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CONTENTS

From the Editor-in-Chief's Desk

It is my pleasure to release the Ninth Volume of the Indian Journal of Distance Education (2007). A plethora of articles taking up varied issues pertaining to Distance Education have been presented. The problems relating to the submission of assignments, course material and personal contact programmes have been discussed at length. The various strategies to cope with problem-focussed and emotion-focussed stress in teaching are thought provoking. Moreover, in an economic environment of liberalization and globalization, the contribution of the information technology system is imperative. Thus the issues relating to alternatives to impart information/knowledge to the distance learners together with the removal of the constraint 'delay' are taken up from time to time. A change in intent and policies alone does not bring about a neutral change. Let economic policies be made immune to political activities in times to come to ensure a consistent economic system. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the collective efforts of all our contributors.

We are profoundly grateful to our Vice-Chancellor, Prof. R.C.Sobti for taking keen interest in the publication of this issue inspite of his busy schedule. Prof. Sobti is not only an eminent scientist but also an outstanding administrator. We hope that we shall continue to enjoy his munificence and patronage in the future also.

Prof. Jagmohan Chopra
Editor- in- Chief
Chairperson, D.C.S.

EDITORIAL

As for any economic or social choice, two steps are decisive: the preliminary step of preparing the best decisions, which involves mainly the comparison between the alternative educational systems, giving due weight to the whole set of criteria to be considered; the final step of implementation, by means of measures which will orientate the literacy balance of the nation in the right direction. The methodological aspects of distance learning and the practical problems of delineating and implementing changes in the on-going system of education are the main topics of the papers.

The Indian Journal of Distance Education provides a comprehensive analysis of issues pertaining to distance education, discusses policy options and suggests solutions. The language is simple and non-technical, entirely accessible to the general reader without compromising on analytical rigour.

The issue commences with Jatinder Grover's paper "Distance Learning in the New Millennium: Where is it going?" in which he has explicitly discussed the delivery system in distance education based on video, audio, and computer technologies. The social and psychological frontiers are yet to be crossed in the application of technology to education due to inadequate investment in infrastructure.

Devendra Singh provides a comprehensive analysis of the Information and Communication Technology tools to enhance higher education by disseminating information quickly. And this is particularly important in the case of Library and Information Science education to the less privileged distance learners.

Dr. Swinder Singh in "Towards a Better Management of Distance Education – Need of HRD Interventions" has focussed on Human Resource Development in terms of performance and potential appraisal, organizational development work environment, proactive orientation and an effective communication system. HRD interventions assume all the more significance with the world fastly moving towards a new economic order. The Indian economy is in the midst of undertaking structural adjustment programmes and this is the opportune time to harness the human resource potential and to create an effective and efficient work culture.

Since assignments form an integral part of two-way communication between the distance learner and the teacher, Dr. Pity Kaul has conducted a descriptive survey to obtain the feedback of the learners pertaining to the B.Sc. Nursing Programme. The findings reveal that the assignments proved to be thought

provoking and effective in understanding the text. The respondents, however, expressed the need for a critical evaluation by the concerned tutors inorder to develop the exchange of information. Non-receipt of assignments/delay, detailed readings for reference and preparation of creative/innovative assignments are some of the issues which need immediate attention.

To analyse and compare the study habits and achievement motivation of the secondary teacher trainees (B.Ed. trainees) in distance and face-to-face mode of education, Dr. Mamta Garg and Prof. Sudesh Gakhar employed "Study Habits Inventory" by Palsana and Sharma (1990) and "Deo Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale" (1985) respectively. It was found that the distant trainees in areas of budgeting time and learning motivation fared better than their counterparts in the face-to-face mode. Also, they scored relatively higher in the factors of achievement motivation viz., academic motivation, attitude towards education, work methods and interpersonal relationships than the secondary teacher trainees, implying the need for achievement in the latter group.

Ms. Supreet Kaur traces the emerging challenges in Teacher Education Programme through the Distance Mode. She opines that the distance mode may be viewed in a wider perspective and include both, in pre-service and in-service teacher preparation, which can widen the horizon of teacher-preparation to cope with the demand of self-learning and lifelong education.

"Performance of students in Distance Education as a function of their stay in the Instructional Process" is the contribution of Dr. Ravi K. Mahajan. The paper dwells on the performance of students in two distinct systems: non-contiguous learning in open university and in distance education institutes in the traditional university. A lengthier duration of stay in an 'instructional process' does not necessarily ensure better chances of success in the examination. He thus calls for rethinking on the 'instructional process' in Distance Education to make it more effective and result oriented.

A Comparative Study of Teaching Effectiveness of the Government and Private School Teacher trained through the Formal and Distance Mode was conducted by Madhu Gupta and Rachna Jain.. Teaching effectiveness was defined in terms of the ability of a teacher to successfully communicate the subject matter to the students, to organize the learning material and to deal with the classroom situations. It was found that irrespective of the training background, teachers need to have the basic teaching skills as a part of their repertoire of teaching effectiveness. And for this, modules for the development of teaching skills need be initiated at the pre-service and in-service training levels.

The paper "Coping Strategies for Teacher Trainees and Teacher Educators of Distance Education", deals with the various coping strategies to help alleviate stress. Dr. Kuljeet has gone into the intricacies of the problem-focussed and emotion-focussed coping in the context of professionals in terms of social relationships. In the fast changing economic environment of uncertainty, the need to enjoy 'work' and contribute positively to one's institution is imperative. And for this one can resort to the eastern practices of Meditation, Yoga, Tai-Chi and Qigong.

I am indebted to the members of the Editorial Board and the sub-editor, Dr. Surinder Shukla for their assistance in exercising total quality management. I am particularly grateful to the reviewers for their expert opinion on the various topics.

Thanks are also due to Mr. B.S.Rawat, for typing the manuscript and to Mr. Jatinder Moudgil, heading the Panjab Unviersity Press in ensuring that the timeline was met.

Prof.(Ms.) Perminder Khanna
Chief Editor

DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE NEW MILLENIUM: WHERE IS IT GOING?

Jatinder Grover

Abstract

An alternative way to think about teaching and learning is called distance education. Today, distance education has become one of the most useful educational systems for all kinds of students. Distance education is growing very fast because the development of telecommunication technologies have enabled its applicability. Telecommunication capabilities make it possible for students and teachers to share information -personal messages, reports, data, graphics, and so on across cities, states or continents, thus ending the isolation of the classroom (Knapp and Glenn, 1996). Throughout the United States, professors are engaging in electronic instruction, and business people are using electronic conferencing to conduct international meetings across the Atlantic via satellite transmission. Teachers at some institutions have developed learning experiences that involve combinations of print, fax, or live and prerecorded video delivered by telecommunications or videotape to home or other sites and interactivity via audio-conferencing, computer-conferencing, or face-to-face class sessions on university campus (Wagner, 1996).

1.0 Introduction

Like mushrooms in a damp forest distance learning programs have sprung up and multiplied incredibly over the past ten years. However, despite its high profile in academics, distance learning remains highly controversial. Will it be the "savior" of the educational enterprise, or will it be the "destroyer" of the educational establishment, as we know it? Will "virtual colleges and universities" replace brick and mortar, as some visionaries have asserted, or will it coexist with traditional educational systems?

What does the term distance learning mean? The range of interpretations run from sending an instructor some distance from the main campus to teach a group of students face-to-face or providing all instruction and interaction via the World Wide Web. Between these two extremes lie several different paradigms. First of all, sending faculty to teach at distant sites is no longer considered distance learning by most practitioners of the field. The current definition of the term usually includes physical separation of the instructor and the student and the use of some technological delivery system. Nonetheless, the patterns for instruction continue to expand based on local situations and funding. The most important factor, however, is whether a distance learning programme takes into consideration the efficiency factor pertaining to administration and faculty. Lacking sufficient support from either group will make the road rocky, if not impossible.

1.1 Objectives

- To discuss the distance education system of the new millenium.
- To point out the various innovations of distance education system used worldwide.

- To notify the innovative distance education system techniques used in India.

2.0 Merging Technologies to Deliver Instruction

Now a days, telecommunication technologies such as satellite, fiber-optic, radio, television, computer, and others are used to deliver the instruction of distance education. The main reason of using these technologies is to increase interaction between the teachers and the students. The interaction is playing a key role to effectively and efficiently plan the instructional activities of distance education. Today, teachers and administrators must be trained to use telecommunication technologies so that they can increase the rapport between students and teachers.

Distance education is now offered at all educational levels, starting from primary school to through university students, and includes general education as well as skills, training and retraining programmes.

On the other hand, distance teaching and learning are different from traditional teaching and learning procedures. Distance education provides people access to specific instruction that they would never otherwise have received. Distance learning activities encourage autonomy and independence as well as cooperation, support, self-regulated learning, and helps to make the instruction personally relevant (Crotty, 1995).

The new telecommunication capabilities provide many ways to meet educational demands, these include extending professional education to distant learners with the promise of instant access to educational opportunities regardless of temporal or geographic distance (Haynes and Dillon, 1992). The number and scope of institutions dedicated to distance education are increasing, and more and more conventional institutions are using techniques "borrowed" from distance education to make their own teaching more effective, efficient, or flexible. In higher education, we are experiencing dramatic shifts to a move towards lifelong learning as a result of the need to retrain individuals whose skills are no longer marketable.

Web-supported instruction is becoming more commonplace in today's colleges and universities (Lindner, Dooley, & Murphy, 2001). Distance education continues to expand because of growth of the Internet, increased capability and flexibility of web-based tools, enhanced proficiency in basic Internet skills, and shrinking barriers with respect to accessing and using the Internet (Lindner, 1999). Distance education methods include those that permit any education received by a student to occur when location and/or time separate the teacher and the student. Distance education relies on the students' abilities to be self-directed and internally motivated. This type of education is particularly appealing to students whose lifestyle (time and distance constraints) does not allow them to take advantage of traditional classroom methods. To optimize methods of delivering instructional programs, a need exists to examine continually technologically mediated delivery strategies (Murphy & Karasek, 1999); which is to say, how can teaching be improved through the use of technology (Means, 1994) Web course tools (e.g., static and dynamic Web pages, threaded discussion groups, e-mail, chat, instant messaging, streaming media/video, animations, application sharing, IP audio/video conferencing). All these are being adopted and used increasingly by teachers to optimize delivery of instructional material.

3.0 Modes of Distance Education Delivery System

Now-a-days, there are two categories of distance education delivery systems i.e., correspondence and telecommunications' technologies-based. The first one is based on the

correspondence system. The other one is based on the exploitation of six major technologies; telephone, radio, television (via satellite or fiber optic), video, computer connected to Internet, a virtual university.

3.1 Correspondence Based Delivery System Education Model

Educators have been interested in offering equal education to all for more than a hundred years. The first known instance of distance education, in the form of correspondence education, was implemented in 1728. Until 1900, the correspondence model was the only model used in distance educational systems because there were no telecommunication capabilities available for educational use. During this time, distance education was generally nothing more than the dissemination of letters and eventually printed materials (Plomp and Ely, 1996).

This model is still widely used today because some countries such as India, Turkey, China, USA, England and others want to enhance their distance education system.

3.2 Telecommunications' Technologies Based Delivery System

Telecommunication technologies such as radio, television, computers and others are used to deliver distance education instruction by distance education institutes. There are two categories of telecommunication technologies based distance education, synchronous and asynchronous. A Synchronous System requires the simultaneous participation of all the students and the instructor. The advantage of this system is that the student and the teacher can interact in real time. In this system, interactive TV radio, and computer conferencing system are being used.

An Asynchronous System does not require a two-way interaction between the students and the teachers. The students do not need to be gathered together in the same location at the same time. In this system, videotape, e-mail, Internet, television, radio can be used to deliver the instruction to the students.

3.2.1 Asynchronous System

In this system, students can hear or see their teachers on radio, television or computer screen. The students and teachers cannot ask questions during the class session because there is no real classroom. It includes

- **Radio-based delivery system:** Radio is commonly used to deliver instructions in the developing world because this technology is available almost everywhere. Typically, students can listen but cannot interact with their course tutors from their homes, offices, or classrooms. Instructional programs are presented at specific times. The students cannot ask questions from their teachers but follow their textbooks and complete their correspondence study materials. Completed materials are sent to the distance education centers where their work is evaluated.
- **Television-based delivery system:** Distance Education Centers may use television to deliver their instructional programs. Unlike one-way radio, students can see and hear their teachers on the television screen in their classrooms, offices, or homes.
- **Asymmetric computer-based delivery system**: Computers can also be used to deliver distance education instructions. In the one-way asynchronous computer system, an individual can communicate with the distance education center using a personal computer and a telephone line. Course instruction is stored in a central computer library. Each student, whether domestic or international, has his/her own account number. Whenever they wish, wherever they are, these students can enter into the

main computer library to receive instructions. Instructional packages may include picture, text, audio and graphics. The students can also receive self-paced tutorial programs from the computer. They do not need to send the hard copy papers of the correspondence study because they can forward them by Internet. The distance education centers also can return their evaluated material to students by computer mail.

3.2.2 Synchronous System

In this system, students and teachers can hear and see each other. Students can ask any question to their teacher and these teachers can answer the question instantly. This system should be supported by e-mail, fax machine, phone calls, and videotapes to increase the interaction between students and teachers. There are several different models used to deliver instruction.

- **Audio conference**: Audio teleconference is a live, two way conversation among two or more persons at different locations connected by telephone lines, cable, or satellites requiring special microphone amplifier devices for voice communications (Heinich, Molenda, and Russell, 1993). Distance educators can deliver their instruction to two or more locations almost anywhere in the world. Students can ask questions to their teachers and interact with fellow participants in real time. Today, some distance education institutions in U.S.A, India, Europe, Japan, China, Africa, and Turkey have been using this system to deliver some of their instructions to their students. In this way, students and teachers can talk with each other without being face to face.

- **Television conference:** Each classroom is equipped with a camera, a microphone, and a television screen. Classrooms are connected by telephone line, cable, or wireless means such as microwave, cellular, or satellite. Distance educators can use these systems to deliver their instructions to two or more international locations. Unlike two-way audio conferences, participants can see and hear each other. Students can talk face to face and ask questions of their partners. These students can receive answers to their questions during the class.

- **Computer conference:** To establish a two-way live computer conference, global distance educators must provide students with a personal computer, a software package such as "CU see me" and a wire or wireless channel to convey their interactions internationally. In this approach, two or more participant groups with compatible software and microphone can see and hear each other on the computer screen. They can also ask questions from their teachers or international partners and receive the answers to their questions. During the 1990s, computers assumed a greater role in distance education programs worldwide. Computers can be used to enhance both one-way and two-way video teleconferencing.. Now computer-aided instruction is common, but another model, using computers in distance education, is an emerging application. Computer mediated communication can be in real time, as with audio/visual conferencing, or asymmetric, as with e-mail on the Internet. Computers have been linked into networks. Learning networks in universities and colleges, distance education institutions, and professional development and training agencies have been used to deliver formal educational applications, such as credit and noncredit courses and degrees, informal learning, and research activities (Harasim, Hiltz, Teles, and Turoff, 1996).

Today, the integration of computer technology with the telephone network has generated a seemingly endless array of possible communication links to such an extent that geographical isolation is now a comparatively minor concern for the delivery of education at a distance (Ely and Minor, 1993). Thus, computers can not only restructure the ways of teaching and learning, but also affect the way of communication with each other. From correspondence, to radio and television, to the computer, the proliferation of communication avenues have helped to make distance education available to more students.

3.3 Computer Communications

3.3.1 E-mail: The convergence of computers and telecommunications has stimulated entirely new forms of student/teacher relationships. The advent of programmed learning enables students to develop mastery over educational material sitting in front of computer workstations following lessons being prepared for them. E-mail allows students to log on to computer networks at their convenience to access lectures, read assignments, deliver-completed homework or to interact with teachers and fellow students. These can be selective interactions when needed from either side. For student's off-campus, the technique provides a way for them to participate in campus activities, including group projects, while carrying on a full time job or attending to family responsibilities.

3.3.2 Geo/Leo Satellite

Satellites are already well-established distance education technologies Communication satellites located in geosynchronous orbits 36,000 km above the equator are serving as wide coverage receivers and retransmitters for a variety of educational applications.

No technology can match the wide geographic coverage of the satellite footprint. Satellite signals can be anywhere or everywhere: local, regional, or global. They can be point-to-point, as with the delivery of sales training from corporate headquarters to distant offices, or point-to-multipoint, as with the broadcast of lessons from a teacher to multiple home-schooled pupils. With modern satellite technologies, it does not matter whether those addressable locations are in homes or hospitals, in urban areas or rural, on one continent or several. With today's satellite systems, the users can quickly be brought on-line.

Direct-to-home (DTH) systems can now be installed in a single day and they can be quickly disconnected and moved from one location to another. While truly interactive systems via satellite are not yet a common home product, rapid connection to broadband media services is already a selling point for educational applications in schools and businesses.

- **Internet:** The Internet is a great gift for learners. The Internet is a network of estimated 50,000 and growing information networks, all interconnected in a way that globally distributed databases and other resources are on call to individual subscribers no matter where they are. With the introduction of the World Wide Web, in which vast amounts of information is linked, and the development of tools to access and browse the Web, learners can go out and electronically look for information
- **Computer Conferencing:** With the addition of audio and video to computer communications, conferencing no longer need consist only of asynchronous text exchanges. Internet-delivered conferences can be live with pictures and sound, though not always with full-motion video and not the clearest of audio.

- CD-ROM is an inexpensive but a high-capacity disc, in appearance similar to the CD audio disc, used to store text, data and other digitized information. It is an optical, not magnetic, storage medium with a huge capacity, up to 700 Mb of data equivalent to 300,000 pages of text. The forerunner of interactive multimedia, the CD-ROM enables the viewer to be more of a participant.
- Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), sometimes called Digital Video Disc, is an even higher capacity storage medium, holding up to 17 Gb of digital data on a single side. Although it is being promoted as a new distribution medium for movies, it will also have educational uses. DVD, as a result of its capacity, will be able to provide multiple language tracks along with its video programs.

3.3.3 Hybrid Systems

In the educators' toolbox there are many options for improving student access to learning and for enhancing the quality of the educational experience. No one solution serves all, so choices must be made among those that are available, most suitable and affordable. The trend is towards the adoption of hybrid technology systems, which incorporate more than one telecommunication medium to maximize impact, improve efficiency and reduce cost. Many current examples point to the combinations of broadcast, cable, satellite, computer and storage technologies being integrated into a single system. Of all the technologies under use today, the Internet is proving to be the most promising for education. One reason is its ability to successfully partner with the other media.

4.0 Distance Education in India:

In India, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is playing a major role in modernizing the distance education courses. To meet the emerging needs of information era, the University offers some programs on-line through tele-learning centres through its virtual campus initiatives and through EDUSAT and Gyan Darshan Educational channel and Gyan Vani Radio Program.

4.1 EDUSAT

- Edusat is a collaborative project of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization), the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, Indira Gandhi National Open University and the State Departments of Education.
- It is an interactive satellite- based distance education system through audio-visual medium, employing Direct to Home quality broadcast.
- IGNOU is up-linking its Edusat program in Ku band transponder (National beams) using the DVB-RCS (Digital Video Broadcast – Return channel through satellite) technology. It has already established more than 134 SIT (satellite interactive terminals) across the country.
- The satellite has multiple regional beams covering different parts of India- five Ku Band transponders with spot beams covering northern, north-eastern, eastern, southern and western regions of the country, a Ku-band transponder with the national beam covering the Indian mainland region and six C-band transponders with their footprints covering the entire country.

4.2 Gyan Darshan

It is a satellite-based national educational and development channel put forth by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Prasar Bharati with IGNOU as the nodal agency. Gyan Darshan expanded into a bouquet of channels namely GD-1, GD-2, GD-3 and GD-4.

- Gyan Darshan 1, is a 24-hr channel broadcasting the programs produced by IGNOU and the best educational programs from other channels and institutes.
- Gyan Darshan 2, devoted entirely to interactive distance education, a unique feature of the channel.
- Gyan Darshan 3, (Eklavya Channel) is a 24 hr Channel transmitting quality education to the students pursuing engineering throughout the country.
- Gyan Darshan 4, (Vyas Channel) is a 24 hr Channel and imparting quality education to the students pursuing higher education throughout the country.

4.3 Gyan Vani

It is a 'Radio Cooperative' devoted exclusively to education and community development. The main objective is to bridge the gap between the educationally privileged and the deprived. These interactive, participatory educational stations are aimed at a greater empowerment of the people, particularly the disadvantaged.

IGNOU, under the Gyan Vani FM Radio initiative has set up a network of 25 Stations (Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Coimbatore, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Jabalpur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Mysore, Rajkot, Raipur, Varanasi, Vishakapatnam, Lucknow, Shillong, Jaipur, Panaji, Indore, Kanpur, Patna, Nagpur and Hyderabad.) The test transmission of Aurangabad is being started.

IGNOU is in the process of setting up 11 more Stations shortly. GV channels offer a mix of programs aimed at the pre-primary, primary, secondary, technical, and higher education, continuing and distance education in the areas of environment, science and technology, health, social justice, women's empowerment and career counseling.

5 Conclusion

Distance education is defined as an educational system in which the student is formally enrolled in a school or college but receives instruction at some remote site. Traditionally, correspondence has been the primary delivery medium. However, the delivery systems most common today are based on video, audio, and computer technologies. An interesting facet of these technologies is that they have been adapted to transmit information in unexpected forms - visual images via telephone lines or through satellite .A variety of such adaptations make live transmission of lectures, demonstrations, and audiovisual resource materials possible, often in an interactive context.

Inspite of the important development of the technology applied to education there is still a limited use of it in the educational centers in India in general. The social and psychological frontiers are yet to be crossed. Most educators are not prepared to adapt their teaching programs to technology. Some of them even feel that technology can be a danger to their positions and are almost afraid to be substituted by it. Others are indifferent to it. Another cause of the slow integration of technology in education is the amount of the investment needed to provide these educational centers with these new resources as well as with the infrastructure required.

However, radio, television and video are the cheapest resources for a large audience, but have a strong disadvantage in the fixed timetable that they imply. In a few years, when the teleteaching products are commercialized and information costs decrease, the education through telecommunication technology will reach the top of the educational system.

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TOOLS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Devendra Singh

Abstract

In Library and Information Science (LIS) education, it is imperative to impart library orientation to the students of academic institutions. And this is all the more important in the context of the less privileged, distance learners. With the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) media, quality education can be imparted in the E-environment. This paper attempts to analyze various ICT tools that can help to enhance higher education by disseminating information quickly.

1.0 Introduction

As the population of distance learners is growing, so is the need to make them self-dependent in their studies. They are offered help by means of various tools such as providing them with printed lessons; personal contact programmes (PCPs) etc. Although distance students cannot study without books, and nobody can afford to purchase all the books in a given subject, so they have access to libraries for their specific needs. At conventional universities, a few students delve deeply into the resources offered by the libraries, but most do not (Arms 2000). While distant learners are not included in library orientation programmes offered by the academic institutions; thereby needing more information resources than their regular counterparts.

2.0 Objectives of the study

Online media is becoming the best tool to bridge the communication gap and Internet has revolutionized the learning process but the academic institutions are lagging behind in adapting the new technology. "Too often a distance learning course is launched with the unwritten expectation that students will be able to find their own library support. The home institution's library may not even know that the course has been launched until one of the students telephones to ask for books or other services to be delivered (Brophy 2000)". It may be due to administrative reasons but with the emergence of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), the less privileged lot can also be given quality education in the e-environment. The physical library is a necessity for the academic institutions, but a digital / virtual collection is important for open universities. Remote students cannot visit the library, but if the digital collections are broad enough and accessible enough, perhaps more of these students will be heavy users of digital libraries (Arms 2000). So, hybrid libraries are the gateway to impart distance education with more emphasis on E-resources in the present information era. To go with the changing times, distance learners should be given the opportunity of e-learning together with traditional tools. And "it is now widely accepted that people prefer to assimilate knowledge in different ways and we, as learning and development professionals, need to concentrate not only on providing the most effective delivery of learning for any individual, but also on encouraging the assimilation and application of that knowledge... (T J 2005)".

Active learning implies that students do not limit themselves to resources supplied by their instructors, but also that the students search for new materials themselves in order to solve problems at hand and to develop their competencies continuously (Roes 2001).

This paper seeks to analyze various ICT tools that help to disseminate information in the least time through the E-environment.

3.0 E-environment : A Basic Necessity in Distance Education

We have to change with times and contribute into the e-revolution by minimizing the communication gap because information can be retrieved instantly through e-media. Also, "...the Information Revolution, almost everybody is sure of two things about it : first, that it is proceeding with unprecedented speed; and second, that its effects will be more radical than anything that has gone before (Drucker 2003)."

Arie de Geus (1988) rightly says, "If we understand that the only competitive advantage the company of the future will have is its managers' ability to learn faster than their competitors", this is true also in imparting education to the distant learners.

In the e-learning environment, the 'e' in e-tivities, e-mate, e-guide, ecoach, e-facilitating, e-training, e-moderating, reminds all net users that the working domain is not quite the same as its traditional counterpart (Rasulo, 2005).

3.1 Features of E-documents

a) Available all the time;

b) Easily portable;

c) One can update them instantly; d) Colourful / illustrated;

e) Provides links to other sites;

f) Helps in information searching; g) Mostly free;

h) Instant retrieval of information; etc.

Therefore, to reach every distant learner, new communication technology must be used in relation to time and place and for this situational barriers have to be removed.

4.0 Various ICT Tools to enhance Distant Learning

To make distant learners self dependent, various ICT tools can be used as the Internet has revolutionized the information world. When students use the World Wide Web for learning environment, they suddenly have the world at their fingertips (Collis and Meeuwsen, 1999). Moreover, Elliston (1988) informs us, hardly surprisingly, one tends to:

Teach as he has been taught;

Lead as he has been led;

Relate as he has been related to;

Develop curricula like those in which he learned.

Of all the blue-sky scenarios and vapourware solutions offered by those who promote information technology, online learning has become the most pressing and pervasive. As thousands of academics, millions of students, as well as librarians, support staff and administrators struggle daily to come to terms with its actual strengths, weaknesses and idiosyncrasies, the promises of the internet continue to develop unabated (Murphy & others 2001).

Nevertheless, a general consensus is that distance education technology and programmes are here and will continue to be. It is therefore, appropriate to continue exploring

the support system - like the digital library that will help further develop new services and programmes for distance learners (Osorio 2002). Hence, new technology must be utilized in imparting education, as it is fast becoming the distance learner's preferential tool in the present times.

4.1 E-mail

It is the most widely used tool in the e-environment. It allows us to send and receive messages / mail through internet in text as well as graphics. To give personal response to distance learners, e-mail is the best medium. Students can save their mail for future reference as many sites are providing a huge storage capacity for free (for example Lycos is providing 3 GB (giga bytes) for a free email account). Moreover, if the size of the mail is very large, then *Bulk* (in relation to space / size) facility is also provided.

E-mail is a boon for distance learners as they can ask their personal queries / questions and receive answers from the correspondence department. This facility must be started in open universities to fulfil the needs of their distant learners. It is more fun to invent the future than to dismiss it or wait for it to happen (Lankes, 2003).

4.2 E-Newsletter

To enhance distance learning, e-newsletter can be sent to students by e-mail covering academic topics and reference to other new links (web sites) in many subjects to keep the students abreast of the latest developments. Academicians and librarians can help to suggest respective sites in their field. It can be started as a monthly service and adjusted as desired.

4.3 Bulletin Board Service (BBS) / Online Discussion Forum

As students of distance education are residing at far away places, they are not known to their other fellows. To overcome this difficulty, Online Discussion Forum / Bulletin Board Service (BBS) should be provided so that they can interact on their own level through university (correspondence department) website in their varied disciplines.

4.4 Links to other sites (subject gateways, search engines, etc.)

Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of other academic sites must be provided in the home page of the correspondence department's website, so that students can access directly these sites. Moreover, a search tool bar of any search engine (for example Google) can also be put on the university's site to enhance information searching of the students.

There is however a note of caution to be observed in e-learning. It is said *"Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well" (*4th Earl of Chesterfield (Jones 1997).

Before providing any link to other site(s), its evaluation must be done as internet is just like a politician which never says 'No'. The services of academicians and librarians can be sought *to* evaluate the web content. (Various quality sites are given in (Section 6) A *Brief Manual to Internet for Distance Learners).* But benefits of links should be kept in mind as "The only valid way to assess the true quality of e-learning resources is to determine whether the learners achieved the learning objectives set for the programme (Muir 2006).

4.5 Ask-A Service

To help distance learners in their specific problems / questions, online submission of their queries must be available through the website of the distance institution. Students can post their questions to this online submission site and answers can be provided by the experts in their respective fields. *The Internet Public Library (www.ipl.org)* example can be followed in this regard.

Some suggested columns for submission of questions are as follows.

Note: First check your question in FAQs.

a) Name and Class of the Student alongwith the Roll No.;

b) E-mail address of the user;

c) Subject / Paper to which the question relates to;

d) Question to be asked (space upto atleast 1000 words or more should be provided).

4.6 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To provide answers to the students' querries, FAQs (frequently asked questions) are also helpful. A question asked by one student can be made available online so that other students with a similar problem can also be benefited. Even before the submission of the question in *Ask-A Service,* first the students should refer to FAQs to check if the answer already exists on the website.

4.7 Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)

Online Public Access Catalogue is a must in this information age. This type of catalogue is in e-format and in e-environment. It provides searching by various techniques for example by author, title, subject, by type of document (books, journals, CDs, etc.), combination search (with keywords), etc. One can know about the status of a document instantly through an OPAC, for example, whether a book is available in the library as well as already issued or not; this facility however cannot be given in the traditional catalogue like the use of the card.

The library can use its home page on the web as the interface to its services, and provide from there a link to the OPAC as well as links to other services (Brophy 2000).

4.8 Frequency Modulation (FM)

Live Radio talks can be provided by experts in their specialized fields to cater to the needs of the distance learners in which the students can ask their questions through the telephone. Although, Punjabi University, Patiala is providing this opportunity to its correspondence students, but a Radio Session by Librarians would be very helpful to the students in the context of the various services being provided by it.

5.0 Challenges for Information Professionals in the E-world

The challenges for the information professionals are partly due to the fear of new technology.

Fear and Loathing in Digital Reference (Gross, McClure and Lankes, 2003) refers to:

- Fear of competition with the commercial sector.
- Fear of loss of professional domain.
- Fear of replacement by intelligence agents or other advances in technology.
- Fear of falling reference statistics.
- Fear of potential volume of digital reference questions.
- Worry that per transaction digital reference questions take longer to respond to than traditional face-to-face questions do.
- Fear of using new technologies that support digital reference services and constantly having to update and be trained regarding new technology.

- Developing and providing digital reference services in order to be able to say the library provides it and then doing little to promote or grow the service after it is established.

....."Digital librarians must thrive on change. They should read constantly (but selectively) and experiment endlessly. They need to love learning, be able to self-teach, and be inclined to take risks. And they must have a keen sense of both the potentials and pitfalls of technology (Hastings and Tennant 1996)".

It takes both technical competence and effective pedagogy to teach in an e-learning environment (Southern Regional Education Board, 2001, p.2). But with communication comes an understanding that what one person regards as prejudice may not necessarily be regarded as prejudice by others (McDougall 2005).

Cost is a major factor particularly in the case of Video Conferencing, Real Time Live Web Conference, etc. But in regard to download / surfing cost, it's cheaper as compared to coming to the university for every problem because distant learners have to spend on travelling expense plus time to travel which can be saved in abundance if they surf the net. Moreover, every student is not utilizing online resources in his/her academic life. So an introductory manual to internet is given below, because "The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common" (Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882)

6.0 A Brief Manual to Internet for Distance Learners

Note: Please feel free to ask your librarian or staff at the cyber cafe from where you are logging in about using internet.

6.1 *Why Internet is essential*

To keep abreast the distance learners to the new developments alongwith traditional information, Internet is a must in this Information Age as the students can help themselves and search the net for their academic informational needs.

6.2 *Opening Internet*

Double click (with left button of the mouse) on the *Internet Explorer* icon (mostly MS Internet Explorer is used in India)

OR Click on *Start* button (usually on left-bottom side of the monitor) and click on *Internet.*

6.3 *Opening websites*

Write the address of the website in the *address bar.* Usually addresses start with *WWW (but this* is not necessary always).

www.universitypunjabi. org

Some endings of the site addresses (it reveals about the nature of the site).

For example:

.com	commercial site
.org	organization (non profit usually)
.net	network related
.gov	government site
.edu	education
.mil	military

.ac.uk	academic, United Kingdom
.ac .in	academic, India
.gov.in	government, India

6.4 *Search Engines*

It is OK when we know the website address correctly, but if we don't know about the address, then open a *Search Engine*. A search engine retrieves web pages through its own in built system and it shows results to your querry and displays the best results in an ascending order.

For example: www.google.com OR www.yahoo.com

Type your query / keyword in the search bar / box

sociology

It would reveal thousands or even millions of sites having this term and then we can click with mouse on the links / sites provided.

6.5 *Use of Boolean Operators*

To search many terms simultaneously, Boolean operators are used.

+	AND	sign mostly used is plus sign
()	OR	sign mostly used is circular brackets
-	NOT	sign mostly used is minus

AND it means all terms specified by you will be revealed

E.g. Political AND Science

OR at least one of the terms specified by you would be revealed

E.g. Information OR Technology

NOT at least one of the terms specified by you would not be revealed

E.g. Information AND Communication NOT Technology

Note: Initially, try using + only while searching for many terms and use symbols.

Eg.

Public+ Administration+ District+ Governance

Truncation * symbol is used

It widens our search by typing the keyword in the search bar and add * (shift + 8), so that the words following the typed word would also be revealed through the search engine.

For example,

Bank*

Bank* would reveal the web pages containing the words

Bank banks banker banking etc.

We can regionalize (with respect to country) our search through GOOGLE and YAHOO.

For example: www.google.co.in would reveal sites from India (don't forget to click on a small circle *Pages from India)*

Similarly,

www.google.co.uk	from UK
www.yahoo.co.in	
www.yahoo.co.uk	

6.6 *Back and Forward*

While visiting web pages, sometimes we need to re-visit the previous pages. So, click on *Back* button at the top (left side) just below the *File* menu. It would open the last web page opened. If we want to go back more than one page then click on the *down-arrow* that is available at right side of the Back button and it would reveal us the pages last visited in ascending order and click on the desired web page to be opened. The smaller case is applicable with *Forward* button to go forward, but it should be remembered that Forward is possible only when we are Back at some page.

To know about the history of the sites visited, click on *History* button on the tool bar OR click on *View* menu and then click on *Explorer Bar* then further click on *History.* OR we can simply press *Ctrl H* keys together.

Bookmark: We can also bookmark the web pages we have visited to refer to them again by adding them to the *Favourites* menu available in the Microsoft Internet Explorer, just by clicking on this menu and adding the current web page; OR Right-click (with right button of mouse) anywhere on the current web page (where a link is not to be activated i.e. a hand doesn't appear) and then click on *Add to Favourites.* When we are visiting many sites, this facility helps us to refer to the favorite web pages by just clicking on the *Favourites* the selected / favourite pages (links) appear on the left side of the screen and we can go to the required page by clicking on its link.

6.7 *Meta Search Engines*

These allow comprehensive search capabilities from various search engines, i.e., they give the sites referred by other search engines collectively for a given querry.

For example: www.metacrawler.com

It displays results (for a given querry) from various search engines like Google; Yahoo; Lycos; etc.

Moreover meta search engines allow us to ask our questions in human language.

For example: www.mamma.com

Type

What is economics

Some more search engines:

www.lycos.com	www.askjeeves.com
www.dogpile.com	www.altavista.com
www.alltheweb.com	www.clusty.com

6.8 *E-mail*

Note: Don't forget to have an e-mail account in this Information Age *(it's FREE).*

Visit: www.yahoo.com OR http://mail.yahoo.com
click on *Mail* then, *Sign Up* (create a new account)

Another site,

www.lycos.com OR http://maiLlycos.com

click on My *Mail* then, *Sign up* a new account

(and follow instructions)

In case you are unable to open an e-mail account, ask for help from your librarian or staff at the cyber cafe from where you are logging in.

Emoticons & Smileys

To converse easily and to save space, emoticons (symbols in e-communication, usually used is e-mail, chat, sms, etc.) have been invented to communicate succinctly.

For example, :-) is a Standard Smiley

For more emoticons, visit

www.muller-godschaik.com/emoticon.html

6.9 *Encyclopaedia on Net*

Visit www.wikipedia.org

Search by typing words in the search bar, e.g. *economics*

The letters printed in 'blue ink' means that by clicking on them, that word / entry / link would be opened, e.g. *Marx* (revealed from economics).

6.10 *Dictionary on Net*

6.10.1 *English to Punjabi* (and vice versa)

www.punjabionline.com/diction.html

OR

www.punjabonline.com/servlet/library .dictionary? Action;;;: Punjabi

OR

www.word2word.com/diet.html

6.10.2 *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms*

http://dictionary.cambridge.org/

6.10.3 *FOLDOC* (Free Online Dictionary of Computing)

www.foldoc.doc.ic.ac. uklfoldoc

6.10.4 *Glossary of Internet Terms*

www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html

6.10.5 BABEL: A Glossary of Computer Oriented Abbreviations and Acronyms

www.geocities.comlikind_babellbabel/babelsr.html

6.10.6 *The Free Dictionary*

www.thefreedictionary.com

6.10.7 *Online Dictionary* of *Social Sciences*

http://bitbucket.icaap.org/dict.pl

6.11 *Online Quotations* www.quoteland.com

Comprehensive quotations are retrieved in various subjects, like

Topic; Author; Art; Motivational; Dreams; etc. plus many other facilities relating to quotations

6.12 *Social Sciences Information Gateway*

Visit www.intute.ac.uk

It provides many (free) services, from learning to access of other quality websites. There is an expert network of UK universities and other partners on its working.

Intute :Virtual Training Suite provides free training for education and research purposes in many disciplines as below:

Science, Engineering and Technology
Arts and Humanities
Social Sciences
Health and Life Sciences

(Various subjects are covered in these four major headings. Moreover, it also gives search strategies for Internet and evaluating web content, at the end).

6.13 *Social Science Information System*

Visit www.sociosite.net

This site provides qualitative information to help the public at large.

6.14 *Bubl* Visit www.bubl.ac.uk

It provides various quality links / websites of the whole universe of knowledge (subject wise; by country; type - e-books (fiction, non-fiction), journals, bibliographies etc.).

Type keywords in search bar Eg.

history

OR search alphabetically ABC...Z (by clicking)

OR search by classified arrangement (Dewey Decimal Classification system is used) using numbers for different subjects / disciplines by clicking on

000	Generalities	500	Science and Technology
100	Philosophy and psychology	600	Technology
200	Religion	700	Arts
300	Social Sciences	800	Literature and rhetoric
400	Language	900	Geography and History

All knowledge is classified in this arrangement. It works 000 to 999, and has further sub-divisions like 300,310,320, ... 390;

For example 330 Economics; 340 Law; 350 Public Administration

320 Political Science 320.5 Political Ideologies;

321 Systems of Governments and states; 327 International Relations then further arrangement like 321, 321.1, 321.2, '" and so on.

Note: Initially, try searching by typing your querry / keywords in the search bar or by clicking with alphabetical arrangement. But familiarize yourself with classified arrangement also by clicking.

6.15 *Political Science*

www.politicalresources.net

6.16 *The Virtual Library* www.vlib.org

This site gives many subjects to be studied, for example, Agriculture, The Arts, Business and Economics, International Affairs, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Humanistic Studies, etc.

6.17 *Free e-books*

Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (lu.com) defines ebooks as "A digital version of a traditional print book designed to be read on a personal computer or an e-book reader (a software application for use on a standard-sized computer or a book-sized computer used solely as a reading device).

6.17.1 *Technical books* www.freetechbooks.com

6.17.2 *Bibliomania* (many classic texts can be viewed here)

www.bibliomania.com/

6.17.3 *Orsforlis* (major books from 200 BC to 20th century)

www.orsforlis.com/www.grtbooks.com

6.17.4 *World e-book* (unlimited access to comprehensive collection)

http://netlibrarv.net/WorldHome.html

6.17.5 *Digital Book Index* (a largest online resource)

www.digitalbookindex.org/about.htm

6.17.6 *Internet Public Library*

www. ipl. org/reading/books

6.17.7 *Ebooks4free* (multi-lingual languages, various subjects, etc.)

www.ebooks4free.netl

6.17.8 *Web-books* (provides links, e-books, journals etc.)

www.web-books.com/cool/ebooks/Library.htm

6.18 *E-journals*

6.18.1 *UNESCO* (about 700 periodicals in social and human sciences)

www.unesco.org/shs/shsdc/index.htm

6.18.2 *E-journals*

www.e-iournals.org/

6.18.3 *Free Full Text* (links to thousands of periodicals, only which are free are accessible freely)

www.freefulltext.com/

6.18.4 *The Digital Library Federation* (free journals in the field of Library and Information Science)

www.dlib.org

6.18.5 *Directories of Free e-journals*

http://ibrarV.curtin.edu.au/ebooks/directiournals.htm l

6.18.6 *A-Z list of education e-journals - JCU Library*

www.library.icu.edu.au/Educ/allis.html

6.19 ***The Researching Librarian***

To view online databases of various disciplines, visit

www.researchinglibrarian.com/databases.html#

6.20 ***Ask-A Services***

Many sites are providing online answers to specific questions asked by the users.

For example *The Internet Public Library* (www.ipl.org) is providing online submission of questions / querries. Go to this site and click on *Ask* a *Question* OR simply visit the web page directly at www.ipl.org/div/askus

This site also gives various subjects to be studied through many authoritative links and many aspects of various disciplines are covered in much detail.

6.21 ***Latest Conferences / Seminars***

To keep abreast of the latest information about the forthcoming conferences / seminars to be held in various disciplines, one can search through search engines for many sites.

OR go directly to www.conferencealerts.com

Conferencealerts.com provides information about the forthcoming conferences / seminars in varied (all) disciplines. It allows searching in many ways, for example, country wise, subject wise etc. We can also subscribe to its newsletter (free of cost) by just giving our e-mail.

6.22 Caution

Please do not give your address (residential) on the Internet and avoid E-shopping that is giving credit card number, for safety reasons.

7.0 Point To Remember

As we have reached the stage of Information Explosion through Internet, so gather that information only which is relevant to your specific needs and please don't get confused by the sites that are revealed by search engines, FOCUS on your TOPIC only, and if what you are looking for is relevant, read further (not every site) upto your understanding of the topic / information or try another site / search engine.

Find more about your specific questions / subjects through *Search Engines.*

8.0 Brief suggestions for correspondence departments / open universities

1. Radio Talk on Library Use
2. 0 PAC
3. BBS / Online Discussion Forum for students
4. Ask-A Service / Querry Submission on CC department's site
5. E-Newsletter
6. Links to other websites
7. Access to online journals / databases
8. Renewal of books through telephone / fax / e-mail

9.0 Conclusion

Day by day we are entering the *Knowledge Society*. The anonymous mantra is that knowledge increases by sharing. The Information Revolution has opened many new ways to share and communicate. To keep going, we need to adapt to the new technology in education especially through correspondence. Various ICT tools have been discussed in this study that can be used to enhance higher education and the *Brief Manual* has been prepared so that it can be distributed to distant learners as such to make them self dependent for the academic informational needs.

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TOWARDS A BETTER MANAGEMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION – NEED OF HRD INTERVENTIONS

Dr. Swinder Singh

Abstract

Liberalization, globalization and privatization (LPG) have thrown serious challenges to distance education. The advancement in IT has deeply influenced the needs, modalities and the delivery system of distance education. It has opened up varied possibilities for the distance learners to choose from a large number of Distance Education (DE) courses of various levels and traits and together with the availability of better techniques to cater to the needs of different serve / cater to needs of different strata of society. The prevailing competitive environment necessitates a DE institute to have a relook into its strengths and weaknesses. Primarily it needs to take stock of its human asset – needs, capabilities and upliftment of human force. The author is of the view that a given DE institute must go for appropriate Human Resource Development (HRD) interventions, such as performance an potential appraisal, training and development, organizational development, quality work environment, effective communication system, proactive orientation and so on. In order to face the prevailing and forthcoming challenges, those who are managing a DE institute must go for a quantum leap by adopting the HRD philosophy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are passing through a phase having series of radical changes happening around us – in India and the world over. With the older order changing due to liberalization, privatization and globalization, most barriers to exchange of information have been removed and competitions have got new forms. No market is now supposed to be a territory of a single player. Knowledge of various kinds is advancing at a must faster pace than before. Rapid computerization and the onset of information technology has intensified the pace of work and business and now is moving at the speed of light. All this has changed the mental horizons, expectations, human relations and work atmosphere. The advancements in skills and talents have given a further boost to the significance of work – force as a precious human asset. Today, no progressive organization can afford to lag behind in this competitive age. For that matter a distance education organization too needs to change the gear. It needs to take stock of the situation, assess and sharpen the skills of its human asset through the Human Resource Development (HRD) interventions.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

In the present study an endeavour has been made

- to examine briefly the nature of DE and its current status in India;
- to list the major challenges and problems before DE;
- to highlight the significance of human factor towards managing DE;
- to examine the scope / possibility of HRD interventions towards managing DE system with a view to enhance the quality of contents and delivery system.

- to recommend HRD measures to the Distance Education justifies enabling them to meet the current and future challenges.

3.0 Nature of Distance Education

Over the years Distance Education (DE), passing through various stages, has grown from infancy towards maturity. As we know distance education is distance teaching plus distance learning. To briefly mention some of the basic characteristics of distance education would not be out of place here. A number of authors have identified certain essential features of distance education. Kegan (1986 : 49) for instance has given the following features:

1. The quasi – permanent separation to teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process; this distinguishes it from conventional face – to – face education;
2. The influence of an educational organization both in planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; this distinguishes it from private study and teach – yourself programmes;
3. The use of technical media – print, audio, video or computer – unites teacher and learner and carries the content of the course;
4. The provision of a two – way communication so that he student may benefit from or even initiate a dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education;
5. The quasi – permanent absence of a learning group throughout the length of the learning process, so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possible meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes. (1986 : 49)

In addition, he finds that there are two other socio – cultural determinants which are necessary pre – conditions and consequences of distance education. These are: (1) the presence of more industrialized features than its conventional or oral education; and (2) privatization of institutional learning. (1986 – 50).

4.0 Status of Distance Education in India

Lifelong learning process has always been a part of Indian culture. Tracing back to the ancient period with Eklavya type self – learning or gurukul traditions, distance education has always been there. However, the systematic ways of distance and open education were adopted in India on the pattern of correspondence education as found in Europe in the 18th and the 19th centuries and which developed into a full fledged mode in the twentieth century. In India it was during the last quarter of 20th century that this mode of education attracted some attentions of policy makers and planners. Other than the system of distance education through correspondence courses, the open university system began in 1982 with the establishment of Andhra Pradesh Open University – now known as DR. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. This later paved the way for the founding of thirteen other Open Universities, one at the national level and the twelve at the state level Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) set up in 1985 by the Government of India, is now said to be the largest open university of the world with 1.5 million students and has a presence in 35 countries. It has emerged as a significantly different and a unique role model for education.

Despite its growing demand and popularity the system of distance education (mainly correspondence education) continued to be treated for a long time as the second fiddle to the formal system of education and which got "just liberated by the conventional system" (Reddy,

1986 : 7) The Vice – Chancellors' Committee report in 1986 as an example of the same, suggested that subsidized higher education should be limited to the "most intelligent" and that the less proficient should seek "distance education" (Shatrugna, 1988, 2624).

Although the attitude of looking down upon other modes of education by those associated with conventional system of education has not changed much, meanwhile during the last one decade or so, distance education has gained further grounds and has advanced further to secure a much deserving and a respectable place. Distance Education seems to have shifted from periphery to the centre stage. This is indicative in the words of former Union Minister of Human Resource Development in the context of the Tenth Plan: "Though we have planned to increase the number of students in higher education from 6% to 15% in the 10th Five Year Plan, we do have a feeling that formal face – to – face education does not have the required capacity to meet the challenge. Its seems to me that distance education is the 'mantra' for the present and the near future. In this context, the country looks forward to greater efforts from the open university system to meet the need of larger number of students intake into higher education. In Distance Education in the country, the intake to students into the system will have to grow five or six times, as the plan proposals have aimed to a target of 40% share of the total number of students in higher education". (Quoted in Bansal, 2009, 128) The then Secretary, Deptt. of Higher Edcuation, Ministry of Human Resource Development added that the "Government of India plans to expand Distance Education system at an unprecedented rate" (Bansal, ibid).

This is indicative of the progression of Distance Education in India as perceived by a number of authors on the basis of progression taken place in a number of other countries. Taylor (2001), for instance has classified the growth of distance education into the following steps:

1. The Correspondence mode based on print technology.
2. The Telelearning model based the applications of tele – communications technology to provide opportunities for synchorous communication; and
3. The Multi – media model based on print, audio and video – technologies.
4. The Flexible learning model based on online delivery via the internet.

Although a number of DE institutes may have achieved the third and fourth stage, a large number of other institutes are still struggling at the first or the second stage.

As pointed out earlier, DE has opened up new possibilities in the field of higher education today. It is making its reach much wider and more impactful. Emerging trends rightly establish that DE has now become more relevant to the societal needs than a decade back. At the same time globalization, liberalization and privatization has made a definite impact on the nature and technologies of DE. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) under the World Trade Organization is worth consideration here. Education services (industry DE) are one of the 12 economic activities identified under the (GATS). Trade among these is to be carried out under four modes:

a) Cross border supply;
b) Consumption abroad;
c) Commercial presence; and
d) Movement of natural persons

In the context of DE the cross border supply of DE material such as print material, on – line education may be covered in this category, while under the other categories, setting up of overseas study centers, information centers or exchange of personnel may be covered.

GATS agreement has already started showing its influence on DE. More and more DE institutions – regional, national and international have intensified their activities and making their presence felt to the perspective distance learners. Various universities / DE institutions are already feeling the heat of the growing competition and are struggling to raise and maintain the enrolment level, either by trying to raise the quality of their delivery system, working, marketing strategies or by starting new and unconventional courses.

All this makes it imperative for the DE institutions – whether an Open University or a traditional DE institution within the dual mode universities – to gear up towards meeting the prevailing emerging and complex challenges. For some institutions, however, it may be a question of maintaining their survival existence.

4.1 Major Problems

As a number of research studies (Reddy, 1986) Rana Sudarshana 1994, Singh, Swinder (2004); Prasad and Pandey (2004), Baweja, Sudhir (2004) have shown, there are a number of organizational and technological problems and the problems relating to personnel within the DE institutions which hinder the effective working and which need to be taken care of urgently. Some of the problems may be listed here:

- Lack of professional approach towards managing DE.
- Lack of standardized quality of the delivery system.
- Heterogeneous quality of the Printed matter.
- Inadequate use of audio – video media.
- Lack of effective communication with distance learners.
- Mismanagement of counseling sessions / PCPs.
- Poor use of computers and other interactive technologies.
- Insensitivity to training and development of human capital.
- Poor inclination towards on – line education system.
- Lack of effective leadership and motivation system.
- Problem of over centralization with no faith in delegation of responsibilities.
- Poor work culture.
- Poor team spirit.
- Lack of accountability.
- Absence of any mechanisms for performance appraisal.
- Unnecessary administrative hurdles.

Such problems may be found in any DE institute / university. However, these are more common in DE institutions working within the folds of conventional universities.

4.2 Need for HRD Interventions

The changing scenario of DE with increasing competition and awareness among the perspective DE learners, the DE institutions need to tackle the above problems in a professional manner.

Among the possible strategies towa4rds tackling these problems, one of the universally accepted way is to adopt an appropriate HRD system and to make the relevant HRD interventions.

Human resource definitely is the most important asset for any organizational it is the human resource which besides being a primary resource of production has to utilize other resources (such as money, material and machines) towards the achievement of organizational goals. Any investment and efforts made towards the development of human resource is sure to show the results of efforts towards development of skills, knowledge and attitudes may take some time, and the progress is likely to be slow and indefinite. The success of such an exercise depends upon the approach of the persons involved in it. One definite approach is to adopt a genuine Human Resource Development System – which can be planned, implemented and monitored in ways that would lead to better individual and organizational effectiveness.

5.0 HRD – The Concept and Meaning

The term HRD was first used in the year 1968 in the George Washington University. In 1969 it was discussed and adopted by the American Society for Training and Development and by the mid 1970s the term HRD gained much acceptance and was being used, as a more attractive term than 'training and development'. Japan was among the first nations to adopt and stress the use of HRD practices. 'Better people', not merely 'better technology' being the surest way to a 'better society' is a popular belief in Japan. In India the concept of HRD is said to have developed by Udai Pareek and T.V. Rao at IIM, Ahmedabad. [Rao, I.V. 1996, Pareek, 1997, Nayyar 2000].

Meaning of the term HRD has been interpreted differently by different authors. In its narrowest sense Human Resource Development has to do with the development of skill functions. But the other spectrum of the term, it has been referred to the processes that lead to the all round development of personnel in an organization so that they may assume a higher order of assignment and help towards organizational growth and development. HRD may also be defined as a process of developing skills, habits, knowledge and attitude for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of employees (human resource) in their present positions as well as preparing them for higher or different positions. As a planned process, HRD helps the members of an organization to develop their general capabilities as individuals and discover and exploit their inner potential for their own development as well as towards the organizational development. In the same vein, HRD may be regarded as an approach to the systematic expansion of work-related abilities with a focus on the attainment of both organizational and personal goals.[Raom 1996, Jayagopal, 1997, Nayyar, 2000].

HRD is a continuous process. However, the nature of efforts and investments may vary from one organization to other – depending upon its size nature of activities, type of manpower needs and so on. Basic elements of HRD too may be adopted differently by different organizations.

Some of the key elements or instruments of HRD as agreed by different authors may include : training and development, appraisal system, role analysis, job enrichment, openness and better communication, teamwork, organizational development, quality work life risk taking, pro-active orientation and so on. [Rao, 1997, Khandewal, A. 1988]. Making HRD interventions in a DE organization would not only help it to tackle many of its problems but would also help it towards meeting the current and future challenges.

5.1 Appraisal System

Starting with the basic element of HRD – an appraisal system – a DE organization need to have a mechanism towards a systematic and periodic critical analysis and evaluation of employee's abilities strengths, weaknesses and potentials. An Appraisal System is generally used under the titles of performance appraisal and potential appraisal. As a HRD philosophy, an appraisal system is used as an instrument for improving the individual performance and bringing about a general work culture. Most of the organizations including DE organizations are having an under utilized wealth of potential human asset. The first step, therefore, is to make an inventory of human asset and its potentials. Whether it is an Open University or a DE institute within a conventional university there exists a team of experiences academicians alongwith the administrative staff having varied experience. It is for those in top positions to make use of an appropriate appraisal system and utilize their potential to the maximum.

5.2 Training and Development

The term training and development hardly needs any explanation. Here it stands for systematic arrangement (formal and informal) towards developing and sharpening of skills, habits and knowledge among the academic and administrative staff in order to prepare them in a better way in their present positions as well as preparing them for higher positions. In the wake of IT revolution, the top most priority for a DE institution is to train the staff to make them computer savvy so that the task of printing lessons and their, vetting may be facilitated, to make the delivery system an efficient one, to solve the student problems – online or to answer their queries through e-mail. Besides training in computers, there are other significant areas where some effective training is required, such as – training in the area of conversion of print matter from traditional lesson mode to self-learning mode (SLM), training in communication skills, behavioural aspects, administrative and relevant technical areas.

5.3 Organizational Development

Overall organizational health with a progressive culture is also included in the list of essential HRD elements. In fact improvement and advancement of human resources requires a definite development orientation. The ultimate objective of Organizational development (OD) approach is to usher in an area of healthy work culture, what is generally coined as OCTAPAC culture. It stands for openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, pro-action, autonomy and collaboration. From the point of view of a Distance Education institution these elements need a little elaboration here:

5.4 Openness

Openness of policies and strategies towards better DE management; better inter-personal communication and transparency rather than secretive spacing working and over centralization.

Confrontations

With a positive outlook, particularly the confrontation with the authorities space in the traditional universities or those who fail to understand the needs and requirements of DE.

5.5 Trust

Particularly on the part of the Chair/top managers amongst colleagues and staff.

5.6 Pro-action

Initiatives towards new courses through DE mode, innovativeness and openness to new ideas.

5.7 Autonomy

As far as possible there is always a need for autonomy for a DE institute, also autonomy (within limits) to the individual departments/units working within a DE institute.

5.8 Collaboration

Wherever possible the DE institute should go for collaboration with expert agencies such as IGNOU (STRIDE), DEC, any other training organization, and may be with other DE institutions. Collaborative work must be encouraged including that of internal collaboration and inter-departmental collaboration in case of a non-open university system.

Among the other HRD elements which a DE organization may adopt and utilize successfully are: Team work, Job enrichment and rotation.

5.9 Quality work-life.

No effort towards organizational development or effectiveness is possible without assertive and effective leadership. It is for the leadership to have a vision, a focus on long term objectives with a missionary zeal, to delegate the responsibilities, to motivate others so as to utilize the maximum potential of the available human resource, to create work culture and to create and lead a team of different faculties.

Conclusion

We stand at a turning point that has the potential to push DE to an equal footing with the conventional educational (higher) system. No challenges come without opportunities. We have a big opportunity to harness the maturity in the system of DE, to utilize the technological advancements brought about by the infotech revolution and the potential of expanding Indian and global markets to bring in new dimensions and advancements in DE. There is an unmistakable realization and emphatic acknowledgement not only in India but also abroad that if the 21st Century is going to be the Asian Century; then India will be playing a pivotal role in making that happen. In order to reap the harvest/encash the opportunity we need to change the working methods – from simple maintaining the status quo in DE organizations to a proactive approach towards OD and organizational effectiveness. It would therefore not be wise to leave the DE institutions in raw hands. An appropriate HRD strategy would go a long way to lift the DE institutions to a woerthy platform.

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OPINION OF DISTANCE LEARNERS REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS

Dr.Pity Kaul,

Abstract

In open and distance learning system, assignments form an important tool of two-way communication between distance learner and distance teacher and they are an essential component of continuous assessment. In Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Programme of IGNOU, learners are required to submit two tutor marked assignments for 4 credits course and .one tutor marked assignment for 2 credit course. Each assignment carries a 30% weightage and learners are required to obtain 50% marks as pass percentage in each assignment.

A descriptive survey was carried out to obtain feedback of learners of Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing programme regarding the assignments. A Questionnaire was administered to a randomly selected sample of 201 distance learners enrolled during 1994, 1995 and 1997. The major findings revealed that 72 percent learners had submitted the assignment response in time. The reasons for not submitting the assignment in time included; late receipt of assignments, lack of time, difficult to understand, lack of interest, late receipt of study material, work pressure at home and work-place. The Assignment questions were found to be challenging and of good quality in relation to the coverage and content, type and number of questions, time allotment, language and preparation of assignment response. The feedback of evaluated assignments helped the learners to understand the course content and prepare for the examination. However, the late receipt of evaluated assignments was a cause of concern. The findings revealed an urgent need for sending the assignment feedback to learners in time and for writing helpful and constructive tutor comments.

1.0 Introduction

Distance education is being looked upon, as a system of education which takes education 'to doorsteps of learners who are scattered on account of geographical distances or for other reasons cannot avail educational facilities themselves. Thus, the distance learning system is characterized by a spatial separation of learner and teacher. There is an indirect contact between the teacher and the learner as compared to the direct contact and continuous response system in the conventional system. The non-contiguous communication through assignment questions, responses by the learners and the subsequent comments by the distance teachers to these responses minimizes this spatial distance between the teacher and the learner.

Teaching students through distance mode demands to address different teaching challenges than teaching in a traditional classroom which may include (Tania 2000):

- Unfamiliar traditional classroom;
- Relatively heterogeneous group of students;
- Lack of face-to-face feedback during class (e.g. students' questions, comments, body language and facial expression);

- Total control over the distance delivery system, and
- No convenient opportunities to talk to students individually.

Delivery of distance education courses does not lend itself to the immediate instructor behaviour which is a routine in the face to face learning environment, for example non-verbal communication can be difficult in distance education, and the feed back is delayed which is based on different behaviour and attitudes regarding frequency of course access and perception for the need for formal feedback. Thus assignments must compensate for such limitations.

2.0 What are Assignments?

Assignments are the set of tasks that the learner needs to do at a periodic interval as planned by the educational institution while going through a course of study. Assignments are designed to provide learning support to learners, help them to maximize their potential, assess their progress, evaluate their performance and enable them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from the course material, tutor comments, explanations and suggestions. They provide guidance, counseling and suggestions to improve the study habits of the learners by writing helpful tutor comments. Therefore providing timely feedback is essential to remove the feeling of isolation of the learner and keep them actively involved in the study throughout the programme. In correcting the assignment, teachers can obtain the feedback information of the learners' study and the assistance required by the learner. Giving evaluated assignments back to the students, and providing feedback information helps the learner to .correct his/her mistakes, encourage, modulate, improve and perfect their enthusiasm and mechanism of self-study.

Some courses/programmes have only tutor-marked assignment and some have computer-marked assignments while some have both tutor-marked and computer-marked assignments. The tutor-marked assignments test the conventional skills of being able to discuss, apply or carry out practical tests while the computer-marked assignment tests the students' ability to recognize or recall certain facts, patterns and information or manipulate specific argument in the course material (IGNOU-ES364).

2.1 Assignments as a Tool of Evaluation

In the context of nursing education programme/s, the evaluation helps to examine and assess the effect of educational system on the nursing practice. Ongoing evaluation is particularly important for producing nursing graduates who can successfully practice in the rapidly changing healthcare system. It helps the teachers to plan remedial material and exercises on the basis of difficulties encountered by the learners.

Teachers in various training institutions use a variety of methods, formal or informal, to determine how much and how well their students are learning. In order to evaluate student learning formally, various means such as quizzes, tests, examinations, term papers, laboratory reports and home work are used. These formal evaluation techniques help the teachers/instructors to assess student achievement and assign grades. Also in classroom situation teachers use a variety of informal techniques which include posing questions, listening carefully to student questions and comments, monitoring body language and facial expressions. This informal often implicit evaluation permit the teachers to make adjustments in their teaching to slow down or review materials in response to questions, confusion and misunderstanding or to move on when student's performance exceeds expectation.

In distance learning system the assignments are used as a tool of continuous evaluation and learners are expected to complete a set of assignments as per credit requirement of a course to become eligible for appearing in term-end examination or semester examination. The assignments are evaluated by adopting different schemes of evaluation which may include numerical or letter grades/marks and rating scales. However, there is a criticism for both marking and grading system. The marking system is believed to have a high degree of subjectivity and the grading system too does not have uniformity across the various institutions. In some systems grading is done from A to D whereas in others grading is done from A to F and in some others, various numerical scales are used.

2.2 Assignments as Teaching Tool

The significant feature of assignments in distance education is not only to act as a feed back about the progress but is an important tool of two-way communication between the teacher and the learner with the help of writing tutor comments. The tutor comments are most academic in nature. Tutor responses and the assignment response in the form of specific comments, guidance and suggestions for improvement build the didactic dialogue that is essential in the process of learning because the dialogue tends to decrease the distance between the teacher and the learner. There are empirical evidences that interaction and collaborative involvement lessons the psychological distances for students at remote learning sites. Assignments enable the students to ensure that they have learnt what they are expected to learn from their course material.

In IGNOU written assignments form a crucial part of the interactive process and it is a tool of continuous evaluation. Significant resources are committed to it both by the providers and by the students. The purpose of assignments is not only to enhance the students' writing ability, but also to make them go through whole course material in order to find the relevant answers after understanding the course material. It is mandatory for the students to complete the assignments to progress from one year to another, as the submission of assignments is compulsory for the successful completion of the programme.

2.3 Assignments Post Basic B.Sc. Programme of IGNOU

Post-Basic B.Sc. Nursing was launched in July 1994 for the in-service diploma holder nurses. The programme consists of 84 credits (36 theory and 44 practical) having 10 theory and 8 practical courses. There are 18 assignments in the programmes. Learners are required to submit two tutor-marked assignments for 4 credits course and one assignment for 2 credit course. The learners submit the assignments to the programme incharge and the programme incharge then forwards them to the Academic Counsellors. The assignments are corrected by the Academic Counsellors who provide feedback in the form of numerical grades and with tutor comments for a two-way communication. The corrected and graded assignments are returned to the students to get the feedback. Assignments carry 30% weightage and are counted in the final grade. A student must obtain at least 50 percent of the total marks in assignments in each course to progress from one stage to another. If a student fails the assignments, but passes the Term End Examination in a particular course, the student is deemed to have failed in that particular course because it is compulsory that the student must pass assignments and the Term End Examination separately. The learner is expected to rewrite and resubmit the assignment if she/he is not able to pass the assignments.

2.4 Assessing the Impact of Assignments on Learning

Since the assignments involve huge resources in terms of manpower and finances from preparation delivery, dispatch and evaluation, it becomes important to assess the impact

of assignments on learning. In this context, a study has been conducted to assess the opinion of learners/programme incharge/academic counsellors regarding assignments. The present study being a part of a detailed study on effectiveness of distance education programme in nursing, attempted to assess opinion of the learners, counsellors, clinical supervisors and the programme incharge about the various aspects of assignments. This paper highlights the opinion of the learners regarding the assignments.

Studies have shown that the assignments have been found to be useful and helpful for learning and in preparing for the examination.

Tutor comments were helpful and learners were satisfied with the assignment grades (Chambers 1997). The assignment helped the learners to understand the course content and provided opportunity to discuss and participate in counseling sessions. (Fung and Carr, 2000). Learners were satisfied with the assignments (Kachroo 1999), assignments' grades were reported to be fair and tutor comments helped in learning (Kenneth, 1997), helpful in learning (Mishra, 1999), tutor comments were found to be helpful in further study of the material (Rickwood, 1992), quality of assignment was good and helped in the process of learning, (Rathore 1993), helpful in preparing ffor examination (Srivastava, 1995), tutor comments were useful to some extent for their studies, (Sahoo 1985, Muley 1986 and Biswal 1979), promptness and feedback helped the learners in learning (Thompson and Castro 1986).

3.0 Methodology

The learners enrolled for Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Programme during 1994, 1995 and 1997 in various regional centers across the country, all the counselors and Programme Incharge formed the population of study. The sample comprised 548 learners selected by random sampling, 136 counselors selected by purposive sampling and 17 programme incharges selected by total enumeration sampling. Structured questionnaires and rating scales were developed and administered to sample subjects by post/person. Responses were received from 201 learners, 85 counsellors and 13 programme incharges.

4.0 Results and Discusson

4.1 Receipt of Assignment

In distance learning system assignments are dispatched to the learners along with the course material so that they can study and discuss the assignments during the counseling sessions. Majority of the learners (80.10%) had received the assignments. Only 40% had received the assignment before counseling, 13.40% received after counseling session, 13.90% after the date of submission, 15.40% before the term-end examination, 3.0% after the term-end examination, and a negligible number of 0.5% did not receive at al. those who did not receive the assignments tried to collect them personally or from their colleagues from the University (72.50%). They borrowed from colleagues (20%) and sent a written request to the headquarters (7.50%) (Fig. 1). It appears that although the majority of the learners had received the assignments but most of them did not receive them in time as per schedule. This area needs to be closely monitored and timely dispatch of the assignments needs to be ensured.

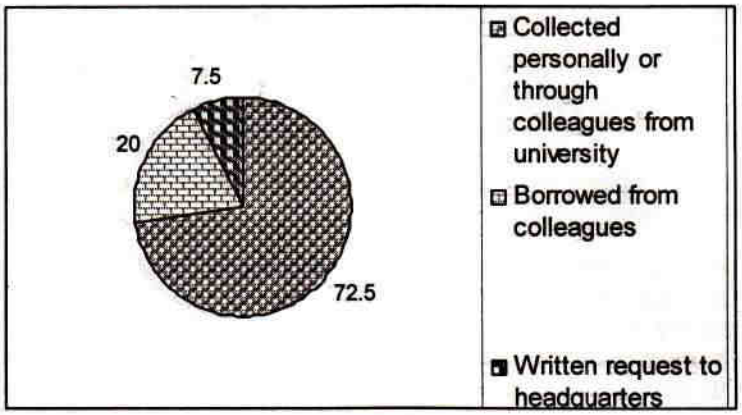

Figure 1: Sources of Receiving Assignments

4.2 Submission of Assignments

A majority of the learners (72.60%) had submitted the assignments followed by 27.36% who did not submit. The reason for nor submitting the assignments included late receipt of assignments as expressed by 56.36% of learners, lack of time 32.72%, difficult to understand 7.27%, lack of interest 3.64% and 18.20% reported late receipt of the course material, work pressure at home and workplace as the reason for not submitting the assignments. The high rate of submission of assignments shows that learners are positive about the submission of assignments and consider them as an important teaching-learning tool.

4.3 Study of Course Material Before Writing Assignment Response

Distance learners are expected to read through the course material before writing the assignments to understand the text and avoid direct copying of the course material. They were asked to study course material before writing assignments.

A majority of them (58.70%) had completely studied all the course material before writing the assignments, 22.9% studied some of the course material completely, 7% studied all partly, 4.5% studied some partly, a negligible number 0.5% glanced through the course material and 6.4% did not study the course material at all before writing the assignments. On the whole, learners studied some of the course material completely before writing the assignments (mean score 5) findings suggest that innovative, creative and thought provoking assignments need to be developed so that students are motivated to read and comprehend the course material to prevent the direct copying from book.

So far as the completion of the assignments is concerned a majority of the learners (81.60%) completed the assignments independently. Only 18.40% could not complete the assignment independently. Those who could not complete the assignments independently took the help of the seniors (37.80%). (35.10%) took the help of counsellors (13.50%) copied from the books, (8.10%) took the help from the supervisory staff, (2.70%) referred, to many books, and (2.70%) discussed with their peer groups. It appears that a few learners needed

additional support to complete the assignments, thus focusing the need for improving the design of the assignments.

4.4 Quality of the Assignments

A majority of the learners felt that the assignments are challenging (75.1%), routine (18.4%) and very helpful (7.5%) found them too difficult (Figure 2). Learners were further asked to rate the different aspects of the assignments of a five point scale.

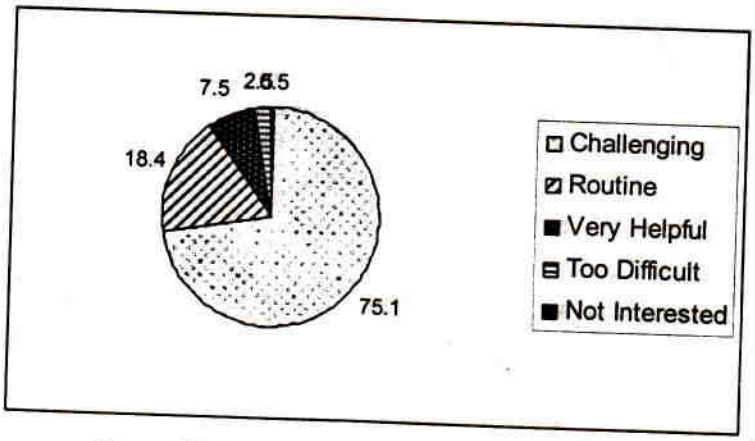

Figure 2: Quality of the Assignments

The assignment questions were rated excellent by (24.9%), very good (48.3%), good (16.4%), average (1%) and only (9.5%) of the respondents found them poor (mean score 3.78).

The language of the questions was found to be excellent (22.4%), very good (47.3%), good (18.9%) and only 1.5% rated them average. As many as 10% of the respondents found the assignments poor (mean score 3.71).

In relation to the proper allotment of time to each assignment only 17.91% respondents rated it excellent, 33.8% very good, 26.4% good, 11.9% average and 10% rated it poor (mean score 3.37).

So far as the instructions for the assignments are concerned, only 24.87% of the respondents rated it excellent. 37.8% very good, 21.9% good and only 4.5% rated it average. As many as 10.9% of the respondents rated it poor (mean score 3.61). With reference to the easy preparation of the responses only 16.4% of the respondents rated it as excellent, 31.8% very good, 30.8% good, 9% average and 11.9% of the respondents rated it poor (mean score 3.62).

In the area of coverage of the whole lesson, 24.4% respondents rated it excellent, 35.8% very good, 20.9% good, 8.5% average and 10.5% of the respondents found it poor (mean score 3.55). With regard to the rating in the area of preparation for examination, 24.9% of the respondents rated it excellent, 40.3% very good, 17.9% good, 7.5% average and 9.5% rated it poor (mean score 3.64).

It is evident that the quality of the assignments in relation to questions, language, instructions, coverage and preparation for examination were found to be very good and effective compared to the time allotment and easy preparation of responses for the assignments. A similar picture was depicted by the composite mean score of 3.56. However, there is a further scope for improvement in preparing, dispatch, timely evaluation and feedback of assignments.

4.5 Return of Evaluated Assignment Responses

The turnaround time of evaluated assignment is very crucial for the distance learners because the feedback to the learners in the form of teaching type tutor comments help the learners correct the mistakes and modulate learning. Data reveals that majority (51.74%) of learners received back the evaluated assignments after the Term End Examination, 37.8% before examination and 1.5% did not receive the assignments back at all. As many as 9% gave varied responses which included receipt of evaluated assignments after 3 - 4 months of submitting them in time and received back only a few evaluated assignment (Figure 3).

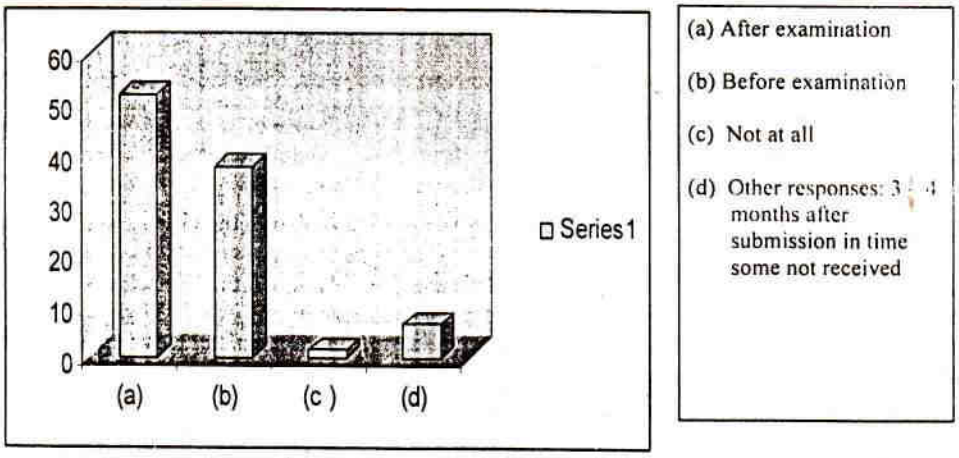

Figure 3: Receipt of Evaluated Assignments

The learners were asked to report about the action taken by them for not receiving the evaluated assignments. In order to get back the evaluated assignments a large number of the learners contacted the academic counselors/programme incharges (43.24%), study center (41.08%), regional centers (10.81%), IGNOU faculty (7.02%), registration and evaluation division (3.24%) and 32.97% of respondents did not do anything and waited till the result. It suggested the need for close monitoring; and developing an effective mechanism for sending back the evaluated assignments to learners so that they are able to get feedback in time.

4.6 Usefulness of Assignments

A vast majority of the respondents (89.10%) expressed that evaluated assignments are useful for studying the course material and helpful in preparing for the examination. Learners were further asked to rate the extent of usefulness on a three-point scale. Majority of the learners reported that the assignments are helpful in understanding the course material to a greater extent; (58.2%), to some extent and to a lesser extent, 1.5% helpful in preparing for examination to a greater extent (57.2%); to some extent (30.09%), and to a lesser extent (1.5%). (The mean score 3.63 and 3.62)) (Figure 4). It indicates that assignments are considered to be an important tool for teaching/learning and this implies that assignment system should be strengthened qualitatively.

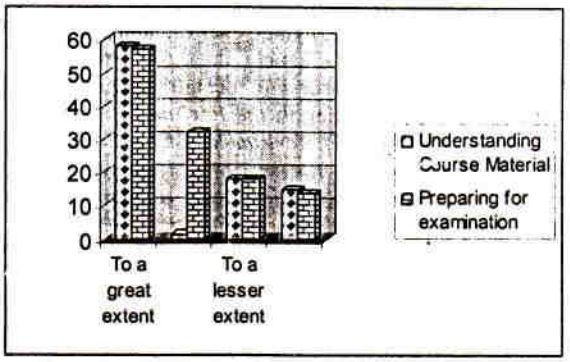

Figure 4: Usefulness of Assignments

4.7 Opinion About Tutor Comments

Academic Counsellors are expected to write the tutor comments on all the assignments to give feedback to the learners for improvement and justify grades.

Tutor comments were written on the assignments of only 29.9% of the learners and were found to be constructive (86.6%), and gave encouragement (83.33%), and new dimensions (66.66%). Only 6.66% mentioned that the tutor comments were negative. Although from the data it appears that the comments were viewed positively by the learners yet tutor comments need to be written on all the assignments to encourage effective learning and provide adequate feedback (Figure 5). The low response of writing tutor comments on assignments could be done due to the fact that during the initial years of launching the academic counsellors might not be well versed with the process of writing tutor comments. Therefore, it need to be strengthened.

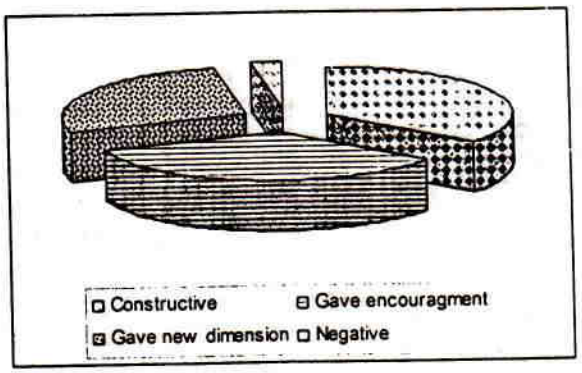

Figure 5: Opinion About Tutor Comments

4.7.1 Assignment Grades

In Post-Basic B.Sc. Nursing programme numerical grading is followed to grade the assignments and learners have to score 50% marks in each assignment as pass percentage. Grade in assignments were found to be fair by majority (90%) of the learners; lenient (7%); harsh (2.5%); and 1.5% found the assignments difficult to understand. Only a negligible number (0.5%) mentioned that grades were not received at all (Figure 6). It appears that the learners were satisfied regarding grading of the assignments.

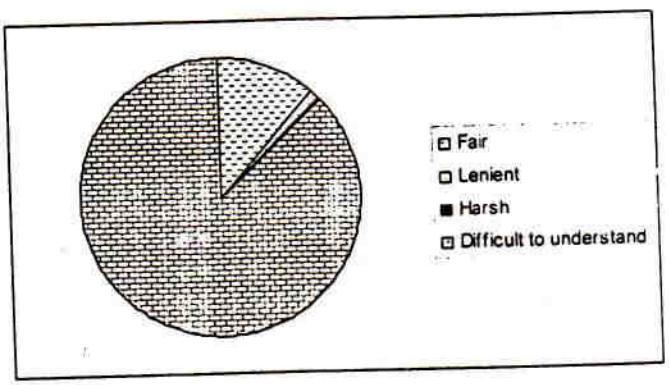

Figure 6: The Opinion of Learners about the Assignment Grades

Suggestions for Improvement

The suggestions given by the learners for improving the assignments included that the evaluated assignments should be sent back to the learner 4 - 5 months before the term-end examination and the submission dates of assignments should be after counseling sessions (43.78%) there should be timely checking (25%); discussion on grades and questions (25%); and more availability of books at study centers for reference to improve the assignment responses (25%). Tutor comments should be novel and clarify doubts (15%), answer key of short answer questions should be provided to the evaluators (12.5%) also, there should be emphasis on designing more objective type and short answer type questions

(12.5%); change in the pattern of assignments every year (3%); proper checking and grading of objective type questions (2.5%); improving and revising course material (5.5%); giving more time for writing the assignments (1.5%); and a negligible number (0.5%) of the respondents mentioned that assignments should be self-explanatory. Other suggestion given by the respondents included that assignment marks and examination grades should be combined and tutors' comments should be positive and constructive. Tutors should be impartial and honest in grading and should be made responsible for the performance of the learners.

The above suggestions reflect that learners need to receive constructive and positive comments on assignment responses, short turn around time and additional reference material. The learners felt the need for improving the assignments in terms of the pattern of development, preparation, dispatch, timely evaluation, scheduling and guiding the students for improving the assignment responses.

5.0 Conclusion

Assignments were found to be challenging, thought provoking and effective. They helped the learners to understand the text and prepare for the examination. Tutor comments were positive and constructive. However, they were written only on a few assignments. The respondents expressed the need for writing tutor comments on all the assignments to promote a two-way communication between tutor and leamer, get feedback, and enhance learning.

There was a great delay in the receipt of the evaluated assignments. The return of the evaluated assignment responses needs to be prompt and individual feedback given to the learners. Some of the students stated that they had to wait for many months to receive back the evaluated assignments and/or receive grade cards. Non-receipt of assignments caused delay in preparing and submitting the assignments and prepare for the term-end examination. Learners desired more individualized feedback on their assessment and more interesting study guides and readings for reference.

It suggests that learners should receive the evaluated assignments in time so that they can prepare for the examination. The comments need to be written on all the assignments and concrete suggestions need to be given to learners so that they know what exactly needs to be done to correct mistakes and improve the responses.

The main suggestions given by learners for improving the assignments included timely dispatch and grading of assignments, change in pattern of assignments every year, and more objective and short answer questions, more time for writing and submitting assignments after counselling sessions, writing tutor comments and timely feedback.

Programme incharge and counsellors felt the need for improving the type and number of questions, preparing creative and innovative assignments and increasing the number of assignments per course.

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDY HABITS AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF SECONDARY TEACHER TRAINEES IN DISTANCE AND FACE-TO-FACE MODE OF EDUCATION

Mamta Garg & Prof. Sudesh Gakhar

Abstract

The present investigation was undertaken to analyze and compare the study habits and achievement motivation of the secondary teacher trainees (B.Ed. trainees) in distance and face-to-face mode of education. A sample of 200 Distance learners enrolled in B.Ed. course in the Department of Correspondence Studies and 200 Face-to-Face learners from three colleges of Education affiliated to the Panjab University were taken up for the purpose. The Study Habits and Achievement Motivation of the participants were assessed by employing Study Habits Inventory by Palsane and Sharma (1990) and Deo Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale (1985) respectively. The study indicated that the distance trainees in two areas of study habits i.e. budgeting time and learning motivation were significantly better than their counterparts in face-to-face mode. Also they scored significantly higher in four factors of achievement motivation i.e. - academic motivation, attitude towards education, work methods and interpersonal relationships than secondary teacher trainees in face-to-face mode whereas in the latter group it was found that there is a significantly higher need for achievement than the former group.

1.0 Introduction

With the expansion of education in the post-independence period, the requirement of more trained teachers was felt. So both the state and the private management started a large number of teachers' education institutes. In spite of a large number of formal teacher training institutes, all the teachers catering to the need of expanding education in India are not technically trained. Inadequate supply of trained teachers has motivated our educationists to work out alternatives to face-to-face learning in teacher education. In this connection, the Government of India through University Grant Commission appointed a search committee. On the recommendations of the committee and some other expert committees, secondary teacher education programme through distance mode was introduced (Reddy and Jyothi, 2001). The face-to-face mode refers to instructional interactions in which learners and the teacher transact a curriculum in a face-to-face situation. The distance mode, as the term indicates, pertains to all kinds of interactions between the teacher and the learners in which they are not in direct contact with one another. Distance Education constitutes an important dimension in university extension movement to meet the continuation of education requirements. The recipients are treated at par with the regular students to entitle themselves as degree holders. Distance Education provides a solution for generating trained human resources and has taken the education even to the unreachable.

Distance Education in the teacher training area is used for different purposes with a variety of programmes in different countries (Ozer, 1991, p. 73). Today in many countries, Distance Education programmes are used in pre-service and in-service trainings of teachers. Distance Education is completely implemented as long-term programmes to prepare individuals for the teaching profession.

The entrants of the correspondence secondary teacher education course (B.Ed.) are either untrained professionally or they have gone through teacher training for elementary/primary schools. They constitute a heterogeneous group in terms of age, marital status, professional qualification and teaching experience etc. whereas their counterparts i.e. the entrants of face-to-face secondary teacher education programme (B.Ed.) make a relatively homogeneous group in these characteristics as they almost fall in same age group, mostly unmarried, most of them do not have any professional qualification and teaching experience.

Distance Education students are typically older than the traditional students with the average age being more than 25 years, and they are more likely to be females rather than males. They tend to have a family and a job responsibility that prohibits them from attending traditional classes—being employed full-time while attending college on a part-time basis; and, they are often at times disadvantaged by geographic remoteness, generally living in rural areas (Ashby 2002, Halsne & Gatta 2002; Smith 2001; Gilliard 1997; Guernsey 1998). Further, they are more likely to be married and have higher incomes (Ashby, 2002). Gilliard (1997) also notes that Distance Education students are mature, have a high level of motivation, and do not require instructors to constantly remind them to meet deadlines. They are disciplined, they establish regular study schedules, and they set aside time on a regular basis in order to successfully accomplish their tasks. Qureshi, Morton, and Antosz (2002) described a typical student enrolled in Distance Education courses as a female between the ages of 18 and 40 who did not possess the time to attend on-campus classes due to family and work commitments. Dutton *et al* (2002) also described online students as older and more greatly committed to responsibilities such as work and children.

Generally, there is the belief that the adult distance learners are achievement oriented, highly motivated, and relatively independent with special needs for flexible schedules and instruction appropriate for their developmental level (Benshoff and Lewis, 1992; Cross, 1980).

Motivation in education is the compulsion that keeps a person within a learning situation and encourages learning (Rogers, 1989). Given that learners who participate in Distance Education programmes have a variety of educational needs (MacBrayne, 1995; Porter, 1997; Willis, 1993) there may be a variety of motivators ranging from formal pressures (e.g., job and family) to the personal qualities (e.g., interests and idiosyncracies). Many adults who are seeking workforce training or degree completion have embraced distance learning as a means of achieving their educational goals. When learners enroll in a distance-learning course, they assume a high degree of individual responsibility.

The literature captures the general context of Distance Education and shows that distance learners often differ from the traditional students with respect to demographics, experience, and motivation. The achievement motivation and study habits of the secondary teacher trainees in Distance Education which distinguish them from the trainees in face-to-face education have been examined in the present investigation. In this study the investigator

intended to determine the differences in the two major characteristics of a learner i.e. the study habits and the achievement motivation that affect learning to a large extent.

Study habits refer to the activities carried out by a learner during the learning process for the purpose of improving learning (Mayer, 1987). The distance trainees who have to carry on responsibility of a job and a family along with the learning may have different schedules and plans of the study, concentration etc. than the face-to-face teacher trainees who do not have such responsibilities. So the two groups may differ in their study habits.

Achievement motivation is considered to be a psychological need that forces the individual to do the best for achieving the goals set for oneself and get satisfaction. The distance teacher trainees who have joined the course in spite of their large responsibility and busy schedule may have a stronger drive to succeed as they know they have less time to devote to the studies as compared to face-to-face trainees who do not have such a binding.

To understand the study habits and the motivational differences between the secondary teacher trainees in distance and traditional classes is important, as the types of learning goals and course assignments designed by an instructor need to match the characteristics of the students. The present investigation was thus taken up to determine the differences in the two major characteristics of the learner i.e. Study Habits and Achievement Motivation which affect the learning to a large extent.

1.1 Objectives

1. To examine and compare the study habits of secondary teacher trainees in Distance Education and face-to-face mode.
2. To study and compare achievement motivation of secondary teacher trainees in Distance Education and face-to-face mode.

1.2 Method

The study was, by and large, an exploratory study for which descriptive survey method had been used. It involved descriptions and comparisons of face-to-face (regular) and distance teacher trainees.

Subjects

The total sample constituted 400 secondary teacher trainees i.e. 200 from face-to-face (regular B.Ed) and 200 from Distance Education programme (correspondence course). The sample was selected from Dev Samaj College of Education for Women, Chandigarh, Govt. College of Education, Chandigarh and DAV College of Education, Abohar. As far as the sample of face-to-face learners was concerned, it was limited to those colleges from where the units of distance learners were selected.

Instrumentations

To assess the Study Habits and Achievement Motivation of the participants, the Study Habit Inventory by M.N. Palsane and S.Sharma (1990) and Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation (n-Ach) Scale by Pratibha Deo and Asha Mohan (1985) has been administered.

Statistical Techniques

To analyze the data and observe the difference between the secondary teacher trainees of Distance Education and the face-to-face mode, with respect to the study habits and achievement motivation, the t-ratio was employed.

1.3 Findings

To examine the study habits of the secondary teacher trainees, they were asked to respond on Study Habit Inventory constructed by Palsane & Sharma (1990). The raw score obtained by the trainees were compared with the norm tables and on the basis of that the following habits were noted in the trainees:

Table 1: Showing the Number of the Secondary Teacher Trainees in B.Ed. Course in Distance and Face-to-Face Mode having different types of Study Habits

Categories of Study Habits	Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance Education	Secondary Teacher Trainees in face-to-face education
Good study habits	121 (60.5%)	95 (47.5%)
Average study habits	42 (21%)	40 (20%)
Unsatisfactory study habits	37 (18.5%)	65 (32.5%)

Table 1 depicts that most of the trainees have good study habits in both the modes of education. A large number (47.5%) of the secondary teacher trainees in face-to-face mode have good study habits but the number of trainees who have unsatisfactory study habits is also large (32.5%).

Then the trainees in distance & face-to-face education were compared for each of the dimension of the study habits. The significance of variance in mean of raw scores obtained in each dimension of study habits by the trainees of two groups were found out with the help of t-test, summarized in table 2:

Table 2: Comparisons in Different Areas of Study Habits of Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance and Face-to-Face education

	Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance Education		Secondary Teacher Trainees in Face-to-Face education		$S.E_D$	t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Budgeting Time	8.084	1.22	7.272	1.75	.151	5.38**
Physical conditions	7.891	1.53	8.079	1.5	.152	1.24
Reading ability	11.23	1.79	11.037	2.38	.210	.92
Notes Taking	3.832	1.36	3.956	1.6	.148	.838
Learning Motivation	10.151	1.39	9.123	1.71	.156	6.59**
Memory	5.45	1.06	5.284	1.29	.118	1.44
Taking Examination	13.34	2.14	13.465	2.29	.222	.56
Health	4.185	0.873	4.193	1.05	.096	.083
Overall Study Habits	64.1	6.28	61.74	8.19	.729	3.24**

It is clear from the Table 2 that the mean score in study habits of the distance teacher trainees (Mean= 64.1) is more than their counterparts in face-to-face mode (Mean = 61.74) as the t-value came out to be 2.32 that is larger than the critical value at .05 level of significance. So it may be said that there existed a significant difference in the study habits of the secondary teacher trainees in Distance Education and face-to-face mode. The mean

values reveal that the study habits of the distance teacher trainees are better than their counterparts in the face-to-face mode.

As far as the different areas of the study habits are concerned, there existed a significant difference in just two areas that is, **Budgeting time** (t- value = 5.98, that is higher than the critical value 2.58 at .01 level of significance) and **Learning Motivation** (t- value =5.039, that is higher than critical value the 2.58 at .01 level of significance). Distance learners are better in both of these areas than the learners in the face-to-face mode.

Next, to assess the achievement motivation, Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation (n-Ach) Scale by Pratibha Deo and Asha Mohan (1985) was administered on the selected sample of the two groups. The raw scores of the trainees were tabulated and interpreted as per the percentile norm table of the manual (p.11). On the basis of the percentile rank, three categories were made: the first category is **'High Achievement Motivation'** with the percentile rank more than 60, second group of percentile ranks 40-60 were categorized as **'Average Achievement Motivation'** and the third with a percentile rank 39 or less was put **in 'Low Achievement Motivation'.** The trainees were put in these three categories on the basis of their percentile rank corresponding to their raw score. The results are tabulated in table 3:

Table 3: Number of Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance and Face-to-Face mode of Education w.r.t. their Achievement Motivation

	Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance Education	Secondary Teacher Trainees in Face-to-Face Education
High Achievement Motivation	102 (51%)	81 (40.5%)
Average Achievement Motivation	45 (22.5%)	67 (33.5%)
Below Average Achievement Motivation	53 (26.5%)	52 (26%)

The data in Table 3 indicates that trainees have a high achievement motivation irrespective of their mode of education. The significance of differences in the Achievement Motivation of trainees of the two groups was found out with the help of t-test, summarized in table 4

Table 4 elucidates that for some factors of Achievement Motivation like Academic Motivation, Attitude towards Education, Work Methods and Interpersonal Relationships, the secondary teacher trainees in Distance Education scored higher than their counterparts in face-to-face mode. The calculated t-value for mean scores of the two groups in these factors 1,8,9,11 is 2.62, 4.93, 5.16 and 3.4 respectively are higher than the critical value (tabulated value at .01 (2.58) levels of significance. Thus the **distance trainees** were found to **have significantly higher academic motivation** than their counterparts in face-to-face education. Also their **'Attitude towards Education'**, their **Work Methods** and their **Interpersonal Relationships** were noted to be significantly better than those of the face-to-face trainees. Whereas the trainees in the face-to-face education have significantly higher **'Need for Achievement'** than distance trainees, also the former group has significantly more achievement motivation for **Sports** than the latter group.

Table 4: Comparison of the Different Factors of Achievement Motivation of Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance Education and Face-to-Face

Factors of Achievement Motivation	Secondary Teacher Trainees in Distance Education		Secondary Teacher Trainees in Face-to-Face education		$S.E_D$	t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1. Academic motivation	13.0	2.41	12.34	2.62	.252	2.62**
2. Need for Achievement	11.96	3.0	12.9	2.81	.291	3.23**
3. Academic Challenge	11.83	2.98	12.33	2.25	.264	1.89
4. Achievement Anxiety	1.91	1.07	2.05	.99	.102	1.36
5. Importance of Grades	6.64	1.59	6.37	1.79	.169	1.51
6. Meaningfulness of Task	12.06	2.92	11.59	3.07	.299	1.57
7. Relevance of College for future goals	5.23	1.57	5.42	1.05	.133	1.45
8. Attitude towards Education	12.19	2.27	11.11	2.11	.219	4.93**
9. Work Methods	17.02	2.95	15.25	3.86	.343	5.16**
10. Attitude Towards Teachers	10.11	2.16	10.19	1.55	.187	.42
11. Interpersonal Relations	12.47	3.01	11.62	1.87	.250	3.4**
12. Individual Concerns	6.23	1.89	6.5	1.64	.177	1.52
13. General Interest	11.77	2.77	11.92	2.99	.288	.521
14. Dramatics	5.77	1.23	5.89	1.68	.147	.816
15. Sports	13.89	3.67	14.79	3.83	.375	2.14*
Overall Achievement Motivation	**151.89**	6.13	**151.7**	5.34	.575	.33

* significant at .05 level of significance

** significant at .01 level of significance

As the calculated t-value for overall achievement motivation of the secondary teacher trainees in the distance and the face-to-face education is less than the critical value (.33< 1.96 at .05 level of significance), thus there exists no significant difference in overall Achievement Motivation of the secondary teacher trainees in the distance and the face-to-face education.

1.4 Discussion

An analysis of the data indicates that the study habits of the secondary teacher trainees in Distance Education are better than their counterparts in the face-to-face mode. The difference in the overall study habits in distance teacher trainees and their counterparts in the face-to-face education may be due to the reason that distance trainees have reassumed the studies after an interval, therefore, they may be cautious and more careful about their studies and do not want to lag behind. The trainees in the face-to-face education may have the attitude that they have a full year for their studies and their faculty is always available to them for guiding them in their studies and they may be a little less careful as compared to the distance trainees.

The budgeting of time is very crucial for the distance teacher trainees as they have to manage their own studies along with other responsibilities whether at home or workplace (i.e. schools). Their learning motivation is comparatively higher, may be due to the reason that

being teachers they intend to improve themselves by learning different aspects of teaching during the course and get success in the course.

Morgan *et al*, 1980; Harper & Kemper, 1986; Richardson, 1999; Kumar, 2002; and Thang, 2005 also found that distance learners have comparatively good study habits and have good time management. Gillard (1997) opined that distance learners are highly motivated, regular, mature, disciplined and have a good study schedule.

No significant difference was found in the overall achievement motivation of the secondary teacher trainees in distance and face-to-face mode. This may be due to the fact that the former group pursues the B.Ed. course for stability in job or for promotion whereas the latter join the course to get in the job. So the B.Ed. course is psychological as well as a social need for both the groups in order to get some satisfaction in career. The high academic motivation and the attitude towards education of the distance teacher trainees may be understood in the light of the fact that they have enrolled themselves in the secondary teacher training programme inspite of their home and job responsibilities. As they are mature and have a richer experience of life, this may be the reason for their better work methods and their interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the distance trainees come in contact with the faculty and the peers for a short duration i.e., during the Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs), which encourage them to establish good relations with others so that they may get the required information from each other after the PCPs. The trainees in face-to-face education have a higher need of achievement as they still have to get into a job. Their interest in sports may be due to the fact that they are young and also they have a hectic schedule in their colleges. The sports activities may provide them relaxation and also the competitive spirit may give rise to high achievement motivation for sports.

Cross, 1980; Craton, 1989; Benshoff & Lewis, 1992, MacBrayan, 1995; Parrot, 1995; Gillard, 1997; Roblyer, 1999; Willis, 2002; and Stevens, 2006 found that distance learners are highly motivated. A mixed trend has been observed for the differences in achievement motivation of the distance and the face-to-face learners. A few researchers (Craton, 1989; Benshoff & Lewis, 1992, Parrot, 1995; Willis, 2002;) have found that the distance learners have a higher motivation than the face-to-face learners. But *Dutton et al* (2002) and Stevens (2006) found no significant difference in the motivation of the distance and the face-to-face learners, whereas Qureshi *et al* (2002) found that the distance learners are less motivated than the face-to-face learners.

1.5 Conclusion

Distance Education should be regarded as a vital option in continuous in-service training of the teachers. Distance Education should be effectively used by catering to the learning needs of the teacher trainees. The results of this research are significant as they would provide an understanding of the study habits and the motivation pattern of trainees in Distance Education and the areas in which they differ from their counterparts in face-to-face education. Such results would also help in providing a suitable instructional system to the distance learners that is tailored to their specific needs.

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EMERGING CHALLENGES IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME THROUGH THE DISTANCE MODE

Mrs. Supreet Kaur

Abstract

The organization of teacher education programmes have been institution-based but during the past few decades, distance mode has taken a prominent place. It is often argued that open learning and distance education are likely to prove as effective as institution-based training provided the programme is conducted with due rigour and multi mode approach. The provision of self learning materials followed by frequent contact programmes at the accredited institutions and periodic teleconferencing shall go a long way in enhancing the quality of any professional programme.

1.0 Introduction

Major strides have been made in teacher education since independence. These have altered it from being a mere training component recognized as 'relevant' for school teachers, to becoming a significant and essential aspect of the education system with the stature of an independent area of specialization. This transformation was facilitated by appropriate conditions and context after independence. The advent of democracy in India resulted in new hopes, aspirations and demands on education, and in highlighting the shortfalls and inadequacies in the existing educational system in relation to the seemingly insurmountable targets and ideals to be pursued. Being at best a semi-literate nation, the ravages of prolonged colonial rule, nearly a century of struggle for freedom and World War II, left India with a weak political structure and a debilitated economy. In such a situation, education came to be seen as a potent force that could lend effective support to the process of social reconstruction.

In India, there are mainly three problems of teacher education which threaten the attainment of education targets. Firstly, there is a shortage of teachers, while school enrollments generally grew in the 1990's, teacher numbers only just kept pace with them. With all the other pressures on education budgets, it seems unlikely that colleges for teachers can be expanded at the rate necessary to meet these demands. The scenario of teacher shortages continues to dominate the educational landscape. Secondly, even when there are enough teachers too many of them are untrained or under-trained and the quality of training is often itself inadequate. About half of the teachers in the developing countries are unqualified in terms of their own country's formal standards for teacher's education. Thirdly, in many developing countries, there is a desire not just to raise the quality of teaching but also to create new goals to meet new demands of education for democracy, peace and social cohesion, increased accountability for achieving learning targets, skilled in critical thinking and preparation of learners who are competent for knowledge – based economies and are capable in the use of information technology. In the developing countries, society expects the teachers to change their approach towards imparting knowledge as education is itself is being reformed within the content of social change. And these changes in the long run are

likely to affect both the pre-service education of teachers and the programmes of continuing professional development.

All this creates new challenges for teacher education and the need to find ways of expanding access to learning opportunities at affordable cost. Teacher education is an integral component of the educational system. It is intimately connected with the society and is conditioned by the ethos, culture and character of a nation. The constitutional goals, the directive principles of state policy, the socio economic problems and the growth of knowledge, the emerging expectations and the changes operating in education, call for an appropriate response from a futuristic education system and provide the perspective within which teacher education programmes need to be viewed. Thus, in the present scenario the question of whether distance education can help with the teacher's demands or not has to be looked into.

2.0 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to explore the challenges emerging in teacher education programmes through the distance mode. An attempt has been made to visualize how distance education can overcome the shortage of unqualified teachers and identify those who need further professional education and training as they work.

3.0 Distance Education System and Study Skills

Distance education takes place when a teacher and student (s) are separated by physical distance and technology (i.e., voice, video, data and print), often in concert with face to face communication is used to bridge the instructional gap. These type of programmes can provide adults with a second chance at a college education, reach those disadvantaged limited by time, distance or physical disability and update the knowledge base. Research, comparing distance education to traditional face-to-face instruction, indicates that teaching and studying at a distance can be effective as traditional instruction, when method and technologies used are appropriate to the instructional tasks, there is student-to-student interaction and when there is timely teacher-to-student feedback (Moore & Thompson, 1990).

The typical challenges posed by distance education are countered by opportunities to:

- Reach a wider student audience;
- Meet the needs of students who are unable to attend on campus classes;
- Involve outside speakers who would otherwise be unavailable; and,
- Link students from different social, cultural, economic, and experiential backgrounds.

These days with the advancement of science and technology, a wide range of technological options are available to the teacher educator. They can be grouped into four major categories namely voice, video, print and web (Internet) options. Voice tools include passive or one – way technologies (tapes, radio etc.) and the interactive technologies (telephone, audio conferencing, etc.). Video tools, include still images such as slides, combined with audio conferencing. Print version in self learning format is the foundation element of distance education programmes and the basis from which all other delivery systems have evolved. Various print formats that could be used for distance learning are textbooks, study guides, workbooks, course syllabi and case studies. With the advancement and affordability of communication technology, web or internet-based learning have become a reality. Technology plays a key role in the delivery of distance education. However, the focus of the programme is on the instructional outcomes rather than on the technology of

delivery. In other words, the main thrust is on the needs of the learner, the requirements of the content and the constraints faced by the teachers, before selecting a delivery system. Typically, this systematic approach has resulted in a mix of media, each serving a specific purpose as indicated below:

- Print learning format provides much of the basic learning content in the form of learning materials (which are in self learning format), supplemented by suggested readings and other support materials in print.
- Personal Contact Programme (PCP) as the name suggests is a short periodical face-to-face contact with the distance students. Such programmes are arranged by the concerned institutions once or twice a year. The contact programme facilitates condensed classroom teaching to substantiate and reinforce the printed course material. It also helps the students to remove their academic doubts and queries. The personal contact programmes help to fill the void between the printed word and the students by acting as a bridge between the learner and the tutor.
- Computer conferencing (e.g. chat session, discussion forum, bulletin board) or electronic mail to send messages, assignment feedback, and other targeted communications. This helps to increase the interaction among students and between students and teachers.

Using this integrated approach the task is to carefully select among the technological options depending on students (infrastructual facilities available in their locality), subject requirements (field visits, case studies, etc.) and institutional commitments. The goal is to build a hybrid instructional media, meeting the needs of the learner that is instructionally effective and economically prudent.

The essence of it is that it enables students to learn without attending an institution. That has made it attractive for students who for practical, economic, social and geographical reasons cannot get to college. It also makes it particularly appropriate for audiences that are scattered, and audiences that cannot leave their jobs to attend full time courses. The worlds sixty million teachers are like that

4.0 Does Open and Distance Learning Work for Teachers?

To answer this question, we can look at three kinds of responses about student numbers, about outcomes in terms of examination results or learning gains, and about performance in the classroom.

The evidence of numbers enrolling on Courses is solid and reassuring. Many programmes of teacher education, in all continents, have succeeded in enrolling students in significant numbers. There are more than 300 universities in India out of which 106 universities are having Distance Education Institutes (DEIs) including 10 Open Universities (OUs) in the country at present. While a large number of institutes/universities were offering teacher education programmes through correspondence / distance mode prior to the establishment of National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) as a statutory body by the Government of India, at present there are only ii institutes/universities (roughly 10% of the total DEU's/OUs) offering teacher education programmes through distance education mode. The delivery of teacher education programmes in this context means how curriculum transaction could take place. The curriculum of teacher education programme involves practice teaching in the school, conduct of psychological experiments and of course the pedagogy part. The course materials are prepared in general by a course team and evaluated by experts in the field of teacher education and distance education in relation to the relevance of content style of presentation and language difficulty. Generally they are good

thick bound booklets and their cost is included in the course fee. The fact that both the teachers and the students of conventional universities use the study material of distance education programme to supplement their classroom teaching and learning speak for their quality.

As far as practice teaching goes, all the institutions insist on giving 40 lessons during the course (20 in each teaching subject). Lesson guidance is given both individually and in groups. The lessons are evaluated by teacher educators, principals of schools and core staff of DIEs. The students are given feedback both individually and in groups.

The Personal Contact Programme (PCP) are held in varying times depending upon the institutions either at the beginning or at the end or in the middle of the course. The duration of the PCP is usually a given time slot, which ranges from 6 days to a maximum of 15 days. The attendance is compulsory. These programmes are conducted at the study centers, contact centers or DEIs. The faculty members involved are the staff of the DEI's, visiting faculty or both. It is also seen that the support services provided include library with reference and lending facilities, study rooms, photocopying facilities, audio -visual aids. The counselling is given as per student's demand regarding the choice of papers, practice teaching and the use of library, examination confidence building etc.

Evaluation is a ongoing process with 25 to 30 percent weightage being given to assignments, oral and written tests, seminars and external examination.

Assignments are compulsory for all the students. The main purpose is to enhance student learning and assessment of their performance.

There is evidence, too, that students in courses for teachers get reasonable examination results. A review of the studies found that the pass rates were between 50 to 90 percent. It can be concluded that while the examination success cannot be equated with the teaching capacity, we can legitimately assume that a reasonable examination pass rate demonstrates that a programme was effective in teaching academic subjects.

It would be interesting to ask whether the students of trained teachers perform better than those untrained teachers but unfortunately we have limited evidence, and hardly any of it from open and distance learning.

4.1 Which parts of the curriculum is it suitable for?

In the present scenario, the key question arises whether there are parts of curriculum of teacher education for which open and distance learning is more or less appropriate. Mainly there are four elements of the teacher's curriculum i.e. general education, subject knowledge, pedagogy and practice teaching. It seems that distance education lends itself to the first element because there is a wide experience of using open and distance learning methods for the traditional curriculum, of secondary and tertiary education. In many developing countries like India, there are teachers or student-teachers with quite a limited background in education. Here, open and distance learning can be effectively used to raise the level of their general education which will ultimately improve the quality of the teaching force. Extending teachers' knowledge of the subjects they are to teach can be more demanding if it is asking both to acquire new subject knowledge and at the same time to think about how they are to present it in the classroom. Some aspects of pedagogy lend themselves fairly well to open and distance learning. Video examples of real life classroom teaching in a variety of contexts can give teachers a wider range of exemplary approaches than would be possible in conventional face to face learning. Thus many programmes appropriate elements of teaching

practice and here it is generally necessary to integrate what is done at a distance with arrangements for the supervision of classroom practice. The general conclusion is that there are aspects of teacher education where the distance elements of open and distance learning are particularly appropriate, while others demand a close contact with the teacher and contemporaries.

4.2 Why use distance education for teacher training?

The reasons are varied. It has been used to reach trainees in geographically challenging areas such as the riverain in Guyana, mountainous area in Nepal and small island states in the Caribbean and the Pacific. In some thickly populated countries such a China, India and Pakistan, distance programmes have played an essential role in providing teacher education on a huge scale.

In India, although the percentage of untrained teachers has been coming down, the backlog of untrained teachers is considerably high; in some cases, as high as 60 and 70 per cent. Table I indicates the percentage of untrained teachers in various states in India.

Using distance education for teacher training has various potential advantages. Large programmes have brought economies of scale. In contrast to college-based training, distance programmes can provide access to courses on a much larger scale and a wider geographical reach. It can overcome regional differences in access to teacher education. It provides a means of side stepping the slowness and dilution of the cascade approach. In continuing professional development, distance education can help avoid the cost of replacing a teacher who has gone to full-time education. It can open up access to teacher training opportunities for teachers with family responsibilities who are earning an income and need to remain within their communities.

Three general points need to be discussed:

First, distance education is of potential benefit to teachers because it can reach the scattered population and offer them education and training without having to leave their schools. It has great logistical advantages. This means that it offers the chance of accelerating the supply or the updating of teachers beyond what could be done through conventional means.

Secondly, good programmes of open and distance learning have benefited from its strengths and avoided its weaknesses. Some aspects of teacher education need to be done face-to-face, or need close interaction with a tutor or other students, others do not. Programmes that combine open and distance methods are likely to be better than those relying on a single approach.

Thirdly, and for that reason, the more successful programmes have been carefully integrated into the structure of teacher education as a whole. They have not been designed as second class alternatives to conventional education but as a part of complementary system using a variety of different approaches, each choosen for its appropriateness to the curriculum and the audience.

Table 1

Percentage of Untrained Teachers in Schools as on 30 September 1996

S.No.	States/Union/Territories	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
1.	Andhra Pradesh	3	8	4	3
2	Arunachal Pradesh	54	57	47	33
3	Assam	32	64	70	70
4	Bihar	17	10	8	15
5	Goa	4	3	5	23
6	Gujarat	7	5	1	1
7	Haryana	3	8	4	3
8	Himachal Pradesh	14	1	2	0
9	Jammu & Kashmir	39	47	33	21
10	Karnataka	0	0	0	0
11	Kerala	33	5	1	0
12	Madhya Pradesh	40	33	32	24
13	Maharashtra	6	5	4	10
14	Manipur	50	71	68	54
15	Meghalaya	55	63	64	12
16	Mizoram	22	26	53	100
17	Nagaland	78	71	70	75
18	Orissa	1	2	1	0
19	Punjab	1	3	1	7
20	Rajasthan	2	3	3	2
21	Sikkim	60	53	49	40
22	Tamil Nadu	0	0	1	2
23	Tripura	68	70	65	47
24	Uttar Pradesh	2	2	3	3
25	West Bengal	-	-	27	28
26	Aandaman & Nicobar Islands	5	3	3	1
27	Chandigarh	0	0	0	0
28	Daman & Diu	3	0	5	0
29	Delhi	0	0	0	0
30	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0
31	Pondicherry	5	5	2	0

Source: *Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, government of India*

5.0 Conclusion

In a broader perspective, the component of distance education in the recent decade has found a place in the traditional face-to-face mode in the form of multi channel mode, self-

learning materials and teleconferencing to bring rigour and professionalism in teacher-preparation. Hence, the distance mode may be viewed in a wider perspective and include both in pre-service and in-service teacher preparation, which can widen the horizon of teacher-preparation to cope with the demand of self-learning and lifelong education.

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PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A FUNCTION OF THEIR STAY IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

Ravi K Mahajan

Abstract

With distance education becoming an integral part of THE educational edifice worldwide, educationists and planners have been impelled to undertake research studies on the various dimensions of DE. This paper is an attempt to study the performance of the students in DE as a function of their stay in the instructional process in DE. The paper is divided into three parts, starting with a brief review on the issue of performance in part I. While in part II, scenario in IGNOU and DCSPU have been discussed, part III discusses the results. The paper calls for rethinking on the instructional process in DE to make it more effective.

I. Resource constraints and the demand for education particularly in the backdrop of expanding horizon of information, largely paved the way for the emergence of distance education (DE) worldwide. In India , beginning with a pilot project in the University of Delhi in 1962, by the turn of the century, DE has emerged as an integral part of the educational edifice of India . The growth and the popularity of DE, has impelled the educationists and planners to undertake research activities in the new system of education for enhancing its scope and improving its success. Exponents of DE are continuously pondering over the means to develop the system so as to provide a more satisfying experience to its clientele.

Ethereal gains of the system notwithstanding, in the overall scenario; it is the students' success in obtaining the course completion certificate, diploma or degree which is a measure of success of the institute or system. In the Indian scenario Chander, J, et al (1985), Mulay (1986), Mahajan (1987), Sujatha (1988), have pioneered empirical studies on the performance component in DE. However, not many studies have been reported on the performance analysis of the students in DE as a function of their stay in the instructional process of DE, and hence this modest attempt.

II The paper dwells on the performance of students in two distinct systems on non-contiguous learning – in open university and in the DEIs (distance education institutes in the traditional university). These two systems differ on very many counts, particularly on the 'duration of the stay of students in the instructional process'. For the purpose of the study, the 'duration of instructional process' is taken as the time period between the enrolment and the examinations' (Mahajan, 1987). It is during the instructional process that students can have interaction with teachers, seek guidance from them, consult study material and library, etc. Thus a conjecture that 'with lengthier duration of stay in the instructional process, students can ensure better chances of being successful in the examination', ought to prevail logically.

In the study, the system prevalent in Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in general, and the Department of Correspondence Studies, Panjab University (DCSPU), in particular has been focused. For the study, the DCSPU, which has an established credentials of teaching Postgraduate courses for over two decades, was

selected. The three courses therein selected at random for the study were English, History and Political Science, and the total population of the selected courses was studied for the session 2004-05.

II .(i) Transcending the initial experimental stage, IGNOU has come out with a structural-functional model in DE which is being reckoned worldwide. Usually students in IGNOU are enrolled about four months before the start of an academic session. Precisely to get into a course for which an academic session starts in January, the students are expected to apply by September of the preceding year. On the completion of the admission process, IGNOU provides study material to the students by December, thereby giving them enough time to study the same at their own "pace and place", the much eulogized component in DE.

When the formal academic session starts in January, students are given opportunities to supplement and complement their content enrichment by audio-video programmes as also by the counseling sessions. And before taking their term-end – examination, students are required to submit "Tutor-Marked Assignments"/ "Projects" for "internal assessment". The mechanism of internal assessment, besides giving them tangible credit with marks which are counted towards course completion, this exercise also helps to strengthen the component of two-way communication, besides giving opportunity to the students to have a first hand evaluation of their understanding about the subject and ponder about improvement therein.

A notable feature in the IGNOU's model is an equality of 'duration of the stay of students in the instructional process'.

Despite the nice backdrop, the performance as measured by successful completion of the course/programmes by the students in IGNOU is often questioned. In one of the recent studies, the success rate over the years has been put at alarming low (Murthy, 2005).

II.(ii) For traditional universities, the academic session usually starts in the month of July and the enrolment to the courses in DEIs also starts with that of the formal system. While the enrolment process for the students in the regular departments closes by the first week of August but the instructional process in the forms of classroom teaching starts almost concurrently.

In contrast, the admission dates to DEIs is usually extended by an array of late fee and special permissions. And practically the admission to DEIs for commoners remains open till December end, while the month of April is scheduled for the Examination. Thus in the DEIs, a variation of four to eight months in their stay in the instructional process is observed among the students.

II (ii-a). The final performance of the students' population in English, History and Political Science for the session 2004-05 was studied in dichotomy. The performance in examination was ascertained in terms of successful completion and non-completion. The data were collected on the bases of gender also.

II (ii-b). The analysis of the dichotomous data was subjected to "runs test" for "test for randomness" with an underline conjecture that "non-randomness" in the final result of performance is suggestive of trend. In an ideal case, students who seek early admission in the DCSPU are expected to have a longer stay in the instructional process and hence have better chances of being successful in the examination.

The following table (No. 1) gives the numeric values on the number of observations and the number of runs.

Table No. 1

	Male			Female		
Course	**Not Pass**	**Pass**	**Runs**	**Not Pass**	**Pass**	**Runs**
English I	136	24	38	194	110	129
English II	11	31	18	23	49	32
History I	210	56	80	70	12	17
History II	85	77	67	34	13	25
Pol Sc I	31	11	18	83	31	41
Pol Sc II	25	17	22	15	14	17

The following table (No.2) gives the computed values in various groups on Mean (Er), standard deviation (SDr) and |Z|

Table No. 2

	Male			Female		
Course	**Er**	**SDr**	**|Z|**	**Er**	**SDr**	**|Z|**
English I	41.8	3.195752	1.189079	141.3947	8.036691	1.542269
English II	17.2381	2.456637	0.31014	32.30556	3.655465	0.083589
History I	89.42105	5.40086	1.744362	21.4878	2.220172	2.021377*
History II	81.80247	6.328598	2.338981*	19.80851	2.698436	1.92389
Pol Sc I	17.2381	2.456637	0.31014	46.14035	4.199148	1.224142
Pol Sc II	21.2381	3.081583	0.24724	15.48276	2.640803	0.57454

Following the standard statistical testing procedure, the null hypotheses, viz., "the observations are random in pattern" in the above cases were not rejected in ten of the twelve comparisons at 5% level of significance (in Table No. 2, * indicates the cases where the hypothesis of randomness were rejected). It was only in the case of History that some evidence was found on a healthy relation of success with the duration of the stay in the instructional process.

The non rejection of the null-hypothesis in most of the cases suggests that students' stay in the instructional process did not influence students' performance in the examinations. In other-words, whether a student enrolls in the course in the month of August or December, his successful completion is not influenced by the same.

III. The study suggests that in IGNOU while all the students undertake instructional process of the same duration and intensity, the success rate remains as serious a cause of concern as in the case of DEIs where students undergo varied length and intensity of instructional process.

Arguments about not taking a holistic approach in discussing students' success in the light of their pervious academic performance, his attitude, intelligence, study habits, motivational aspects, cannot be undermined. But then the fact can not be ignored that over the decades, DE system has been worked on to develop support services for making instructions learner oriented and thus cater to the various shades of students. Nonetheless, result of the study, though constrained by the limited scope and restrictive time and space components, cast blemishes on the efforts made by the distance educators. The study calls for rethinking on the instructional process as it ought to bridge the gaps, motivate and guide the students for tangible gains.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS TRAINED THROUGH THE FORMAL AND DISTANCE MODES

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Abstract

The present study has been designed to examine and compare the various aspects of teaching effectiveness of government and private school teachers, trained through formal and distance mode. The sample consists of one hundred fifty (150) teachers (75 formal-trained and 75 distance-trained teachers) categorized as government teachers (37 formal trained and 37 distance trained) and private teachers (38 formal trained and 38 distance trained) working in twenty secondary schools in the two districts (South and Central) of Delhi. Teaching Effectiveness Observation Scale developed by the investigators themselves was used to get the data related to their classroom teaching skills. It contains five aspects viz., review of home assignment, introduction of the lesson, development of the lesson, ending of the lesson and classroom climate. Development of the lesson is further sub-divided into seven specific skills viz., explanation, communication, questioning, response management, reinforcement, use of chalkboard, and class management. The present study revealed that private school teachers were more effective in using the skills required in developing the lesson as compared to the government school teachers. Moreover, private school teachers were found to fare better in reviewing of home assignments, introduction of the lesson, ending of the lesson and classroom climate than the government school teachers.

1.0 Introduction

Teacher education has acquired recognition as an integral part of our education system. Need for it at all levels of education is no longer a matter of debate. During the past five decades, the role of the teacher has continually evolved, making it necessary for incumbents to be much more than mere pedagogues. With increased specialization within the educational system, the need for differentiation in teacher education has surfaced inorder to cater to the variety of professional needs of more specific groups.

Teachers themselves also need to be a lifelong learner; to able to articulate their teaching with the new paradigm of learning; be adaptive and flexible in dealing with a new brand of students comprising different age groups of diverse ethnicity, and with a wide range of prior knowledge and background; and be conversant with the new technologies which are developing rapidly at an ever increasing speed (Elliott & Morris, 2001; Pang, 2001; Tsui & Cheng, 2000). There are many activities that the teacher has to perform in the classroom and outside the classroom in order to provide the required learning experiences to the students.

The focus of the teacher should be on what we here call the pedagogical i.e. the complexity of rational, personal, moral, emotional aspects of teachers' everyday acting with children or young people they teach (Van Manen, 2002).

In teacher education, the systems of curriculum transaction have essentially been of two categories:

- **Formal (face to face) System**
- **Distance system**

The Formal System of Education refers to the instructional interactions in which teachers and learners transact a curriculum in a face-to-face situation.

The Distance System of Education pertains to all kinds of interactions between the teacher and the learners in which they are not in direct contact with one another and require a third channel or a medium for contact. These include the print, audio, video or any other mode.

The formal system is the oldest and the most widely accepted mode of teacher preparation in India. The distance mode emerged as an alternative to the formal system mainly because of the demographic problems of a large number of people desiring education and a shortage of trained teachers after independence. Perraton (1991), Kulundaiswamy (1993) observed that distance education is neither a supplement nor a mere alternative to the conventional system, but a new stage in the evolution of education which recognizes the fact that in many situations it is easier to transport knowledge to people than transport people to the place of knowledge.

For the development of teaching effectiveness of the teachers, a professional training in education has always been considered desirable to the level of being obligatory for all. The achievement of pedagogic goals of stimulation, presentation of new knowledge, management and classroom activities, use of audio-visual aids, art of questioning etc. accentuates the need for well trained teachers and, hence the teacher education programmes. The crux of teacher education programme is the manner in which it is implemented. The modes of curriculum transaction represent the channels adopted for providing learning experiences to trainees. Rao (1995) found positive relationship between teacher effectiveness, creativity and inter personal relationships. Singh (1993) found significant difference between male and female teachers in their adjustment. Krishnan and Usha (1995) concluded that gender and types of schools have an impact on teacher effectiveness.

This study has been undertaken to understand whether distance mode has the potential to meet the desired end of producing well-trained teachers or face-to-face mode of teacher preparation that can only serve the need of professional education of teachers. One of the means of arriving at an answer can be to compare the teachers prepared through the formal system of education with those trained through the distance system of education in order to get a clear picture of the two modes of teacher preparation in the Indian context.

To understand the scenario of teacher education in India, a need was felt to compare the teachers trained through both the systems of teacher preparation while on job. Hence, the investigators attempted to examine and compare the various aspects of teaching effectiveness of Government and Private school teachers trained through the formal and distance mode

Teaching effectiveness is defined as a teacher who has a clear concept of the subject matter; ability to organize learning materials, ability to communicate his knowledge to

the students successfully and to deal with classroom situations. An attitude is a tendency of an individual to favour or not to favour same type of object or a situation.

2.0 Objectives Of The Study

The study purports to meet the following objectives:

2.1 To compare the teaching effectiveness of teachers trained through the formal and distance mode.

2.2 To compare the teaching effectiveness of the government and private school teachers trained through the formal mode.

2.3 To compare the teaching effectiveness of the government and private school teachers trained through the distance mode.

2.4 To compare the teaching effectiveness of the government school teachers trained through the formal and distance mode.

2.5 To compare the teaching effectiveness of the private school teachers trained through the formal and distance mode.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Sample

The sample for the study consisted of one hundred fifty (150) teachers (75 formal-trained and 75 distance-trained teachers) working in twenty secondary schools in the two districts (South and Central) of Delhi. On the basis of the personal data sheet, information of teachers was categorized as government teachers (37 formal-trained and 37 distance-trained) and private teachers (38 formal-trained and 38 distance-trained) on the basis of type of school.

3.2 Variables involved

- **Dependent Variable:** Teaching Effectiveness of teachers
- **Independent Variables:**
  1. Mode of Training (Formal and Distance mode)
  2. Type of schools (Government and Private Schools)

3.3 Tools Used

- **Personal data sheet** was used for getting information specifying whether the teacher is trained through the formal or the distance mode and about the school category.
- Teaching Effectiveness Observation Scale (TEOS) developed by the investigators has sixty-four items distributed over five aspects, viz., review of home assignment, introduction of the lesson, development of the lesson, ending of the lesson, and classroom climate. Development of the lesson is further sub-divided into seven specific skills viz., explanation, communication, questioning, response management, reinforcement, use of chalkboard, and class management. In the TEOS, out of sixty-four items, 53 are in positive declaration forms and 11 of them are in negative form. Each statement was rated on a five-point scale i.e. 'very effectively' to 'least effectively'. For positive statements, the 'very effectively' responses to 'least effectively' responses were given scores from 5 to 1, for negative statements, the

scoring procedure was reversed with 'least effectively' responses being given a score of 5 and 'very effectively' response given a score of 1. Higher scores of the scale represent the higher effectiveness of classroom teaching.

4.0 Procedure Of The Study

In the beginning of the study, teachers were categorized with respect to their mode of training and the type of the school on the basis of personal data sheet. For making the classroom observations, the whole period was being observed by sitting at the back corner of the class. The frequencies against each item were marked in TEOS .At the end of the period; ratings were given against all the items on TEOS Scale.

5.0 Results And Discussions

5.1. Comparison of Teaching Effectiveness of Teachers Trained through Formal and Distance Mode

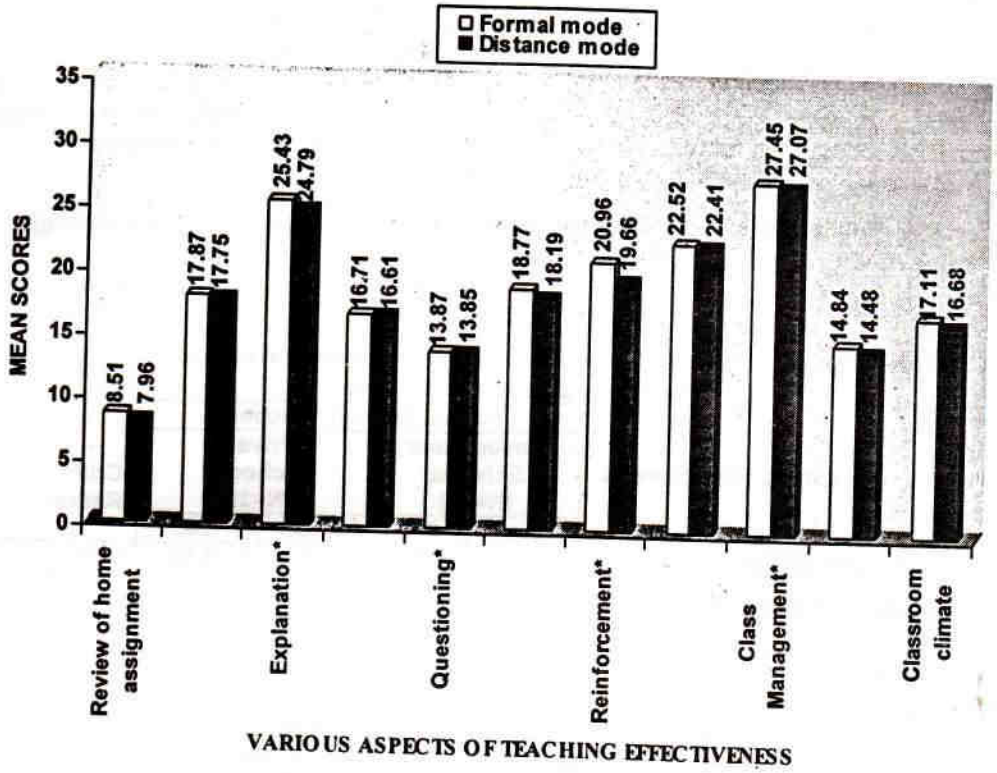
TABLE - 1

Means, SDs and CRs of Teaching Effectiveness of Teachers Trained through Formal and Distance Mode

S. No	Aspects of Teaching Effectiveness	Formal Trained Teachers N=75		Distance Trained Teachers N=75		Critical Ratios
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
1.	Review of home assignment	8.51	2.43	7.96	2.51	2.12*
2.	Introduction of the lesson	17.87	3.49	17.75	4.08	0.36(NS)
3.	Development of the lesson					
	a) Explanation	25.43	3.32	24.79	4.38	2.00*
	b) Communication	16.71	2.59	16.61	3.34	0.05(NS)
	c) Questioning	13.87	4.29	13.85	3.46	0.06(NS)
	d) Response Management	18.77	2.98	18.19	3.14	1.5(NS)
	e) Reinforcement	20.96	4.23	19.66	3.68	3.94**
	f) Use of chalkboard & Others	22.52	5.63	22.41	4.9	0.29(NS)
	g) Class Management	27.45	4.42	27.07	4.82	0.71(NS)
4.	Ending of the lesson	14.84	5.43	14.48	3.33	1.06(NS)
5.	Classroom climate	17.11	2.54	16.68	3.01	1.59(NS)

Note :
** indicates Significant at 0.01 level
* indicates Significant at 0.05 level
NS- Not Significant

Fig. 1: Teaching Effectiveness of Teachers Trained Through the Formal and Distance Mode



Note:

*** indicates skills required for 'Development of the lesson'**

Table 1 depicts that CR (2.12) between the mean scores of the formal and distance mode teachers with respect to the review of home assignments were found to be significant at 0.05 level. This gives rise to the interpretation that formal trained teachers were found to be better in reviewing the home assignment of the students in the classroom, which shows that they pay more emphasis on review of home assignment before starting the actual teaching.

An examination of Table 1 further shows that CRs between mean scores of the formal and distance mode teachers with respect to introduction of the lesson, ending the lesson, and classroom climate were found to be insignificant. Higher mean scores (as represented in the Bar diagram in Fig. 1) in the case of the formal-trained teachers indicate that these teachers are slightly better in classroom teaching.

CRs between mean scores of the formal and distance mode teachers with respect to communication, questioning, response management, use of chalkboard, and class management, were found to be insignificant. But, CRs for explanation (2.00), and reinforcement skill (3.94) were significant at 0.05 and 0.01 respectively. However, in the context of mean scores, it can be seen from the table that the teachers trained through the formal mode performed slightly better in their skills required for developing a lesson than the teachers trained through the distance mode. The formal training that one gets while undergoing B.Ed course perhaps may contribute enhanced teaching effectiveness in the schools. These mean scores have been presented in the form of a Bar diagram in Fig.1

5. 2 Teaching Effectiveness of Government and Private School Teachers Trained through Formal Mode

TABLE – 2

Means, SDs and CRs of Teaching Effectiveness of Government and Private School Teachers Trained through the Formal Mode

S.No	Aspects of Teaching Effectiveness	Formal Trained Teachers				Critical Ratios
		Government Schools (N=37)		Private Schools (N=38)		
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
1.	Review of home assignment	7.49	2.36	9.74	1.93	4.5**
2.	Introduction of the lesson	15.83	3.11	20.32	2.04	7.48**
3.	Development of the lesson					
	a) Explanation	23.54	2.94	27.71	2.11	7.1**
	b) Communication	15.59	2.43	18.06	2.12	2.47*
	c) Questioning	12.29	2.32	15.76	5.30	3.47**
	d) Response Management	16.46	3.28	19.35	1.49	2.89**
	e) Reinforcement	20.17	5.26	21.91	2.19	4.47**
	f) Use of chalkboard & Others	20.15	4.79	25.38	5.29	1.91(NS)
	g) Class Management	25.73	4.94	29.53	2.45	3.8**
4.	Ending of the lesson	14.44	7.13	15.32	2.06	0.88(NS)
5.	Classroom climate	15.95	2.17	18.50	2.26	4.90**

Note :

*** Indicates Significant at 0.05 level**

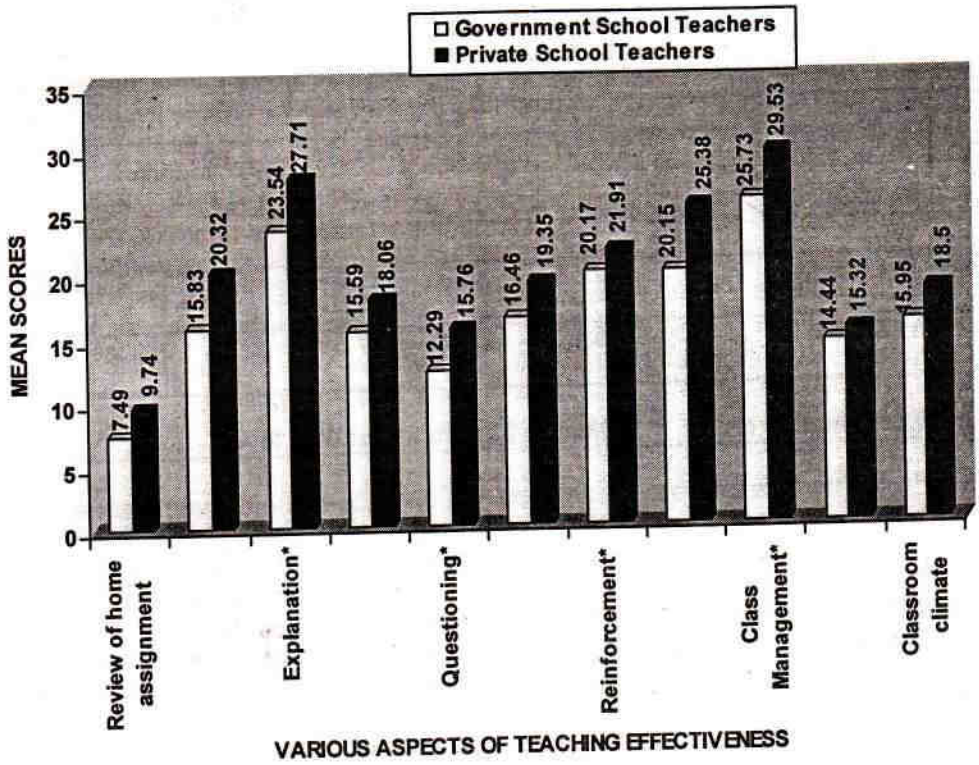
**** Indicates Significant at 0.01 level, NS – Not Significant**

Table 2 reflects that CRs between mean scores for government and private school teachers with respect to the review of home assignments (4.5), introduction of the lesson (7.48), and classroom climate (4.90) were found to be significant at 0.01 level whereas, no significant difference was found in the case of ending of the lesson. Higher mean scores in the case of private school teachers show that the private school teachers were substantially better as compared to the government school teachers. It may be due to the reason that

better teaching facilities/orientation programmes are available to private school teachers, which enhance their knowledge and make their teaching more interesting, informative and effective.

Table 2 further illustrates that CRs for explanation (7.1), questioning (3.47), response management (2.89), reinforcement (4.47), and class management (3.8), were found to be significant at 0.01 level while communication (2.47) was found to be significant at 0.05 level. But no significant difference was found in the use of chalkboard among the government and private school teachers trained through the formal mode. Higher mean scores (as represented in the bar diagram in Fig. 2) in case of private school teachers shows that they were relatively better as compared to their counterparts. This difference might be due to the fact that though both the groups have acquired basic-teaching skills during training practice by the formal mode but teachers working in private schools have better teaching facilities/orientation as a result of which they have higher mean scores for development of the lesson than their counterparts. These mean scores have been presented in the form of bar diagram in Fig.2

Fig. 2: Teaching Effectiveness of Government and Private School Teachers Trained Through Formal Mode



5.3 Teaching Effectiveness of the Government and Private School Teachers Trained through the Distance Mode

TABLE – 3

Means, SDs and CRs of Teaching Effectiveness of the Government and Private School Teachers Trained through the Distance Mode

S.No	Aspects of Teaching Effectiveness	Distance Mode Teachers				Critical Ratios
		Government Schools (N=37)		Private Schools (N=38)		
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
1.	**Review of home assignment**	7.18	2.39	8.43	2.49	2.19*
2.	**Introduction of the lesson**	14.97	3.43	19.88	3.11	6.38**
3.	**Development of the lesson**					
	a) Explanation	22.06	4.09	26.88	3.26	5.54**
	b) Communication	14.61	2.29	18.26	3.25	5.70**
	c) Questioning	12.15	2.32	15.17	3.64	4.38**
	d) Response Management	16.42	2.95	19.52	2.58	4.56**
	e) Reinforcement	18.85	3.54	23.00	3.05	5.32**
	f) Use of chalkboard &	19.91	4.22	24.31	4.52	4.36**
	Note: *** indicates skills required for 'Development of the lesson'**					**
4.	**Ending of the lesson**	12.58	2.39	16.05	3.28	5.26**
5.	**Classroom climate**	15.12	2.79	17.88	2.61	6.9**

Note:
*** Indicates Significant at 0.05 level, ** Indicates Significant at 0.01 level**

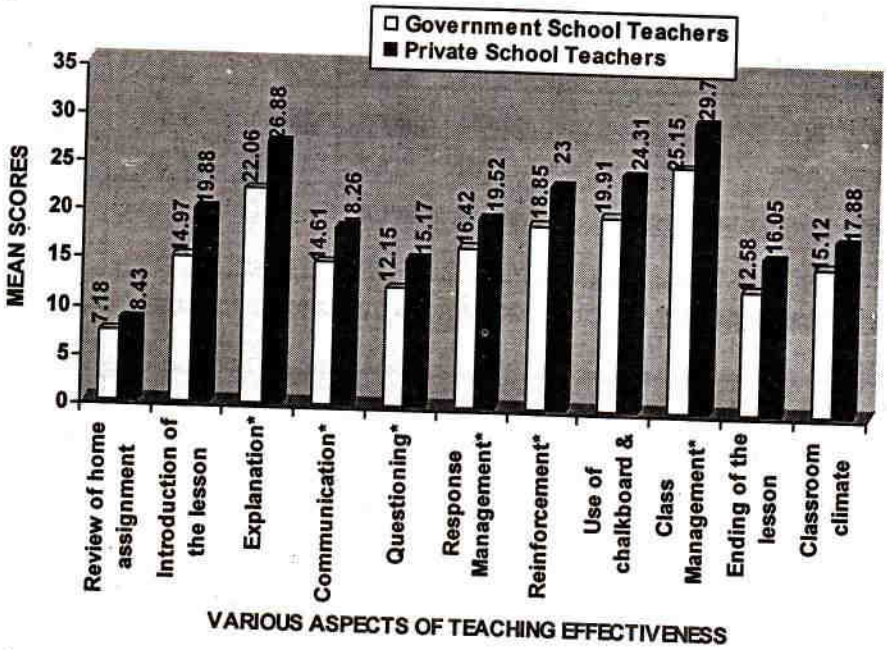
Table 3 reflects that CRs between mean scores of distance-trained government and private school teachers were found to be significant with all aspects of teaching effectiveness i.e., review of home assignments (2.19), introduction of the lesson (6.38), ending the lesson (5.26), and classroom climate (6.9). It can be inferred that private school teachers are more effective in the classroom teaching as compared to the government school teachers. It may be perhaps that teachers working in private schools are more hard working and also pressure from the management to give better results makes them review the home assignment effectively.

Table 3 further illustrates that CRs for explanation (5.54), communication (5.70), questioning (4.38), response management (4.56), reinforcement (5.32), use of chalkboard (4.36), and class management (4.66), were found to be significant at 0.01 level. It can be

inferred that teachers working in private school are better in developing the lesson in the classroom as compared to teachers of government schools. Probably, the reason behind this finding may be that in government schools, the job of the teachers is permanent whereas in private schools the job of the teachers are not very much secure. The teachers could be easily suspended / terminated by the management if they were not satisfied with their performance.

It seems that due to this reason that the teachers are hard working in private schools and are dedicated to their jobs than government school teachers of which, in turn, enhances the effectiveness of former ones. It can be interpreted that teaching facilities in school play an important role in teaching effectiveness. These mean scores have been presented in the form of bar diagram in Fig.3

Fig. 3: Teaching Effectiveness of the Government and Private School Teachers Trained Through the Distance Mode



Note:

*** indicates skills required for 'Development of the lesson'**

An examination of Table 4 reflects that CRs between mean scores of government school teachers trained through the formal and distance mode with all aspects of teaching effectiveness viz., review of home assignments, introduction of the lesson, development of the lesson, ending of the lesson and classroom climate were found to be insignificant. The

5. 4 Teaching Effectiveness of Government School Teachers Trained through the Formal and Distance Modes

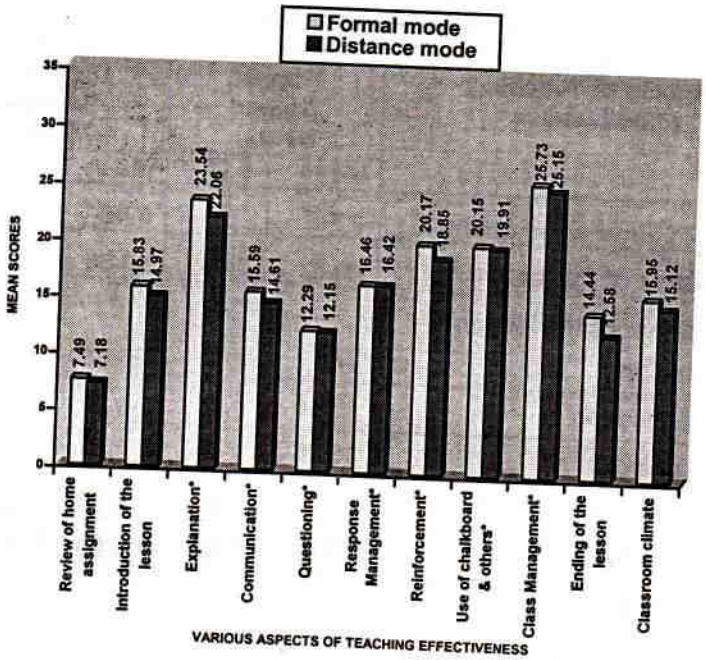
TABLE – 4
Means, SDs and CRs of Teaching Effectiveness of Government School Teachers Trained through Formal and Distance Mode

S.No	Aspects of Teaching Effectiveness	*Government School Teachers*				Critical Ratios
		Formal Trained (N=37)		Distance Trained (N=37)		
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
1.	**Review of home assignment**	7.49	2.36	7.18	2.39	0.41(NS)
2.	**Introduction of the lesson**	15.83	3.11	14.97	3.43	1.12(NS)
3.	**Development of the lesson**					
	a) Explanation	23.54	2.94	22.06	4.09	1.76(NS)
	b) Communication	15.59	2.43	14.61	2.29	1.82(NS)
	c) Questioning	12.29	2.32	12.15	2.32	0.26(NS)
	d) Response Management	16.46	3.28	16.42	2.95	0.05(NS)
	e) Reinforcement	20.17	5.26	18.85	3.54	1.28(NS)
	f) Use of chalkboard & Others	20.15	4.79	19.91	4.22	0.23(NS)
	g) Class Management	25.73	4.94	25.15	4.09	0.56(NS)
4.	**Ending of the lesson**	14.44	7.13	12.58	2.39	1.56(NS)
5.	**Classroom climate**	15.95	2.17	15.12	2.79	1.41(NS)

Note:
NS – Not Significant

possible reason was that for the government teachers it was difficult to apply teaching skills because students being from low socio-economic group, the students attending school were the main criterion. Their learning was confined to school only. At home they are supposed to do household work and studying was given the least priority. Therefore, inspite of using teaching skills, the students did not respond which ultimately resulted in a lifeless classroom teaching. These mean scores have been presented in the form of a Bar diagram in Fig.4.

Fig. 4: Teaching Effectiveness of Government School Teachers Trained Through Formal and Distance Mode



Note

*** indicates skills required for 'Development of the lesson'**

Table 5 depicts that CR (2.54) between the mean scores of the formal and distance trained teachers teaching in a private school in the review of home assignments was found to be significant at 0.05 level. It can be inferred that though both the groups are teaching in private schools but the formal mode teachers were found to be better in reviewing the home assignment of the students in the classroom as compared to heir counterparts. The possible reason may be that the formal training that one gets while undergoing B.Ed course perhaps make their teaching effective.

Table 5 further reflects that CRs between mean scores of the formal and distance mode teachers of private schools with respect to introduction of the lesson, development of the lesson, ending of the lesson, and classroom climate were found to be insignificant. Irrespective of their training background, it has been generally seen that the private schools have their own orientation programme to understand innovative skills and to later utilize them in classroom teaching. These mean scores have been presented in the form of a Bar diagram in Fig 5.

5.5 Teaching Effectiveness of the Private School Teachers Trained through Formal and Distance Modes

TABLE – 5

Means, SDs and CRs of Teaching Effectiveness of the Private School Teachers Trained through the Formal and Distance Modes

S.No	Aspects of Teaching Effectiveness	*Private School Teachers*				Critical Ratios
		Formal Trained *(N=38)*		Distance Trained *(N=38)*		
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
1.	**Review of home assignment**	9.74	1.93	8.43	2.49	2.54*
2.	**Introduction of the lesson**	20.32	2.04	19.88	3.11	0.73(NS)
3.	**Development of the lesson**					
	a) Explanation	27.71	2.11	26.88	3.26	1.34(NS)
	b) Communication	18.36	2.12	18.26	3.25	0.32(NS)
	c) Questioning	15.76	5.30	15.17	3.64	0.55(NS)
	d) Response Management	19.85	1.49	19.52	2.58	0.26(NS)
	e) Reinforcement	21.91	2.19	23.00	3.05	1.78(NS)
	f) Use of chalkboard & Others	25.38	5.29	24.31	4.52	0.93(NS)
	g) Class Management	29.53	2.45	29.16	4.47	0.28(NS)
4.	**Ending of the lesson**	16.32	2.06	16.05	3.28	1.18(NS)
5.	**Classroom climate**	18.50	2.26	17.88	2.61	1.15(NS)

Note:
**** indicates Significant at 0.05 level**
NS – Not Significant

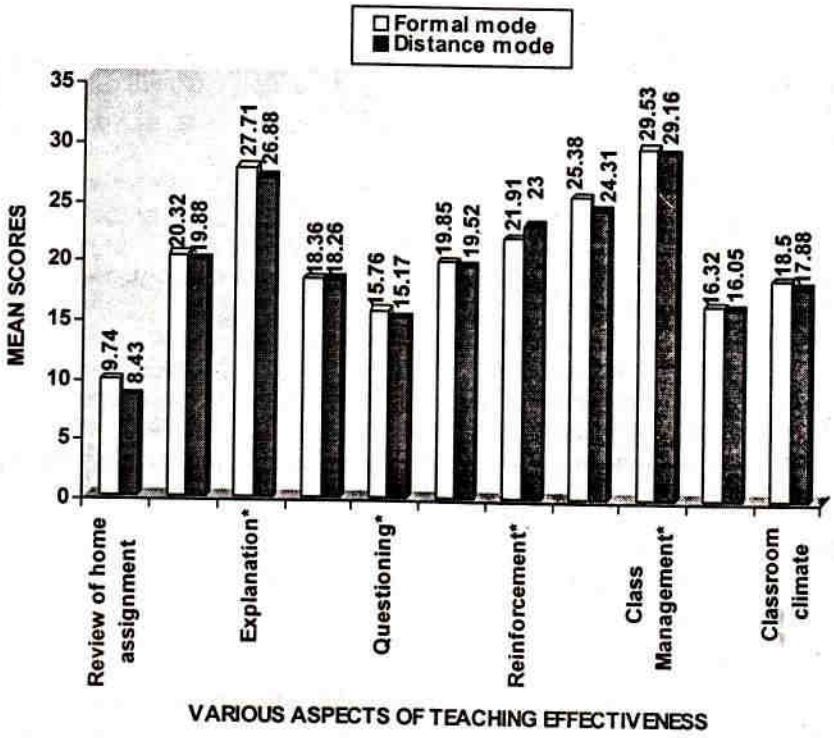
6.0 Conclusions

The present study can be concluded as follows:

6.1 The private school teachers were found to be better in reviewing the home assignments, introduction of the lesson, and classroom climate, as compared to the government school teachers.

6.2 In the case of 'development of the lesson', significant difference was found with respect to explanation, communication, questioning, response management, reinforcement, and class management of government and private school teachers trained through the formal mode. No significant difference was found in the use of chalkboard among the government and private school teachers. The private school teachers were more effective in using the skills required in developing the lesson as compared to the government school teachers.

Fig. 5: Teaching Effectiveness of the Private School Teachers Trained Through the Formal and Distance Modes



Note:

*** indicates skills required for 'Development of the lesson'**

6.3 The private school teachers were found to be better in reviewing the home assignments, introduction of the lesson, ending of the lesson, and classroom climate as compared to the government school teachers.

6.4 In the case of 'development of the lesson', significant difference was found in all the aspects i.e., to explanation, communication, questioning, response management, reinforcement, use of chalkboard, and class management of the government and private school teachers trained through the distance mode. The private school teachers were

more effective in using the skills required in developing the lesson as compared to the government school teachers.

6.5 There was no significant difference in all aspects of teaching effectiveness of government school teachers trained through the formal and distance modes.

6.6 There was no significant difference in all aspects of teaching effectiveness except in the case of review of home assignments of private school teachers trained through formal and distance modes.

7.0 Educational Implications

7.1 The study has revealed that irrespective of the training background, teachers need to have the basic teaching skills as a part of their repertoire of teaching effectiveness. For this, modules for development of teaching skills both at the pre-service and in-service training levels needs to be developed.

7.2 At the pre-service training level, it is necessary for teacher educators to establish a close match between the work schedule of the teacher in a school and the programme adopted for teacher preparation in the training institutes. They should lay a great emphasis on the internship in teaching to develop pedagogical abilities and skills in student teachers.

7.3 At the in-service level, training should be given at regular intervals with systematic assessment and feedback programmes. Professional advancement of the teachers should never be neglected. A vigorous follow-up of all the workshops, courses etc., meant for their professional growth will ensure better teaching.

7.4 Inorder to make teaching effective and to create a suitable learning environment in the schools, the school principals should take the responsibility of organizing orientation programmes for the teachers from time to time so that they may add effective teaching skills in classroom teaching. There should be need-based programmes throughout the year and should deal with concrete or actual problems confronting the teachers.

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COPING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Individuals are subjected to a variety of stressors from the environment around them. Teachers of distance education also face new and different problems at their work place and handle these problems by using various coping strategies to help alleviate stress. When people are exposed to a stressful demand, they respond by coping, coping attempts to reduce the demand, reduce its effect or helps one to change the way one thinks about the demand. Sometimes teachers medicate themselves, choosing alcohol or other non-prescription drugs to reduce the symptoms of the stress response. Tranquilizing medications also tend to produce sleepiness, slowed reaction time, poor coordination and inhibitions in judgment which tend to hinder work productivity and safety. Coping affects stress in two ways (a) problem-focussed coping and (b) emotion-focussed coping. Informal settings for social support include the sharing of one's problems with friends, family and co-workers. There are a number of coping steps for reducing the impact of job stress such as taking charge of a situation, being-realistic, honest, slowing down, learning to relax, taking care of one's physical health, recognizing danger signals etc. Social support group allows teachers to let their hair down to share their lives. Teachers imparting Distance Education can also receive considerable enjoyment and safety from the social-support groups like an informal group, a formal group, a kinship family and a service group.

1.0 Objectives

- To explain the concept of Coping Strategies;
- To familiarize the teachers of Distance Education with the types and approaches of coping;
- To make the teachers aware about physical techniques such as Yoga, Qigong and exercise;
- To elucidate applications of social support as a psychological technique in formal and informal settings.

1.1 Introduction

From the day people are born, and even before that, they are subjected to a variety of stressors from the environment around them. Each one of these exacts a certain toll on their bodies; some stressors seem to affect individuals differently while others seem to have a universal effect. In any case, both the mind and the body must mobilize to deal effectively with these factors. The school teachers are usually able to handle these problems by using various coping strategies to help alleviate stress. The problem arises when too many stressors last too long for the teachers who are engaged in different activities at job and do

not get a single moment to exercise and entertainment. The individual must adapt or change his or her coping strategy to return to a normal equilibrium.

When people are exposed to a stressful demand, they respond by coping; coping attempts to reduce the demand, reduce its effect, or help one to change the way one thinks about the demands. Coping can either help one in a stressful situation or increase the kind and number of problems created by the demand. It includes all the possible responses to stressors in one's environment. Coping can often reduce the negative effects of the stressor, but sometimes it creates new and different problems .Coping is a general term that describes the wide range of responses used by individuals to deal with their health problems. Although, the concept of coping seems straightforward, there is still a disagreement about its nature and measurement as well as about its effects on emotional and physical outcome. It is generally agreed that coping is not a static process in the context of chronic illness since it can change over time as the perceptions, demands, and social implications of illness change. Some researchers prefer to use very broad dimensions of behaviour (e.g. approach vs. avoidance) to characterize individual differences in coping behaviour, whereas others focus on much more specific behaviour inorder to describe the wide range of responses shown by patients. It is also unclear whether coping determines psychological or physical well-being or whether this relationship is a mere two -way process.

The transition from the pre-industrial to industrial society has brought with it a number of broad changes in the role of the teacher in the school. The teacher's role has become extended with new tasks and challenges. Teaching is not what it was, expectations have intensified today and the job of a teacher also includes different managerial functions. Today, when we conceptualize the role of a teacher we regard him as a manager. In addition to this traditional function, the teacher also performs a number of managerial functions in the area of curriculum planning, resource management, management of examination, management of co-curricular activities, time management, conflict management, management of innovation and change etc. Educators are recognised as working in a profession with high stress. Studies reveal that teachers experience more occupational stress as compared to other professions e.g. Murphy (1986); Borg (1990) and Miller (1995).

1.2 Concept of Coping Strategies

Coping may be conceptualized as a person's affective, cognitive or behavioural efforts to manage demands which exceed one's resources. These demands may be internal, such as having overly high performance standards, or they may be external, such as facing a natural disaster. Coping can be studied in terms of specific strategies used to handle a particular event or a crisis. It can also be studied in terms of personal styles which tend to be more stable across situations.

As the cognitive mediation outlook developed further, the coping process gained importance too, because psychological stress defines an unfavourable person-environment relationship, its essence is process and changes rather than a structure a stasis. We alter circumstances, or how they are interpreted, to make them appear more favourable, an effort called coping. Coping is the psychologist's convenient characterization of a diverse set of psycho-social processes, but it remains to be determined how such a widely used description of human behaviour is manifested in the context of the life of a teacher. When there is a perceived discrepancy between environmental demands and one's ability to meet those demands, an individual is likely to feel stress. Stress has both psychological and physiological causes and effects. In order to continue to function in an adaptive way, everyone must learn to cope with stress.

Coping is the management of a stressful event or a situation by the family as a unit with no detrimental effects on any individual in that unit. Family coping is the cognitive, affective and behavioural process by which individuals and their family systems as a whole manage (rather than eradicate) a stressful event or situation. .Many of the techniques of stress management is directed towards reducing the stress response. The pattern of physiological arousal in a stress response feels uncomfortable to most people; moreover, the related physiological changes can increase one's chances of illness or injury. The stress response is often treated as a physical illness. Prescribed medication, such as tranquilizing drugs may be provided to reduce the unpleasant symptoms of the stress response such as anxiety, muscle tension, and pain. Sometimes people medicate themselves, choosing alcohol or other nonprescription drugs to reduce the symptoms of the stress response. All these medications tend to reduce the effects of stress over the short term, but they also tend to create problems of their own. Medications can be habit forming and may continue to be used after the stressful situation is over. They may promote an artificial contentment and limit the possibility of finding a permanent solution to the problem creating the stress. Tranquilizing medications also tend to produce sleepiness, slowed reaction time, poor coordination, and inhibitions in judgment. These effects may hinder work, productivity and safety.

1.3 Types of Coping

Coping affects subsequent stress reactions in two main ways, problem- focussed and emotion-focussed coping.

1.3.1 Problem-focussed Coping

If a person's relationship with the environment is changed by coping actions, the conditions of psychological stress may also be changed for the better and this is called problem-focussed coping. Problem-focussed coping consists of efforts undertaken to manage or alter objective conditions that are the source of stress. Problem-focussed coping is most effective with stressors perceived as controllable (i.e. as being possible in ameliorating by action).

1.3.2 Emotion-focussed Coping

Another coping process which we call emotion-focussed coping, changes only the way we attend to or interpret what is happening. A threat that we successfully avoid thinking about, even if only temporarily, it does not bother us. Emotion-focussed coping consists of efforts undertaken to regulate stressful emotions by the use of mechanisms that avoid direct confrontation with the stressor. Emotion-focussed coping is most useful in situations that largely have to be accepted.

1.4 Approaches to Coping

Coping includes all the possible responses to stressors in one's environment. As a stressor makes demand on an organism and initiates a stress response, the organism initiates behaviour and thoughts which attempt to remove the stressor or to reinterpret its effects. Coping can often reduce the negative effects of the stressor, but sometimes coping creates new and different problems. Coping strategies may emphasize the physical, social or psychological components of stress and the stress response. Coping strategies may attempt to eliminate or moderate the initial sources of the stress reaction. Stimulus-directed coping reduces the magnitude of the stress response (response-directed coping), or changes the way the stressor is perceived (cognitive coping). The coping strategies directed toward the stressor itself in stimulus-directed coping may eliminate the cause of the problem. The

physical changes which occur in response to stress are very much like pain in that they ring as an alarm bell implying that something in the environment is unusual and is a potential threat. Taking action to eliminate the threat not only removes the present demand but also reduces the possibility of continued stress.

1.4.1 Physical Approach

Physical approach to coping with stress involves increasing the level of exercise. Exercise can lower stress level. It reduces tension in muscles, improves cardiac fitness and the functioning of the central nervous system. Athletic activities can also have a psychological impact, as they provide social support and distraction from stressful situations. Another approach to reducing stress involves learning to evoke a physical **relaxation response**. Others are helped by using an electronic device which closely monitors subtle physiological changes known as **Bio-feedback training.** Eastern practices like **Meditation, Yoga, Tai-chi and Qigong** can strengthen a person's coping repertoire in that they have both preventive and restorative value. They help to ward off stress equilibrium after a stressful episode. The popularity of these measures is reflected in their widespread adaptation in executive health and stress management programmes in the West.

1.4.2 Psychological Approach

Psychological coping strategies include techniques that change the way one thinks about the stressor or the stress-response. Cognitive reappraisal and restructuring can help one to think of a stressful event as a positive challenge. Imaging techniques are used to help the stressed individual to see her or himself as healthy and as successful coping with the sources of stress. One approach to stress that can give people a feeling of control is to teach them relaxation techniques; these range from meditation to **progressive relaxation** to **bio-feedback techniques**. A strong social support system found to be very important to discipline oneself and not to violate one's own value system, is essential. Even having a pet that needs love and attention has been found to lower stress

1.5 Social Support

Every human needs to have a feeling of closeness with other persons. Social support group allows people to let their hair down to share their lives, to kid around, to keep in touch, and to have a sense of security and help when emergencies and crises arise. People receive considerable enjoyment from such support groups. There are a variety of possible support groups.

- An Informal Group of Co-workers;
- A Formal Co-worker Group (such as a weekly lunch on a sports day or a hobby group ;
- Social Kinship Family.
- A Service Group such as a single's club etc.

Essential features of support groups are -

- The same people attend;
- The group meets regularly;
- A feeling of closeness has developed among members;
- There is an opportunity for informality and spontaneity .

1.6 Models of Social Support

Two different models have been prepared to describe the ways in which social support has beneficial effects.

1.6.1 Buffering Hypothesis

Buffering Hypothesis holds that social support is related to well-being only for persons who experience stress. Social support serves as coping resources that lessens or blocks the potentially pathogenic impact of stressors but is not particularly helpful for persons who are relatively stress free.

1.6.2 Direct Effects Hypothesis

Direct Effects Hypothesis maintains that social support has beneficial effects regardless of the level of other stressors. Indeed, the perception of too little support may in itself, be an independent source of stress. Of course, these hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, and under stressful conditions it is possible for social support to have both a direct and a buffering effect.

1.7 Type of Social Support

Social Support is applied in a variety of settings, both informal and formal. Informal settings for social support include the sharing of one's problems with friends and family. Informational support may come from coworkers. He later may provide tangible support by volunteering their time to work together on the campaign. Emotional support is more likely to come from the family. A person might seek professional help from a counsellor. A counselling situation takes place in a supportive environment and is generally focussed on emotional support. However, some therapy situations can also provide informational and tangible support. The types of support which are provided through social relationship in which recipients perceive are:

1.7.1 Attachment, a sense of emotional connection that provides safety and security;

1.7.2 Social integration, their interests and concerns are shared by others;

1.7.3 Reassurance of worth, their skills and abilities are acknowledged and valued;

1.7.4 Reliable alliance, they can count on assistance under any circumstances if needed;

1.7.5 Guidance and trustworthy and authoritative individuals will provide advice; and

1.7.6 Opportunity for nurturance, the feeling of responsibility for the well-being of another. The sixth component does not involve receiving but rather providing support. Thus in the strictest terms, opportunity for nurturance cannot be considered a type of support.

In the existing literature researchers have studied that significant Gender differences are present for Occupational Stress level [Winchester Vega, 1992; Punch and Tuetteman, 1990]. Stress scores of female are high as compared to males [e.g. Okebukola and Jegede, 1989; Blix.et.al, 1994; Alikah, 1995]. But some research studies show that there is no difference in the occupational stress level of male and female subjects [Wolf-Gillespie and Betz, 1993 and Geick, 1998]. No evidence was found indicating that Social Support serves as a moderator of stress [e.g. Freed, 1994; Buchanan, 1994; Yang and Carayan, 1995]. Social Support has proved to be a successful coping resource with interacting buffering effect on worker stress [e.g. Balzan, 1990; Ryan, 1993a; Lechner, 1993; Geller, 1994; Freed, 1994; Descoteaux, 1994; Lim, 1994; Huebner, 1994; Durgin, 1998]. Females use more coping resources to reduce occupational stress [e.g. Wu and Lam, 1993; Armstrong, 1998; Ryan, 1993a; Turner, 1994; Chan and Hui, 1995; Agarwal, 1994 a]. Some studies indicate that men

use more coping resources [e.g. Long and Kahn, 1993; Goeller, 1992]. Teachers use relaxation techniques to avoid stress. [Pestonjee, 1992]

1.8 Coping Techniques for Teachers of Distance Education

Teachers usually have one of the five basic reactions to too much stress at work. They either:-

1.8.1 Talk to others, air their grievances, share the problem, but do not take direct steps to change the situation;

1.8.2 Work longer and harder, trying to overcome the overload.

1.8.3 Switch to an engrossing recreation activity so that they can return refreshed and do more work in a shorter time;

1.8.4 Withdraw physically from the situation by quitting, seeking another job or else reducing the time and energy they are willing to spend at work;

1.8.5 Analyze the situation, revise strategies and look for ways to change things.

Over the last twenty years there have been numerous studies of teacher stress but little is known of how teachers acquire coping strategies, their knowledge of those available to them and their opinion of these techniques. On average practitioners reported that they were aware of thirty-five of the forty-five strategies listed. Fewer than 30 percent of the sample (28.7 percent) had been or are considered going to a seminar on stress. 45.2 percent had never thought of taking a day off to unwind which might please their fund holders, despite the fact that 39 percent of these individuals considered themselves to be extremely stressed by their jobs. The third least considered possibility was to read books about stress with 35.9 percent of the sample never thinking of it before. But there are a number of coping steps which could help reduce job stress among teachers of **Distance Education.**

- Take charge of your situation;
- Be realistic about what you can change;
- Take one step at a time;
- Be honest with colleagues;
- Let your employer help;
- Slow down;
- Recognize danger signals;
- Take care of your physical health;
- Learn to relax;
- Do not neglect your private life;
- Consider a change.

1.9 Quick Tricks

There are some speedy ways to relieve stress for teachers and educators which they can use for immediate relief from different stressful situations.

1.9.1 Mental and Physical Activities

Make sure you get and keep mental and physical activities in your life that you enjoy.

1.9.2 Raise Imperfection to an art form (silly mistakes)

Make an intentional silly, harmless mistake everyday. Make imperfection an art form in your daily mistakes

1.9.3 Social Support

Get together formally in groups, informally with co-workers and colleagues. You can identify problems and exchange solutions and strategies. A strong social support system has been found to be very important. Discipline oneself not to violate one's own value system.

1.9.4 Chairperson

Whenever you encounter something that causes you job stress, write it down. Later, in a quiet place, sit in a chair and mediate for five to fifteen minutes on your accumulated job related stresses for that day.

1.10 Conclusion

The transition from the pre-industrial to industrial society has brought with it a number of broad changes in the role of the teacher in the school. The teacher's role has become extended with new tasks and challenges. Educators are recognised as working in a profession with high stress. When people are exposed to a stressful demand, they respond by coping. Coping attempts to reduce the demand, reduce its effect or help one to change the way one thinks about the demand. Coping affects subsequent stress reactions in two main ways, problem- focussed and emotion-focussed coping. Coping strategies may emphasize the physical, social or psychological components of stress and the stress response. Social support is the perception of a positive emotion towards oneself from another. Motivation by another person to express one's beliefs or feelings in a non- aggressive environment helps to release stress. Teachers usually talk to others to share the problem, work longer and harder or seek another job. But there are a number of coping steps, like take one step at a time, let your employer help, slowdown, learn to relax, do not neglect your private life and consider a change which could help reduce job stress in an efficient and a noble way.

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Book Review

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By
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Focusing on the status of Distance Education, the author has spelt out the theory and practice of a system that not only democratises education, but it takes a cost-effective system to the peoples' doorsteps.

A unique feature of the book is to present distance education as a cost effective system of education as also a boon for the neglected and marginalized sections of society such as, SC, STs, physically challenged etc.

The book contains point analysis and description of distance education in the Indian context and is the most comprehensive one available so far. Twenty chapters of the book lay down the basic concepts of the subject of distance education. In the first five chapters the author has traced the trajectory of distance education in India by carefully defining the formal, informal and distance education, the philosophy of distance education and its work ethics. Various dimensions of distance education are enumerated and evaluated.

In chapter six the author has very aptly discussed the management of distance education as an important tool for making democracy inclusive and meaningful. The author has argued that in a heavily populated society like India 'the formal system of education cannot meet the educational needs of the whole population. Therefore, the need of the hour is to accept the utility of distance education and find out ways and means for its better management (p.82). The author further suggests a two-pronged management strategy for managing distance education i.e. **Academic** and **Administrative.** 'Since the focus of attention must be academic, the administrative or the executive staff should ensure promptitude in handling the educational wares.' (p.83).

The spoken word has a tendency to get scattered in the air and in contrast the written word is open to public scrutiny, delivered on open-circuit broadcasts. Therefore it must carry the stamp of authenticity, for which a team of distinguished scholars with a remarkable command over language is needed. Besides this, the author places forward the concept of financial and functional autonomy in order to manage distance education better.

Highlighting the significance of distance education, the author says that the demand for DE will increase to a large extent in the future also. This is because the increasing rate of unemployment would demotivate students from joining formal courses because of their expensive nature. In future, it is believed that 'the provision of competitive and job-oriented

experience would be available in open forms of distance education'. (p.326). With a view to make distance education accessible to the existing heterogeneous groups of learners of different occupational background and the freshers aspiring for employment positions, there is a need to reorganize the courses of DE. The author suggests that the discipline-oriented status must be diverted towards problem-based and workforce oriented areas.

In order to make DE pragmatic and flexible, an attempt should be made to ensure the compatibility of the cost-effective nature of instruction with the national needs, such as needs of youth population specially residing in rural areas, existing language differences in population, remoteness of location of students,, present position of University graduates, manpower needed for short-term and long-term employment etc..

The growing popularity of DE in the forms of correspondence courses is one of the indicators of stability of this system in India. According to the author, it has been found that inspite of a large number of dropouts, thousands of students actually continue with studies till their course completion. Citing other scholars, Madhulika Sharma asserts that these students possessed high positive attitude toward DE (p.327).

Dr.(Mrs.) Surinder K. Shukla

A Note For the Contributors

For Paper publication in the Indian Journal of Distance Education, the manuscripts are to be type written, double spaced, with sufficient margins and are to be submitted in duplicate alongwith a CD to the Chief Editor, Indian Journal of Distance Education, Department of Correspondence Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh-160 014. The other pre-requisites are (a) an Abstract, (b) a declaration that the paper has not been previously published, nor is it being considered for publication elsewhere, and (c) a brief resume of the author giving recent publications and research interests.

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