



**ROLE OF ICT IN MAINTAINING TEACHER TAUGHT CONTACT
FOR QUALITATIVE AND EFFECTIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT:

Distance education is an approach where knowledge is delivered on an individual basis to the distant learners who are unable to attend the classroom education system. Distance education caters to the needs of such people who have an inner quest to grow academically. It is an alternative platform of learning for people who really want to learn. Therefore there is a demand for a forum to share creative ideas, innovative practices and high quality resources to the future success of distance education locally and globally as it is gaining popularity. The teacher taught contact on a regular basis made possible through ICT has contributed significantly to make distance education qualitative. It is very important in Indian perspective as India is passing through a very critical and sensitive stage where 65 percent of the population of the country is youth. The power of the youth can change the direction of development. The existing higher education institutes fail to provide educational opportunities to this population due to limited resources. Distance education is an alternative and effective mode to provide opportunities to these youths who are not able to study in prestigious institutes and also are deprived of professional trainings because of their poor financial condition, poor mental set up and lack of guidance. By increasing teacher taught contact through ICT distance education can provide an alternative and effective academic platform to not only to these youths but also to other learners also through low-cost, accessible, qualitative, excellent and effective education.

KEYWORDS: ICT, Teacher Taught Contact, Distance Education.

INTRODUCTION:

We are living in the times of rapid changes. These changes are taking place in all walks of life and affecting everyone. We have reached this stage due to education as it has the power to change the world. Education is a crucial and complex activity. It is the cultivation of the mind to make life easier and tolerable by helping in the acquisition of skills for making it possible. The education which does not inculcate the qualities and skills necessary for living graciously, efficiently and harmoniously with fellow beings is without any worth. Education should prepare the individual to take responsibilities, meet the challenges and help in achieving complete growth and development. Thus education contributes in the progress of a nation by giving it knowledgeable, purposeful, confident, aware and skilled citizens. Such citizens are essential for building a dynamic, vibrant, cohesive and powerful nation that stands out as a leader in the world. Thus education helps in developing and nurturing an individual's personality according to the needs and demands of the changing times.

DISCUSSION:

Education plays such an important role in curving the future of our country that it becomes the responsibility of the nation to provide education to all its citizens. There are two major modes of education running in our country - Regular mode of education and Distance mode of education. Regular mode of education is formal system of education where teachers and students are in regular contact with each other. They interact interpersonally with each other on a daily basis. Traditionally distance education is used to refer to education that takes place when the teacher and students are separated by space and/or time. It is a non formal system of education that refers to the interactive process between student and teacher separated by physical distance. It relates to programs of study which are delivered entirely off-campus. Distance education is an approach where knowledge is delivered on an individual basis to the distant learners who are unable to attend the classroom education system It keeps the source of knowledge and learners distinct by time and place. The learners in distance education are 'unreached fragment of learners' as they fail to attend the classroom learning. These distant learners are offered enormous potential in distance education through flexibility. This flexibility (of not attending classes physically) appeals to many students however others find it challenging

and frustrating. However we all agree that distance education is an educational system which is parallel to formal education and is capable of overcoming limitations of formal education. It came into existence considering the needs and requirement of the individual in the changing scenario.

Role of Teacher:

Any educational system or policy is judged on the basis of performance of learners which is the most important parameter but we must not forget that it depends upon many factors. The most crucial factor is teacher. Teacher is an integral component of all education systems. Realizing the importance of teacher in educational process in the UNESCO REPORT (1991) 'Education for 21st Century' it has been stated :

'The teacher's role is crucial in the knowing-learning-teaching process and, especially in reorienting education.'

Dr. Radhakrishnan has highlighted the significance of teacher in these words – 'Teacher is like a candle who burns himself to give us light.'

Teacher's knowledge and expertise are critical determinates of the teaching learning process as the learning of the students depend upon what teachers know and are able to do. The teacher has to discharge some essential duties in the teaching learning process :

- Creating and restructuring knowledge.
- Selecting, organizing and using learning resources.
- Effectively transacting curriculum.
- Selecting and organizing educational activities and programmes for learners.
- Using media and appropriate instructional technologies.
- Counselling students for personality development, adjustment and learning attainment.
- Organising student activities.
- Fostering interest in life long learning.

There are teachers and learners both in distance education system but they are not in direct contact. The face to face interaction is possible only during workshops or in the counselling sessions for a limited period. Therefore the students are not able to get the benefit of the teacher's knowledge, expertise commitment and competency. A great teacher inspires the

students but due to paucity of time it is not possible in distance education. The teachers remain distant teachers and the learners remain distant learners in distance education. We may call these learners distant learners but they are real learners who want to study irrespective of various barriers. Distance education caters to the needs of such people who have an inner quest to grow academically. It is an alternative platform of learning for people who really want to learn. Therefore there is a demand for a forum to share creative ideas, innovative practices and high quality resources to the future success of distance education locally and globally as it is gaining popularity. To retain the quality and popularity of distance education the teacher –taught contact must be given due attention so that this system should be made more effective and qualitative with the booms of technology especially information and communication technology (ICT). ICT has emerged as a low cost and effective way of communication among people across the globe. Let's have a look how ICT has contributed in the field of education:

- Through access to variety of learning resources.
- Enabling immediacy to information anytime, anywhere.
- By making learning possible anytime, anywhere.
- Giving multimedia approach to education.
- By providing authentic and up to date information.
- Through access to online libraries and source of information.
- By providing educational data storage.
- BY encouraging collaborative learning.
- Access to multiple communication channels- e-mail, chat, forum, blogs etc.

We must say that ICT has really transformed the way we perceived teaching learning process. The most important fact is that it has provided multiple communication channels to maintain contact and interaction which was not possible previously. The persons who are far away from each other can remain in touch on a regular basis and they can communicate virtually too. By adopting ICT, distance education has overcome the hurdles of :

- No direct contact with faculty
- Lack of interaction.
- Absence of a proper learning environment.
- Feeling of isolation and loneliness in learners.

- Lack of guidance by teacher.
- Lack of motivation by teacher.

ICT has improved the quality of distance education by introducing various teaching techniques:

- Teaching through internet.
- Web based instruction
- Learning through CD-ROM
- Tele conferencing
- Video conferencing
- Virtual classes
- On-line lectures

Teacher Taught Contact :

Distance education is an innovation in the field of education. ICT has made it more innovative and qualitative by giving new dimensions. There are various tools of ICT – desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones. These tools have enabled various activities of teaching learning possible through teacher taught contact as given below :

- Teaching activity remains unaffected and continuous because of internet and multimedia.
- Bridging the communication gap between teacher and learner, considered to be biggest drawback of distance education system.
- The teacher –student interaction has become more effective and regular.
- E-content in audio/video especially in regional languages has made teacher-student connect stronger.
- The guidance by teacher helps the learners (in distance education) to handle the challenges of 21st century with maximum efficiency by suitable application of knowledge and understanding, problem solving ability, creative thinking, practical and productive skills, attitudes and values.
- Communicating with teacher helps students to build up confidence.
- Video conferencing compensates for classroom teaching to some extent.

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- Distance education helps the learner to study amidst other commitments and ICT helps the learner to maintain contact with the teacher amidst other commitment.
- As kofi Annan- United Nations Former Secretary General “Trees grow stronger over the years, rivers widen. Likewise with age human beings gain immeasurable depth and breadth of experience and wisdom.” These aged persons are also the learners of distance education in general. Such experienced learners can help teachers with their knowledge and experience.
- Creating a space for dialogue between teacher and learner on a regular basis through smart phone which is a device that can be carried anywhere and is available anytime.
- Paving way from literacy to digital literacy for both teachers and learners by increasing their digital competencies.
- Helping to prepare a better innovative, effective and up to date curriculum according to the needs and demands of the students.
- Upgrading the quality and excellence of distance education as the regular interaction between teacher and learner lets the concerned authorities know about the shortcomings of distance education.
- Ultimately it helps in making distance education more students friendly.

CONCLUSION:

Thus we have seen that the teacher taught contact on a regular basis made possible through ICT has contributed significantly to make distance education qualitative. It is very important in Indian perspective as India is passing through a very critical and sensitive stage where 65 percent of the population of the country is youth. The power of the youth can change the direction of development. The existing higher education institutes fail to provide educational opportunities to this population due to limited resources. Distance education is an alternative and effective mode to provide opportunities to these youths who are not able to study in prestigious institutes and also are deprived of professional trainings because of their poor financial condition, poor mental set up and lack of guidance. By increasing teacher taught contact through ICT distance education can provide an alternative and effective academic platform to not only to

these youths but also to other learners also through low-cost, accessible, qualitative, excellent and effective education.

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