ON LINE EDUCATION IN NORTH EAST INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to address the various issues pertaining to its background, development and training. An attempt has been made to describe the need for education, its challenges and training. Education is a process which begins at birth and mother is the first teacher. It starts with manual skill, intellectual capacity and social awareness learnt by visual capacity and instructions. For the sustainable development of any nation, higher education is a major instrument for change. It has the important task of preparing leaders for different walks of life, i.e. social, political, cultural, scientific and technological. Today education is not restricted to classroom only but is being imparted by latest communication technology, one of the fastest spreading ways of online education. One view, which represents official position, advocates the privatization, commercialisation and deregulation of education. To them, everything that shines is private. The paper critically examines the privatisation and its impact on inclusive education in North East India with special reference...
to North East. And the content needs to be more elaborate, because of the absence of face – to – face interaction.

INTRODUCTION

Online learning Community colleges committed to proving a quality educational experience to students through distance learning courses by offering distance or online learning programmes. Many people join online Community colleges for distance or online learning. Taking online Community colleges courses can be busy students. Stress on skill development, infrastructure growth and better faculty – to some extent achieve the concept of Community colleges.

Education minister of Bihar, Shahi, who had been sent to United State of America by the central government to study the concept of community college and explore possibility of opening such colleges in India. Minister Shahi would send his report to the central government about his experience and suggestions to make better IITs and polytechnics colleges. Shahi visited Montgomery, Richmond Virginia, Washington and other places and attended a meeting of the American Community colleges at Auckland. Concept is good but where is the money to open such institutions – said Shahi. Not even possible for developed states to spend Hugh money on Community colleges. Minister Shahi said that copying US experiment of community colleges in India was not practicable.

Community colleges require very high quality of education and for that highly educated faculty is needed. The fee would also be quite high and beyond the reach of students coming from middle class society. Through appropriate skill development leading to gainful employment in collaboration with the local industry.
Punjab Technical University (PTU) is one of the first Indian universities which started the online courses. This study analysed some of the challenges of online programmes and highlights the need to remove those imbalances to make them more effective. The only thing the student requires to get enrolled himself via online and should have a Personal Computer accessing the sites of online university like www.PTU.online.com, www.lovelyuniversity.com.

The implementation of recommendations of the National Commission on Teachers (Higher Education) as well as the National Policy of Education of 1986 relating to the professional development of teachers resulted in Refresher Courses (RCs). These are conducted under the auspices of the Academic Staff College. Apart from these, Universities not having Academic Staff College, Academic Departments have been specially assigned the job of conducting RCs. Department of Commerce; Dibrugarh University is one of them. Since 1994, it started organizing RCs in Commerce. The entire North Eastern region is its catchment area i.e. Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Information and communication technology offers enormous potential for improving the delivery of information and knowledge based services in all sectors of life including all forms of education. The internet is a general term for a large group of computers all over the world linked to one another so that users and computers themselves can exchange information. Introduction of networks to various disciplines led to the applications such as e-business, e-commerce, e-banking, e-services, e-learning, e-governance and so on. Advantages of online education includes new learning opportunities, objectivity in education system, faster – easiest mode of communication (E-mail), Internet conferencing, reference and information service, role of network, shifting role of teacher educators, Internet to enhance curriculum and instruction, facilitates interdisciplinary approach of field of education. To improve the quality of teacher education certain measures can be
observed which include standardization of teacher education, ability to handle the Information and Communication Technology, teachers’ IT requirement, application of computer in classrooms to enrich the students, online learning in teacher education, integrating ICT in teacher education, etc.

The UGC’s initiative of linking the 273 universities and 12,000 colleges of India is a right move in this direction, as it will help to cut costs, level disparities in teaching quality and infrastructure and improve access to higher education. The use of Networked Information Technology with Multimedia courseware, Electronic Libraries and Database is leading to the emergence of a whole new kind of educational experience both to the students and educators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of Literature for the concerned study is essential to every researcher to produce accurate and sufficient information related to the area of study. In fact, the reference of the early studies is of tremendous help and positive sources of an invaluable output. In other word, referring to the studies done previously is the basic foundation upon which development facts can be made possible. Therefore, an attempt has been made to review some of the available studies.

Singh (1997) deliberated on programs, achievements, Quality control and Assessment. He suggested exploring the short duration RCs as against current three to four weeks duration. He also proposed evaluation of the participants of RCs.
Gupta (1997) opined that there should be educational research by Social Science Departments other than the education department. This has the benefit of cross-fertilisation of ideas leading to new horizons.

Pandey (1998) said that teachers’ training has emerged as the important area of educational research. He further opined that there is no single study available on the valuation of alternative model of teachers’ training. Similarly, in case of in-service teacher education, little research is available regarding the use of distance learning technique.

Many further studies may be said to be needed to identify problems of the concern topic. In this perspective, the present investigation proposed here is to be quite relevant.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study touched some of the vital issues particularly related to online education and training, its impact, growth, benefits, prospects and threats with special reference to Punjab Technical University, Imphal – Thangal Bazar. This study covered the following specific objectives:

i. To study the growth and trends in online education.

ii. To analyse the prospects of online education in development of human resources.

iii. To analyse the challenges faced in online education.
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on Primary data as well as Secondary data. Secondary data regarding the general information were collected from the Punjab Technical University web site.

Primary data regarding the experience and opinion of the students registered for online courses are collected from 50 randomly selected students of Punjab Technical University, ITCTC, Microsoft computer education online through a structured questionnaire on five point Likert scale.

FINDING OF THE STUDY

The Educational Institution provides a comprehensive and effective admission procedure to the students seeking admission via net globally as per the choice of the learners. As per the response from the students (Table below), 90 per cent of the students strongly favoured admission procedure, facilities provided by the Educational Institutions, any time to alter / change the particulars, inquiry and cost reduction of admission. Thus, sample students showed highly positive response of students to all the five statements regarding admission via net.

Table: Responses of the students regarding online courses-

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<tr>
<th>Admission via Net</th>
<th>E-excellent</th>
<th>VG-very good</th>
<th>G-good</th>
<th>F-fair</th>
<th>P-poor</th>
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<td>a. Responses regarding admission via net</td>
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<td>1. Admission procedure</td>
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Journal of Radix International Educational and Research Consortium
3. Cost reduction of admission
4. Alteration in admission particulars, if any
5. Anytime / anywhere

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b. Response regarding classroom learning.
6. Attractive multimedia
7. Self assessment
8. Project report & practical task provided by University
9. Interaction with class meet through chatting
10. Internet in virtual class room
11. Access available on 24 X7 basis
12. Problem solving
13. Lesson providing
14. Career oriented
15. Helps in developing personality
16. Effectiveness of visual oral aids on topic

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c. Virtual library provided
17. Timely information from library
18. Virtual library as compared to physical library
19. Convenience regarding downloading information

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d. Communication with the faculty
20. Nature of communication
security

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<th>Statements</th>
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<td>21. Responses to inquiry</td>
<td>50(100)</td>
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<td>22. Internal evaluation</td>
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<td>23. Issue of certificate</td>
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<th>e. Technical aspects concerning online education</th>
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<td>24. Security of data</td>
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<td>25. Security of sites</td>
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Source: Personal Survey, Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to row total.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Virtual classroom learning provided by the Educational Institution is modern and advanced. The classroom learning is provided to the students according to their convenience. There is no fixed timing and further students are not forced.

Virtual classroom also provides systematic presentation of topic through oral and visual aids. As per the response to statements 20 to 23, above 90 per cent in favour of these excellent facilities. The students can check out their result via net after its declaration. Responses to statements 20 to 23 indicate that students are highly satisfied with communication, evaluation and certification, except the examination conducted by such Educational Institutions.

Above 90 per cent students are satisfied with the communication and the students who are not satisfied may be due to their incapability to understand the new concepts. Though such Educational Institutions provides excellent anti-virus software, this is rarely updated and e-mail is down frequently due to virus.
CHALLENGES TO ONLINE EDUCATION

i. The teacher cannot guide and control the students which are a great challenge to the online education.

ii. The system cannot create emotional attachment among them as it occurs in classroom learning.

iii. Above 90 per cent of surveyed students are afraid of internet virus and hackers, therefore, need proper safeguards in this regard.

iv. Though online education conceptually tends to provide instant learning, but practically it fails.

v. Online learning is not possible if the users do not have the basic knowledge of operating computer.

vi. Conducting practical in Science subjects is very complicated in online programmes.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

On line Educational Institutions providing e-learning via net. It provides distance education and training anytime, anywhere through e-channels. Online education is an attempt to provide education and training with complete freedom. It creates interest in learning process by presenting lectures in the form of multimedia, graphics, pictures and voice. It
enables students for self assessment instantly through structured questions inbuilt in the learning materials.

It makes students more comfortable and provides scientific way to learn the advanced concepts. It is student oriented. It provides for everything to the students what he can not get through classroom learning. The professionals can advance and update their knowledge at lowest cost at their choice.

In spite of the advantages, the online education is not free from the challenges. The student is completely free from the direct disciplining by the teacher, which has made students out of control beyond the limits which is not a healthy sign. Further expert does not provide instant solution to the problem. As the learners are provided specific time to chat, some students miss the sessions due to technical snags and personal problems. Further, online education has some limitations regarding practical in science subjects, which are difficult to present in case of online media. Therefore, there is dire need to remove these imbalances to make the online education more effective.

REFERENCES

- N. Pandey (1998), Research in Teacher Education in India – some Emerging Issues, University News, Volume 36(3).