



TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND ODL SYSTEM: NEED AND CHALLENGES

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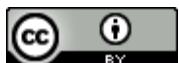
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Abstract

*Education is very important not only for the success of an individual but for the nation as well. It is a powerful instrument to bring about desired change in the individual as well as in the society. These changes are in terms of more physical and mental abilities, development of certain skills peculiar to each subject and better adjustment to the given situation environment. It is also considered the best investment for national development through the development of human. For this human development the **Conventional** and the **Distance** mode of education systems are contributing equally. Teacher education is an important area where Open and Distance Learning system has been used extensively to provide pre-service teacher preparation, upgrading of academic qualifications and in-service continuing professional development in particular subjects, content areas and instructional methods. This article discusses the need of ODL system in the field of teacher education and about the challenges in that particular area.*

Keywords: Distance Education, Teacher Education, Open and Distance Learning,



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INTRODUCTION

Since India attained independence, a good deal of attention has been paid to the quantitative and qualitative improvement in teacher education. The freedom of the country brought many problems too including the problem of teacher's training. At that time about half the number of teachers working in India were untrained for secondary schools. The Education Commission (1964-66) recognized in strong terms the urgent need to clear the backlog of untrained teachers and recommended opening supplementary channels. Summer courses, part time courses and correspondence courses were suggested by the commission as effective possibilities.

Teaching is becoming one of the most challenging professions in our society where knowledge is expanding rapidly and where teacher education programmes are becoming rigorous and skill oriented programme. In today's world teachers' are need to be equipped

not only with subject specific expertise and effective teaching methodologies but with the capacity to assist students to meet the demands of the emerging knowledge based society. Teacher education system is an important vehicle to improve the quality of school education. Teacher education is a part of professional education similar to the engineering, law and medicine.

Teachers throughout the world are experiencing an unprecedented transition in their role and status and demands of them are becoming increasingly multifaceted.

Over the years, the distance education system in India has grown into a dynamic and vibrant system of teaching and learning having a strong network of universities at the state and national levels to cater to the requirements of heterogeneous groups of learners. Open and Distance has been widely applied to teacher education and there is some record of success in its use.

The need for providing opportunities to untrained teachers to improve their professional competencies had always been felt and the emergence of distance education gave a new lease of life and greater popularity for the system. All over the world, distance mode of education is gaining momentum and becoming more popular than conventional education. The teacher education is not lagging behind and the distance mode to train teachers is also widely used around the world. Teacher education is an important area where distance education has been used extensively to provide pre-service teacher preparation, upgrading of academic qualifications and in-service continuing professional development in particular subjects, content areas and instructional methods. The advantages of distance education is that it makes teachers preparation and professional development programmes accessible to indigenous peoples and others located in remote, rural areas who do not have convenient access to higher education institutions and where there is often a shortage of well prepared teachers and other educational professional. Distance education playing an increasing role in helping address the growing shortage of teachers. Various commissions and committees like the Parekh Committee appointed by UGC in 1993, Lyngoh Committee (1994) and Takwal Committee (1995), all stressed the need for starting B.Ed through distance mode and recommended detailed norms to ensure the quality of distance programmes.

The NCFTE (NCTE-2010) also found that ODL as powerful instrument for providing professional support to the teacher, particularly with a view to overcoming the barriers of physical distance and time.

These days variety of teacher education programmes is being offered by universities through open and distance learning. Recent developments of technology and flexibility in academic

policies have brought the open and distance universities to the doorstep of the learners. Learning is not restricted to the time spent in school. It begins at birth and continuous all our life. Lifelong learning is becoming a part of modern life.

OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

There is no one definition of ODL. Rather there are many approaches to defining the term. Most definitions however pay attention to the following characteristics:

- Separation of Teacher and Learner
- Institutional Accreditation
- Use of mixed-media courseware
- Two-way Communication

TECHNOLOGIES USED IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM

Open and distance learning system emerged as a potential system through integration of various technologies. Using of technology provide assistance in improving learning and developing efficiency, and competency in teachers. It helps to change the role of educators from traditional method to using innovative technique methods of teaching. The technologies used in ODL system apart from print medium are the following:

- Audio,
- Video,
- Interactive audio via radio,
- Interactive video via satellite ,
- Virtual classroom via internet.

NEED FOR TEACHER TRAINING THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING

With the fast pace of development in the world, there is a deep felt need for innovation and innovative individuals who could provide a leading role to the development process. This is possible when the education system is geared up to train the learners to become creative and innovative. Teachers play a vital role in shaping up the future of the students. So it is necessary for the aspiring teachers to go through formal training to acquire the skills that would assist them in becoming role models. The main objectives of the teacher education course are to prepare individuals for this noble profession and help them learn the various aspects of it. Candidates who are already working or those looking for flexible mode of education can opt for the distance learning programmes offered by various institutions. The comprehensive courses offered enable them to wider their understanding ability and help them judge the needs of the students.

SALIENT ISSUES IN THE DISTANCE MODE TEACHER EDUCATION

The distance mode has lots of issues and challenges in the system. Few of them are mentioned below

- Selection of entrants
- In-service programme for teachers
- Curriculum delivery
- Funding
- Facilities
- Staffing
- Professionalization
- Multi-Media Instruction
- Support and Services

CHALLENGES IN DISTANCE MODE EDUCATION

Delivery of Course material

Conduct of Examinations

Publishing of Results

Sufficient professionally qualified teachers

Direct real time feedback from the students or teachers is not possible

The focus of ODL is on self learning

The Distance education system is a crucial vehicle in the sustained development of a knowledge society.

ADVANTAGES OF ODL

Flexible education delivery

Scope for self and lifelong learning

Cost effectiveness

With the help of media viz., Television, radio, computer, internet, newspapers and pamphlets it is possible to strengthen the quality and quantity of ODL in the scientific and technological world.

ICT have the potential to enhance access, quality and effectiveness in education in general and enable the development of more and more teachers in particular.

CONCLUSION

It may be conclude that Teacher Education is an important area where Distance Education mode has been used extensively. Distance Education has also undergone a tremendous

change in the recent days. Distance learners demand and expect a high level of service when it comes to delivery of course material and exams. Distance Education mode has its peculiar potentiality for Teacher Education which cannot be underestimated for improving both its quality and quantity. It has the great potential for meeting the requirements of the varied demands of human recourses. Teacher Education through Distance Education can bring about wonders in Teacher Education Programmes. Particularly, In- service Teacher Education Programmes can be successfully managed with the help of Distance Education Mode.

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