Quality of Teacher Education in ODE: Sustain by Technology

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Paper Received on: 10/05/2012
Paper Reviewed on: 16/05/2012
Paper Accepted on: 26/05/2012

Abstract

Open and distance learning is usually contrasted with 'conventional or face to face education' which may be described as the form of education which takes place in a classroom or an auditorium. So, the concept of open and distance learning suggests an educational approach designed to reach learners in their homes/offices/shops, etc, provide learning resources for them to qualify without attending formal classes in person, or create opportunities for lifelong learning, no matter where or when they want to study. This is the crucial time in front of us that teacher education is now burning issue in the educational policy of country. Today lot of questions stands on teacher education in the context of conventional and distance education. Conventional mode is today not capable to carry such issue in the proper way. Because large numbers of educational institutions/colleges are commenced, so the quality of teacher education in the system of conventional mode is in quizzical manner. Conventional approaches to teacher education have not met all the demands upon the profession and this has led to an interest in open and distance learning alternatives.Teacher education is a vital area where, we are using the ODL system extensively in order to provide pre-service teacher training, upgrading of academic qualifications, in-service continuing professional development in particular subjects, content areas and instructional methods. This can be used in developed and developing countries in the world. We have ample examples that distance learning initiatives in new ideas and technology for preparing new teachers or upgrade skills of the existing teaching force. The use of open and distance learning for teacher education is therefore a crucial strategy when expansion or quality improvement is needed in the public education system.Unless we can get more teachers, and better teachers, we will not reach the target of making quality education available for all by 2015. But there are still world shortages of teachers, still large numbers of under qualified teachers, and still many who need further professional education and training as they work. In this condition we have ethical responsibility to maintain the quality of teacher education and to provide better teachers and upgrade to all teachers in their teaching skills and their behavioral changes.

***Keywords**: ODL, Teacher Education, Quality, Technology*

Introduction:

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) believes that open and distance education is imperative to achieve the objectives of expansion, inclusion and excellence in higher education. In the country, Open University or distance education is viewed as a system which can do away with inequalities in the educational system. This new system of education which can democratize higher education by providing a second opportunity to all those who were denied it earlier which maintaining high quality in the contents of education.

> "ODE has an enormous potential to spread higher education opportunities beyond the brick and mortar world."
>
> - National Knowledge Commission, 2007

NKC is point out that the quality of ODE is not pleasing (NKC Report, pp48). It is needed to improve the excellence of ODE and to make it more appropriate to the needs of society. In such transformation condition of the country, ODE must use the proper channel and their sources and to improve our best and show that we can do. By and large, open learning is defined as 'an organized educational activity, based on the use of teaching materials, in which the constraints on study are minimized in terms of access, entry, or time and place, pace, method of study, or any combination of these'. So open and distance learning suggests an educational approach designed to reach learners in their homes/offices/shops, etc, provide learning resources for them to qualify without attending formal classes in person, or create opportunities for lifelong learning, no matter where or when they want to study. This is our potentialities' and in the higher education we shall make the focus of the opportunities to all people at educationally disadvantaged situations such as living in remote areas and for those mass, who have limited access to education of their choice.

TEACHER EDUCATION:

Today in the field of higher education, teacher education is most key issue in front of educational policy makers. The teacher education system in India, at present, is one of the largest systems in the world. Out of 56.6 million teachers (1998) nearly 4.6 million are Indians. The World Education Report 1998 mentions that out of every twelve teachers one is an Indian. India has a long tradition of teaching and learning and the traditional Indian teacher is still identified with values, commitment, devotion and affection to the learner. Such a well-established system cannot survive in isolation. The teacher education system at present has been influenced by the socioeconomic context, developments in science and technology, and the expansion of elementary education and predominance of economic pursuits over the spiritual aspirations of the people. Teachers are role models for the community and more effectively for learners.

The system becomes more bureaucratic than remaining academic and professional. It will have to be ensured in the process of teacher preparation that student-teachers imbibe a sense of pride in the Indian tradition and values associated with teaching. But today the picture of teachers is quietly different. Media and channels are active in the society and they are doing their work

very keenly. And they point out, unfortunately, some news and incidents are not in favor with teaching profession.

This is the crucial time in front of us that teacher education is now burning issue in the educational policy of country. Today lot of questions stands on teacher education in the context of conventional and distance education. Conventional mode is today not capable to carry such issue in the proper way. Because large numbers of educational institutions/colleges are commenced, so the quality of teacher education in the system of conventional mode is in quizzical manner. Conventional approaches to teacher education have not met all the demands upon the profession and so open and distance learning system should carry the situation, because we are binding to the grass root level society.

ODE IN TEACHER EDCAUTION:

Teacher education is a vital area where, we are using the ODE system extensively in order to provide pre-service teacher training, upgrading of academic qualifications, in-service continuing professional development in particular subjects, content areas and instructional methods. This can be used in developed and developing countries in the world. We have ample examples that distance learning initiatives in new ideas and technology for preparing new teachers or upgrade skills of the existing teaching force. The use of open and distance learning for teacher education is therefore a crucial strategy when expansion or quality improvement is needed in the public education system.

Unless we can get more teachers, and better teachers, we will not reach the target of making quality education available for all by 2015. But there are still world shortages of teachers, still large numbers of under qualified teachers, and still many who need further professional education and training as they work. In this condition we have ethical responsibility to maintain the quality of teacher education and to provide better teachers and upgrade to all teachers in their teaching skills and their behavioral changes.

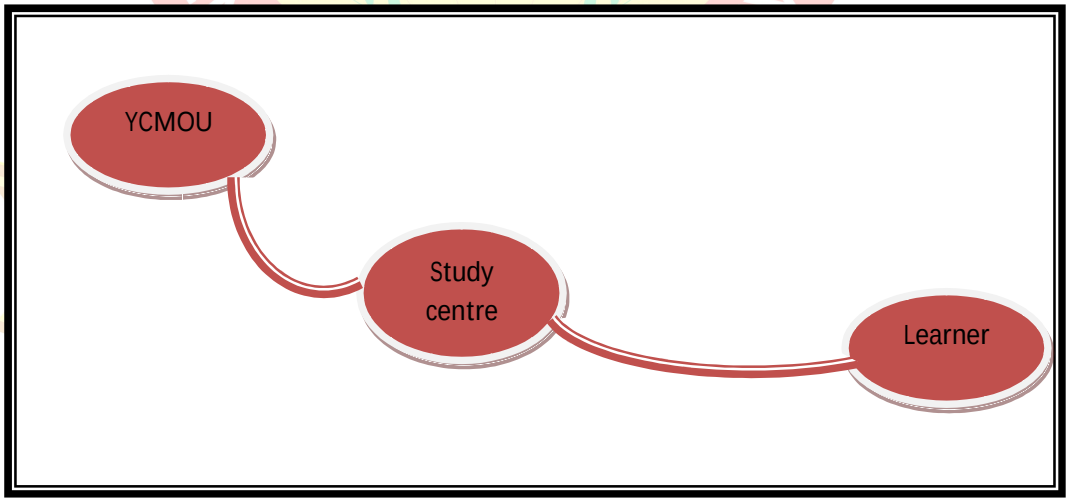
As we mentioned above that it is our ethical duty. Moreover we would like to say that we have some strong point and on that base we can maintain out quality in the field of teacher education. No doubt that we are doing the in this area but society can expect more best than good. So we have making some focal point, which are our strengthen area.

STRENGHS OF OPEN UNIVERISTIY:

1. Autonomy – Autonomous is the major part in the modernization of education. Because of this, university/institute can implement their policy, ideas, and own decision. And also we have own pedagogical merit, leading to different ways of conceiving knowledge generation and acquisition. Bachelor of education is most popular programme in India. Here in Maharashtra, most of primary teacher wants to complete this porgramme for their professional growth. With the help of power of autonomy we can generate this programme at very big level. Today in Maharashtra we have near about 35 study centers of this porgramme. When the matter of quality comes in the developing porgramme, we have to use specific concentrate on it. In

YCMOU the teacher education programme run successfully because their innovation e.g. the concept of CCM and Model of teaching are discussed in deep manner.

2. Academic credibility – In the conventional university we are always heard that their power is quietly depend on the academician. We would like to say, with the help our experiences, that the academicians in distance mode having eminence and divergent thinking. Because they have multiple work under the one roof. Conventional mode generally useful for available community. In contrast, distance education may help to develop qualified teachers and other educational professionals among the all type of community, who are also best able to adapt or develop curriculum resources that meet national standards but also reflect and integrate local culture and indigenous knowledge.
3. Infrastructure – this is the best showing matter in the educational hub. Infrastructure is the major part of any university in the world. This is your overt personality. Today Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nasik has 150 acres land and have splendor infrastructure. We have special evaluation section, independent library building, etc. In the respective area of Open University, there are our centers and those are working for us.
4. Fanatical Delivery System – this is the backbone of the Open University. YCMOU has established 7 regional centers. And in reference of teacher education programme. We have one center in each district of Maharashtra. The regional centers function as the principal coordinating and monitoring bodies of the study centers within the region. The study centers are actually involved in the implementation of the programme as the grass root-level, taking care of all functions like students registration, counseling, A-V displaying, information-dissemination etc.



No doubt that we are working in outstanding in delivery system but in the point of view quality, our regional centers should be objective monitoring and to enhance their management, tutoring, counseling and their general function and facilities

5. Students Support Services – The philosophy behind students support services is to open only for to remove the barriers, which are hurdle in the path of education for living in remote areas' society. If we want to maintain the quality of our services, we

have to develop mechanism for providing continuous and flexible services and to use of electronic media.

6. Research – In the Oct, 1989 YCMOU began to focus on the developing research as an important activity of the university. We have successfully run the PGR programme (Post graduate and research progarmme) since 1990. the distinct identity of the PGR porgramme as compared to those offered in the traditional or conventional, formal channel of education, is illustrated through the following:
    - Emphasis on the 'communication' of existing knowledge in the various subjects rather than generation of new knowledge. The three areas of research identified for the PGR programes are : (1) distance education , (2) Educational communication, and (3) Subject Communication
    - Today we have been running successfully the porgramme of M.Phil and Ph.D. the procedure of Ph.D programme is quietly difficult in the sense of quality.
      At presently UGC point out and stop the research programme, which is conducted by distance mode. We are known as university not institute, and without research not a single university survives their identity as university. So we have put our stand in front of UGC.

This is the strength of Open University. On the basis of such supremacy, we can maintain the real sense of quality in the field of higher education. Quality it is now well recognized by each university either open or conventional. In the world of technology, we can do best in the field of teacher education.

TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHER EDUCATION.

Today in the fast and rapid world, open and distance education is valuable and demanded so that we can use the new computer-based technologies to make in outstanding position and to develop the quality of higher education. It is possible, through an internet connection, both to distribute material to learners electronically rather than physically and to teach them, by means of a computer program, or engage in dialogue with them by email or computer conferencing. This is really big question in front of us how would we use the technology in distance mode, because there are some hurdles and those are definitely discouraged to operation system. Therefore we should mentally prepare for such technology and we have to remove some bias from our mind that there is dilemma to handle the technology. There are available different types of technology.

There is no single answer to the question 'which technology is best?' Indeed, one starting point for choosing technologies is to recognize that media do not differ in their effectiveness. Of course a particular subject, or a particular kind of learning, may lend itself to a particular medium; print is not ideal for learning the pronunciation of an unfamiliar language and so on. But a long line of research, and much practical experience, has shown that where you can compare different media for teaching the same subject matter, there are no significant differences in teaching effectiveness between different them (Clark 1983). But there is some evidence to suggest that combinations of media are likely to be more effective than any single medium. Practicalities support this argument: if something is available both on the radio and in print then you have an alternative if you miss the radio programme or if the printed document does not arrive. A careful blend of media, drawing on their individual strengths and minimising their individual limitations, is likely to produce the best results.

To choose between technologies we need to look their strengths and weaknesses, to ask whether the infrastructure is in place to use them, and to examine the costs. And also we can choose our technologies on grounds such as their appropriateness, convenience and reassured that many different combinations of technology are likely to be effective.

Table- 1 Technology Uses in Teacher Education

Sr.No	ICT	Function in teacher education and development	Strengths	Limitations and requirements
1	**PRINT**	Provides information, concepts and examples in a structured way.	A learning resource in a permanent form, permitting individual or group use. A portable and convenient resource. Copies can be used by more than one teacher. Good for explaining theory and concepts and providing detailed information.	Physical distribution of the materials can be slow or difficult in some contexts. Requires relatively lengthy preparation time and team-working by those producing the materials.
2	**RADIO**	Provides topical information and current news for teachers and reach all or most teachers at the same time	Often widely accessible by teachers and to integrate effectively with print Use of local radio can increase the relevance of programmes and respond to local needs or languages.	Scheduled transmission times may be inconvenient. Has a poor and unglamorous image
3	**AUDIO**	Provides illustrations through sound.	Offers a permanent resource for individuals or groups. Is relatively portable.	Needs skilled integration with print or other media. Content often needs designing differently from

			Cassette players are often widely accessible by teachers Combines effectively with print, and can extend the use of radio programmes through recording for re-play. Is low cost to develop and duplicate. Provides good models in language learning and teaching, and sequences of natural conversation.	radio programmes.
5	**TELEVISION**	Provide a processes in real-time or slowed down or in close-up (e.g. classroom interaction, language development, mathematical operations). Can reach a mass audience of teachers and the community.	To demonstrate real contexts and provide rich visual content. Can combine a variety of content (e.g. site visits to schools; interviews, dynamic simulations, and examples of teachers' work). Can be combined with other media. Can provide topical content.	High programme development costs and may be high transmission costs. (But modest cost per viewer possible on large enough scale.)
6	**VIDEO**	Provides a means for student-teachers to observe themselves on recorded video in a teaching situation.	Provides opportunities for practice and experiment followed by feedback; helps the student-teacher develop specific skills	More difficult to do over a distance.

			(Such as questioning, explaining, managing time-on-task, setting up group-work, is using a particular teaching method). Gives attention to the individual student teacher	
7	**VIDEO-CONFERENCING**	Enables real-time interaction among teachers and educators in different locations	Can support development of teachers across large distances, enabling contact between groups. Can provide topical content at short notice more easily than print (has the immediacy (or more) of radio). Can make scarce expertise available widely.	Requires technical support, including at remote sites. Requires students to travel to venue; given the cost of equipping sites, these are likely to be less local than options using different technologies.
8	**COMPUTERS**	Provides access to information on CD-rom and local databases.	Can provide access to large amounts of resources for teachers to select from and use as appropriate in their own contexts or for their own development. Its use helps teachers to develop their own personal computer skills.	Technical support is needed and may be scarce in rural areas.
9	**COMPUTER COMMUNICATION**	Provides access to databases, either on a local area network provided by the education authorities, or the Internet.	To provide a wide range of multimedia materials, if the infrastructure permit.	Problems of access and cost in some countries. Requires an adequate infrastructure (electricity, telecommunications),

(Source - UNESCO)

Within teacher education, the new technologies have been used for two different purposes. One is training teachers to learn about information and communication technologies and their use in teaching as computers are introduced to schools. In many countries this is being done through face-to-face training programmes, e.g. Pune University introduced the ICT paper separately. In the distance mode we have make ample place for ICT. Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University has been taken initiative and to start the B.ED (e-Education). No doubt that we are facing lot of problem to implement this programme. But with the help of ICT and continuous learning of technology, we will definitely overcome all the hindrance.

ANNEXURE- 1

UNESCO report suggests some guild lines to us for strengthening to teacher education with the help of Information and Communication Technology.

- Convenience and availability for learners are all important: we need to ensure that the technology does fit with learners' needs and realities.
- Technology needs to be appropriate for the curriculum and for teaching effectiveness. While arguments based on minimizing cost, and keeping technology as simple as possible, might often lead us to print, this is not ideal for all purposes and has limitations in terms of motivating students.
- Technical backup and support needs to be in place: it is no good relying on a technology if it cannot be used by students; many videocassettes sitting on shelves in remote villages bear witness to this. Maintenance needs to be planned for.
- The costs need to be affordable for the institution and for the learner.''
- There are particular difficulties in achieving a balance here within small states where the use of sophisticated technology may force educators into dependence on external sources with the danger of cultural hegemony by large countries and large international companies.

In general the challenge is to find an appropriate trade-off between quality and cost, justifying any move away from the simplest and cheapest technologies but resisting untested arguments that they are the only ones to be considered.

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