



Growing Trends of Distance Learning in India –Problems, Performances and Prospects

Dr. SHASHIKUMAR, Department of Sociology, Government First Grade College for Women, Hassan, Karnataka

Abstract

This paper examines the factors responsible for the growing significance of Distance Learning (DL) and analyses its prospective expansion in India. The concept of DL has been a great assistant for aspirants to pursue education, to continue their education, to career advancements and in opening the doors of opportunities for their future good life. The DL helps to education to the rural and marginalized people specially women and people belonging to scheduled sections. DL is becoming popular because it is beyond all family obligations, social challenges and financial constraints as it provides a mechanism for continuing education for youth through the creation of an learning sustainability environment.

Key Words: *Distance Learning, learning benefits, Prospects, Challenges*

Introduction: The concept of Distance Learning (DL) was first commissioned in 1962 in India. Then the inception of DL was very innovative and it gradually picked up momentum. Progressively it has grown into a vibrant mode of teaching and learning with one national Open University, 12 state universities and 120 distance education centers across India. Some are working under conventional universities, some as private institutions and some are autonomous centers while some are under state control. As of now nearly 4 million students are under DL. Nearly 22% of the



student enrollment is under DL.(Amrik Singh (2004).

As DL helps to promote educational habits among the rural and marginalized people specially women and people belonging to scheduled sections its importance is continuously growing. DL bars family compulsions, community challenges and monetary constraints as it provides a mechanism for contributing to continue education for youth. It provides all types of education, traditional courses to management courses, certificates courses to post graduate diploma courses M. Phil degrees to doctorate degrees. (Amrik Singh - 2004)

The Process of Learning

DL is learning from a remote distance. There will be a gap in learning as they do not come under direct connectivity with the instructors as it is the case in regular learning. (Aruna Goel andS. L. Goel - 2010) .They are not monitored, they are not given

any regular class work, they are not listening to regular lectures they do not attend regular classes but this gap between student and instructor is bridged by technology in DL(Amrik Singh - Fifty Years Of Higher Education In India)

DL works through

1. **Postal service** -where printed notes are sent to each student. This method was the initial method of DL because well prepared lessons were sent to each student and he could contact the instructor through contact course work for 10 days where he could exchange his doubts in lessons.
2. **Audio tapes:** where a student could listen to pre recorded lectures by experts make notes and self study.
3. **Video conferencing:** where a student and the instructor exchanged lessons ,clarified subject details , helped each other through internet conversation
4. **Satellite broad casts:** where pre- programmed lessons



are available through satellite network in the name of EDUSAT

5. **Online technical av aids** -where a student can learn about the subjects of study through online technical AV methodology

Benefits of distance learning

There are various method of learning through DL it is growing extensively because it has several benefits of learning

1. It helps learning aspirants of remote areas to pursue study
2. It helps career advancements and career opportunity aspirants to move up
3. It helps to increase upward education level
4. It helps career prospects and promotional benefits of already employed people
5. It helps the poor and the under privileged persons to streamline into academically poignant circle
6. It helps poor and the under privileged persons to pursue

study as the course fees are very less

7. It helps housewives to practice education which helps them to empower themselves by making their leisure time motivating
8. It helps women and needy to work from home as well and earn a suitable living
9. It helps the marginalized group of aspirants as it saves time, energy, money and health
10. It helps semi employed , half employed temporarily employed to outreach themselves with furthering their qualifications as DL study centers at their nearest reach

Performance criteria and upward expansion:

The causes for the upward expansion of DL in post LPG era have been motivational for the policy makers to increase DL centers all over India. The following causes have been key



factors in popular growth of DL centers. DL provides

1. DL has been an appropriate access tool to education
2. DL provides equal accessibility to socio political hierarchies
3. Geographical inaccessibility is a dream now as anybody from any distant area can pursue learning.
4. DL bridges the gap of inappropriate decentralization of educational process
5. DL exposes several inherent shortcomings of traditional method of University learning
6. DL can congregate the accelerated demands of economy for skilled people with several optional opening of skill based learning tailored for market demands
7. DL supports outbound mobility of students .Students who are dropouts, repeatedly failed students , part-time working students, etc can

pursue education from where they have left.

8. DL espouses the values of accessibility and flexibility for all levels of DL aspirants
9. DL conveys the values of open learning in a new mold designed for market needs
10. DL infuses an upward progression of academic culture

Lacunae of DL

Even though DL is popular with aspirants of continuing education there have been several shortfalls which is hitting the momentum of growth. (Amrik Singh -Fifty Years Of Higher Education In India) .

1. Postal delays in providing source materials in time
2. Hold ups and slow communication as the aspirants are always from backward / remote areas.
3. Irrational Postponement of exam dates
4. Delay in result announcement



5. Impediments in holding course contact classes
6. Lack of arrangement for pre-course work
7. Lack of infrastructure in study centers
8. Increased rupture of exam destinations
9. Absence of notification if any
10. No familiar environment
11. Technological impediments
12. Inaccessibility of internet in remote areas

Need for prospective growth

We know that inability to exploit and generate knowledge capital has been costing India dearly. India is being listed as an emerging super power and it has to capitalize on vast human resources. (Report of the Distance Education Council -2013). India has young generation by 50 %. Following knowledge oriented paradigm of development would enable India to leverage this demographic advantage. Even after several popular thoughts

that D L is making a upward escalation there have been several shortfalls where DL needs restructuring. (Aruna Goel and S.L.Goel - 2010)

Shortfalls of DL

1. Need for modular restructured planning of the market relevant courses
2. Well designed traditional courses
3. Special instructional techniques
4. Innovative methods of faster communication
5. Increased use of Electronic devices for instruction
6. Techno savvy administrative arrangements
7. Filling up Organizational lacuna

Accessibility through internet has made students to learn anything at a faster pace these days. As market trends are changing corporate skills have become the main stay. Hence internet can be tapped to deliver corporate skills



and knowledge to distant learners. Thus it caters to the need of time and person individual dreams of great career. Flexibility of high end tutorials quality of learning It cuts down on travel expenses reduces the need for costly class room based learning helps to provide more time in workplace. All this has lead to the extensive growth of learning through DL. (Report of the Distance Education Council -2013).

Conclusion- Thus DL enhances the learning capabilities of the youth who are reaching out to sky in order to obtain a great career. India now needs a second wave of institution building as it is marching ahead of super powers in global scenario. DL can become a strategist for organizational improvement, a guide in cross

cultural communication, a mentor in dealing with academic diversity. India's inability to exploit and generate knowledge capital has to be structurally altered and it has to capitalize on its vast human resources.

References

1. Amrik Singh -Fifty Years Of Higher Education In India -The Role Of UGC -Sage publications, New Delhi 2013).
2. Aruna Goel andS. L. Goel (2010).Encyclopedia of higher education - Deep and Deep Publications New Delhi - 2010
3. Indira Gandhi National Open University Act -1985
4. Report of the Distance Education Council -2013



Dr. SHASHIKUMAR