

Technology Enabled Networked Collaboration in Distance Teacher Education

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Abstract

India has one of the largest systems of higher education. Teachers have an important role to play in making education relevant to the needs of the emerging modern society. This is possible, only if teachers are well trained through effective teacher education programmes. Tamilnadu Open University is the pioneer in offering B.Ed Programme in distance mode since 2004. Every year 1000 in-service teachers are admitted as student-teachers in 10 Programme Study Centers.

The Networked Collaboration is an emerging technology that make interactive, flexible and accessible learning possible for any potential recipient. This will provide complete professional skill and training for B.Ed. students-teachers. The vital role and functions of School of Education, Regional Center at Dharmapuri, B.Ed Programme Study Centers (PSCs) is to provide timely support services in all activities to its student-teachers is done through Social Media Technology Enabled Network Collaboration.

The paper enumerates Historical Perspectives of Teacher Education - Post Independence India, Role of Regional Center in both administrative, academic activities Role of Social Media in Networked Collaboration in B.Ed programme.

Keywords: Technology Enabled Networked Collaboration, Role of Regional Center, B.Ed in Distance Education

1. Introduction

All India Statistics report on Higher education (AISHE) states that Gross Enrolment in higher education is 25.8 and Tamilnadu state Gross Enrolment is 46.9. Among Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system is being mandated to increase its share to about 40%. The ODL system becomes an educational mode supplementary, complementary and alternative to conventional system of education. Distance education is a wider system in terms of both connotation and denotation. Its connotation is wider because it works in a much larger learning situation. It has a wider denotation in that it covers a considerable distance in order to effect academic communication.

The concept of distance education is basically a democratic idea. The learning resources in distance education is open to all. So, it can be reviewed and revised from time to time. The quality and quantity of distance learning depends all kinds of inter-personal communication. The system is self-reliant and autonomous. Today teaching is a profession requiring specialization in terms of knowledge and skills. Teacher education has not come up to the requisite standards. Teachers are not able to think critically and solve the issue related to teaching methods, content, and organizations etc.

The paper discuss History of Teacher education, Structure and function of B.Ed (DE) in Tamilnadu Open University, Technology enabled Networking Collaboration, Role of Social Media by Regional centre at Dharmapuri, Discussion and Conclusion.

2. Define

1. Goods Dictionary of Education explains, “Teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or discharge his responsibilities more effectively”.
2. Clinton stated in his Call for Action for American Education in the 21st Century that, “Every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. We have enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into to the 21st century if we recruit promising people into teaching into give them the highest quality preparation and training”.
3. Teacher Education = Teacher Skills + Pedagogical theory skills + Professional skills.

3. Historical Perspectives of Teacher Education - Post Independence India:

After Independence, several committees, commissions were prepared and brought into force to review and suggest progress in teacher education. These are as follows:

1. University Education Commission (1948-49)
2. Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)
3. Ford Foundation Term (1954)
4. Piers Committee (1956)
5. A report on the state of teacher education in late 1960
6. In 1964, a General Inspection Commission was appointed by the University of Madras to inspect all the training colleges.
7. State Institute of Education was established in 1965
8. The Education Commission (1964-66)
9. National Policy Statement on Education (1968)
10. First Asian Conference of Teacher Education (1971)
11. Efforts of Indian Association of Teachers Educators (IATE)
12. National Commission on Teachers –I (1983-85)
13. The National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986
14. Acharya Ramamurthi Committee (1990)
15. NPE Programme of Action (1992)
16. Yaspal Committee (1992)
17. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005
18. National Knowledge Commission (2007)
19. B.Ed course was started as correspondence mode by Himachal Pradesh University, Jaipur University and several South Indian universities.
20. Regional Colleges were started at Ajmer, Mysore, Bhubaneswar and Bhopal.
 - Eleventh Five Year Plan was a boost for education sectors. It focused on Strengthening Teacher Education, Technology in teacher education, Integrating elementary teacher education with higher education
21. Twelfth Five Year Plan, emphasize integration of technology in teacher education in teacher education to promote openness for adaptability to new technology for developing professionalism.
22. In 2004, Tamilnadu Open University had started B.Ed course in distance mode after long years. From 2004 to 2006, only 500 student teachers were admitted English medium.
23. From 2006, additional of 500 student teachers were admitted in Tamil medium. Totally 1000 students are admitting in 10 B.Ed colleges named as programme study centres.
24. According to the recent NCTE (2009) rules and regulations, D.Ted is the compulsory eligible criteria for the B.Ed. Admission, because of this for the past 2-3 years, 1000 seats are not able to fill up.

25. Currently, 10 Universities are conducting B.Ed programme in distance mode.

4. Structure and Functions of B.Ed programme in Tamilnadu Open University

Tamilnadu Open University is offering B.Ed Programme in distance mode since 2004. Totally 1000 students are admitting in 10 B.Ed colleges named as programme study centers from the year 2006 to till date. The B.Ed. Programme in distance stream is executed through 10 B.Ed. colleges as Programme Study Center (PSC). Every PSC has in take capacity of 100 student teachers.

The Administrative flow is as follows: TNOU Head Quarters – Controller of Examinations – Assistant Registrar of Admission – School of Education – Regional Centers – Learning Support Centres- LSC In charge – LSC Assistant In charge and Clerks. The Academic flow is as follows: TNOU –Head in School of Education – All Faculty – Regional Coordinators in all 8 Centers - LSC Principal in 10 Learning Support Centers - All Faculty in the Centres.

5. Current Challenges in B.Ed. distance stream:

1. Subject knowledge: The B.Ed programme should ensure the development of respective subject knowledge along with teaching skills.

2. Integration of skills: Life skills, techno-pedagogic skills, info-savvy skills, emotional skills, human developmental skills and spiritual skills are need to be integrated in distance B.Ed. also.

3. Innovative Methods of Teaching: In some colleges, schools teachers are not showing interest towards adopting innovative methods and experimenting ICT methods as observed in common view.

4. Internship: The 1st year B.Ed has 15 days of Observation classes, for which proper guidelines are not given to school teachers. Similarly in 2nd year 75 days of Practice Teaching is not monitored by university and B.Ed programme study centres with more effectively and continuously and confidentially. The practice teaching word should be modified into 'Internship' programme. The current Internship training does not provide proper opportunities for student teachers to development their teaching components. Generally Internship is not taken seriously and professionally by student teachers. They may show lack of sense of duty, and they remain irresponsible, aimless. Internship model should be developed that create close rapport between school teacher's regular day today work in a school and student teacher's training work in the same school. So, Internship is the heart of B.Ed. course in distance mode, more emphasis should be given scientifically.

5. Complete Monitoring and Feedback: The lesson plan writing, development of Instructional Aids and usage skills in class room should be followed by school teachers. Similar may be monitored by Teacher educators in B.Ed learning Support centres and University.

6. Monitoring of B.Ed Programme Study Centres: All LSCs should be under strict control of this regulatory body for the selection of teachers, students and provision of good infra-structure.

7. Insufficient co-curricular activities: There is no importance for co-curricular activities like NCC, NSS, Field trips, etc in distance B.Ed programme.

6. Solution to the Current Challenges

1. Training in value education and stress management: This could help students in managing stress and educate young minds in right direction by appropriate values.
2. Development of Critical thinking: Teachers should be able to think critically and make decisions in all occasions and encourage student teacher's capacity to construct knowledge.
3. Development of Skills: The life skills includes Thinking skills, Self Awareness, Problem solving, creative thinking, Decision making, and Critical thinking, Social Skills such as Interpersonal Skills, Effective Communication Skills, Emotional and stress Management.
4. Developing Competency of Teachers: The usage of science and technology and ICT in effective learning in teacher education.
5. Leveraging ICT: Technology usage is high for managerial and administrative measures. Websites are being developed and accessed by the institutions. Internet access, computer labs, hardware and software resources are beginning to be available to all Academic Counsellors (Teacher educators) and make available to all student teachers also during counselling classes.

6. Academic Quality of Teacher Educators: Lifelong learning of Teacher educators can be continuously updated by Professional Development courses, Refresher courses, Short term courses, Workshops, Conferences, MOOC courses and other Online courses.
7. Academic Uniformity: It should be ensured and maintained with respect of subjects, curriculum, structure and all aspects.
8. Co-curricular and Extracurricular activities: These are essential part of a good teacher education. Various activities such as assembly programme, community living, library study, social work and other social extension activities.
9. Strengthening the Resources in B.Ed centres: Library, Laboratory, Language Laboratory, Digital laboratory resources.
10. Creation of Teacher Education Hub: All distance teacher education faculty and students should create Research Hub, to fulfill the research and development.
11. Research and Innovation: Most research activities are independent research studies. There is a lack linkage within the university or with the departments.

7. Networked Collaboration

‘Network’ is a technical term, it means an arrangement where learners and teachers are linked together through means of computer communication to interact with each other. ‘Collaboration’ means a conscious decision to cooperate with each other to promote active learning. The learning resources are pooled together and cooperate to help each other depending on the need and convenience.

Networked Collaboration an emerging technology that make interactive, flexible and accessible learning possible for any potential recipient. This will provide complete professional skill and training for distance mode B.Ed students. Computer mediated conferencing is possible through e-mail while the internet helps the learners to access a wide range of knowledge and information. It gives variety of sources and to interact with peers and teachers.

The 10 LSCs, interactive media facilities are available to student teachers about details of admission, counseling classes, assignments, workshop, and practice teaching. Likely teaching professionals get necessary information and contacts to benefit mutually to grow better and faster in their careers, while learners get opportunities to get new sources of learning. The LSC have the chance to share, clarify and interact about claims, vouchers, forms, bills through internet/website.

Necessary steps to be taken for quality improvement of Education system. The steps are as follows: Infrastructure facilities including ICTs, Functioning of Faculty, Pre-Admission strategies, Admission Process, Attendance, Counseling Classes, Delivery system, Instructional and Institutional, Evaluation and Feedback, Reflective Action and Future Plan.

To make student-teachers more self-reliant, independent and self-confident at different levels. The system emphasis is on making every learner able to learn himself. The school of education supporting the individual learning of the student whether alone or in groups, while in contrast the mass- produced elements are essential and integral. Therefore, the functions of school of education and role of faculty is significant.

8. Role of Regional Centre in Net Work Collaborative Activities though Social Media

The Regional Centers is using variety of Social Media to execute the above listed B.Ed administrative and academic activities. Regional Centre, Dharmapuri has monitoring 2 Learning Support Centres as follows: Crescent College of Education, Thiruvannmalai, Bharathi College of Education, Salem. It has created and using what up, Twitter, Facebook, which informed to all Learning Resource Centers, Community Colleges, Learning Support Centers and Representatives of Student teachers in the current year.

1. Pre –Admission: The advertisement of B.Ed prospectus is already published in university web site www.tnou.ac.in which will be disseminated and doubt about eligibility criteria with other details will

- be answered via social media. The Regional centre has 3 mail id are using for answering the criteria, check list and involving in promotional activities.
2. During the Induction and 1st class, the mobile number, social media Id was collected by selected 4 Representatives for I, II year separately.
 3. The Schedule of Counseling Classes, Terms and conditions are informed to all student teachers, faculty in colleges.
 4. Teaching of theory classes: The Time Table was prepared earlier and informed to all via social media.
 5. Assignments questions are usually published in website of university, also informed to all students via social media
 6. The Workshop programme is compulsory. The schedule is prepared well in advance and informed to all student teacher's mobile via social media. The PSC is asking any doubt via social media and get clarification immediately.
 7. The Model lesson plans is published at the time of workshop and taught to all students. Moreover if any doubt student teachers are using the social media.
 8. Schedule and teaching of practical classes via social media is regular activity which involved by Regional centers.
 9. The social media is using for preparing of teaching aids and involved in guidance.
 10. Previous 3 years theory question papers and guidance is given to all student teachers via social media.
 11. All students are train to prepare practical examinations in details via social media
 12. If any student teachers ask how to get Consolidate mark statement, the answer will be given via any social media.
 13. If any student teachers ask how to get Provisional certificate, the answer will be given via any social media.
 14. If any student teachers ask how to get Getting Geniuses certificate, the answer will be given via any social media.
 15. If any student teachers ask how to get Convocation certificate, the answer will be given via any social media.
 16. Guiding in getting promotion in school education department via social media.
 17. All variety of guidance and counseling is delivered via social media for any activities of B.Edprogramme.

9. Discussion and conclusion

A general goal, however seems to be that the student teachers are supposed to acquire sufficient subject, pedagogical knowledge, skills and training. As Distance educators, our challenge is to capture Networked Collaboration for the benefit of all. It is not easy to implement Networked Collaborative Learning, because there are various related domains that are needed to be considered before implementation. These include the selection of media connectivity, networking technologies, the hardware and software infrastructure, quality content creation and required manpower.

The first challenges is to change the attitude and mentally of teachers who are directly or indirectly connected with ODL system. They have fear from change, time commitment, appearing incompetent, techno-failure and rejection or reprisals. They need to move from a passive to an active. The second challenge concerns funds. In Tamilnadu, it is not possible for the government to invest huge amounts on Net Work Collaboration, So Institution should invest fund in establishment of the same and training on it.

There is need to update faculty's knowledge about new ideas and research in the field of pedagogy of social sciences, languages, and physical sciences and perspectives on education that is, education sociology and philosophy. Inter institutional interactions, refresher courses and avenues to participate in academic interactions would be desirable for fulfilling such objectives. The NCTE should conduct review meeting to revise the rules and regulations according to the current problems and status.

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