



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Problems of Women's Education through Distance Mode: A Study

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ABSTRACT

The method of distance education is also being resorted to on a large scale for intrusting women into higher education. But, still it is limited. Education for women has been emphasized in the recent years with the slogam 'educating a women means educating an entire family in prospect'. Therefore, Distance Education system has to play a vital role to improve the women literacy rate. A new creative, relevant and constructed pedagogy for distant education is yet to emerge. The paper concludes by pointing those positive features of the flexible distance education system that will break all the barriers and certainly attract the women from various corners for pursuing their higher education.

Key words: Women Education, Distance Education, social imperative

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INTRODUCTION

Education is both an economic necessity and a social and moral imperative for women. Development holistically concerned in terms of cultural, social, political and economical domains calls for a massive need oriented education. Education has to overcome the garden inequalities independent as well as instrumental values. Late Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi correctly said "Education is a liberating force and in our age it is also a democratizing force, by birth and other circumstances". Hence, it is the basic minimum requirement for creating awareness among women and it is vital for the accelerated and effective participation of women distance education can play a role in this endeavour.

The term 'Distance Education' came to be accepted more and more, in preference to others and eventually the international council for correspondence education (ICCE) changed its name to international council for distance education (ICDE) in 1982 at its 12th conference at Vancouver Canada. There are many definitions available for distance education. The simplest seems to be distance education occurs when interacting learner and the teacher are separated by time and / or space. In India during the past sixty years of independence various efforts have been made by the Government and Non-Governmental bodies to increase the literacy rate and spread of education. At the beginning of the twentieth century India had only 4 universities and at present there are 268 universities and there total enrolment of students is 85,00,000. Which the quantitative growth may look to be relatively large it is still insufficient to meet growing

demand of the population and the varied needs of the national development. In this regard, distance education has emerged as one of the important modes in spreading education to these who are movable to utilize the regular mode of education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educational planners, and administrators find distance education system as an effective method of promoting women's education. Because of certain inherent limitations in the conventional system of education, women's education has not been well promoted. It is found that by removing the limitations of the formal system, the non-formal system of education can be developed which can promote women's welfare, development and empowerment. For women's development, education is very essential. Hence, the development of women's education has been proposed and practiced through various forms of non-formal education, of which distance education is an important form. This paper has gathered evidence to show that women's education can be well further promoted and developed through distance education system.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rais Ahmed (1977) examined the utility of existing educational system and emphasized the need to identify a new pattern of education. He felt that under the existing system the upliftment of backward and deprived sections of the society is doubtful.

J.P. Naik (1977) visualized the role which distance education could play for the promotion of extension work in rural community. Naik also advocated the use of the techniques of distance education for evolving sound methods of effective training to the functionaries working at grass root level including teachers in rural areas.

Gore (1982) has emphasized the role of education for modernizing the country and pointed out its shortcomings. Gore believes that the existing educational system lacked clear focus as well as effective implementation.

As the call for reforms in the educational systems the world over became louder, it had an effect on the Indian scenario. Meanwhile, the importance of distance education was duly emphasized in the National Policy on Education Policy (1986) as well as the Programme of Action (1992). The NPE called it as an "instrument of democratizing education". This created a more conducive atmosphere for the promotion of distance education.

Lewis and Spencer (1986) use open learning as a term to describe courses flexibly designed to meet individual requirements. It is often applied to the provision which tries to remove barriers that prevent attendance at more traditional courses, but it also suggests a learner centred philosophy.

According to Lewis (1988) the terms "Open and 'Learning' have their own significance importance once. "Open points out the acts of individual choice that are central to learning; 'Learning' because this reminds the providers that they are there to help learner to bring about desired change.

Perraton (1982) called distance education an educational process in which a significant proportion of teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and or time from the learner.

According to an estimate about 20 percent of the total students are now learning through distance education mode. In 1975-76 enrolment into formal stream was 97.42 percent and enrolment in distance mode was 2.58 percent. In between 1975-76 to 2000-01 there had been a decrease at enrolment into formal stream from 97.42% to 79.40%. At the same time enrolment in distance mode had increased from 2.58% to 20.60 percent. Development and prosperity of a nation cannot be measured only by technological and scientific advancement but by the quality of life of all the people living and development of a nation depends upon elevation of the women and lot of the weaker sections of the country.

In India among the illiterates, the females are more in number. But, after independence the female literacy rate has been increasing gradually women literacy rate, in 1901 was 0.6 percent and in 2001 women literacy rate was 54.16%. This there is a growth in enrolment of women in higher education in the last 100 years.

As per the information of UNESCO in many countries quantitatively more women are opting higher education than men. But in India the situation is different in case of higher education on the percentage of women is only 10.0 percent in 1950-51 and now it is 37.65 percent. Illiteracy is the cause as well as the consequence of poverty and under development. Hence the removal of illiteracy and the universalization of education among women becomes imperative for women development.

OBJECTIVES

The study has the following objectives.

1. To explain the overview of women's education.
2. To explain how the Distance Education fulfills the needs of the unreached especially women who are not been extensively covered by formal education.
3. To analyse women learners problems through Distance mode.

HYPOTHESIS

Distance education made helps in promoting women's education.

The methodology adopted in this study in a case study author.

The School of Distance Learning and Continuing education (SDLCE) of Kakatiya University had been chosen for this case study.

The women students admitted to the under graduate programme in this school are drawn from both formal and non-formal streams. Students who have completed intermediate course i.e. 10+2 of formal education are given direct administration in to B.A/B.Com courses. Under distance education system students without any basic qualification are given admission in to undergraduate course provided they pass the eligibility test conducted by the SDLCE, KU after attaining the age of 18 years.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The present study is based on primary as well as secondary sources of data. For the primary data collection 100 women students have been chosen the interview method had been used to gather references from them.

The distance education system is expected to serve the educational needs of socially, economically and geographically disadvantaged persons as well as the needs of continuing education and meet such emerging challenges as are not foreseen and met by the formal system. In order to assess how for these needs are fulfilled we may consider the evidences obtained with respect to the problems faced by women learners.

PROBLEMS EXPRESSED BY WOMEN LEARNERS THROUGH DISTANCE MODE

Distance education of conventional universities does not enjoy autonomy and freedom to experiment and innovate provides majorities of distance courses. A majority of correspondence courses have inbuilt resistance to changes and are not sensitive to the new educational demands. Some of problems and deficiencies of this mode of education on expressed by women learners in the interviews conducted with them are:

ACADEMIC

1. Delayed supply of study material
2. Study material is of too high standard
3. Difficulty with subject
4. Inadequate counseling classes
5. Delay in conduct of examinations and announcement of results.

6. Lack of use of library facilities
7. No proper correspondence from institution

DOMESTIC

1. Family burden and responsibilities
2. Care of children, husband and other household activities
3. Lack of proper guidance and encouragement
4. Lack of support from family members
5. Health problems of family members
6. Rigid social customs and traditions of the family

FINANCIAL

1. Inability to remit fees in time
2. Some times father/husband not interest to pay the fees and they will not provide money.

SUGGESTIONS

For further promotion and development of women education through distance mode, some of the suggestions are:

1. Distance Education institutions should increase the number of study centres
2. Prompt replies to inquiries by students
3. The course material should be prepared in a self-instructional format with a simple language for easy understanding of the women learner
4. Delay in delivery of the course material must be avoided
5. The institution should increase the number of counseling classes
6. Introduction of job oriented courses in the areas of computers, bio-technology, tourism, home management, office management, para medical courses, fashion technology etc.
7. Regular publication and supply of News letters
8. Organization of extension lectures by women working in Government and Voluntary organizations for women's development
9. Timely conduct of annual examinations and declaration of results
10. More family support and assistance for distance study
11. The institution has to give medals for the women merit students to encourage them
12. In study centres physical facilities should be improved
13. It is convenient for women if the institution provides bus passes to attend counseling classes
14. Library and reference services must be improved
15. Academic calendar should be prepared and sent to the learners well in advance

CONCLUSION

Distance Education has come to stay and has been growing to meet the growing demand of the society. The most significant aspect of it is origin and substance was that it creates an "Education Environment". Women's education is vital to the development of society as a whole. The world has also experienced that there is a strong link between women's education and development, particularly in the case of developing countries. In India, women constitute nearly half of the population and play a key role in the economy. The purpose of providing education to women is to enable them to think critically, identify their strengths and empower them to play positive role in their own and in the development of the nation. The enrolment of women in higher education is still very low in formal education system. Hence, the distance education system provides access to increase the women enrolment in higher education. Today's women want equality, education and recognition. That is why any programme designed for women should give

the education, which is financially helpful, or income generating. Technical and vocational courses must be introduced in distance education for benefiting the village and urban women. For example, nursing courses, health and preparation of cosmetics, hotel management, catering, arts & crafts, designing etc. Now that the Govt. is encouraging people to go for self-employment instead of depending on Govt. jobs therefore, the courses of distance education system should be like that, which are helpful to get self-employment opportunities without any age limit. And also it is the responsibility of distance institutes to increase the women's level of education as more women are showing interest in distance education system. Keeping this in view the School of Distance Learning and Continuing Education of Kakatiya University is giving 40% of fee concession to women for their studies. If the same is implemented by all others especially by distance Education institutes along with the open universities, there will be a better improvement in women higher education.

The method of distance education is also being resorted to on a large scale for intrusting women into higher education. But, still it is limited. Education for women has been emphasized in the recent years with the slogan 'educating a woman means educating an entire family in prospect'. Therefore, Distance Education system has to play a vital role to improve the women literacy rate. A new creative, relevant and constructed pedagogy for distant education is yet to emerge. The paper concludes by pointing those positive features of the flexible distance education system that will break all the barriers and certainly attract the women from various corners for pursuing their higher education.

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