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Impact of Distance Learning on the Professional Development of English Language Prospective Teachers

Abstract:

The present study was conducted to explore the impact of distance learning on the professional development of prospective English teachers who applied for the TEFL programme designed and organized by Allama Iqbal Open University. The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of distance learning on the professional development of English teachers. Through stratified random sampling technique (30 males and 45 females) were selected as a sample. The questionnaire was developed to assess the impact of distance learning. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques were applied to analyze the data. The independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the demographic variables. The findings revealed that the majority of the participants were satisfied with the TEFL programme as it is catering to all the required learning needs of the teachers, and they were of the view that this programme has profound effects in terms of their professional development.

Key Words:

AEIOU, Prospective Teachers, Distance Learning, Professional Development.

Introduction

Education refers to a process of getting or gaining knowledge by enriching and broadening the vision of not only one's surrounding but of the entire world as well. We might have heard this phrase so many times that "The world is now just one click away, which clearly explains and defines the phenomenon of a globalized and interconnected world where people are connected with one another via numerous emerging technologies. These information technologies have flooded information from one nook (one specified area) to the remotest corner of the world. [Perraton \(1995\)](#) defined distance learning as "an educational system in which an important proportion of teaching conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from learner."

Use of Information Technology and Distance Education

[Conrad \(2006\)](#), an eminent educationist and social analyst, has firmly made this conviction that the main participants, i.e. students and teachers, find more ease in sharing the most relevant information and gain learning skills using specialized technology in distance learning as distance learning programmes are handicapped without the use of electronic information resources as these resources have been used to disseminate the teaching-learning material to all the students. Another revolutionary thinker and educationist, [Saturia \(1990\)](#), is of this view that learning technologies can revolutionize the concept of learning among the masses by utilizing various IT resources and aids such as printed materials, i.e. books, notes,

articles; radio, television, audio-visual aids, internet, computers and telephone etc. and they also seem to address the limitations and restrictions posed by the conventional (traditional) methods of learning or seeking education and the only reason behind is that such technologies are far-reaching as well as are easily accessible to a large audience of learners. Thus such programmes play a significant role in familiarizing teachers with the

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use of information technologies. As it is rightly said that learning is not an individual or alone effort, knowledge can be best learned when distributed equally through collaborative efforts, and the latest new technological shift has given rise to true learning communities in which learners come together on one platform and learn through various software where students can meet, learn and socialize. Such software functions as lecture rooms or halls where student teachers can learn from one another and helps in problem-solving that they can encounter during their learning process.

There are multiple numbers of tools for employing distant learning. For example, IT resources and internet facilities offer numerous opportunities for effective communication and close collaboration among the learners and educators/instructors. They are literally available at various remote geographical locations due to different time zones (Belanger & Jordan, 2000). The following list of tools is required for distant learning. Email video-conferences, CD-ROM, Collaboration software, Video, Videotape, Fax, Voice/Audio telephone and etc. Videodiscs are also used as a tool to disseminate information and learning materials to the students, video discs with their rich combination of audio and video for a problem solution will result in adding and multiplying problem-solving approach for the students. By using such interactive forms of communication, these programmes play a great significant role in the professional development of teachers, and these programmes have enhanced teaching and learning manifolds. The use of information technology, especially for distance learning, has done wonders in reshaping the universities organizational structures. [Gulati \(2008\)](#) explained with the conviction that a new aura and a new age of learning are evolving in the traditional educational institutions and universities as these institutions applying ICT resources in order to achieve blended learning environments. These institutions also strive to merge conventional classroom atmosphere along with distance learning programmes.

Relationship between Distance Learning and Professional Development

In disseminating education, distance learning programmes have successfully brought a revolution in terms of adult education. [Selim \(2005\)](#) stated that distance education might be considered a revolutionary development because it marked a significant break from the centuries-old formal teaching system and have led to the development of innovative multimedia teaching for the learning system. The question arises that why professional development is the need of the hour, why it is important to professionally train the teachers. We all are subsisting in a revolutionary global village, and electronic gadgets have bombarded our lives in such a way that it has altered the way of our thinking, living as well as patterns of acquiring education, so due to ever-increasing globalization, education and teacher training is considered to be the principal drivers or handlers in order to compete with other countries across the globe.

It can be rightly said that professional teachers all over the world need professional development programmes. In today's rapidly changing world, with regards to higher education, the expectancy towards students has changed during the course of time. Learning should not be considered as a passive knowledge gaining process. In fact, the rapid changing world demands students to be more active, self-governing and self-demanding towards their learning process. Students are expected to be more autonomous and more self-regulated in their learning ([Collis, 1995](#)).

Prospective teachers need to be prepared as lifelong learners in such a way that they can meet international demands. Likewise, teachers need to be trained in the most appropriate way that may help their students to reach their desired goals of international scope. The quality of every successful educational programme is directly proportional to the greater quality of teachers who are putting their efforts to run those programmes at a successful pace. A distinguished scholar, [Farrant \(1990\)](#), opined that “only those conventional institutes offering formal education are bound to succeed where the quality of teachers is drastically and steadily ensured as their success largely counts upon this long-lasting quality of teachers who render their services conscientiously. In this way, teacher education acts as a changing agent in this regard (p., 169). Revisionists have concluded that changing curriculum can never assist in helping students to get the required

new measures in order to satisfy their learning needs. Teachers need to be professionally developed in order to meet such demands and should participate in helping students so that they might initiate standard educational programmes ensuring international quality.

The word 'professional development' refers to give a feeling of empowerment to all the teachers worldwide. Its importance can never be overlooked as the educational system can be made better through the professional development of teachers. One of the procedures to enhance professional development is through distant learning. Cardno (2005) was of the view that professional development plays a vital role in order to be ensured about the sustainability and development of the teaching profession. With the advancement in technology, the popularity of distance learning has increased enormously in continuing education, especially for practising professionals. Distance learning means the use of a variety of various technologies such as television and other mediums such as the internet, video conferencing, interaction through Skype, recordings provided through different cassettes and print in order to provide professional development with the help of a variety of learning resources, by keeping teachers up to date without considering from where and when they want to study.

This mode acts as a vital source of disseminating knowledge to the masses while keeping at a distance and also offers a healthy advantage and creates a competitive atmosphere among the students. These kinds of online programmes help to motivate and encourage all the teachers in order to grow professionally and give them a feeling of empowerment for their professional development. Such programmes are highly useful for all teachers who cannot leave their jobs and thus turn out to be the success of such programmes all over the world. These programmes are designed for pre-service and in-service teachers in facilitating their professional development needs through a variety of different mediums.

Distant learning is said to be a wider or broader approach as it relies on a number of different modes of providing learning to the students as well as teachers that best suit their learning requirements. Distant learning proves to be helpful for all those teachers from remote areas. All such teachers who want to stay within their regions or communities can learn by using various technologies. Such programmes break the barriers of conventional means of taking education. Distance education is playing a vital role in helping teachers to become professionally developed as they are seeking to get promotions as headteachers or in order to be highly qualified. Distance learning proves to be a good exciting way of getting professional development while staying in your homes, and it provides a wide range of opportunities to deepen thinking skills and understanding faculty of all the teachers by facilitating them with very low-cost techniques. It also proves to be a great support for all those teachers who are not having enough resources to join other high-cost programmes, so distant education is facilitating almost all the teachers coming from different backgrounds. Distant learning is supporting both formal and informal learning styles of the teachers.

The concept of distance education helps to provide ways in which students feel free to get education regularly from online sources while freeing themselves from the constraints of time and space. The term 'distance learning' is mainly aimed to implement the flow of smooth information using such applications capable of communication technology which can be used simultaneously at different locations. ([Webster & Hackley, 1997; p., 1284](#)). Globally, the Socioeconomic status of the countries can be enriched through distance learning programmes; such programmes are very convenient because most of the technologies needed for such programmes are easily accessible at home. It will not be wrong to say that such programmes are relying on multiple senses in order to meet the learning needs of learners.

[Saleem \(2010\)](#), an aspiring researcher, states as it was formerly and rightly thought that the conventional system of learning was not good enough in order to cater for the growing demands of our educational scenario. All this forced the researchers to launch an extensive and purposive search via-media which method could be most appropriate that could be applied to fulfil the educational needs of the general masses. There should be a way that might not require students to sit at a certain place in order to enhance their learning; rather, it was

planned to take schools and colleges to the students, and in this way, the idea of distance learning was evolved and materialized.

In addition, [Saleem \(2010\)](#) says, apart from the failure of the current so-called education system to fulfil the academic needs of the learners, there are numerous other causes for the evolution and expansion of distance education. According to Perraton, an educationist and active researcher (1995), distance learning helps:

- To deal with or handle the ever-increasing educational demands of the masses.
- To make mass education to be provided at possibly very low costs.
- To empower people to seek education at any phase of their life.
- To upgrade the professional qualifications of in-service leaders or workers.

Significance of the Study

This study throws ample light on the fact that whether the TEFL programme organized by Allama Iqbal Open University is having a good quality in order to fulfill the learning needs of the enrolled TEFL prospective teachers. The beneficiaries of this research would be teachers and students as well as parents. The ELT teachers will be able to understand how distance learning improves teachers' professional development, so the teachers can refine their instructional methodology in light of this research. In our Pakistani context, students are supposed to encounter the traditional type of teaching and learning, but the present study will open up new horizons for professional teachers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the impact of distance learning on the professional development of English language prospective teachers.
2. To find out the significant difference between English language prospective teachers' perceptions about distance learning in terms of their demographic variable (gender, qualification, age, and experience).

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of distance learning on the professional development of English language prospective teachers in an urban area?
2. Is there any significant difference between English language prospective teachers' perceptions of distance learning in terms of their gender?
3. Is there any significant difference between English language prospective teachers' perceptions about distance learning in terms of their qualification?
4. Is there any significant difference between English language prospective teachers' perceptions of distance learning in terms of their experience?
5. Is there any significant difference between male and female English language prospective teachers' perceptions of distance learning in terms of their age groups?

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the distance learning programme of TEFL organized by the Allama Iqbal Open University Lahore campus. And it is also delimited to the prospective English language teachers enrolled under the distance learning (The rationale for selecting only ELT prospective teachers of district Lahore) is to make research-focused, narrowed and clear for the researcher as well as for the reader. Furthermore, research was only delimited in Lahore due to a lack of resources to conduct research outside the city.

Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature to investigate the impact of distance learning on the professional development of English language teachers. The population of the study comprised all the English language students enrolled in AIOU from Lahore District. A convenience sampling technique was used to draw a sample of the study. Using the stratified random, a sample of 75 prospective teachers (male =30 and female =45 enrolled in AIOU, TEFL program, district Lahore. The research instrument was prepared by the researcher after reviewing the related literature. The research instrument contained closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were developed at 5-Point Likert Scale, ranging from ‘strongly agree (SA)’ to ‘strongly disagree (SDA)’. Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were applied to analyze data. One-way ANOVA and independent samples t-test were used on demographic variables like; age, experience, gender, qualification etc. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through repeated discussions with the supervisor and three experts in the relevant field. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach Alpha. The Cronbach’s alpha value was .81.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of TEFL program Prospective Teachers Perceptions regarding Distance Education.

S. No.	Statement	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	M	SD
1.	Distant learning program caters to the all-focal needs of education.	11	41	0	23	0	3.53	1.082
2.	The institution is well equipped with all the modern and latest equipment and tools to teach and to practice.	21	38	5		11	0	3.92
3.	You, as an English Language Teacher, feel that you got professionally developed after this course.	23	36	2	12	2	3.88	1.10
4.	Does the distant Learning program endow with the requirements of the students?	22	37	2	14	0	3.89	1.03
5.	Modules are easy, understandable and practical for ELT Teachers.	14	36	3	17	5	3.49	1.22
6.	Is it possible for you to participate in group discussions?	19	39	10	7	0	3.93	.87
7.	Has the instructor given all types of facilities?	12	49	8	6	0	3.89	.76
8.	Are you taught in your comfort zone?	7	38	7	22	1	3.37	1.05
9.	Do institutes update the syllabus according to the requirement?	8	36	11	20	0	3.43	1.00
10.	Are you given proper training for teaching in your context?	14	48	7	4	2	3.91	.85
11.	Is literacy time suitable?	12	46	8	5	4	3.76	.98
12.	Is teacher punctual in arriving and leaving the class?	12	50	9	2	2	3.91	.79
13.	Have you been trained in Computer Assisted Language Learning?	10	36	13	12	4	3.48	1.08
14.	Is your teacher been facilitated by the administration and by the organization?	7	33	17	15	3	3.35	1.03

15.	Does the higher authority visit the campus?	13	29	17	16	0	3.52	1.01
16.	Is your teacher friendly?	9	23	15	22	6	3.09	1.18
17.	Does your teacher possess the quality of problem-solving?	7	23	8	29	8	2.89	1.22
18.	Literacy material is developed after need assessment.	18	50	2	2	3	4.04	.86

Table 1 contains descriptive information regarding distance learning of prospective teachers. Mostly prospective teachers stated that distant learning program caters to the all-focal needs of education ($M=3.53$). Most of the prospective teachers agreed that the institution is well equipped with all the modern and latest equipment and tools to teach and to practice as ($M=3.92$). 36 prospective teachers agreed to the statement, “You as an English Language Teacher feel that you have got professionally developed after this course” as ($M=3.88$). 37 prospective teachers agreed that the Distant Learning program endows with the requirements of the students as ($M=3.89$). Most of the prospective teachers agreed that modules are easy, understandable and practical for ELT Teachers ($M=3.49$). 39 prospective teachers said that It is possible for them to participate in group discussions as the mean value is ($M=3.93$). 49 prospective teachers agreed that the instructor has given all types of facilities to them as ($M=3.89$). 38 prospective teachers agreed that they are taught in their comfort zone as ($M=3.37$). 36 prospective teachers agreed that Institutes update the syllabus according to the requirement as ($M=3.43$). 48 prospective teachers agreed to given proper training for teaching at your context as ($M=3.89$). 46 prospective teachers agreed that literacy time is suitable as ($M=3.76$). 50 prospective teachers agreed to be punctual in arriving and leaving the class as ($M=3.91$). 36 prospective teachers agreed that they had been trained in Computer Assisted Language Learning as ($M=3.48$). 33 prospective teachers agreed that teacher been facilitated by the administration and by the organization as ($M=3.35$). 29 prospective teachers agreed that the higher authority visit the campus as ($M=3.35$). 23 prospective teachers agreed to the statement their teacher is friendly as ($M=3.09$). 23 prospective teachers agreed to the statement their teacher possesses the quality of problem solving ($M=2.89$). 50 prospective teachers agreed to the statement Literacy material is developed after need assessment ($M=4.04$).

Table 2. Gender wise comparison of Prospective Teachers Perception about Distance Education

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Distance Education	Male	30	64.06	10.68	73	0.931	0.193
	Female	45	66.11	8.28	51.453		

Comparison between male and female prospective teachers was calculated by using independent samples t-test regarding distance learning. It is indicated that there was no statistical mean difference found between male and female prospective teachers’ perception as $t(73) = .931, p > .05$.

Table 3. Comparison of Perception of Prospective Teachers about Distance Education in terms of their Qualification

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Distance Education	998.243	3	332.748	4.367	.007
	5409.304	71	76.187		
	6407.547	74			

Qualification wise comparison between male and female prospective teachers’ perception was calculated by using one-way ANOVA regarding distance learning. It is indicated that a statistical mean difference was

found between male and female prospective teachers at $F(3, 71) = 4.367, p < .05$ level of significance in terms of their qualification.

Table 3(a). Comparison of Perception of Prospective Teachers about Distance Education in terms of their Professional Qualification

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	334.150	1	334.150	4.016	.049
Within Groups	6073.397	73	83.197		
Total	6407.547	74			

Comparison between male and female prospective teachers was calculated by using one-way ANOVA regarding distance learning in terms of their professional qualification. It is indicated that statistical mean difference was found between male and female prospective teachers as the $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance in terms of their professional qualification.

Table 4. Comparison of Perception of Prospective Teachers about Distance Education in terms of their age

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Distance Education	1169.063	4	292.266	3.905	.006
	5238.483	70	74.835		
	6407.547	74			

Age-wise comparison between male and female prospective teachers was calculated by using one-way ANOVA regarding distance learning. It is indicated that a statistical mean difference was found between male and female teachers perceptions at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance in terms of their age.

Table 4(a). Post hoc Tukey (HSD)

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
26-30	31-35	.88333	.999
	36-40	-5.86667	.265
	41-45	-7.49167	.125
	46-50	-10.36667*	.016
31-35	26-30	-.88333	.999
	36-40	-6.75000	.332
	41-45	-8.37500	.179
	46-50	-11.25000*	.035
36-40	26-30	5.86667	.265
	31-35	6.75000	.332
	41-45	-1.62500	.979
	46-50	-4.50000	.552
41-45	26-30	7.49167	.125
	31-35	8.37500	.179
	36-40	1.62500	.979
	46-50	-2.87500	.893
46-50	26-30	10.36667*	.016
	31-35	11.25000*	.035
	36-40	4.50000	.552
	41-45	2.87500	.893

Post hoc (Tukey) was applied to find out the difference between prospective teachers perceptions about distance learning in terms of their age. It is shown in the table that there was a statistical mean difference found between the students having age 46-50 years, 26-30 and 31-35 years, respectively.

Table 5. Comparison of students' Perception of Prospective Teachers about Distance Education in terms of their Experience

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Distance Education	523.149	5	104.630	1.227	.306
	5884.398	69	85.281		
	6407.547	74			

Experience wise comparison between male and female prospective teachers was calculated by using one-way ANOVA regarding distance learning. It is indicated that there was no statistical mean difference found between male and female prospective teachers perceptions at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance in terms of their experience.

Discussion

The objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of distance learning on the professional development of English language prospective teachers. Findings of the study indicated that most of the prospective teachers were found to be stating that distance education caters to all needs of education; the institute is well-equipped, and tools are available for practice; teachers developed professionally after this course; it also fulfils students' requirement; modules are easy, understandable and practical for ELT teachers; the opportunity of group discussion is available; comfort zone for teachers and students is provided by the university; literacy time is suitable; teachers are punctual in arriving and leaving the class; computer technology is also available; higher authorities visited campuses time to time; need-based assessment is done properly, and teacher possesses the quality of problem-solving. Hussain, p.329, further says that the process of education, that is not dependent on face-to-face interaction between teachers and students being taught. Rather, it brings knowledge or training to the student without moving from either his domestic arrangement or place of work. It is made possible by the use of multimedia teaching packages based on correspondence text & audio-visual material, with only minimum dependence on the face to face teaching. [Brownson and Harriman \(2000\)](#) suggested and contended that distance learning provides a better learning atmosphere and convenience to the students of all ages and calibre as compared to the conventional mode of classroom lectures, whereas another educationist, [Johnson et al. \(2000\)](#), conducted a research study and found out that there is not much difference in between the efficacy of distance learning and classroom learning. That's why he suggested that distance learning needs to be introduced on a wider scale in order to make it even more fruitful and cost-effective.

There was no statistical mean difference between male and female students' perceptions at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Furthermore, distance learning must provide tutor-guided, student-centred and independent engagement that might boost the interactions between the students and the instructors as it might not invariably be possible in the conventional classroom learning atmosphere ([Michailidou & Economides, 2003](#)). [Astin \(1993\)](#) has aptly defined student satisfaction as a student's personal observation and insight of his/her college or university experience and the supposed importance of the education that she got from a certain institution. [Levy \(2003\)](#) has thoughtfully come up with this conclusion in his research study conducted over 200 students enrolled in e-learning courses, that students' satisfaction is a major factor in the process of an e-learning programme in order to check and assess the effectiveness of e-learning. The overall effectiveness and success of online education counts on the interaction, which is a powerful ingredient to the process of student's learning (Fresen, 2007; Moore, 1993; Northrup, 2001). Therefore, [Volery et al. \(2000\)](#) suggested that in order

to boost student's interactions, the online teacher should make the roll-call and check which students are more serious about this modern technique of learning. Furthermore, instructors should be equipped with a strong acumen and be acquainted with the diverse nature of his/her students so that he/she might prompt them to participate in online discussions and also motivate strong interaction in between the fellow students. ([Darling, Cross, & Johnson, 1996](#)). National and International organizations for higher education should also come forward to promote distance learning. For instance, "Professional from human resource management and related managers tend to take up such courses quite often and thus enhance certain skills while staying at their workplaces ("Lifelong," 2002, p. 77). Apart from it, more and more universities around the world are switching to this modern technique to imparting education by upgrading their ICT facilities.

Students participating or taking up any of the distance learning programmes belong to all ages, such as youngsters, working-class, technical staff, vocational learners as well as adult learners. All of them are taking full advantage of these specially designed courses, both on-campus and home-based classes, through video links and other related sources. ([Anderson, 2001](#)). Approximately many of the students from the age-group 18-25 are taking up online courses rather than conventional on-campus classes. ([Roach, 2002, p. 24](#)). It has been more than two centuries since distance education has existed in some form. Nonetheless, with a hike in the use of the internet (see trend 23), "distance education focus has quite dramatically and drastically shifted towards network-based technologies (in general) and Internet-based learning (more specifically) in today's world" ([Kinley, 2001, p. 7](#)). In the 21st century, where the internet is the key to all major sources of information, it has also brought about a revolution with the help of Internet Television (Web TV), quick live response, cyber correspondence, Video Link etc. in getting an education online by leaving behind the idea of the conventional mode of education. ([Hickman, 2003](#)). The significance of distance learning can be seen with the fact that there is at least 40% annual increase in online courses now as it has never been before. ([Gallagher, 2002](#)). Another reason for the wider scope and expansion of distance learning is that digital media such as photos, documents, sheets, video clips are quite easy to store, transfer and, more importantly, to access in the current scenario ([Pond, 2003](#)). The global facts reveal that those nations who have extensively poured in heavy investments in the education fields, both conventional and online are yielding higher standards in education than those of the others. (UNESCO, 2005 b, 3). So, if we also make efforts to promote and expand the scope of emerging technologies, distance learning and conventional learning will promise long-term benefits to the teachers in the process of their professional development.

Conclusion

DLP has insightful and deeper impacts on the professional development of teachers. The institution is well-equipped with all-new gadgets of teaching. The distance learning programme has a deeper and profound impact on the professional development of teachers. Most of the participants had a viewpoint that distance learning program caters to the all-focal needs of English language teachers' professional development. They, as ELT Teachers, felt improvement in their skills; DLP endowed them with their professional requirements. Furthermore, they are taught in their comfort zone, and the instructors were friendly and accommodating for handling personal and professional issues. In light of the findings, it was concluded that there was no statistical mean difference found between male and female students at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. It was also concluded that a statistical mean difference was found between male and female students at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance in terms of their qualification. Moreover, it was also concluded that a statistical mean difference was found between male and female students at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance in terms of their professional qualification. Moving further, it was concluded that age-wise mean differences in students' perceptions were found at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance regarding distance learning. Another test was employed, which concluded that there was a statistical mean difference found between the students having age 46-50 years, 26-30 and 31-35 years, respectively. On the other hand, it was concluded that there was no statistical mean difference found between male and female students' perceptions at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance in terms of their experience. All of the

above-stated findings concluded that DLP had affected all of the research participants in more or less the same ways.

Recommendations

- Most modern sources of ICT should be applied in order to effectively launch a wider range of Distance Learning Programmes so that they can be accessible to the masses with more reliability and cost-effectiveness. There is a prediction as more students become computer literate and get access to the internet, this revolutionary system of learning will become more beneficial and effective for the learners as it would give them ease of time and place. That's why distance learning should be introduced at all district levels in order to cater to the needs of the diverse range of students from various disciplines of studies.
- Competent and well-qualified teachers and instructors should be inducted from various fields of studies in order to make distance learning so that students could put their confidence in such programmes and might consider these teachers to be their mentors as well. The students should also study their material under the strict guidance of their tutor and submit their assignments before the deadlines. In addition, workshops on certain skills should also be arranged at the end of each semester in order to further strengthen the process of students' learning.

Distance learning programmes are usually cheaper than attending a full time course, so students should make sure that they choose a programme that is having value over money so. In this regard, universities should design such distance learning programmes that should have a higher quality in the same manner as those set for the internal students of the universities.

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