

Importance of Information and Communication Technology in the Adult Education Programme

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Abstract

In the 21st century, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the key driving forces of the developing country like India. It transforms the way we live, learn, work, and play. The 21st century is characterised by an upsurge of Information Technology which dictates the pace of development. The term ICT is formed by the convergence of Information Technology (IT) and Communication Technology (CT). ICT is an umbrella term that include any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware & software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning.

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Introduction

In the 21st century, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the key driving forces of the developing country like India. It transforms the way we live, learn, work, and play. The 21st century is characterised by an upsurge of Information Technology which dictates the pace of development. The term ICT is formed by the convergence of Information Technology (IT) and Communication Technology (CT). ICT is an umbrella term that include any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware & software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video conferencing and distance learning.

Traditionally, basic adult education has a particular concern with the skills of literacy and numeracy, seeing these as essential for entry to the world of work. As we enter the 21st century, however, ICT has already become a necessary and important component of adult education. Adult Education is expected to address the socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental problems besieging humanity in their various societies. This is so because adults are the major occupants of the production sectors of the economy. ICT application has created lots of benefit in adult education. There is a common belief that the use of ICT in adult education will contribute to more constructivist learning and an increase in activity and greater responsibility of adult learner (Volman, 2005). It also provides the adult educator with new sources of information and knowledge which will enhance the process of and practices of teaching adults. This is because acquisition of ICT knowledge and skills can help the adult educator to obtain basic knowledge of principles of teaching and learning and the skills to apply those principles in teaching- learning situations.

The use of ICT in Adult Education will extend beyond its motivational value to address key outcomes of syllabus and allow learners to become competent. ICT can improve the writing, reading, speaking and listening skills of learners besides supporting their creativity and independence in learning through collaboration and reflection. It is often seen that in an Adult Education Programme (AEP), major problem is to get all the learner together at a common place at one time. It is one area of education where technique of individualised mass-learning is most required. This is where ICT can be of tremendous help. ICT has created great potential for literacy and adult life long education.

In spite of best of effort the sheer magnitude of the widespread geography and varied nature of facilities has hampered progress of the programme and has

prevented achievement of the desired goals of the programme. Hence, the concept of Model Adult Education Centre needs to be incorporated so as to make possible for easy accessible and rapid progress while implementing the programme in the grass root level by providing better infrastructure/ equipments and ICT facilities.

Under Saakshar Bharat Programme, there are 321 AECs (Adult Education Centres) in 4 Districts of the Manipur State, out of which 20 AECs have been upgraded to the level of MODEL AECs with the financial assistance from CONCOR (Container Corporation of India Limited).

A Model AEC is envisaged as a well-equipped multi-functional and multi discipline training centre which is enable with Satellite connectivity which in turn ensures effective and speedy delivery of quality services to large number of beneficiaries on a regular basis at a fraction of the cost of manual delivery. The MAEC will encompass besides a cultural and recreational an interactive training centre staffed with proper trained manpower and equipped with necessary resources. The MAEC will function as multi-faceted resource and facilitation centre to cater to the varied nature of occupational, social and cultural needs of the Society at the Gram Panchayat level. A MAEC cuts across time and space boundaries and renders a learning experience that can be highly enriching and engaging.

The list of infrastructures/ equipment's actually procured for 20 MAECS are Sony Projector model, Sony Bravia 56cm LCD TV Model, Sony DVD player, Tape/ Voice Recorder Sony Model, HP Laser Printer, Projector screen with stand, Honda Generator, Desk Top Computer Set, Ahuja Amplifier, Microphone, Unit Mode, Long Trumpet Horn, cable for trumpet, long stand for Microphone & Battery 12 Volt, Bajaj Pedestal Fan, Enthroned Computer Table, Enthroned Computer Chair, Chatai, Library Almirah, Book Shelves, Reading table with one box (without rack), and Reading chair.

For the present study, the researcher has taken up Thoubal district MAECs Prerak, Volunteer and Learner. Before bifurcating Kakching block as a district from the Thoubal district. The district has 5 MAECs after Kakching block is divided as a district from the Thoubal district, 2 MAECs i.e. Hiyanglam Awang Leikai, and Keirak Tomal Makhong that belongs to Kakching block is included in the newly form district.

Objective of the Study

- i) To study the importance of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Adult Education Programme (Saakshar Bharat).
- ii) To study the function of Model Adult Education Centres (MAECs) in application of ICT.

- iii) To explore the activities of the Prerak in application of ICT in the MAECs.
- iv) To find out the impact of ICT in implementation of Saakshar Bharat Programme.
- v) To find out the problems if any in maintenance of ICT facilities in the MAEC.

Methodology

The major purpose of this method is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present in the form of conditions, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes, beliefs etc. It investigates into the conditions or relationship that exists, practices that prevail, belief, point of view or attitudes that are hold, processes that are going on and trends that are developing.

The present study used random sampling technique. This is study is confined only to the MAECs of Thoubal district. Here, the research take 6 prerak and 12 learner as a sample for the present study. In this study, the data is collected through questionnaire method.

The present study is only confined to Model Adult Education Centres (MAECS) of Thoubal District. The MAECs of Thoubal district are Khangabok Part-1 Awang Leikai, Irong Thockchom, Thoudam Wangma Taba and Sangai yumpham Part-1 Mairelkhul.

Main Findings of the Study

The main findings of the present study are as follows:-

1. Almost all the Preraks, Volunteer and the Learner in the MAECs of Thoubal district are mostly in the age group of 21yrs & above. From this it can be concluded that most of the learner are from 21yrs & above and the person under 21yrs are almost educated as from the finding of the present study.
2. All the prerak of the MAECs of Thoubal district are mainly the unemployed youth.
3. It is found that ICT application is very much necessary in the adult literacy programme. But due to the lack of awareness related to ICT application and its impact, most the people educated and non-educated are not aware about the benefit of ICT which will developed the standard of their life, increased their income and livelihood.
4. There is lack of infrastructure in the MAECs that leads to lack of learner interest in attending the centre and which leads to more drop-out learner.
5. All the prerak of the 3 MAECs of Thoubal district have attend ICT related training but the training is not adequate for effective utilisation of ICT- based teaching materials.
6. The information those are required for the MAECs are received in time with the help of ICT materials and uses of mobile phone.

7. In Thoubal district, all the MAECs have high utilisation of ICT and Audio-Visual application.

8. It get full cooperation from the state and District authority but in case of honorarium and administrative fund they do not get cooperation from the National Level Authority.

9. It is also found that evaluation is taken place regularly in the centre.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that ICT infrastructures are provided by Container Corporation of India Lt. (CONCOR) in PPP mode through GOI. Because of the infrastructures provided by the CONCOR, the Model AECs are well equipped as compared to Normal AEC and make it possible to use ICT facilities. It also helps in the better communication and administration of the concerned MAE Centre. However, there is need for the appropriate integration of ICT in adult education setting to enhance the capacity of Preraks and other beneficiaries. Integration of ICT in adult education programmes would provide beneficiaries with the basic skills.

In Thoubal district, there are three Model Adult Education Centres at present as two MAECs are shifted to newly formed Kackching District. They are Khangabok Pt- I Khullakpam Leikai, Sangaiyumpham Pt- I Mairelkhul Mayai Leikai and Irong Thokchom Thoudam Wangmataba. Among these three centre, Sangaiyumpham Pt- 1 Mairelkhul is little weaker when compared with other two in every aspect. These three MAECs needed to make more improvement in the terms of infrastructures, equipments and more rooms to make a standard Model AECs because the present conditions of the MAECs are far from the expected layout of the planned Model AECs.

It is noted from the Directorate AE/ SLMA, Manipur official records that the proposal for National Digital Literacy Mission to utilize Model Adult Education Centers for promoting IT Training has been submitted (9th Jan, 2015 E-mail responded to F.No.9-10/2014-NLM-I dt 30th Nov.2014). It was the follow up activities of the decision of 72nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the NLMA, Govt. of India that the MAECs can be used for promoting IT Training under NDLM. In this connection CSE e- Governance Service India Limited, New Delhi, has requested for the complete details of Model AECs and availability of computers etc. therein, in the template attached with their letter so that they may map them with the identified Districts/ Blocks in each State/UT to empanel them as Training Centres under NDLM.

Suggestion

The following are the suggestion that will help to make the adult literacy

programme related to ICT application more effective and efficient:

1. ICT integration to adult education should be emphasised, and fully recognised.
2. Prerak should be given ICT application training that are adequate for the effective improvement of the adult education programme.
3. Government should provide separate fund and it should increase power supply so that there will be opportunities for significant improvements and increase in ICT awareness among the rural areas.
4. The infrastructure of the centre should be increased in accordance with the learner enrolled.
5. The learning materials for the learner should be adequate and should be laid emphasis to the learning contents to reflect the needs of the adults in the communities.
6. Honorarium should be given in time so that Prerak and Volunteer could make the programme more successful.

Suggestion for Further Study

1. The same study can be conducted in the other remaining district.
2. The study can also be done regarding the training of ICT application in adult education.
3. It can also be study regarding the impact of library facilities in MAECs.
4. A Comparative study can also be done between the MAECs of different district.
5. A study can also be done on the fuctions ICT application of MAECs.

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