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ICT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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Introduction:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education becomes popular over the past 15 years and has led to changes in the way educational institutions carry out activities and processes, not only in teaching and learning process, monitoring of student's progress but it has also an impact on educational administrative processes and management of higher educational institutions. Information and communication technologies consist of hardware, software, network and media for collecting, storing, processing, transmitting and presenting information (voice, data, text and image) as well as related services. ICT can be divided into three components: Information and Communication and Technology.

According to UNESCO (2002): ICT now permeates the education environments and underpins the very success of 21st century education. ICT also adds value to the process of learning and to the organization and management of learning institutions. Technologies are a driving force behind much of the development and innovation in both developed and developing countries.

Use of ICT in HEI:

ICT can be implemented for the development of applications for the management of administrative transactions, records and so on. ICT can increase Higher Education Institution's (HEI) efficiency and reduce unnecessary paperwork in HEI administration.

Using ICT, the administrators can release their duties by using computers and Internet in solving HEI's problems. The ICT can play a major role in reducing the work load of the administrators and staff especially in analyzing information like student academic performance. ICT also helps in managing student admission, student records and examination records, the monitoring and evaluation of staff, planning for HEI's activities, curriculum development, financial management and information dissemination, promotes communication between HEI's units, parents, and principal administration.

ICT plays a dynamic role in supporting powerful, efficient management and administration in education sector. It is specified that technology can be used right from student's administration to various resource administration in HEI.

Effective implementation of ICT into education systems involves substantial funding. ICT-supported hardware, software, internet, audio visual aids, teaching aids and other accessories demand huge funds.

ICT enhances the international dimension of educational services (UNESCO, 2002). It can also be used for non-formal education like health campaigns and literacy campaigns (UNESCO, 2002). Use of ICT in education develops higher order skills such as collaborating across time and place and solving complex real world problems (Bottino, 2003; Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007; Mason, 2000; Lim and Hang, 2003). It improves the perception and understanding of the world of the student. Thus, ICT can be used to prepare the workforce for the information society and the new global economy (Kozma, 2005). ICT presents an

entirely new learning environment for students, thus requiring a different skill set to be successful. Critical thinking, research, and evaluation skills are growing in importance as students have increasing volumes of information from a variety of sources to sort through (New Media Consortium, 2007).

Teacher's Training to ICT:

Teacher's professional development is a key factor to successful integration of computers into classroom teaching. ICT-related training programs develop teachers competences in computer use attitudes towards computers as well as assisting teachers rearrange the task of technology and how new technology tools are significant in student learning. Reference related technology training to successful integration of technology in the classroom. In a study of 35 teachers, they showed that professional development and the continuing support of good practice are among the greatest determinants of successful ICT integration, but they are not conditions for effective use of technology in the classroom. They argue that training programs that concentrate on ICT educational training instead of technical issues and effective technical support, help teachers apply technologies in teaching and learning. Teachers who are committed to professional development activities gain knowledge of ICT integration and classroom technology. Training programs for teachers that embrace educational practices and strategies to address beliefs, skills and knowledge improve teachers' awareness and insights in advance, in relation to transformations in classroom activities.

Challenges of ICT in HEI:

The high cost of acquiring, installing, operating, maintaining and replacing ICTs. While potentially of great importance, the integration of ICTs into teaching is still in its beginning. Introducing ICT systems for teaching in developing countries has a particularly high opportunity cost because mounting them is usually more. Using unlicensed software can be very problematic, not only legally but in the costs of maintenance, particularly if the pirated software varies in standard formats. Even though students can benefit immensely from well-produced learning resources, online teaching has its own unique challenges as not all faculties are ICT literate and can teach using ICT tools. Producing low quality content that has poor instructional design and is not adapted to the technology in use.

Another challenge is that the teachers need to develop their own capacity so as to efficiently make use of the different ICTs in different situations. They should not be scared that ICTs would replace teachers English being the dominant language most of the online content is in English. This causes problems as in many nations the people are not conversant or comfortable with English. Skills development is another important area in which ICT could be used effectively. Attempts are being made to strengthen the ICT framework. ICT can play a major role in integrating skill development as a component of a poverty alleviation strategy.

Dishonesty is one of the strong barriers to the execution of ICT in education. The misuse of government funds which could have been used to develop other sectors like the integration of ICT in education is channeled in other directions i.e. few people benefit from those funds by pocketing all the money. The budget for the newer technology is misused due to corruption at every level. Huge budgets are passed to buy modern teaching and learning materials for the improvement of the teaching and learning process, but in the end only minor improvements are found in the overall sector.

The effective use of ICT would require the availability of equipment's which are not available in all the educational institutions. Besides, ICT requires up-to-date hardware and software. Highspeed internet connection, but unfortunately internet access is very poor.

In the past, the conventional process of teaching

has revolved around teachers planning and leading students through a series of instructional sequences to achieve a desired learning outcome. ICT applications provide many options and choices and many institutions are now creating competitive edges for themselves through the choices they are offering students. Use of ICT in learning settings can act to support various aspects of knowledge construction.

Through virtual technologies learning has become an activity that is no longer set within programmed schedules and slots. Students are free to participate in learning activities when time permits and these freedoms have greatly increased the opportunities for many students to participate in formal programs.

A number of other issues have emerged from the uptake of technology whose impacts have yet to be fully explored. These include changes to the makeup of the teacher pool, changes to the profile of who are the learners in our courses and paramount in all of this, changes in the costing and economics of course delivery.

Adebayo (2013) defines Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as technology that supports activities involving the creation, storage, manipulation and communication of information, the application and use of ICT has led to the emergence of different forms of microelectronic and telecommunications tools such as laptops and computers, computer networks, the Internet digital printers and mobile technology, which enable administrators to record, store, process, retrieve, and transmit information.

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