

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND TRAINING CENTRES IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

Dr. Radhika Kapur

ABSTRACT

In rural and remote areas, there have been establishment of educational institutions and training centres. The primary objective of these educational institutions and training centres is to enhance the lives of the individuals, so that they can alleviate the conditions of poverty and backwardness, make provision of employment opportunities, and sustain their living conditions efficiently. The rural communities need to be aware of advancements, modernization and innovative strategies. The main purpose of this research paper focuses upon educational institutions and training centres in rural and remote areas. The aspects that have been taken into account include, areas focused upon in rural and remote education, teachers in rural and remote areas, characteristics of teachers in rural and remote schools, benefits of educational institutions in rural and remote areas, disadvantages of educational institutions in rural and remote areas, measures implemented to improve education in rural and remote areas and E-Learning services for rural communities.

Keywords: Rural, Remote, Educational Institutions, Training Centres, Teachers, Students, Education

INTRODUCTION

The conditions of the educational institutions and training centres in rural and remote areas are not in a very developed state. In less developed countries, schools in remote and rural areas are in a deprived state. One of the important causes is comparatively low quality of teachers and a high rate of teacher turnover in rural schools. It is likely that contributory factors are the ways in which posting and transfer procedures cause inadequate preparation and support for teachers and their own features, principles, standards and interests. For the purposes of analysis, two models are suggested which illuminate the policy assumptions behind different strategies used to try to remedy the situation. The rural scarcity model tends to inspire the use of necessary postings and incentives, while the rural challenge model examines better ways of preparing teachers for service in remote and rural schools (Dove, 1985).

There are four interrelated features of contemporary teacher-education programmes, which have the potential and should be focused upon, if good teachers are to be attracted to and retained in remote and rural schools. These are, field-based preparations team work in trainings community that contribute in the support of training and the recruitment and preparation of local teachers (Dove, 1985). Other problems that have been observed in educational institutions and training centres are with regards to teaching-learning methods, curriculum and instructional strategies, provision of adequate equipment and furniture within the classrooms, development of infrastructure, usage of technology, civic amenities and other facilities. Due to lack of facilities, the teachers, staff members and the students experience problems in working and learning. In the present existence, in order to facilitate learning, it is

essential to make use of technology, teaching-learning materials and a proper learning environment. In training centres, there should be provision of adequate machines and technology and well qualified instructors, who are proficient and skilled in the impartment of training to the learners.

AREAS FOCUSED UPON IN RURAL AND REMOTE EDUCATION

The main areas that are focused upon in rural and remote education include, early childhood care and education, primary education, curriculum, and adult and non-formal basic education (Education for Rural People in Africa, 2006).

Early Childhood Care and Education –An individual begins his learning by getting enrolled in nursery schools at the age of two plus. In nursery schools, learning of children begins with play. When a young child enters into a classroom, he is given playthings and games, which stimulates his mind-set and he does not feel vulnerable, when he moves away from home. In nursery schools, the next level of learning begins with drawing, colouring, scribbling, alphabets and numbers. The students at this level begin to develop their reading and writing skills. In early childhood care and education (ECCE), students take pleasure in drawing and colouring, they are given sheets, with pictures drawn and are asked to colour them.

Students are provided information about all the concepts, which they begin to recognize, these include, environment, plants, vehicles, weather, fruits, vegetables, home, family, flowers, birds and animals. The individuals, who belong to poverty stricken, deprived and marginalized families are normally not educated, but they send their children to schools, so that they are able to enhance their learning and understanding. In ECCE, the students are young, therefore, it is essential to make provision of the environment, where they are able to adjust easily and teachers need to possess an amiable, social and a friendly attitude. In nursery schools, the mother system of education is followed, it means all the subjects are taught by a single teacher.

Primary Education – In primary education, the students are young, but they are able to understand and differentiate between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. At this level, the students are taught different subjects that include, English, mathematics, Science, Social Science, Hindi and arts. In the case of festivals, there are organization of functions and events, in which children are encouraged to participate and develop their skills and abilities. The students are taught how to make handicrafts and develop their artistic skills and are taught various sports. In this education, it is vital for the teachers to develop their teaching skills and adequately pay attention to the students, so that they are able to render an efficient class performance. In other words, at the primary level of education, students are familiarised with extra-curricular activities.

In the present existence, not only in India, but in other countries of the world, there have been efforts made to encourage the education of girls, so that in their young age, they are able to learn and play and not stay back at home and perform the household chores. At the level of primary education, the students are made to recognize the significance of education and the important part that it plays in enriching their lives. When individuals are socially and economically deprived, then educating their children would generate opportunities for them to

make improvements in their living conditions. Education generates awareness among the individuals to make their lives productive.

Curriculum – The relevance of the curriculum and the instructional methods that would be used in primary schooling and other basic educational programs would have an influence on meeting the basic needs and requirements of learning. Curriculum should combine the core national content with local content, taking into account the framework, customs, livelihoods and rural development activities. Besides all the academic concepts and subjects, it is vital that the curriculum should focus upon generating knowledge and awareness amongst the individuals to make their living standards more refined. The areas that are required to be taken into consideration include, management of water resources, environmental preservation, adequate management of the household, child development, taking care of the needs and requirements of the elderly individuals and so forth.

It is essential to make use of effective instructional methods, when imparting training to the learners. There have been instances, when students do not understand in an efficient manner through verbal explanation, therefore, the teachers should make use of writing methods to promote learning. The curriculum should be in accordance to the ability levels of the students. For instance, if class six curriculum is made available at class five level, then students will not be able to understand in an adequate manner. The curriculum should be in accordance to the needs and requirements of the individuals.

Adult and Non-Formal basic Education –In rural and remote areas, there is an increase in the illiteracy rate of the adults. There are adults, who do not possess the literacy skills or reading, writing and arithmetic. They are unable to acquire understanding of various concepts and lack awareness. Elderly individuals normally possess traditional viewpoints and have a strong belief in customs and values. They feel that school education is not meant for girls and women, the reason being, they are supposed to take care of the household chores. On the other hand, it is believed that education is meant for the male members of the family. If the males are educated, they would be able to render an effective contribution towards the welfare of their families and community.

Adults in rural and remote areas get enrolled in educational institutions and training centres, when they feel, they are required to enhance their knowledge and understanding regarding a particular area or they feel, they should enhance their literacy skills for their well-being. In rural areas, agriculture is the main occupation of the individuals, therefore, to enhance productivity in the agricultural sector, the labourers enhance their knowledge and understanding regarding utilization of proper irrigation methods, technology, fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, and so forth. Adult and non-formal basic education programs are the ones that are initiated in rural areas to generate awareness among the adults regarding recognition of education. Adults normally make use of their life experiences to improve their knowledge and understanding. They usually develop a friend like attitude towards their teachers to learn and develop their knowledge, as sometimes they are of the same age group as them.

TEACHERS IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

Teachers in remote rural schools rarely spend their lonesome evenings, writing for the public, mainly concerning their experiences. The signal, which exists for the developed countries such as, it suggests that the majority of teachers teach in remote rural schools only unenthusiastically, especially if they are non-locals. In one area, the climatic conditions may be pleasant, the cost of living is low and the long road to the city is safe and one can travel manageably throughout the year. In another, the teacher may feel like an alien, the school buildings may be of deprived quality and the provisions of life are difficult to obtain. Similarly, there may be differences in the attitudes and interests of the teachers. Young women, recently married, and who do not possess experience or professional qualities, might look for opportunities to teach in their home villages, while determined senior teachers might want to move to the town to augment their careers (Dove, 1985). The attitudes of the teachers towards teaching are influenced by the following factors: (Dove, 1985).

Personal and Family Factors - Many teachers are nurtured in towns and cities or obtain education and training from educational institutions and training centres in urban areas. When teachers from urban areas have to move to rural areas and work in schools, they may feel uncomfortable due to many factors. Migration to a remote rural area may mean an intense and upsetting change of scene. Services, which the teachers are used to regarding the basic necessities and they are insufficient, then the teachers may feel disturbed. Housing may be difficult to find and would not be as adequate as compared to urban housing. All weather communications with towns, may not exist. In addition, teachers, who want their own children to obtain good schooling, particularly at secondary level, may have to make a tough choice and send them away to school.

Social Factors – One of the main disadvantages that teachers experience in schools in rural and remote areas is isolation. It is a matter of widespread separation, not only from family and friends, but also from familiar forms of amusement, cultural and religious organizations, clubs and other leisure time activities, which are part and parcel of the urban life-style. In addition, teachers may identify themselves as strangers among rural people and be disinclined or unable to establish communication terms within the community. Gone are the days for the most part, when the teacher was a member, often a leading member, of the local community. In the present existence, as government servants, the main duties of the teachers are dedicated to the State, which employs them. They have few natural ties with the community and the relationship can be uncertain and challenging. Even the young person, from a remote rural area may consider leaving the rural remote regions and may be unwilling to return for teaching purposes.

Economic Factors - Teachers in rural schools tend to be younger and less experienced, and mainly due to these factors, their salaries tend to be lower as compared to those employed in schools and training centres in urban areas. Teachers in rural areas may find the cost of living significantly higher than in the towns. They may be used to a style of living, which means that they rely on goods imported at great expense from towns. In addition, they are primarily consumers rather than producers of the provisions, whereas, the local people may well produce

much of their own food, weave their own cloth and build their own homes. Travelling expenses for the children, who go to schools and for the teachers, who visit urban friends and relatives may be high. Job opportunities for the teachers' spouses may be in a deprived condition, which may not generate sufficient income. This income will not be enough to meet all their needs and requirements. This is usually common in the case of low paid and younger teachers.

Professional Factors – The factors of remoteness and seclusion affect the quality and quantity of professional facilities available to the teachers. Teachers in rural schools may feel dependent by the scarcity of classroom facilities, and lack of infrastructure. These are adequately available in urban areas that make the work of the teachers manageable, wide-ranging and inspiring. The official curriculum may seem immaterial to the needs of children in rural and remote areas. Supervisors and counsellors may make infrequent visits, requests for classroom materials may be time consuming and even salaries may be paid sporadically or not at all. In addition, lack of communication in the community may mean that the teachers are incapable to promote the kind of parental support for their pupils, which would earn them reverence and admiration. Many rural schools are so small and secluded that teachers may lack the varied contact with other teachers which urban schools can provide. There are rarer opportunities for professional contact through teachers' centres, in-service activities and social gatherings. Teachers in rural schools may feel circumvented and their work is not adequately recognized. For the determined ones, there may be an extra frustration in not being able to get their work suitably noticed and acknowledged by the authorities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS IN RURAL AND REMOTE SCHOOLS

Teachers are regarded as individuals, who are bestowed with the responsibilities and duties to carry out the tasks and functions within the schools. Besides possession of adequate knowledge and information, it is vital for them to possess the characteristics to perform their job duties and manage the students in an efficient manner. The important characteristics of the teachers have been stated as follows:

Amiable Nature – The teachers should possess an amiable and an approachable nature. They should be friendly in attitude and students should feel comfortable in communicating with them. In schools, when students experience any kinds of problems, teachers are the ones, who they approach and it is vital for them to provide solutions to their problems. The teachers should not be harsh and stringent in attitude, in case, students do not complete their assignments on time, they should explain them the consequences in a polite way. The attitude that depicts harshness and strictness does not enable the teachers to retain their jobs.

Use of Proper Teaching-Learning Methods – The teachers are required to make use of instructional strategies and teaching-learning methods in accordance to the needs and requirements of the students. If the students are able to understand the concepts by giving verbal explanations, then the teachers should promote verbal explanations. On the other hand, if the students are able to understand by dictating notes, then the teachers should dictate notes, as well

as explain verbally. The teachers should possess adequate knowledge and information of the subject areas that they are teaching.

Commitment and Enthusiasm – In schools, particularly when teaching young students, there are occurrences of various cases, such as, when they do not perform their tasks in an adequate manner, do not complete homework and class assignments on time, do not pay attention in class, are not conscientious and diligent in their work and so forth. These factors aggravate teachers and they may not take pleasure in the performance of job duties. Therefore, one of the important characteristics of teachers is, they should be committed towards the performance of job duties, possess the enthusiasm to work and deal with all problems and difficulties with a positive attitude.

Aptitude and Knowledge – There are teachers, who possess limited knowledge and information and just provide explanations to the students from the text-books. On the other hand, there are teachers that enrich the knowledge and understanding of the students by providing explanations from daily life experiences or from the information available in newspapers, magazines, articles and the internet. Elaborate explanations render an effective contribution in helping students understand the concepts in a better way. Besides adequate knowledge and information, it is vital to possess the skills and aptitude to impart them to the students. Teaching experience is also an important aspect that enriches the knowledge of the teachers.

Achievement-Oriented – In educational institutions at all levels, in urban and in rural areas, the primary goal of the teachers is to work towards the growth and development of the students. The primary aspect, through which the growth and development of the students takes place is through providing them knowledge and information of not just academic concepts, but also other areas, such as, morality, ethics, decency, norms, values, standards and principles that are important to live an efficient life. The characteristic of achievement-oriented is of utmost significance, the reason being, when the teachers will be aware of their goals and objectives, then they will be able to perform their job duties in an adequate manner. The teachers, who are achievement-oriented will be able to generate job satisfaction.

BENEFITS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

Research has indicated that there are strong positive effects of rural schooling. The benefits are the outcomes of the commitment and dedication of the teachers, parents and the communities to ensure the success of quality education (Stokes, Stafford, & Holdsworth, n.d.). The educational institutions and training centres established in rural and remote areas can prove to be beneficial to the individuals, provided if they are managed and administered in a suitable manner. Some of the benefits have been stated as follows: (Providing Education to Girls from Remote and Rural Areas, 2005).

Promote Access to Schooling – The individuals belonging to rural areas will be able to obtain access to schooling in a manageable way. The schools are usually located from their homes at a walking distance, so they do not have to worry about transportation costs to travel to

distance places to acquire education. The children, who are grown up are even able to commute to schools independently and hence, this arouse the feelings of contentment and pleasure among them.

Attain Gender Equality in Enrolment, Retention and Achievement – In schools in rural and remote areas, individuals are usually admitted on first come first served basis. In accordance to the Right to Education Act (2009), children, below 14 years of age are provided free education. There is not any kind of discrimination between the individuals, on the basis of factors, such as, race, religion, caste, creed, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic background. Retention and achievement opportunities are adequately made available to all the individuals.

Providing Learning Environments to the Children – Whether the educational institution is small in size or large, whether it accommodates large number of students and staff members or less number. There is provision of a learning environment within schools in rural and remote areas. The provision of teaching-learning materials, instructional strategies and methods are available, which make the students as well as their families recognize the significance of education. Schools offer a better study environment as compared to homes, where in some cases, there is shortage of electricity and other facilities.

Enhance Academic Performance of Children, especially Girls –When teachers implement appropriate teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, then the performance of the children can get enhanced, provided if they pay adequate attention and be regular in their studies. When students are motivated and encouraged to attend schools and learn, then they will be able to enhance their performance, provided they have to concentrate upon studies and be consistent. It is important that girls should be encouraged to study at homes, rather than carry out the household chores. Education contributes in enriching the lives of the individuals.

Give Security and Protection to Girls –In communities, where girls are married off early and they are trained regarding the performance of household chores, educational institutions, provide security and protection to the girls. Education generates knowledge and information amongst the individuals regarding societal problems and bringing about welfare of the community. It is vital for the rural and remote communities to understand that individuals should acquire education and work hard. Marriage should not take place before the age of 18 for girls and 21 for boys.

Protect Children against Criminal and Violent Acts – In rural areas, children usually become victims of crime and violence. They get subjected to all forms of criminal and violent acts, such as, verbal abuse, physical abuse, rape, child trafficking, child marriage and so forth. The teachers and counsellors in schools make provision of assistance and protect the children against all forms of criminal and violent acts. Learning and training provides information to the individuals to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate. Educated individuals learn to protect themselves against criminal and violent acts.

Meet Nutritional Needs of Children –In schools, there has been provision of Mid-Day Meal Scheme. Under this scheme, meals are provided to the students to meet their nutritional requirements, so that they are able to concentrate on studies properly. In some cases, poverty stricken families are not able to provide adequate diet and nutrition to their children. Therefore,

Mid-Day Meal Scheme is initiated with the main purpose of providing nutritious meals to the students.

Promote Socialization and Mainstreaming of Poor and Minority Children –Within rural and remote communities, individuals may have different cultures, norms and values. In educational institutions, individuals from different cultures, who possess different values, norms and principles usually socialize with each other. Educational institutions provide opportunities for the individuals to form a social circle and get to know about each other's cultures, values, norms and principles. The poverty stricken and minority children take pleasure in interacting and are able to create a social circle beyond their home. Children normally take pleasure in playing and socializing with their fellow students.

Provide Effective Links between the Community and the Larger Society – When individuals get enrolled in educational institutions and training centres in rural and remote areas, they are able to develop their literacy skills as well as generate knowledge and awareness regarding various areas. When they are literate and skilled, they even migrate to urban areas to enhance their living conditions, hence, in this way, they are able to provide effective links between the community and the larger society. The individuals, who have been educated in rural areas, migrate to urban areas to find employment opportunities. They may find work in a store, grocery shop or develop skills to get engaged in the works of plumbing, carpentry, welding, electric works, painting, repairing, cooking, driving etc.

Reducing the Cost of Educating Children – As it has been stated above that when schools are located at a walking distance, children are able to commute easily and save transportation costs. When meals are provided in schools, then parents do not have to worry about giving meals. In these schools, education is normally provided to the children free of cost or minimal fee may be charged. Books, stationary items, school bags, uniforms may be provided to the children free of cost. Therefore, with these assistances, individuals are able to experience a reduction in the cost of educating children.

DISADVANTAGES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

The disadvantages of educational institutions in rural and remote areas have been stated as follows:

Scarcity of Teachers – The teachers, who are employed in these schools are not sufficiently trained and they lack the abilities, especially of communicating the concepts to the students. When teachers belong to urban areas and they have to work in schools in rural and remote areas, they experience challenges regarding various factors, such as, teaching-learning methods, facilities, equipment, resources and infrastructure. On the other hand, low pay proves to be an impediment within the course of their performance of job duties. It is vital for the teachers to be skilled and proficient in order to perform their job duties adequately.

Cultural Illiteracy –The individuals in rural and remote areas usually stay isolated and do not interact or get involved within the communication processes. Therefore, when the individuals would stay isolated and would be unaware of each other's cultures, then it would

give rise to cultural illiteracy. It is regarded as a disadvantage, because individuals would not be able to generate much awareness of other cultures. They would primarily focus upon enhancing their academic knowledge. The individuals usually lack the awareness regarding cultural practices, values, norms and customs that are needed within the community.

Inadequate Teaching-Learning Methods and Instructional Strategies – In schools in rural and remote areas, the use of teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies are not a well-developed state as compared to urban areas. In the present existence, the usage of technology has facilitated learning of individuals and is used in schools and higher educational institutions in urban areas. On the other hand, in rural areas, emphasis is not put on the usage of technology and there is prevalence of traditional teaching methods. In this way, students remain unaware of usage of technology.

Increase in School Drop-Out – In rural and remote communities, individuals get enrolled in educational institutions, but due to various causes, there is an increase in the drop-out rate. Inability to understand the academic concepts, inadequate performance within the classroom, lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, lack of facilities, equipment and infrastructure in school, stringent attitude on the part of the teachers, family issues, financial problems, health problems and so forth are some of the factors due to which individuals are not able to pursue their studies and drop-out of schools.

Learning and Growth of Students may experience Negative Effects –The problems and challenges that occur in educational institutions such as, inadequate teaching-learning methods, lack of technology, scarcity of teachers, resources, equipment and infrastructure may impose unfavourable effects upon the learning, growth and development of the students. These scarcities impedes the learning of academic concepts, students, who are studying in class five are unable to read class three textbooks. Therefore, measures are required to get implemented to promote learning and understanding among the students.

Girls may be discriminated against – In the present existence, in some rural and remote communities, individuals form this viewpoint that girls are meant to acquire knowledge and training regarding the performance of household chores, preparation of meals and taking care of the needs and requirements of the members of the households. When parents go to work, they are supposed to stay back at home and take care of their younger siblings, elderly members of the family, and carry out domestic tasks. Education is not meant for them and they would eventually be married. In educational institutions also, girls may experience discriminatory treatment regarding participation in extra-curricular activities, competitions, events and functions.

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED TO IMPROVE EDUCATION IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

The measures that are required to be taken into consideration to improve education in rural and remote areas include: (Rural and Remote Education, 2013).

Access to Quality Early Childhood Education - Experiences in the early years have an important influence on children's cognitive, social, emotional and academic development.

Access to quality early childhood education helps children be well prepared for the transition into the school, by establishing a solid foundation for children's learning. Children belonging to all categories and backgrounds benefit from quality early education experiences, but these experiences are especially advantageous for children belonging to deprived and economically weaker sections of the society.

Providing Students with Quality Teaching - This will require providing skills and aptitude to the teachers to teach multi-grade classes, which are much more common in rural and remote schools. This means putting emphasis on the individual student learning needs, through the efficient use of student assessment data, observing and giving feedback, implementing unambiguous teaching techniques and equipping teachers with strong subject knowledge. In the early years of school, putting emphasis upon the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills amongst the students is part of quality teaching.

Providing Students with access to a Broad and Rigorous Curriculum - Students in rural and remote areas should have the same access to a broad and rigorous curriculum as their metropolitan peers. The knowledge and information that students are provided in educational institutions in urban areas, should be provided in rural areas as well. This should include access to a wide range of subject choices, extension opportunities and vocational education and training (VET) opportunities.

Raising Student Expectations and Pathways into further Study - The best way to increase student expectations is to increase awareness of career opportunities, use innovative technologies to involve students, and provide appropriate role models and mentoring for rural students. Eventually, for most rural and remote students to take a tertiary pathway, they must not just aspire to study further, they must also achieve the academic results that will enable them to go on to further training, study or employment.

Effective use of Technology to support Quality Teaching and Learning - Technology can provide new ways to transport curriculum breadth and options, as well as professional learning for staff. While technology by itself will not change student outcomes, it can be a strong device for stimulating student engagement and motivation, and for providing students and teachers in rural and remote communities with access to information, equipment and resources.

Transforming Teacher Training to equip Teachers to teach effectively in Rural and Remote Areas - Providing the student teachers with practicum job opportunities in rural schools has a positive influence on their attitudes toward living in rural communities. Strategies that inspire students to train in rural areas may improve recruitment and retention of quality teachers in these areas.

Encouraging Great Teachers to stay in Rural Areas - By the term, great teachers it is meant, the teachers, who are efficient, proficient and knowledgeable. Besides, the possession of knowledge and information, it is important for the teachers to communicate in an efficient manner with the students and not impose any kinds of negativities in their behavioural traits. In rural and remote schools, students may depict inattentiveness or may not complete the homework assignments and class assignments on time, there may be an increase in the rate of absenteeism and so forth. In such problems, it is vital for the teachers to explain the

consequences to the students in a decent manner. The quality of great teachers is, they should make learning pleasurable and stimulating for the students.

Providing Rural Teachers with appropriate Professional Learning –There has been an increase in the need for professional learning of the teachers employed in educational institutions in rural and remote areas with distance from metropolitan areas. At the same time, there is a decrease in the access to effective professional learning. Online professional learning activities and gathering approaches across schools are the opportunities for increasing access to professional learning for the rural teachers.

Providing Quality School Leadership –Making improvements in quality school leadership is critical in enriching teacher practice and student outcomes. Motivating and retaining great school principals, and providing them with professional learning and support, are critical to maximising student outcomes. The function of leadership is regarded as imperative in management and administration of the educational institutions. It is the teachers and the staff members that are vested with the function of quality school leadership. They are required to guide and direct all the individuals, students and their activities in a well-organized manner to accomplish the desired goals.

Establishing Strong Relationships with Community - Effective leaders in rural schools know how to control the resources to overcome limitations associated with geographic seclusion. Providing rural schools with the resources to establish relationships with their community, including local early childhood services, is one effective way of augmenting the performance of rural schools. In rural schools, it is vital to focus upon the areas of child development, management of household jobs, care of the elderly, management of water resources, preservation of the natural environmental conditions and so forth.

E-LEARNING SERVICES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

The remarkable development in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has paved the way for e-learning. Utilization of computers in the education sector can be traced back to the early 1980s, when simple word processors were in use. In the present existence, the Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world and has rendered a significant contribution in influencing the lives of the individuals. This generates familiarity amongst the individuals with great learning opportunities by having access to large amount of information with benefits in terms of time and cost savings. The modern educational technology assists strategy, proposal, scheme, transfer and management of educational activities for learners. This could be face-to-face within a classroom, online, or combination of both. Imparting education in this way is termed as e-learning (electronic learning) i.e. learning through information and communication technologies. E-learning simplifies distance learning and provides means to learners to access learning material at any time and at any place. A learning management system (LMS) is the software application that facilitates e-learning (Hussain, Wang, & Rahim, n.d.).

Various commercial as well as open source LMSs are available in the present existence, which are being used in educational institutions. Traditional learning involves setting up

infrastructure within schools, colleges and recruitment of faculty and staff. The main purpose of students is to learn, when they get enrolled in educational institutions. In rural areas, development of such institutes and hiring of full-time faculty requires large extent of resources. Professionally trained teachers, in most cases, prefer to work and reside in urban areas. Consequently, the population of rural areas is deprived of quality teachers, resources and thus quality education. The current work proposes the development of e-learning centres based on ICT to provide good quality education with up-to-date learning materials in rural areas. The model employs latest educational technologies that will improve the educational standards and will provide means to introduce educational technology to learners. The learners will have a chance to get acquainted with latest technologies, which will give them profound understanding and efficacy in using it. There will be promotion of e-learning platforms and also the development and usage of open source technologies (Hussain, Wang, & Rahim, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

In the present existence, measures are being implemented to improve the conditions of educational institutions and training centres in rural and remote areas. There are advantages as well as disadvantages of these institutions and centres. The benefits include, promote access to schooling, attain gender equality in enrolment, retention and achievement, providing learning environments to the children, enhance academic performance of children, especially girls, give security and protection to girls, protect children against criminal and violent acts, meet nutritional needs of children, promote socialization and mainstreaming of poor and minority children, provide effective links between the community and the larger society and reducing the cost of educating children. The disadvantages include, scarcity of teachers, cultural illiteracy, inadequate teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, increase in school drop-out, learning and growth of students may experience negative effects and girls may be discriminated against. E-learning platforms have generated the development and usage of open source technologies.

It is essential on the part of the individuals to put into operation effective measures that are necessary to improve education in rural and remote areas. This is not just the issue of equity between urban and rural areas, skills are considered as an imperative part of the economic future of the regions. Helping the children to transition efficiently into the educational institutions and young people to stay in schools, so that they are able to pursue higher educational qualifications and can even migrate to urban areas to enhance their living conditions, will support economic development and improvement in education in rural and remote areas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dove, L.A. (1985). *The Development and Training of Teachers for Remote Rural Schools in Less Developed Countries*. Child Family Community. UNESCO. Retrieved June 09, 2018 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0006/000678/067838eo.pdf>

Education for Rural People in Africa. (2006). UNESCO. Retrieved June 09, 2018 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001502/150256e.pdf>

Hussain, S., Wang, Z., & Rahim, S. (n.d.). E-learning Services for Rural Communities. Retrieved June 10, 2018 from <https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1308/1308.4820.pdf>

Providing Education to Girls from Remote and Rural Areas. (2005). UNESCO. Retrieved June 10, 2018 from http://www.ungei.org/unesco_providing_educ_rural_areas.pdf

Rural and Remote Education A Blueprint for Action. (2013). Education and Communities. Retrieved June 09, 2018 from <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/our-reforms/rural-and-remote-education/randr-blueprint.pdf>

Stokes, H., Stafford, J., & Holdsworth, R. (n.d.). Rural and Remote School Education. A Survey for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. University of Melbourne. Retrieved June 10, 2018 from https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/human_rights/rural_remote/scoping_survey.pdf