**“Role of ICT in Quality Higher Education”-A One Day Orientation-cum-Workshop.**

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Higher Education in India, even in twenty first century is facing challenges in terms of *Access, Equity and Quality.*

Adoption of specific strategies in order to enhance the relevance of higher education through Curriculum reforms, Vocational programs, Networking, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)application and Distance Education along with reforms in governance has been of late, the priority in successive National and State Education Policies. A significant disparity is still observed in ICT usage between institutions in urban areas and those in semi-urban/rural parts of the country. The quality of ICT infrastructure and its use is alarmingly limited in a large percentage of Autonomous/Affiliated Colleges especially due to lack of trained IT staff, connectivity issues and shortage of funds.

Keeping in view the above concerns, for the present Orientation Programme therefore, we have chosen the theme- how the IT/ICT(Information and Communication technology) is acting as an enabler and a catalyst to fuel the growth of Quality Higher Education in Colleges and Universities, with the following specific objectives:

* To catalyze, support and sustain IT/ICT and enabled activities and processes in order to improve Access, Equity and Quality in the fields of Higher education.
* To create an environment in the campus to develop IT/ICT knowledgeable community.
* To create an IT/ICT literate community who can deploy, utilize, benefit from IT/ICT and contribute to Quality higher Education.
* To help create an environment of Collaboration, Cooperation and Sharing, conducive to the creation of demand for an optimal utilization of and optimum returns on the potentials of IT/ICT in higher education.
* To promote universal, equitable, open and free access to state-of-the-art IT/ICT enabled tools and resources to all students and teachers.
* To promote development of professional networks of teachers, continuing education of teachers; guidance, counseling and academic support to students.
* To promote research, evaluation and experimentation in IT/ICT tools and enabled practices in order to inform, guide and critically utilize the potentials of IT/ICT in education.
* To motivate and enable wider participation of all stakeholders of society in general and in fields of higher education in particular in strengthening education through appropriate utilization of IT/ICT.

Some achievements at national levels so far:

1. The***National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology*** (NMEICT) is envisaged as a centrally sponsored scheme to leverage the potential of IT/ICT, in teaching and learning process for the benefit of all the learners in Higher Education Institutions in any-time any-where mode. Content generation and connectivity along with provision for access devices for institutions and learners are the major components of the mission.
2. Using the A-View software developed under the NMEICT, 14 day teachers’ empowerment programs have been conducted for batches of 1,000 teachers at a time by IIT Bombay and other premium institutes. These programs, developed under NMEICT, are becoming the bedrock for successful implementation of the proposed National Mission on Teachers.
3. Under the N-List program of **INFLIBNET**, being run under NMEICT, lakhs of e-books and thousands of high quality paid e-journals have been made available to colleges and universities with a view to inculcating research culture in teachers and students. The model needs to be scaled up for maximizing the coverage and productive usage of the resources made available.
4. The launch of EDUSAT has brought satellite connectivity to large parts of rural India. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and now Odisha State Open University(OSOU) are leveraging satellite, television, and Internet technologies to offer online courses.

Technology undoubtedly is playing a bigger role in transforming higher education, imparted by colleges and universities to the next level. While effecting an increase in GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) in higher education, ICTs will boost the “Employability” of our college graduates. Further, the tools help to create a social, highly collaborative and personalized environment with innovative solutions that will enhance the way students learn, communicate, collaborate and study both on and off campus.

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