Research Article

Inclusive Enrollment Policy, ICT and Disintegrating Teaching-Learning Process: Where do Universities Stand in this Paradox?

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Abstract

Recognizing the significance of education in the development of valuable Human Capital, investing in appropriate infrastructure for providing quality education to all is presently high on the policy agenda of India. However, looking at the diversity of the population in terms of caste, class, and region, every attempt to ensure quality education has an inherent challenge to be addressed. The present paper aims to understand the efficacy and reliability of having an inclusive admission policy and a simultaneous ICT-enabled teaching-learning methodology in vogue. The article argues that an inclusive admission policy demands a teaching-learning methodology that equally minimizes otherwise prevailing disparities. Having IT enabled facilities requires an efficient mechanism to train the stakeholders and create mass awareness about the facilities that would enable everyone to have equal access to the facilities.

Keywords: Education; Reservation; Inclusion; ICT; Teaching-learning, Alienation

Introduction

Institutions of higher learning have played an essential role in educating the elite and achieving significant accomplishments in science and the humanities throughout human history. (Chankseliani, Qoraboyev & Gimranova, 2021). Studies reveal that a robust higher education system is crucial to the nation's ability to compete in the global economy while contributing to its economic growth, quality of life, and positioning as a global leader. (Teague, 2015). Through their institutional policies and practices, institutions of higher learning play a crucial role in initiating and promoting sustainable development measures which are essential to the welfare of any society (Blessinger, Sengupta, and Makhanya, 2018). In this backdrop, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights advocates that based on merit higher education should be affordable and accessible to everyone. However, the challenges to implementing it are hidden in the basic composition of the population of any society and the nature of social inequality and exclusion the society reflects.

Given the diversity of Indian society, wherein people from all walks of life are found to be living, social inequality and exclusion are the facts of life. The occurrence of social inequality and exclusion is so multifaceted and multi-dimensional that hardly any segment of the population in India is devoid of its presence and hardly any institution has escaped its influence. While in India, we come across Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, specially-abled, poor, religious, and regional minorities thereby reflecting the nature of exclusion. Rural-urban differences, gender and educational level of people further add to the existing scene of exclusion of the

Indian society. Given this complexity, it is challenging for India to realize the objectives set by the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'.

Given this backdrop, Indian higher education institutions have been pro-people as they attract students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds by reserving quotas for the downtrodden sections to lift them in society. The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act 2006 and as amended in 2012 provides for 'the reservation in the admission of the students belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes of citizens, to certain Central Educational Institutions, established, maintained or aided by the Central Government, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto' (HBNI, 2020).

The inclusion of the downtrodden, however, is not the only objective of educational institutions. An effective institutional facility has to correspond to the changing programs of educational delivery and must provide a comfortable, safe, protected, affordable, well ventilated, and aesthetically pleasing physical environment. Furnishings, materials and supplies, equipment and information technology, as well as amenities that facilitate co-curricular activities, are all included in the facility. (Osuji, 2016). The last few decades have seen remarkable progress and innovation in technology and those leveraging these advances have seen paradigm shifts.

ICT has quickly become an essential part of the classroom and school infrastructure. From preschool through higher education, computers, laptops, smartphones, smart boards, and tablets is a powerful medium through which we get information and then interact. Several research and analyses have recently highlighted the opportunities and potential benefits of ICT for improving the quality of life and educational quality. ICT is regarded as a "key tool for establishing knowledge societies." and, particularly, as a mechanism at the school education level that could provide a way to rethink and redesign the educational systems and processes, thus leading to quality education for all (Sangra & Gonzalez-Sanmamed, 2010).

At the national level, India has significantly contributed to raising the infrastructure of education based on ICT and during this process; both public and private institutions have made landmark contributions. While some of these learning applications focus on wide-ranging topics or are used as learning aids, others are formulated with specialized fields of study in mind. If, on the one hand, private players like BYJU, Unacademy, Vedantu, Toppr, and Doubtnut facilitate students to learn on e-platforms, government platforms like Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) Swayam Prabha, National Digital Library of India, Diksha, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning, e-ShodhSindhu, etc. have also made a significant contribution in this field.

Such initiatives, however, are productive only if they reach uniformly to its respective stakeholders. Disproportionate access to such initiatives may result in new kinds of inequalities and subsequent concerns among the learning communities. This is evident from the fact that institutes of excellence in terms of ICT facilities witness varied issues among the students. Pertinently, '27 students across 10 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in India have committed suicide between 2014 and 2019 with IIT Madras topping the list with suicides by seven students during this period (Business Standard, 2019).

Prior literature

On the one hand, academics believe that technology plays an important role in the teaching-learning process. (González-Zamar et al, 2020, Agarwal and Mittal, 2018, Montrieux, 2015, Bhaumik 2012, Tamin, Bernard, Borokhovski, Abrami, and Schmid, 2011), on the other hand, some raise questions about whether ICT is appropriate for all types of pupils or for all kinds of teaching-learning processes and caution that educators need to be aware and careful in their handling of technology vis-à-vis students (Lembani et al, 2020;). Many scholars have also warned against the addiction, underuse, and mishandling of Technology while emphasizing that it has offered us a massive opportunity that must be taken advantage of. Given the circumstances, some researchers have departed from conventional presumptions and studied them from different focal points.

Before the use of ICT, the primary basis for understanding the significance and reliability of ICT-enabled teaching-learning lies in the accessibility to the technology and associated gadgets. This disparity cuts across age, income, gender, and educational attainment. The flow of technology would not work unless it ensures deep-rooted and universal access to its stakeholders. Tewathia et al (2020) argue that the less educated, lower-income, and lower-caste strata are more marginalized since they lack ICT assets and skills. Fraillon Et al. (2014) while studying Grade 8 students of selected European countries discovered that for social communication, females made slightly more frequent use of the internet than males. While there are some differences in how men and women use information and communication technologies, these disparities are minor. However, Jha and Shenoy (2016) suggest that in the modern ICT-enabled educational system in India, the people are diverse not only in terms of culture and ethnicity but also in terms of purchasing power and cost. The National Statistical Organization, in its 75th round survey on 'Social Consumption of Education (2017-18)' studied the 'computers and access to the internet' possession of households. 'The analysis only included households that had students aged between 5 to 29 years and were at that time enrolled and attending school. The survey revealed that only 8.3 per cent of households had computers and 21.6 per cent had access to the Internet. (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020) The study reflected the ineffectual accessibility of learners to the devices that link them to ICT. Extreme poverty and highly patriarchal societal systems, in which a strong cultural preference for boys relegates mothers and female children to a lower status, combine and perpetuate the impediments that stand in the way. (Singh, et. al., 2018). Without access to ICT, learners are at greater risk of being left behind in a rapidly changing global society. Studies (Bala and Singhal, 2018; Cummings & O'Neil, 2015) argue that it is essential to promote ICT prospects for women as it can supplement the prospects in education and employment for women.

The review of the prior literature, as such, reveals a complex relationship of ICT with various stakeholders in the arena of education. Its impact is determined by the awareness, access of people to ICT, and availability of the facilities about the Internet.

Objective of the study

Usually, an institution of learning has pupils of almost homogenous backgrounds and in such a condition one does not face different problems while teaching/learning. However, in a condition of reservation, institutions attract students of diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and addressing

such a diverse class is not so easy. It is challenging to bring the whole class to a homogenous level of teaching-learning. In this context, the study sought to understand the efficacy and reliability of ICT-enabled teaching-learning methodology in a diverse classroom wherein students of diverse socio-economic backgrounds are enrolled. The study also aimed to study the challenges faced by the students of different weak and underprivileged settings in ICT-enabled settings.

Methods

The study is qualitative, and the empirical data was gathered from primary and secondary sources. The information related to the students' intake capacity, reservations policy, facilities, and infrastructure were sought from different secondary sources, viz. various university published documents, university websites, relevant books, journals, and various newspapers reflecting the data about the study.

To gather the primary data from varied stakeholders of the institution, a purposive sampling technique was used to derive the desired sample. When using purposive sampling, there is no way of knowing how many people will take part; as such, the research presented here was not determined by finding a set number of participants but rather by engaging those who desired to share their experiences concerning the influence of the teaching-learning process. Three types of people were approached for participating in the study, i.e. students, professors, and IT professionals. Student participants were recruited using the following inclusion criterion: (a) belonging to a weak or underprivileged section of society; (b) seeking admission in the course against a reserved category and (c) presently enrolled as a regular student in the university. For professors and IT professionals, no specific criterion was adopted because they were not the ones getting influenced and their participation could only complement the data collected from the students.

At the outset, 36 potential individuals were contacted of whom only 11 disagreed to participate. Hence, the study shares the experiences of 25 participants who consisted of 20 students (representing various categories), 3 professors, and 2 IT professionals. The relevant information of the participants is given in Table 1.

Table-1: Demographic Profile of Participants

S. No.	Sex	Residence	Category of the student	Level of enrolment	Family Income/month (in Rupees)
1.		Rural	Scheduled Tribe	Postgraduate	> 5,000
2.		Urban	Weak & Under Privileged Class	Postgraduate	5,001 – 15,000
3.		Rural	Residents of Backward Areas	Undergraduate	5,001 – 15,000
4.		Rural	Residents of Backward Areas	Undergraduate	< 15,000
5.		Urban	Weak & Under Privileged Class	Postgraduate	> 5,000

6.		Urban	Differently-abled	Postgraduate	5,001 – 15,000
7.		Rural	Scheduled Tribe	Postgraduate	< 15,000
8.		Rural	Residents of Backward Areas	Postgraduate	5,001 – 15,000
9.		Rural	Differently	Undergraduate	5,001 – 15,000
10.		Urban	Differently	Postgraduate	< 15,000
11.		Urban	Weak & Under Privileged Class	Undergraduate	5,001 – 15,000
12.		Rural	Living along Line of Actual Control	Postgraduate	> 5,000
13.		Rural	Residents of Backward Areas	Postgraduate	5,001 – 15,000
14.		Rural	Residents of Backward Areas	Postgraduate	< 15,000
15.		Rural	Scheduled Tribe	Postgraduate	< 15,000
16.		Rural	Residents of Backward Areas	Postgraduate	> 5,000
17.		Rural	Children of Gujjar and Bak-erwal	Postgraduate	5,001 – 15,000
18.		Rural	Residents of Backward Area	Postgraduate	5,001 – 15,000
19.		Urban	Differently-abled	Postgraduate	< 15,000
20.		Urban	Weak & Under Privileged Class	Postgraduate	> 5,000
21.		-	-	Professor	-
22.		-	-	Professor	-
23.		-	-	Professor	-
24.		-	-	IT professional	-
25.		-	-	IT professional	-
26.		-	-	IT professional	-

The study includes in-depth qualitative interviews with all 20 student participants and semi-structured interviews with the rest of the participants. The interviews were conducted from September 15, 2020, to November 15, 2020, a period, predominantly influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, and teaching-learning was mainly based on ICT. However, it was ensured that the participants were part of the university teaching-learning process before the Covid-19 pandemic as well. Permission was sought from all participants and interviews were conducted at their convenience in the local, Urdu, Hindi, or English language. Each interview ranged from 30 to 50 minutes in length. The sequence of the questions, which was kept simple and clear of technical terminology, was frequently changed as the conversation progressed. All the interviews were taped with the participants' agreement, and later responses were transcribed before being translated into English for analysis.

Names of participants highlighted in the research are pseudonyms and some significant details have been changed to ensure that their identities are protected.

Findings

Two main themes evolved after the data was analyzed. The first theme highlights the facilities the institution offers to the students. The second theme brings out the experiences of the students coming from the reserved categories with the ICT enabled teaching-learning process.

University of Kashmir

The main campus of the University of Kashmir is situated in the Hazratbal area of Srinagar city (in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory of India). Over a while, it has expanded its infrastructure significantly and has come up with Satellite Campuses at Anantnag (South Campus), Baramulla (North Campus), and Kupwara to make education more accessible to the people living in far-off places of Kashmir. The University has also set up an office in the Jammu division to facilitate the students living outside Kashmir enrolled with the University. The official website of the university reads as follows:

> 'The University is committed to providing an intellectually stimulating environment for productive learning to enhance the educational, economic, scientific, business, and cultural environment of the region. It has constantly been introducing innovative/new programmes to cater to the needs and demands of the students and society.
>
> Over the years, the University has marked excellence in its programmes and activities. It has been re-accredited as Grade-A+ University by the National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India. This is recognition and reflection of the high quality standard in teaching and research at the University of Kashmir.'

It further adds,

> 'The University promotes a diverse and inclusive campus environment that fosters creativity and innovation. The University fundamentally affirms and embraces the multiple identities, values, belief systems, and cultural practices of its stakeholders. Thus, the philosophy of diversity and inclusiveness is integrated into the work and lives of every member of the University community.'

The University of Kashmir attracts students and scholars from the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual areas of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh (Jahangir, 2015). Every year the university accommodates more than four thousand students in varied courses both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. However, the students admitted to the university do not belong to a specific homogenous background. The students admitted to the university are, in fact, of diverse socioeconomic, religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. The diversity of the students is reflected in examining the admission policy of the university which is inclusive and ensures that students from all walks of life get an opportunity to study there.

The admission policy of the University of Kashmir

The selection of a candidate to study at the University of Kashmir is purely based on her/his performance in the entrance test conducted every year for admission to various courses. However, to make the selection process more inclusive, the University of Kashmir has adopted

a reservation policy whereby students of almost all kinds of backgrounds seek admission in the various courses. Primarily, 67 per cent of the seats are filled by the candidates belonging to open merit. The remaining 33 per cent of seats available in a Programme/ Course are filled up from amongst the reserved categories in order of merit. The breakup of seats for various reserved categories is given in Table 2:

Table-2: Reservation of Seats

S. No	Category	Quota (in Percentage)
1	Open Merit	67
2	Schedule Caste (SC)	5
3	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	3
4	Children of Gujjar and Bakerwal (CGB)	2
5	Residents of Backward Areas (RBA)	10
6	Line of Actual Control (LAC)	1
7	Scouts/Guides/Rovers and Rangers	1
8	Weak & Under Privileged Classes (Social Caste) (WUP)	2
9	Children of Permanent Resident of Defence Personnel	2
10	Candidates possessing outstanding proficiency in Sports	2
11	Candidates possessing outstanding proficiency in NCC	2
12	Differently-abled (PH)	3

Source: Admission Policy of Kashmir University, 2020

As the information in Table 2 divulges, reservation has been made for almost every marginalized section of society viz. SCs, STs, Social castes, residents of backward areas, differently-abled, people living along borders, etc. Reservation has also been made for the candidates who have made an outstanding performance in sports, NCC, or have been associated as scouts, rovers, rangers, and children of the defense personnel. Besides, a supernumerary quota (in addition to the intake capacity) has also been kept for persons outside the Kashmir division (two per cent), people living outside India (five per cent), and one seat for children of employees of the University of Kashmir.

Consequent to the reservation policy, students from all categories join the different courses and add to the diversity and heterogeneity of the classrooms. The diversity of the classroom is multiplied by other variables, as well, which are not otherwise reserved viz. gender, religion, economic background, etc.

Once somebody enters a classroom after the admissions, she/he finds females, males, rich, poor, SCs, STs, RBAs, WUPs, sportsmen, NCC cadets, rural, urbanites, etc studying together in a common classroom. The diversity of the classroom, on the one hand, depicts the nature of oneness, unity, and tolerance, however, on the other hand, it challenges the teaching-learning process in terms of inclusivity, understanding, and deliverance.

Facilities offered by the University for the students

The University of Kashmir provides its students, scholars, and teachers with an ample number of facilities within and outside classrooms. The classrooms of the students who were taken as participants were equipped with LCD projectors and wifi-enabled. Within the campus, we find a centralized Library housing lakhs of text and reference books, besides thousands of hardbound and full-text online journals, online databases, microfilms/microfocus, and rare manuscripts. It is also connected to a chain of departmental libraries with many books and other reference material. Access to the library is provided round the clock (24×7) for the benefit of users. Most library services are available through network-enabled computers. The library also houses the International Resource Cell, established with the financial support of the British High Commission in India to facilitate the dissemination and sharing of knowledge and experiences through electronic resources. The use of ICT in the teaching-learning process, research, and extension activities has been the hallmark of the University. The measures that the University has undertaken to strengthen the popularization and use of ICT in the curriculum include the making of virtual educational programmes, the production of educational multimedia, and the development of e-contents and learning objects by the Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMMRC). It is assumed that such facilities provide students and teachers with more prospects for communication and collaboration.

Even though the university offers such a large spectrum of online facilities for its students and teachers but it does not directly address the issue of ignorance of the students concerning these facilities and their lack of knowledge to use ICT.

Experiences of students

Against the available ICT facilities within and outside the classroom, the response of the students concerning the teaching-learning process was studied and the following interpretations were made while analyzing the data collected from the participants:

After seeking admission at the university, it is generally presumed that the teaching-learning process would be inclusive and address the academic aspirations of the whole class. The use of ICT is expected to enhance its efficiency further. However, during the study, some startling revelations were made by the participants about the application of ICT. During the fieldwork, it was revealed that the students enrolled in the University have to deal with ICT in three different spaces viz. within the classroom, outside the classroom (library, admission department, scholarship department, etc), and at home and/or hostels.

Classroom: While delivering lectures, teachers frequently use PowerPoint presentations (PPTs) to enhance the efficiency of the teaching-learning process. Even though its use is fruitful for the majority of the class but it does not prove to be encouraging. "As and when the teacher opts for a PowerPoint presentation, it is spontaneous that our attention shifts towards LCD projector, and most students like it. However, owing to my weak eyesight, I am unable to reveal to my teachers that looking towards an LCD projector is meaningless for me. Sometimes he asks us to look towards an image on the projector and then explains the same but how can I understand it"? (P6) Usually such problems are frequent among poor-sighted students and albinos.

The use of an LCD projector is not limited to the delivery of lectures only but is frequently used by students to

deliver presentations as a part of the evaluation process. There are some students (and teachers) who are not aware of its usage and putting them to such a thing that they are not aware of proves to be more challenging and discouraging. "I was not initially aware of what PPTs mean. I came to know about it only after teachers used it at the University. However, I was cornered when given the assignment to deliver as a PPT with a specific period to prepare. Till the period other students prepared presentations, I underwent a process of learning how to make PPT while focusing less on the content. Eventually, I scored less. It then seemed that I was assessed for making PPT and not for the presentation's content." (P13) The use of LCD projectors by the students for delivering PPTs becomes selective and consequently escalates the disparity within the class rather than integrating the stakeholders within the teaching-learning process. Such students who are not aware of such things face discouragement and develop issues of anxiety. "I have decided to opt for elective courses wherein the teacher does not ask for PPTs. Although I am very hard working and good at paper reading or even extempore, I face anxiety issues when asked to deliver a PPT. (P1)"

Besides PPTs, the use of laptops, tabs, and/or smartphones by the students and teachers within a classroom is, quite often, encouraged to make a classroom more interactive and productive. Primarily, it depends upon a teacher's will whether to allow the use of such gadgets in a classroom or not. If allowed, such kind of encouragement poses new types of challenges in a classroom accommodating students of different reserved categories. "I believe that using a laptop or a smartphone inside a classroom is very helpful. It can provide us with efficient access to study material while the teacher discusses things. We can even record the lectures to understand them while at home. However, I come from a very humble background and access to such gadgets is difficult and someone else getting them inside the classroom proves to be discouraging for me. I wonder how far I shall go in my career as compared to those who use them inside the classroom. It seems access to ICT wins over hard work and intelligence. (P5) During the teaching-learning process, a teacher expects students to have access to various online journals and e-books, prepare assignments and watch some video lectures; however, accessibility prevails over hard work. "I was once asked to prepare a review of five articles of the same theme published in some reputed journals. Even though reviewing those articles was not a difficult task for me but having access to the article was a herculean task because of my technological ignorance." (P20)

A sense of discouragement also prevails in a segment of the teaching fraternity towards the use of ICT. Many teachers still exclusively encourage offline book reading and offline libraries. I once appeared in a viva voce. After responding to the query of my teacher, he reacted by asking about the source of my response and I quoted one of the prestigious online journals for which he annoyed me. He then suggested specifying the books available in the library exclusively and discouraged other online means. (P18)

Outside Classroom: In contemporary times, the usage of ICT tools is equally important outside classrooms as well. Students, teachers, and researchers are found to be seeking the assistance of ICT in multiple ways and at multiple places. The University of Kashmir offers a multi-faceted facility to the students and teachers outside the classroom too. However, the students show a varied response in availing the facilities.

Everyone does not avail of the facilities and whosoever avails does so to a very limited extent. On inquiring about the facilities, out of 20 students, only two were aware of all facilities, 6 had some knowledge and 12 had no information at all. There is an enormous number of students in the university who deposit the library fee after the final semester to get a 'No Objection Certificate' from the library which enables them to get the degree-related certificates. (P26) Students, on the other hand, depicted a sense of helplessness owing to their ignorance towards ICT. My knowledge of ICT is limited to a few social networking sites while using a phone. I don't have any knowledge of computers or laptops and hence going to the library to access ICT is not helpful. Moreover, I find myself in an awkward situation while sitting in front of a computer while my classmates are around. (P14)

Allama Iqbal Library (The centralized library of the campus) provides free online access to e-books, e-journals, online databases, online libraries, newspapers, digital talking books, etc. However, poor response from the participants was found concerning its use. I am aware of a few of such online resources but never happened to know about their availability on campus and even did not even feel a need to use them. I rely on the books available at my home and those in the department library. Besides, I already waste a lot of time coming to university and going back home owing to traffic jams, and as such, I do not find time to go to the Allama Iqbal Library. (P2) A specially-abled student further revealed, 'Online access to the sources is a blessing for me but, owing to lack of gadgets, I have to visit the library to use a computer. However, the library's design is such that I cannot easily enter its premises frequently. It has a long path and is far from my hostel' (P9).

Home and/or Hostel: The last two decades have seen a swift escalation in the availability and application of ICT in Kashmir. Its use has thus become popular in a comparatively lesser period and now, ICT has permeated diverse professions and places. Growth in student use of ICT at home has been accompanied by a growing interest in how these technologies are used across communities and groups. However, the student community is not empowered to have universal access to gadgets and knowledge of ICT. When it comes to why a student will utilize ICT, there may be a variety of variables affecting them at multiple levels. Gender, age, mental outlook, motivation, ability, and other personal characteristics of students, as well as family factors such as socioeconomic background, family structure, ICT equipment at home, and parents' attitudes toward ICT, influence the use of ICT at home. (Agasisti et.al., 2017). On inquiring about the use of ICT at home, participants revealed varied responses concerning studies. Although, the majority of the students (17 out of 20) possessed an internet-enabled smartphone only 12 were using it for studies but were limited to accessing search engines (preferably Google), YouTube and surprisingly only two were found to be accessing MOOCs, e-contents, online courses, etc. available on different portals. A student who lived in the university hostel said, 'I live in the hostel of the university which is wifi enabled but am not rich enough to have a smartphone, laptop, or a computer. One of the participants revealed, 'Although I possess an internet-enabled smartphone but am not aware of any such portals which offer any kind of help to study'. (P2) The participants were aware of online private tutoring firms such as Byju's, and Unacademy (because of frequent advertisements on television) but were not aware of e-PG Pathshala, e-Pathshala, Diksha, Sakshat, etc offered by the government of India

free of cost. Although many participants were aware of the Swayam portal they did not use it for studies. A participant revealed, 'I am aware of Swayam but don't have so strong vision to access the phone continuously' (P6) another one narrated, 'I am aware of Unacademy but cannot access it for financial reasons. One of the female participants narrated, 'I know about e-contents available on Swayam and CEC (Consortium for Educational Communication). Even YouTube has uploaded many informative lectures which could be very helpful for my studies but my problem is being a female at home. I access anything on my phone, and my parents complain about watching and/or chatting with friends. Convincing them is difficult owing to their ignorance, illiteracy, and conservative thinking.' (P13) Other participants expressed issues concerning their socio-economic background and lack of awareness as the reasons prohibiting them to access the benefits of ICT-enabled facilities.

Conclusion

The article presents novel findings of the limited use of ICT by students belonging to different reserved categories against a pool of ICT-enabled facilities provided to them in and outside the classroom by the university and government. By systematically analyzing all the interviews conducted with different participants, we identify the following two different issues about the teaching-learning process enabled by ICT:

a. The University of Kashmir has a marginalized-friendly admission policy that ensures admission to people from all walks of life. It also offers a pool of updated and contemporary facilities (both infrastructural and online) about ICT for its students and teachers. However, such facilities are offered with a general presumption that the enrolled students are aware of such facilities and know the use and applications.

b. All the enrolled students are not, however,

   - Either fully equipped with such technologies;
   - Or/and aware of facilities available online on various portals;
   - Or/and owing to their socio-economic incompetence possess gadgets that enable such learning;
   - Or/and lack the physical capabilities to cope with such technologies.

Given this background, it becomes challenging to bring students of diverse socio-economic settings on a single podium of the teaching-learning process featured by ICT. Likely, ICT may further alienate such students who are not capable of engaging themselves in this process of learning unless an inclusive approach is adopted which may not be for 'many' while ignoring 'some'. The first and foremost job of any academic institution, including the University of Kashmir, is to ensure that proper infrastructure is in place before adopting any innovation in the teaching-learning process. The Government of India has been appointing a number of commissions and committees to look at various aspects of education and suggest measures to make the educational system of India inclusive and accessible to one and all. A centrally sponsored scheme 'Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan' (RUSA) opines that **i**nclusiveness is the bedrock on which universities can build truly diverse classrooms. Likewise, the 'National Educational Policy' (2020) envisions a complete overhaul and re-energizing of the higher education

system to overcome the challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion. All such institutions must organize regular awareness workshops for their stakeholders (especially for students with humble socio-economic profiles) to enable them to have holistic knowledge and competence of ICT, at least, of those items which are deemed for them to be learned as students. This would enable an inclusive teaching-learning process and provide the subjugated an opportunity to avail a timely benefit of ICT-enabled services and facilities.

Limitations and Further Research

Despite the fact that qualitative research is a better way to gather detailed information about the perceptions of people, some restrictions are inherent. Data were obtained from a few individual cases in this study, and it was based on first-person observation. However, we are confident that these results will bring value to the research in various ways and can be applied to other novel contexts. While the results of this study only look at the participants' opinions, they challenge teaching practices and the production of learning resources. In future work, it would be fascinating to look at the effects of ICT engagement in the teaching and learning process. To acquire a better understanding of the effects of modern technology on teaching and learning, more empirical research in educational establishments from different locales is required.

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