

Attitude towards Distance Education among Graduate Students

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Abstract- Distance education is very vital for our country because of population and resources. Formal education is not sufficient to cover all the people. The aim of this paper is to know the current attitude of graduate students about distance education. The other objective is to compare the attitude of engineering and B. Sc students towards distance education. Self made tool was used for this purpose on 200 graduate students of Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh. Items of tool have both positive and negative type. This is five point summated rating scale. The result shows that there is no difference in male and female graduate students on attitude towards distance education. Same result is found in different branches of Engineering students. They have favourable attitude towards distance education. Religion has no role on attitude because Muslim and Hindu students also show the positive attitude. It is very important to those students who have no time for regular class because of some problems. The scope is increasing day by day of distance education and open University play significant role in this regard.

Keywords- Attitude, Distance education, Graduate students

Introduction

India is a developing country with having second largest population of the world. Due to lack of resources and limitations of the formal system of education, policy makers attracted towards nonconventional modes of education for providing non-residential studies like correspondence courses. The Distance Education mode, in which it is not necessary to

bring all the students together to listen face-to-face lectures, was considered worthwhile.

A distance is maintained between the teachers and taught. It is a kind of non-formal education in which there is no restrictions of age, class, and duration even qualification, etc. for degree. There is flexibility in all aspects of distance education from admission to examination. Distance education was started and even now it is known in various names such as instruction through correspondence, home study, postal tuition, external study, off-campus study, open learning, open school, open university, education without walls and soon.

However in distance education system, the provision of occasional meetings between the teachers and the students is made. These meetings are popularly known as *Personal Contact Programs (PCP)*. The learners receive their study material through postal services for study at are checked and evaluated by the concerned subject experts. So, Correspondence education is a piece and part of open learning. Distance education system is also known by some other common names like Correspondence Courses, Correspondence Education, Distance Education and External or Private Appearance etc.

This system of education is suitable for the persons who wanted to enhance their qualifications but were not in a position to attend classes on a regular basis. Such distance courses proved a boon for the service persons as well as others desirous of pursuing higher education. As a result, a large number of in-service persons, professionals, entrepreneurs, job-less youth, school teachers, housewives and old aged free persons made a medium for admission to distance education study programs.

Borjholmberg defines distance education as “Distance study is indicate dialogic learning opportunity in which physical distance between the learner and the helping organisation is reached by an artificial carrier”

History of Distance Education in India

The history of distance education in India is not very much old. It is a post independence phenomenon. Immediately after independence, the government of India realised that the traditional full time education had turned out to be restricted and accessible to not many. The education commission (1964-66) point out that “It becomes evident that the present system of education will need radical changes. If it is to meet the purpose of modern democratic and socialist society changes in objective ---- besides the knowledge explosion and consequences demand for acquiring new skills and knowledge is placing pressure on the educational system to accommodating more and more”.

The Kothari committee constituted in 1961 by the Department of Education paved the way for the institution of correspondence courses in India. Later on the basis of the recommendation of the committee the University of Delhi was invite by UGC to consider taking up the institution of correspondence courses on pilot basis. Accordingly country's first school of correspondence courses and continuing education was established in University of Delhi in 1962. The Punjab University Patiala (1968) was the second Indian University to set up a full-fledged directorate of correspondence courses. After this many other universities also started directorate of correspondence courses. The true revolution in distance education in India was heralded with the establishment of the first open university in the country namely Andhra Pradesh open university Hyderabad in 1982 which was later renamed as Dr. Ambedkar Open University. After this many other open Universities established all over the country. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established as a main source of distance education in 1985.

Need and Significance of the Study

Formal education system has very limited recourses to educate this large population. The University Grant Commission has set the target of enhancing the enrolment ratio during the 11th five year plan. In order to achieve this target, tremendous amount of expansion in educational system is necessary.

A growing realization of the urgency by the nation to make its population literate, higher educated and sensitize the existing illiterate and semi-literate millions about the progress and change led to the successive governments to launch various education programme. As the result, the terms like Distance Education, Correspondence Education, open education have been added to the terms – Formal, Non-formal, and Informal education. The concept of Distance Education has been universally accepted as an alternative system to the institutional teaching to provide a second chance for providing higher education to those who missed the opportunity of getting the same at their normal stage. All the society and group have their own way of life. Students want to learn in different way. They want to freedom in teaching learning process. Pace of teaching is also a matter of concern. Distance education can able to teach students their own pace and interest and provide flexibilities in terms of age, curriculum, time and others.

This is an attempt to analyze the problem underlying the awareness about distance education. It focuses on the attitude of graduate students towards distance education because there are some barriers to adopt distance education as a source of learning. This study will be useful to improve the awareness about distance education. It will break down negative attitude of graduate level students towards distance education and removing the barriers towards adopting distance education as a source of learning.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the attitude towards Distance Education of graduate students.
- To compare the attitude towards Distance Education of different branches of B. Tech students.
- To study about the attitude towards Distance Education of different religions graduate students.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no significant difference between Male and Female graduate students towards distance Education.
- There is no significant difference among the different branches of B. Tech students towards distance Education.
- There is no significant difference between Male and Female B.Sc students towards distance Education.
- There is no significant difference between Muslim and Hindu graduate students towards distance Education.

Review of Related Literature

Lenka, S. K. and Ravikant (2012) studied the attitude and perception of the learners towards the Distance education. In this study, with the help of self made tool and a sample of 150 graduate distance learners, it is revealed that gender plays no important role to develop positive attitude and perception. It means, both male and female learners have similar positive attitude towards distance education and biographical factors i.e. locality, stream, SES and caste plays a vital role to develop positive attitude towards distance education.

Ramzi, Nasser and Kamal, Abouchdid, (2013) conducted study on Attitudes and Concerns towards Distance Education. The study surveys 7 school directors and 112 school teachers unequally divided among fourteen urban and rural schools. School directors were negative about

the possibility of distance education meeting the training needs of school teachers. In addition, they reported costly training and the purchase of technologies for distance education as inconceivable. On the other hand, teachers held a more positive view of distance education. Though more than 50% of the teachers reported little acquaintance with the specifics of distance education, they reported willingness to put forth the effort needed to familiarize themselves with the new technologies and practices.

Collins, K. Osei (2013) studied the Perceptions of Students towards use of Distance Learning. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions held by graduate students about distance learning offered by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. The survey utilized a 20 question survey with 691 respondents, who were adult learners enrolled in an Executive Masters of Business/Public Administration Program. The results of the study indicate that distance learning is most patronised by an older (>30 years) and married student population largely because it allows them to combine work and study. The data indicates that student perceptions of distance learning were positive. Respondents indicated that they were satisfied with teaching and learning by distance and also with learner support provided by the host institute.

Design of the Study- The present study is the type of survey research. In this study the researcher wanted to know about attitude of graduate student towards distance education. Both male and female have taken for this study.

Population - In the present study, all the students of graduate were respondent. Some of the students belong to rich family and other belongs to poor family. Student belongs to rural and urban area of city. There are many colleges and university in the Lucknow city which offer different

courses at graduate such as B.A, B.Com, B.Sc, B.Tech, M.Tech, B.Ed etc. Researcher selected only two colleges for data collection. The name of the colleges is Amirudaula Islamia College and Integral University Lucknow. Researcher selected only 200 B. Tech and B. Sc students of Lucknow city. The students belong to both sexes. Purposive sampling technique used for the selection of individual.

Distribution of Samples

S. No.	Name of the College	Male	Female	Total
1	Amirudaula Islamia College	32	18	50
2	Integral University	113	37	150
3	Total	145	55	200

The table shows the gender wise distribution of data. Total 145 male and 55 female students have been taken for in this study. 50 students from Amirudaula Islamia College and 150 from Integral university were the sample.

Tool- Researcher used self made tool for assessing the attitude towards Distance Education among graduate students. This was a summated five point scale rating scale. Multiple choice type statements usually with five alternatives such as strongly agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree concerning the object of attitude was collected by the investigator. Total 27 statements have been prepared for data collection. Data collection was done with the help of rating scale. It was categorized and tabulated according to objectives of the study.

Statistics used in study

For the analysis of data researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics. Researcher used central tendency (Mean), standard deviation, t-test, and f-ratio.

Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

Gender Wise Distribution of Samples

Gender	No. of Students	Percentage
Male	145	72.5
Female	55	27.5
Total	200	100

This table shows that the total no. of male students was 145 and female student was 55. The percentage of male students was 72.5 and female students were 27.5. The total no. of students is 200.

Religion Wise Distribution of Samples

Religion	No. of Student	Percentage
Muslims	165	82.5
Hindu	35	17.5
Total	200	100

This above table shows that the total no. of Muslims students was 165 and Hindu was 35. The Muslims was 82.5% and Hindus was 17.5%. The total no. of students is 200.

Hypothesis-1 There is no significant difference between Male and Female graduate level Students towards Distance Education

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value (d.f=198)	Significance
Male	145	98.3	25.63	1.6	Not significant at both levels
Female	55	102.75	13.32		

The above table shows that the total no. of male is 145 and total no. of female is 55. The mean of male students towards distance education is 98.3 and standard deviation is 25.63. The mean of female students towards distance education is 102.75 and standard deviation is 13.32. The t-value between male and female students is observed 1.6 at the 198 degree of freedom. The table value of t at 198 degree of freedom at 0.5 and 0.1 levels are 1.98 and 2.61 respectively. Here the calculated value of t is less than the table value at both levels of significance, so this hypothesis is accepted at both levels of significance. It means there is no significant difference between male and female graduate level students towards distance education.

Both male and female has equally well aware about the distance education. They have lot of information related to distance education study centre and open Universities. IGNOU is one of the premium institutions which provide various facilities to the students for better and flexible education system.

Hypothesis-2

There is no significant difference among the different branches of B. Tech Students towards Distance Education.

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	d.f	Mean square variance	f-ratio	Significance
Between-groups	$Sb^2=431.7$	3	143.9	0.804	Not significant at both levels
Within-groups	$Sw^2=26131.8$	196	178.98		

In this hypothesis, there were four branches of B. Tech such as civil engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science Engineering students. Here sum of squares (sb^2) is 431.7 and mean of squares variance is 143.9 and within the sum of squares (sw^2) is 26131.8 and mean of squares variance is 178.98. There are different degree of freedom for between the groups (sb^2) is 3 and for within the groups (sw^2) is 196. The F-ratio of different branches is 0.804. The table value of F-ratio at 3 and 196 degree of freedom at 0.5 and 0.1 levels of significance are 2.66 and 3.91 respectively. Here the calculated value of F-ratio (0.804) is less than the table value at both levels of significance, so this hypothesis is accepted at both levels of significance. It means there is no significant difference among the different branches of B. Tech students towards distance education.

It showed that the students of all branches of B. Tech i.e. Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Computer Science Engineering have awareness about distance education because they prepared themselves for competitive examinations.

Hypothesis-3

There is no significant difference between Male and Female B. Sc Students towards Distance Education.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value (d.f=48)	Significance
Male	32	90.42	24.47	1.497	Not significant at both levels
Female	18	98.61	14.24		

The above table shows that the total no. of male is 32 and total no. of female is 18. The mean of male students towards distance education is 90.42 and standard deviation is 24.47. The mean of female students towards distance education is 98.61 and standard deviation is 14.24. The t-value between male and female students is observed 1.497 at the 48 degree of freedom. The table value of t at 48 degree of freedom at 0.5 and 0.1 levels are 2.01 and 2.68 respectively. Here the calculated value of t is less than the table value at both levels of significance, so this hypothesis is accepted at both levels. It means there is no significant difference between male and female B. Sc students towards distance education.

Both male and female B. Sc students like to learn through various sources of distance education such as correspondence courses, open learning. Their interest is increasing day by day towards distance education. It should be given full chance to both groups to also learn through distance education. So it is clear that there is no significant difference between male and female B. Sc students towards distance education.

Hypothesis-4

There is no significant difference between Muslim and Hindu graduate students towards Distance Education.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value (d.f=198)	Significance
Muslim	165	99.78	20.65	0.62	Not significant at both levels
Hindu	35	97.52	19.33		

The above table reveals that the total no. of Muslim students is 165 and number of Hindu students is 35. The mean of Muslim students towards distance education is 99.78 and standard deviation is 20.65. The mean of Hindu students towards distance education is 97.52 and standard deviation is 19.33. The t-value between Muslim and Hindu students is observed 0.62 at the 198 degree of freedom. The table value of t at 0.5 and 0.1 levels are 1.98 and 2.61 respectively. Here the calculated value of t is less than the table value at both levels of significance, so this hypothesis is accepted at both levels. It means there is no significant difference between Muslim and Hindu graduate students towards distance education.

Both Muslim and Hindu group students are interested in distance education. They are well aware about Distance Education. They have lot of information related to Distance Education. In India there is equal chance for Muslims and Hindu to get education from any source such as from formal education and person who is unable to attend regular classes they choose non-formal education such as distance education, correspondence courses and others.

Findings and Results

The following results have been obtained on the analysis of data –

- 1- There is no significant difference between male and female graduate level students towards Distance Education has been accepted at both levels of significance. It means that there is no

significant difference between male and female students towards Distance Education.

- 2- There is no significant difference among the different branches of B. Tech students towards Distance Education. It has been accepted at both levels of significance. So it is clear that there is no significant difference among the different branches of B. Tech students towards Distance Education. The students of all branches of B. Tech.
- 3- There is no significant difference between male and female B. Sc students towards Distance Education has been accepted at both the levels. So this hypothesis reveals that there is no significant difference between the male and female B. Sc students towards distance education.
- 4- There is no significant difference between Muslim and Hindu graduate students towards Distance Education. It has been accepted at both levels. So this hypothesis shows that there is no significant difference between Muslims and Hindu students towards distance education.

Educational Implications of the Study

Present study has great relevance and importance. All of us well know that distance Education plays a very important role in the whole educational system. All the educators should plan and facilitate distance education to all courses. It helps in improving the literacy rate of our country. By this large population has an opportunity to get education with flexibilities. These flexibilities are in all aspects of distance education from admission to examination. Now a day students have keen desire to get education through distance education. So the concept of Distance

Education has been universally accepted as an alternative system to the institutional teaching to provide a second chance for providing higher education to those who missed the opportunity of getting the same at their normal stage.

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