

EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION PROGRAMS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of educational television programs in distance learning system. Using the procedure of survey method, this study finds out the worth of educational television programs. Its results are based on the responses of the learners of distance teaching system. The views of students were collected by using a questionnaire prepared by researcher because no standardized tool for the purpose of study was available. Questionnaire was developed by reviewing related literature on topic of study that was improved in light of the views of experts. Content validity and face validity of questionnaire was further determined by expert opinion. Results of the study indicated, ETV programs were very useful for students & majority of students get benefit of it. Therefore, there were some problems as well. In the light of the results of this study it was also found that majority of students don't get the broadcasts schedule of ETV programs because of which they miss the ETV programs & approximately half of the students who view the program cannot note down the important features of program because of slow writing speed and non availability of recording facilities.

Keywords: ETV Programs, Distance learning, Distance Education, Education.

INTRODUCTION

Distance education system almost all around the world has same structure of guiding students. In distance education student centered learning is soul of the program that demands a learner to work independently. But, educationists are also agreed as according to the code of student centered learning techniques that some advance educational guidance for students is necessary to achieve the better results. Assignments and examinations are also integral parts of this system that demands to provide some type of activity where a student must be able to get regular lecture by expert teacher to understand the lessons. Regular lecturing facility for distance learners is only possible in scheduled workshops at study centers only. Many distance learners are also working people who cannot leave their jobs and places for contacting teachers in institutions on regular basis. In the situation, media play vital role in providing educational assistance to learners where no other regular interaction between teacher and student is possible. ETV, from broadcast media is an important source that is used in many countries to telecast the educational lessons for distance learners. AIOU is also using this media for teaching many courses of different levels in Pakistan. Different users criticize ETV programs of distance learning programs in Pakistan. This study aims to evaluate these programs to find out the effectiveness of these programs for distance learners as well as to point out the problems of learners to prepare guidelines for better planning and implementation in the field of distance education in future.

RELATED LITERATURE

Distance Teaching is a recent international movement as compared to other modes of education. It has manifested itself in different nations according to their own cultural, political & economical factors. Distance Teaching comprise any organized educational activity for school dropouts, for rural & urban adults, for young men & women, for industrial & official workers aimed at improving their knowledge, employment or earning potential or giving them general education. Isman & others (2003:12) views "Distance education provides participants flexibility by enhancing productivity of learning and teaching." Infact, Distance Teaching learning system is one of the most popular methods in Pakistan. It is considered useful for Pakistan as well as for the other countries.

AIOU was pioneer of distance learning in Pakistan but keeping in view the benefits of the system now formal universities are also turning towards the mode. Many universities are offering distance education courses along with the formal system in Pakistan because it is more convenient, suitable, economic and feasible for developing societies. It make possible for adults and those who are not able to continue their regular studies because of different reasons. "Distance education is a system that is not bound to age, place, cast and any other differentiation that is related to social structure and social classes". (Jajja, 2007: 84). Distance education is defined as "a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom" (Harry,K. &Khan,K. (2000).. Honeyman & Miller (1993: 24) explains distance

education as “a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both.” It is flexible system of education for those who are not able to attend the educational institutions on regular basis due to different reasons. It is especially valuable for the working people who cannot leave their jobs and want to improve their education. “Modern Distance education system was firstly started from UK but is very popular now a day all around the world due to its flexibility in rules for learners” (Moore, Michael & Greg , 2005: 82). Different universities in the world are working adopting the system of distance education. In Pakistan that is a developing country and not able to provide education to all at the doors, distance education system of AIOU is playing vital role in providing facility of education to all in almost all areas of Pakistan. Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is a chartered university in Pakistan. It was established in 1974. It is the pioneer in non-formal and distance education in Pakistan and second Open University of the world. Now AIOU is among the list of Mega Universities of the world and provides an opportunity to working people to enhance their qualification without giving up their jobs or place of living. AIOU is running programs of all levels (certificate courses to PhD Degrees). AIOU is utilizing all possible media for instruction including; correspondence materials, Radio and TV, Satellite Transmission, Online Teaching, Non-broadcast media, Tutorial instruction and Group training workshops etc.

Education process in distance education as well as in formal system is a communication process. In formal education system, each learner and teacher/educator has a regular face to face link with each other but distance education system lacks in regular face to face connection. The communication in distance education system is based on use of different types of Medias. A variety of media such as radio, television, computer and Internet etc are being used as a part of learning material by many Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions. (Kulandai, s., 2002).

Isman and others (2003:12) by coding Kinross (2000) explained “technology breaks down all barriers by facilitating easier use of knowledge and creating common place for everyone. It is also reflected that technology become representative which creates home schooling rather than unique learning under the dimension of flexibility.”

As keeping in view the effects of different types of Medias in education process; it is clear that modern communication Medias should be used in recent years. Television has significant role in communication process of distance education as well as has proved effective media of learning not only for informal education but also for formal and non formal education.

Role of television in distance education is prominent. Most of the educational content is conveyed to learners through media e.g. print, television, radio etc. But “Television play role to deliver lessons to distance learners who has no regular interaction with a formal teacher in preparation of assessment”. Chute, Thompson, and Hancock, (2009:24). Like other countries, television is an important component of Distance learning in Pakistan too. It is considered one of the most versatile A/V aids ever developed. It is an effective & interesting medium of education for largest possible number of people. ETV is capable of creating interest & motivation in both children & adults.

Television is an audio visual media. It is interesting for all age people. Various Educationists recommend the use of television for educational process too. Künüçen, Kaya, Mirici, Künüçen & Öztürk (2003: 20) have recommended the use of audio visual Medias in learning process for effective education of learners. They view, “Audio-visual activities take an important part in the learning process. Eyes and ears are sense organs that are responsible for important functions. Information that has been received through eyes and ears enables man to have certain thoughts, feelings and impressions. Hence, it is safe to assume that sight and sound have important role in learning about the world, as well as perceiving, comprehending and commenting.”

ETV is capable of creating interest and motivation in both children and adults (Mohanty, 1986:85). ETV is defined as “Educational Television” (Webster’s new world college dictionary). When television is used for educational purposes, it is called educational television. ETV Program means the Television Program prepared for education of a lesson. In broader view, ETV denotes any television used for education of community. It is a persuasive & effective medium for educating largest possible number of people. It is capable of creating interest & motivation in both children & adults & has become a major instrument of education as well as significant component of distance education learning & alternative system for various categories of learners. Rao (2010) highlights some of the unique characteristics of educational television. He reports "Fixed schedules, scarcity of time, ephemeral, continuous, holistic, aimed at average target viewers & rich in meaning are some salient features of broadcasts television." (P-14). In modern society of today where technology has affected all fields, field of teaching and learning has also got benefits. “Different Medias are used in education. Use of satellite and

telecommunications is a new trend that has helped to improve instructional system in Distance education much more”. (Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (1999: 12). So, trend of distance education is also growing day by day in all societies. But on the other hand television is still used because of different reasons. “One most important reason for this is the availability of Television in almost all corners of the world today”. Khawaja (2008: 28). Television that is a source of entertainment and source of information is also available to different corners in Pakistan. Distance education in Pakistan is also using it for teaching purposes of its registered learners for different programs.

TV graphically brings happenings right into living rooms, complete with color, sound, time sequences, and even to some degree, the associated "feelings. So, Effective use of ETV can make learning process easy & interesting for learners. With the help of ETV program, a learner can learn about a topic with in a fixed time. During a program, ETV teacher tries to teach in such a way that he tries to explain most important topics within a limited time. It has been observed that, ETV Programs are not retrievable for learners, so they attend lectures attentively.

Keeping in view the best results of the use of ETV in teaching learning process, Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan working for providing education & training to the people of Pakistan not only facilitates its students through correspondence courses, tutorials, workshops, laboratories, but also with television, radio broadcasts & other communication medias. PTV initiated educational programs in 1973 in Pakistan. AIOU offers a number of ETV programs on PTV 2. Rashid (1998, 68) views, Pakistan Television initiated educational programs in 1973. AIOU also uses this medium for its mass education programs. The medium has however been excluded for the time being from some courses because of its high cost and having lesser coverage than radio. AIOU offers ETV programs of different levels. Schedule booklets of programs are posted to students in advance so that they may prepare themselves for the lesson broadcast on television.

Distance learners like formal learners face problems in different areas. A study report , analyzing students’ learning problems indicated, distance learners remain mostly weak in achievement as compared to formal system learners because of weak/ no coordination with teachers on regular basis. In formal education system, teacher student relationship is strong. Students learn with the help and assistance of teachers. Distance education system lacks in the area” (Khalid, 2010: 126). Another study on, how to improve students’ learning indicated, quality of education system basis on quality of its teaching services. In distance education system, where teacher student interaction is weak, use of communication technologies can improve the gaps. Distance learners cannot attend lectures of teachers in a regular classroom throughout the sessions but facility of lecture can be provided to students at home by using satellite, broadcasting systems etc (Noreen, 2005: 56). By comparing use of different communication technologies for distance education, use of Television and Radio is considered most important. Radio and television both can facilitate the distance learners scattered in wide range of area. Use of ETV in distance education is more effective than radio because radio is only an audio media but television is an audio visual medium of communication technology. Keeping in view the uses of ETV programs, AIOU is using this in many courses. Programs for different level courses are broadcasted on television. It is helping learners not only to provide facilities of lecture by teacher at home or on workplaces but is highly costly for the institutions. But the question is whether ETV programs are playing role for achievement of its purpose? What problems students face while getting benefits of ETV programs? The answers of the questions are important because many people related to education discuss these. Moreover, Distance Learners also have been found criticizing ETV programs in general discussions too.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Literature studied on use of educational television programs (ETV Programs) for distance learners helped to point out the significance of ETV programs for distance learners. Study of related literature on the topic, general observations and informal discussions with distance learners helped to decide that a study about the evaluation of ETV programs for distance learners should be conducted. So, under study research was conducted. The topic of study was selected as “Evaluation of educational television programs for distance learners”. The study on topic was necessary to point out the problems of distance learners related to ETV programs that could be helpful for distance learning institutions to improve the area in future. Moreover, best efforts of distance education institution, using, ETV programs to facilitate its learners in Pakistan could be appreciated because the study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of ETV program of AIOU, Pakistan too. In addition, the study aimed to get answers of following research questions

1. Are ETV programs effective for distance learners?
2. What are views if distance learners about the effectiveness of ETV programs of AIOU, Pakistan?
3. What are problems of distance learners related to getting benefits from ETV Programs in learning process?

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Objectives of this study were as followings.

1. To investigate the views of distance learners towards ETV programs in Pakistan.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of ETV programs telecasted for distance learners in Pakistan.
3. To find out the problems of distance learners in getting benefits from ETV programs.
4. To give suggestions for the improvement of ETV programs of AIOU.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Use of ETV Programs for distance learners is important because face to face teacher student interaction is very poor. Only correspondence materials, tutorial meetings, workshops arranged by distance education institutions provide chances of learning to students for preparation of examinations. Effective use of ETV Programs can provide additional help to learners to prepare course assignments and do preparation for examinations. No doubt, ETV Programs are a part of many courses of distance learning but like all other areas of teaching learning system, this component also have some problems. So, the study is very helpful for distance learning institutions who are offering ETV Programs as a part of teaching learning process. Moreover, following points also indicates and explain the importance of this study.

1. It evaluates the views of Distance Learners about ETV Programs.
2. It helps to find out advantages of ETV programs for distance learners.
3. It helps to evaluate the effectiveness of ETV programs telecast in Pakistan
4. It helps to identify the limitations of ETV programs telecast by television channels in Pakistan
5. It can be helpful for to improve the quality of ETV programs.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by following the case study method that is a technique of descriptive research methods. Population of study was consisted on the students of distance learning in Pakistan who were ever enrolled in any course where ETV programs were used as a part of instruction of courses. Only AIOU, Pakistan was using ETV Programs in different courses of distance education in Pakistan. 250 students from the list were selected. They were approached by sending questionnaire with a covering letter of request to answer the questions asked. Only 193 students answered and mailed the letters with filled questionnaire back. So, only these 193 questionnaires were used for data analysis. For data analysis, collected data from respondents about analysis of use of ETV Programs for distance learners was firstly converted to quantitative form and then analyzed simply by applying the method of computing percentages by using the SPSS program on computer.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

ETV programs are no doubt very effective for distance learners in studies and preparation of assignments and examinations. The distance education institutes spend lot of money and energy for broadcasting of ETV programs. AIOU is also ignoring to work in the area and providing the facility to its students. Evaluation of ETV programs through the survey and analysis of responses of 193 distance learners some answers related to research questions of the study revealed following results.

ETV programs are effective for distance learners of AIOU. Majority (92%) of distance learners are aware about the ETV programs. Many (58%) of distance learners who watch ETV programs of AIOU are in view that programs are interesting. In view of majority (62%) of distance learners, ETV programs of AIOU increase their knowledge. For many (55%) distance learners, ETV programs are very helpful for preparation of course assignments and examinations. ETV programs of AIOU are effective for learners of formal education system too as well as students of distance education system in learning process. In view of majority (60%) of respondents, teachers deliver ETV lecture with full preparation. In view of many (56%), teachers also explain contents well about the lessons with good examples. Majority (89%) of distance learners contacts their tutors to discuss further points but most of them (67%) contact during the workshops.

About the attitude of distance learners related to ETV programs of AIOU, many (58%) of them who receive the schedule of ETV Programs do not watch these programs. Moreover, Distance learners who watch ETV programs are not aware about the theme and procedure to get more benefits from ETV programs in learning process. Many (78%) learners watch programs without studying course unit related to the lesson of program before watching the programs. Some (43%) distance learners are also not satisfied with teaching technique of teachers who are recorded in programs.

About the problems of distance learners related to ETV programs, most (66%) of respondents reported that distance learners do not receive the schedule of ETV programs on time. ETV programs cannot be recorded by

many (75%) of distance learners due to lacking the facility of recording. Many times (in view of 52%) students cannot watch ETV programs because of technical faults of recording and broadcasting. Some (42%) distance learners reported that duration of ETV program are not sufficient to fulfill their learning needs.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

ETV program are best medium of communication used in distance education system. It is popular media used in distance teaching system in all around the world. Role of television in distance education is prominent. "Television play role to deliver lessons to distance learners who has no regular interaction with a formal teacher in preparation of assessment". Chute, Thompson, and Hancock, 2009:24). Like other countries, television is an important component of Distance learning in Pakistan too. It is considered one of the most versatile A/V aids ever developed. It is an effective & interesting medium of education for largest possible number of people. ETV is capable of creating interest & motivation in both children & adults.

Keeping in view the effective use of ETV programs, television broadcasting is used as a major instrument of education not only in Distance learning but also in alternative systems for various categories of learners. Allama Iqbal Open University, the oldest distance-teaching institute has regarded ETV as an integral part of the whole teaching learning process form years. Pakistan television initiated educational programs in 1973. AIOU also uses this medium for its mass education programs. This medium has however been excluded for the time being from some courses because of its high cost & having lesser coverage than radio. ETV programs are considered important in Distance learning because contact between learner & tutor is not regular. Moreover, regular teaching is arranged occasionally but students have to complete their assignments for continuous assessment before they have to study all course books within duration without the help of a teacher. ETV helps students living in remote areas, having no peer guidance, no teacher's guidance but doing effort to upgrade or fresh his knowledge because of urge to become a useful citizen has acceptable & respectable level of education.

In general, Television is a source of entertainment for everyone. Videos are source of information as well as best source of learning too. Educational videos make learning easier for every age student by adding picture with sound and actions. Ozkan (2002:39) reported "The use of video cases in education has grown very quickly in recent years." ETV is a source to present educational lessons to distance learners through electronic broadcasting media. ETV programs play their role as teacher for the students who are studying in distance learning system. So these programmers should be good, well prepared & well organized & helpful for students. On the other hand students should watch these programmers with positive attitude. The study is interesting and valuable in the sense that it has pointed out some valuable points related to distance learners and ETV programs.

The finding of this study has pointed out the positive attitude of distance learners only to some extent toward ETV programs. Best way to get benefit from ETV programs for learners is to be pre-time well informed about schedule of program. So that students may read course unit before watching a program. But unfortunately, according to findings of study most of students don't read course unit before watching program & nor all learners receive schedule of ETV programs (some time not on time & sometimes never).

The study pointed out that many distance learners don't watch ETV programs because of some reasons. For example, sometimes they don't know the value of ETV programs. Sometimes if they watch program, they don't find it interesting or relevant with their exams. Sometimes they don't watch program because they are not informed about the schedule. Sometimes students receive schedule, but it doesn't match with the schedule of a working student. Sometimes student doesn't get benefit of program because of technical faults in recording or in transmission. This study has supported that best way to get benefit from ETV programs for learners is be pre-time well informed about schedule of program. So that students may read course unit before watching a program but unfortunately, according to findings of this study most of students don't read course unit before watching program and nor all learners receive schedule of programs (sometime not on time and sometimes never).

Most of studies & experts of distance & Non-formal teaching systems, advocate about the effectiveness of ETV programs. ETV Programs help to increase the knowledge of distance learners about a lesson. Students of distance learning system mostly don't have the guidance of their teachers but have to do lot of work for passing their exams. They prepare assignments assigned by their departments for continuous assessment. Moreover, they also prepare different topics for their courses about exams. On the other hand it is a reality that most of distant learners are working people and have no eye contact with their tutors for the most of time during a semester programs. This study has pointed out effectiveness of ETV programs prepared by AIOU. These programs are helping distance learners of this university in increasing knowledge and preparation of assignments for continuous assessment. This means ETV programs are helping distance learners for preparation of final exams. Selection of teachers for ETV programs is an important task. A good classroom teacher is not necessarily a good

TV teacher. Art of successful TV teaching is a different task that requires no small degree of talent for the task. Teaching with some response from students is quite different from teaching in a studio atmosphere. According to findings of this study, Selection of teachers for teaching in ETV programs has been proved good in a way that majority of students are getting help from these teachers because they teach well & come having good preparation. They explain lesson with good examples.

For effective use of ETV programs for distance learners, recording of program should be good. Teaching at T.V. is not an easy task & on the other hand recording of an educational activity is also a good art. Only a tactful teacher & presence of well-trained technical staff for recording is must for a good recording. The study has pointed out some weak areas of AIOU, ETV programs in recording and broadcasting areas.

In the light of findings of this study, ETV programs of AIOU are not poor in sense of teachers teaching. Perhaps organizers of the ETV programs have good talent of teachers having studio atmosphere for teaching. Hence, sometimes programs bear some technical faults of recording. This study has indicated some technical faults of ETV programs also. As for example voice on TV is not found clear sometimes students cannot catch some scenes because process goes through quickly and teachers also speak fluently. So, a student wishing to write important points of lessons cannot write. For the best results special attention should be given to the technical aspects of recording.

For best results ETV programs can be helpful for students only if they not only watch programs but also to write key points of lesson or try to record the program for future use if they have recording facility. This research has proved that students mostly have no facility of recording. Because of poor writing speed, they also cannot write important points of a lesson. This weak point of students can spoil the effectiveness of this media. So, students should try to improve their writing speed to get benefit from these programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study as result of analyzing the views of distance learners and literature review on the topic, propose some recommendations for distance learners, teachers delivering lessons on ETV as well as distance learning institutions. The recommendations are as followings.

1. All students of distance learning should watch ETV programs with interest without missing any one related to their course. Moreover, they should study course unit before watching lesson on Television.
2. Students should try to write down key points of lesson during the lesson & for this purpose they should try to improve their writing speed & art of noting a lesson.
3. Teachers delivering lessons on T.V. should speak slowly & try to repeat main points. This will help students to note key points of lesson.
4. Programs should be repeated more than one. Re telecast of program should be on the demand of students & at night times so that maximum students may get benefit of these programs.
5. Recording of program should be available to distance learners in other forms like as CDs in study centers. Students should be shown recording of a program during workshops at study centers too.
6. Broadcasting schedule should be sent to students on time. Moreover, schedule of daily programs can be provided to students at the time of admission along with the study material.
7. Broadcasting schedule of each ETV program should always be published in some daily papers.

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