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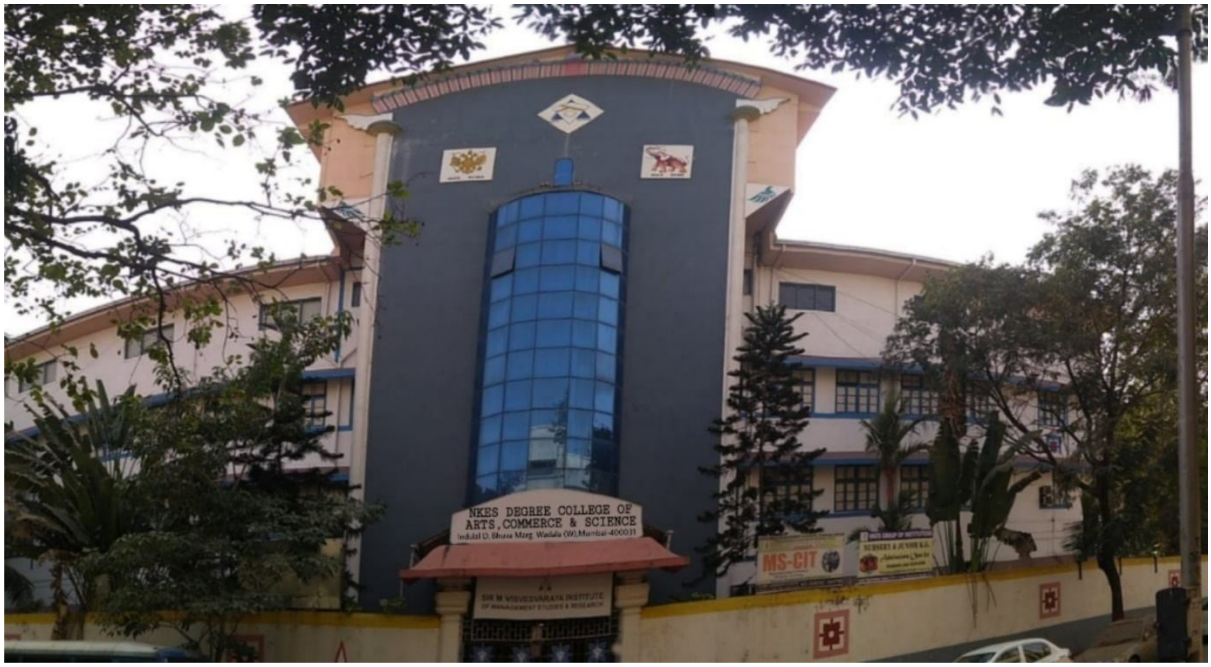

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Research Papers

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ROLE OF ICT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT
This paper makes an attempt to focus on the role of ICT in higher education for the twenty-first century. In developing countries where higher education is concerned with various challenges, there is an increasing burden to ensure that technological opportunities in the context of educational needs. The use of ICT in higher education provides more learner-centered education. With the world moving rapidly into digital media and information, the role of ICT in education is changing into more and more dynamic and this importance can continue to grow and develop in the twenty-first century.

INTRODUCTION
Developments in Technology in recent years has grown rapidly having a lot of impact on the lives of humans. Universities across the world are able to study and do research with the convenience of improved technological facilities in the information and Communication Technology (ICT). University students are exposed to the dynamic world and also the ongoing amendment in technology taking place. Such improvements in technology have replaced the use of traditional methods of education which uses chalkboard, whiteboard and hard copy textbooks. These changes have brought a lot of significance to university students enhancing their academic performance.

It is seen that ICT develops student knowledge and research enhancing their creativity, communication skills and thinking capability, thus enabling them to communicate and collaborate in a learning environment made much easier with ICT.

ICT is an abbreviation for "Information Communication and Technologies". ICT considers all the uses of digital technology that help individuals, business and organization. Since ICT is changing very fast, it is difficult to define ICT.

ICT is the concern with the storage, retrieval, manipulation, transmission or reception of digital data. The definition taken from the guidance in the QCA schemes is "ICTs are the computing and communication facilities and features that variously support teaching, learning and a range of activities in education."

OBJECTIVES OF ICT
1. Improvement in the learning environment

2. Increase of adult literacy rate in terms of computer technology

3. Growth of requirements of basic education and training in different essential skills needed by students as well as teachers;

4. Increased acquirement by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sustainable development.

BENEFITS OF ICT
We discussed ICTs are causing to make a move from teacher-centered education to competency-based learning. The conventional education is based on Transmissive modes. The use of ICT in education adds the new way of students learning. The following are the benefits of the use of ICT in higher education:

1. Learner-Centered Learning
With the help of technologies, it is possible to promote the transformation of education from teacher-centered instruction to students centered instruction e.g. 1) Increased use of the Internet as a source. 2) Internet users can select experts from whom they want to learn. 3) A process will become a problem – based learning where learners identifies problems or issues of any scenario to understand that senario.

ICTs in education acts as a transformation agent as it supports independent learning. Students become engrossed in the learning process by using ICT.

2. Supporting Knowledge Building
The emergence of ICTs as a learning technology unknowingly insists to think on alternative theories for learning.

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The conventional teaching method has targeted on lecturers planning and leading students to attain their lectures. This way of teaching follows the planned knowledge transformation through some interaction with the content as a means to consolidate the knowledge acquisition. It depends on the process of personal understanding. In this domain, learning is viewed as the construction of sense instead of memorizing of facts. Use of ICTs provides many opportunities through their provision and support for resource-based, learner-centered education. Employ ICTs in their education, the more pronounced impact of this can become.

3. Any place and any time learning

The use of ICT has extended the scope of offering programs from a distance. The off-campus delivery was a choice for college students who were unable to attend the lectures in universities. Today, several students are able to build this choice through technology-facilitated education.

It is a good opportunity for students to start education anywhere, anytime & any place.

4. Enhancing e-learning

We take the same broad definition of ICT to include radio, television, satellite, telephone, fax, computers, mobile phones, CD-ROMs and the internet. The ICTs can be divided into two groups: traditional or old ICTs (namely, radio and TV) and the new ICTs (namely, the Internet and telecommunications). Learning through new ICTs is also called e-learning. Recent studies show the enormous potential of e-learning, especially in industrialized countries.

5. Enhancing educational Management

Computer software programs are being used to create timetable and college management to improve the use of staff time, student time, thus reducing costs significantly. Only a few computers are necessary for this type of application. It is noted that ICTs in college or universities can improve quality at minimum cost. New ICTs have a very large potential for teacher learning in larger quantity and better quality. Both ICTs can be used to widen coverage & access and to provide inter-communication are supposed to be cost effective for teacher learning.

6. Enhancing academic experience

E-learning technologies like Moodle can greatly support and enhance teaching and learning activities. Moodle provides a classy set of options designed to allow participants to learn by constructing and sharing their information among a Moodle course learning space. Knowing what these options are for and knowing how to use them will greatly enhance student learning experiences in an academic environment.

CONCLUSION

Information Communication and Technologies play a major role in improving the academic standards of a university and its students to meet the growing needs of the job market in the technological influenced century that we are living in. Therefore universities should put more attention to improve ICT facilities in the colleges or universities so that students will be exposed to ICT before going out into the workforce. On the contrary, better cyber counselling courses should be offered to all freshmen intake in order to build a good foundation to avoid social networking site addiction and internet surfing apart from academic studies as well as to generate awareness about cyber-attack.

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