GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue on the Impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education

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Information and communication technologies (ICT) have fundamentally changed the practices and procedures of nearly all forms of endeavor of life. Its impact on various fields such as medicine, tourism, travel, business, law, banking, engineering and architecture, etc. across the past two or three decades has been enormous. Within education, ICT has begun to have a presence but the impact has not been as extensive as in other fields. The opportunities offered by ICT based teaching and learning is endless. It promises cost effective quality education, maximum utilization of resources, increased coverage of the training and student centric - any time - any place - study methods. ICT can prove as a boon to eradicate the curse of illiteracy and offer inclusive education. It can overcome the geographical barriers and meet the requirements of students with special needs. Use of ICT in education will ensure that each and every student feels welcome and that their unique needs and learning styles are attended to and valued.

The impact of Information and communication technologies (ICT) in education is remarkable. It is enhancing the access to education and strengthening inclusive education. It is a great aid in streamlining the administrative aspects of training and development. Market forecasters predict double digit annual growth of E-learning industry in the years to come in different parts of the world and expecting the market to hit $107 billion (£67.47 billion) by 2015. While ICT is promising tremendous benefits and growth in the field of education in future, currently its inception is observing varied degrees of comfort level in adapting ICT for education.

This special issue focused on "*The Impact of Information Communication Technologies*

(ICT) in Education" is aimed to provide a perspective on different dimensions of ICT applications and support to facilitate the process of learning. These articles, written by researchers from different academic backgrounds, working in India, Tanzania and United Kingdom, cover various techniques and efforts of adopting ICT in the field of education worldwide. It will also accommodate challenges faced and solutions offered by various educational institutes while incorporating ICT in conventional education system.

The first article – "*Impact of ICT on Education*" discusses in detail the effect of ICT on teaching-learning and research with examples of various available ICT tools. It elaborates role of ICT in mobile learning and inclusive education. The paper delineates in brief the challenges faced while adopting ICT in Education and probable solutions.

Dr. Geeta Nair and Robert Hindle in their research paper "*Use of ICT in Education*" attempts to map the trajectory of ICT and its increased usage across the world in an era of globalism, spanning Asia with a focus on India. It also describes various social media tools used in the field of education.

In the following article, "*ICT Policy for Basic Education in Tanzania—Challenges, Strategies and Prospects*", Inderjeet Singh Sodhi examined the efforts carried out so far, in United Republic of Tanzania for the development of ICT policy context for education - particularly the basic education. It brings out in detail objectives, issues, and challenges of ICT policy for basic education. It also suggests strategies for development of effective ICT Policy in Education.

Dr. Sarika Sawant, in her paper "*Open source and Free E learning tools useful in LIS Education*" discussed the synchronous and asynchronous mode of e-learning with its features. The paper also defines and summarizes the impact of open source software on teaching and learning process. The numerous open source e-learning tools are discussed with examples such as Open source LMS, Open source authoring tools, Open source audio editing software, Open source social bookmarking tools, Open source CMS etc. It also throws light on free e learning tools useful in e learning such as Slide share, YouTube, Wikis, RSS, Word press etc. The paper concludes with e learning initiatives in India.

In following research paper, "*Comparative analysis of select databases in Life Sciences*", Purnima Joshi studied the variety of electronic information resources relevant to the field of Life Sciences. She described the characteristics and comparatively analyzed twenty five selected databases from the vast number of available databases in this subject area.

The paper of Pralhad Jadhav, "*Learning Goes Hi-Tech*" covered the various aspects like objectives, characteristics, devices, similarities, differences, challenges, etc. related to eLearning (electronic learning) and mLearning (mobile learning).

In the concluding chapter "*Design and Development of LIS Subject Portal Using Bluevoda*" Vinay Kumar and his colleagues described the design of a subject portal project undertook by LIS (Library and Information Science) department of the Kuvempu University, India. It explains the methods and strategies adopted in the creation of LIS subject portal with special reference to the UGC-NET syllabus.

In sum, the articles describe the current status of ICT practices in various countries. They discuss the advantages of adopting ICT in education field and different methods adopted. They also address various challenges faced and suggest probable solutions. The articles also offer a list of various ICT tools, their comparative study which may be useful for educationalists and researchers.

I take this opportunity to thank all the authors for the contribution they have made for advancement of our knowledge about impact of ICT in education as well as for their co-operation and for responding so patiently to

the comments and recommendations during the peer-review process. To work with this group of scholars was a rewarding experience. I am also in debt to the colleagues that accepted my invitation to review manuscripts, within their field of research expertise, for the double issue on "*The Impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in Education*" and whose names and affiliations are reported in the following page.

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