Abstract

Distance learning is at present becoming significant all around the world in contemporary educational development as an alternative way to meet the huge unmet demand for education at all levels, especially for higher education. Distance learning enables a person to access education despite geographical isolation, social isolation and similar related barriers. With the growth in the technology and internet networks, many developments took place in the field of communication as well. It has led to enormous scopes in the way to deliver learning at a distance in a more efficient and interactive way. ‘New media technology’ is the most recent addition to the field of distance education technologies, and the term comprises of the latest technologies, such as internet radio, web-portals, digital libraries, video-conferencing, mobile devices, multimedia technologies, and so on. Despite the remarkable growth of new technologies, the developing nations like India suffer from various issues which tend to act as hindrances in the successful utilization of the new media technology in distance learning. Though many prominent distance education universities/institutions have incorporated technologies in their delivery mechanism, they are yet to upgrade the available devices and add more innovative and interactive technologies. Reaching the rural-based learners through new media technology, at times, becomes problematic, owing to the limited accessibility and utility of technologies by them. The upward trend of women enrolment in distance education in the recent years call for making technology accessible for them, as most female learners, especially in the state of Assam, has inadequate familiarity with technology. Availability, accessibility, proper training and familiarization, and awareness of new media technology could foster a sense of belongingness among the distance learners and improve learning.