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Distance education – The past, the present and the Precedent

Distance education has grown in different dimensions to become the chosen route for higher education. The larger section of the student community in India, aspiring for higher studies, seeks distance learning for its convenience, flexibility, affordability and accessibility. The eligibility aspect of distance learning attracts even the adult segment to pursue higher education. As per the 2011 statistics, during the last decade (2001-2011) distance education has grown from 20% to 26% of the student populace in India. This growth is further catalyzed by the increasing demand for better competencies for a particular job. Add to that, the technology boom has bolstered the distance education space, through better reach, promising to deliver a bright future.

The positive and prospective aspects of distance learning

Distance education, has scored high in terms of the flexibility, it offers. Additionally, remote access of distance learning courses help students from across the country to study from their own comfort zone. This apart, the pedagogy in terms of faculty and course structure has evolved to suit the industry standards. The distance learning courses ranging from humanities to management feature industry relevant curriculum to make them more applicable and accountable in the job industry. Here, learning extends to the scope of non-academic sessions, with faculty/mentors equipped to handle different facets of subject training. With respect to the pedagogy in distance learning, technology- medium has given effect to industry-oriented training with instant access and quality resources. The online medium with its 24*7 connectivity serves as a global interface for students to network with their peers, share knowledge, learn from the experts and grow in all facets. All these aspects of new-age distance education make it credible/creditable in the job industry, being treated on par with the regular stream of learning.

Distance learning credibility in the competitive job-market

1. For working professionals

The competitive job industry further establishes the prominence of distance education. Enhanced Skills and experience, through industrial exposure play a vital role to jumpstart or progress with a career. Working professionals, therefore get the competitive edge, when they pursue studies while on job. Employers on the other hand, get the benefit of using existing employees for newer responsibilities or multiple job roles, without having to induct them for the process.

2. For starters

The advantages of a distance-learning course help starters/fresher to thrive in the modern-day competition. Students can enroll for any course they aspire to study and are not bound by the constraints of time and space. At the same time, they can secure employment and create a wealth of experience. Backed by experience, distance-learning students have the right combination of academics and practical knowledge to progress in their career.

The final word

Distance education in India has come of age, with innovative pedagogy, technology-driven learning interfaces, remote access, quality output and employability, as its focal point. As India sports 1.29

crore people in the 10+2 category, distance learning holds immense prospects for the future of the country both in the economic and social planes.

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