

Countrywide Classroom Project

For over two decades University Grants Commission (UGC) of India has been using television for higher education. Initially specially designed educational television programmes, imported from abroad or locally produced at the media centres established by the UGC in various universities across the country, were telecast on Doordarshan, the largest public television network in the country, in what was called UGC Countrywide Classroom. Today these programmes are also telecast on DD Bharti, and VYAS – the higher educational channel of UGC.



The UGC has also established Satellite Interactive Terminals (SIT) across the country for Virtual Classroom Operations. This helps students, scholars and teachers share information and knowledge. The UGC has also launched a highly ambitious project of e-Content development on the three year undergraduate syllabi that shall remain available to the students through internet. From Countrywide Classroom to Virtual Classroom UGC has come a long way, but the scheme is yet to achieve its potential and make its presence felt in an effective manner. This paper tries to analyze the UGC's experience of using television and new technology for higher education.

Taking advantage of the Indian experience from “Satellite Interactive Television Experiment” (SITE) and Doordarshan's growing demand for television software, University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex body of



higher education in India, decided to exploit the potential of television for the cause of higher education and launched “UGC Countrywide Classroom” on Doordarshan National

Network on 15th August 1984. “Under the Countrywide Classroom”, on Doordarshan special educational television programmes were produced and telecast for the benefit of undergraduate and post graduate students across the country.

Countrywide Classroom Initially, from August 1984 to February 1985, the programmes were telecast on national network of DD1, six days a week between 12:45 hours to 13:45 hours. From February 1985 the telecast was repeated at 16:00 to 17:00. The repeat telecast was made to enable the students watch programmes as per their convenience after they return



from the colleges. The timings since then have been changed back and forth by DD1, obviously to accommodate other commercially viable programmes, sports coverage and political coverage programmes and today, in 2008, the UGC programmes are telecast on DD1 between 05:30 hours to 06:00 hours seven days a week.

