

EDITORIAL

If we talk about the advantages of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) in education, the first and foremost advantage is that it provides freedom and impartiality as far as time and space limitations are concerned and this is the reason it enhances mode of communications. Second, it provides environment-friendly paperless work in lesser time. Third, it provides ICT based teaching-learning methodology. So, nowadays, it is becoming an essential part of regular teaching and learning process. Looking into the situations like various disasters, etc., ICT may play an important role and this is the reason the ICT must be an essential part of school curriculum. But at what extent, and in which form it may be understood by teachers and students, are really a matter of discussion among ICT experts and practising teachers. How appropriately the use of ICT may be intensified in the regular teaching-learning process is one of the points to be deliberated. If we talk about the online platform, we need to look into its feasibility in the continuous academic development of teachers and students that may bring equality without any biases to rural-urban divides, social divides, etc. In science learning how virtual laboratories, audio video resources, etc., may play a role without hampering creativity of learners. When, how and where the technology may be used in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in school education is another query that is a matter of debate.

We have brought this special issue of *School Science* for our readers to make them aware of the recent viewpoints of the research community regarding the use of ICT in school education. This issue includes selected review articles and research papers which were presented during the National Conference on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in School Education held at Regional Institute of Education Ajmer from 27 to 29 November, 2017. These articles and research papers discuss and provide suggestions for some of the queries flagged above.

The article entitled 'National Conference on Basic Role of ICT in School Education', highlights the indispensable role of ICT in education and learning. It discusses that the system is grappled with many challenges on how to adapt ICT in full potential to accomplish the goals of present curriculum. Many such issues and their prospective solutions have been elaborated in the article.

The research paper entitled 'A Study of Attitude towards ICT of Prospective Secondary Level Teachers in Relation to Their Gender and Academic Streams' concludes that in today's time ICT is not only the backbone of teaching and learning but also a catalyst for introducing educational reforms. The findings suggested that there was no significant difference in attitude of teachers coming from various academic streams or genders towards ICT. The study on 'In-service Teacher's Perception about the Effectiveness of the Use of Multimedia in Training of

Science' reveals that the teachers are positive and appreciative of the technique of use multimedia in teaching learning process. However, it was observed that all agreed that teacher intervention was still necessary. Additionally the article suggests some ways of making the technique accessible to rural areas as well.

The study, 'ICT Integrated Classrooms: an Impetus for Change' analyses the status of ICT in schools and discusses how ICT revolutionised the teaching and learning process. The findings suggested that even though ICT teaching facilities were present in all schools, it was the teacher who brought-in its effective dissemination in their own ways. Another study 'ICT Interventions in Inclusive Education' discusses ICT as a potential reform to the education system and a paradigm shift in learning for special learners. This study analyses and describes provisions in ICT to provide more effective educational support for inclusive learners. The findings revealed a lack of ICT facilities and awareness of teachers about ICT. It, thus, recommends that policy level changes need to be made to enhance the scope of techno-pedagogy for special learners. 'An Online Moodle Experience in Physics at Higher Secondary Level' discusses Moodle as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that is based on open source principles and the educational philosophy called social constructivism. In this study, Moodle platform is used to construct a problem solving learning environment that would help learners to practise physics problems in a unique way called schema based learning. It was found that schema based instruction using Moodle significantly

increases the gain in problem solving ability.

The study 'Using Online Collaborative Writing as a Pre-speaking Task: Integration of ICT in the ESL Classroom' shows positive influence of online pre-speaking tasks on the actual speaking tasks in terms of decreasing learner's anxiety to participate in the face-to-face discussions. The study recommends using online discussion tasks as pre-task for face-to-face discussion tasks. The objective of the Effect of Using ICT study in Teaching-learning of Islamic studies in Madarsa Education on the Scholastic Achievement of Students was to determine the effect of using ICT in teaching-learning of Islamic studies, the core subject of Madarsa education. For this an online available course 'Tajweed-o-Qirat' was used. No significant improvement in learning achievement was found, however, the interest and motivation of students to learn was enhanced. It was concluded that proper ICT facilities and training should be provided to teachers to make the system better. However, ICT should be used only as a support system and not as the substitute to the teacher. The study entitled 'Effect of ICT Mediated Reciprocal Teaching on Achievement in Mathematics' suggests IMRT has a significant impact on improving the achievement in mathematics. However, no significant difference was found on the basis of gender of the students.

Further like the other issues, this issue also has Science News and Web Watch for our readers. Also, we invite feedback from our readers at school.science@yahoo.com for improvement of the journal quality. We wish happy reading to all.