HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE AMBIT OF LEARNER SUPPORT CENTRE (LSC) OF A DISTANCE TEACHING INSTITUTION (DTI)

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ABSTRACT

This paper discussed about the uniqueness of the human capital in the Learner Support Centre (LSC) and the issues encountered in mobilizing the human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC), factors affecting non-availability of human capital continuously at a Learner Support Centre (LSC) and the impact on the quality of student support services in the ambit of Learner Support Centre (LSC) of a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI).

Key words: HR Practices, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Employee Turnover, ICT Industry, Primary Data, Secondary Data, Correlation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian Sub-continent has both the face to face education and the Open and Distance Learning education encompassing even online, blended and experiential learning situations. The uniqueness of Open and Distance Learning system is that it utilizes the physical infrastructure, the human capital of the conventional educational system in a lapse of time when it is not used for face to face education. For example, the case of IGNOU with its national jurisdiction has three tier administrative structure of IGNOU at Head Quarters, Regional Centre and at the field level Learner Support Centres (LSC). The Learner Support Centres (LSC) are housed in educational institutions and functions either after or before the opening of the face to face education system. Hence, the uniqueness of Open and Distance Learning System is its ability to utilize human capital on part-time basis by means of either

empanelment or nomination for a post upon the recommendation of the host institution. The current paper enumerates the issues and concerns related to part-time appointments / empanelment in Open and Distance Learning System with a scope of the paper limited to the appointments at Learner Support Centre (LSC).

2. MEANING OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Open and Distance Learning is not supplementary, complementary or alternative to the conventional system, but it is part of the evolution of new methodologies in teaching and learning (Khan, 1999). Distance Education System facilitates the Distance Learning through the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). According to Trainer's Kit 001(1999a) Open and Distance Learning offers a number of advantage to both learners and providers of opportunities for learning. They include overcoming physical distance, solving time or scheduling problems, expanding the limited number of places available, accommodating low or dispersed enrolments, making best use of the limited number of teachers (experts) available, dealing with cultural, religious and political considerations.

3. TYPES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVIDERS

According to (SAIDE_AFRICAODL\africaodl\Management\Governance\governance.html and WORLDBANK\Management\Governance\governance.html), there are four main types of distance education providers, which are as follows:

Single-mode institutions, where the management's sole responsibility is designing and delivering courses for distance learners. All planning, funds, staff, and other resources are devoted to this purpose.

Dual-mode institutions, which in addition to providing conventional teaching, deliver distance education programmes administered by a special management unit.

Mixed-mode institutions, where distance-teaching programmes are designed, delivered, and administered by the same people who provide conventional programmes.

Consortia, arrangements in which a nation's or state's distance teaching resources are organised under a single management unit, usually made up of representatives of the institutions providing the resources.

According to Trainer's Kit 001 (1999b) at the University level, open and distance learning may be offered through single mode institutions that operates with a free-standing structure (The Open University of Sri Lanka); bimodal or dual mode institutions- a department within an existing teaching institution (Open Learning Institute of Charles Sturt University, the University of Botswana, the University of Guyana, the University of Nairobi, Massey University, the University of Zambia); mixed mode institutions (Deakin University and Murdoch University); consortia (an arrangement involving a number of organisations in formal partnership with joint allocation of resources and sometimes an independent managing agent) and other co-operative arrangements-where institutions work together to teach and support learners and distribute the various functions between them as in the case of The Commonwealth of Learning (COL).

4. ORIGIN OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN INDIA- AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The origin and emergence of an open and distance learning system in India is probably the most significant development in Indian education in the last century. (Menon, 2000). The University of Delhi has become the dual mode Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) in the year 1962 – even before the first Open University at the United Kingdom in the year 1969. The

credibility of the Distance Education System (DES) has made the Distance Learning System (DLS) as one of the options for the aspirants of education, to pursue/continue higher education. (Dorothy, J.S and Kumar, A 2010).

In all types of Distance Teaching Institutions (DTI), the common and constant feature is the presence of Learner Support Centres functioning in an educational institution with manpower drawn mainly from the staff of the host educational institution.

The network of the Learner support Centres (LSC) facilitates the conduct of the various Evaluation procedures chalked out for the programme offered. While most of the Evaluation procedures like the unguided and guided components of the practicals, Practical Term-End Examination are evaluated in the LSC, one of the components which are evaluated outside the LSC is the Theory Term-End Examination Answer Scripts (Dorothy and Ashwinikumar, 2015).

5. HUMAN CAPITAL VERSUS FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL CAPITAL

'Human Capital' is unique in that it 'is capable of building and maintaining the other two capitals namely Physical capital and fiscal capital' (Dorothy, 2020). With the recent Government initiative of loan for infrastructure instead of sanction of grant for infrastructure, the quality of human force aims to play a role in the quality of infrastructure envisaged in the plan. The Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is a dependent of Human Capital of Conventional Educational System (CES) for many of the academic transactions.

The human capital in open and distance learning system plays a key role to mobilize the funds earmarked for various support services with honesty in claim and without furnishing any tailored bill. Many a time, either the host institution employees or experts known to the management of the host institution are mobilized for empanelment of various activities related to management of learner support service, academic counselors for handling the academic transactions (counseling, tutor comments) for learners, Observers for examinations, Evaluators for projects / conduct of viva-voce, Evaluators for answer scripts, Resource Person for phone in programme (broadcast / telecast), and for translation of materials into local language to ensure optimum reach among the learners.

The reasons for mobilizing the human capital from the host institution housing the learner support center is mainly due to the fact that the human capital generally are individuals residing in host institution; easy to mobilize from host institution as they as employees would feel the felt need to support the vision of the management in housing a learner support centre of a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to reach the unreached; Cost effective for the DTI; to have Unity of Command for implementation of the policies framed by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) as per the directives of the Government.

6. MODES OF MOBILIZING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR DISTANCE TEACHING INSTITUTION (DTI)

Many a time, the human capital for Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is mobilized on the basis of where their expertise is needed. For instance, in the case of IGNOU the requirement and procedure of recruitment of human capital for use at Head Quarters, Regional Centre, Learner Support Centre, Gyan Vani studio, Material warehouse varies with a need and the place of use.

For instance, the Employment for regular vacancy at Head Quarters / Regional Centre of a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is through direct recruitment and through notifications in newspaper / website and also by dissemination of information to the various employment exchanges. This is applicable only for permanent employees. However, even in Head

Quarters, Regional Centre adhoc / temporary staff on daily wage basis are used to execute the various tasks in the implementation of Student Support Services (SSS).

In certain cases like utilization of services of experts who have prominence in the current commercial field, say for the utilization of experts for running of the broadcast studio and telecast studio of Distance Teaching Institution (DTI), Promotion / Awareness of the job opportunity by means of individual letters to the various broadcasting / telecasting agency [*with the aim to mobilize the staff due for retirement into the current requirement of* Distance Teaching Institution (DTI)*]*, news press club, broadcaster association, telecaster association, placement cell in education institution *[to facilitate youngsters to be mobilized for the requirement of Distance Teaching Institution (DTI)]*, industry professional bodies *[to mobilize experts to take the part-time assignments as per the requirements of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI)]*, open notification in newspapers and the official website of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). In addition, word of mouth spread is also resorted – all to ensure that the right candidate is not missed out of the opportunity for rendering his/her expertise.

The case of utilization of human capital in Learner Support Centre is unique in that either they are either on the rolls of some other educational institution or retired from some educational institution or a freelancer or drawn from industry. In all the cases of source of employment, the experts fulfill the eligibility criteria prescribed by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). This paper limits its scope to the utilization of human capital in Learner Support Centre (LSC) of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI).

7. TYPES OF HUMAN CAPITAL IN DISTANCE TEACHING INSTITUTION (DTI)– SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO LEARNER SUPPORT CENTRE (LSC)

Human capital in a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is based on their nature of employment as Full Time either as Permanent employee or Temporary employee at Head Quarters and Regional Centres. However, in all Learner Support Centre (LSC), only on temporary, part-time basis with mandatory renewal every year are empanelled.

The rationalization of the part-time Staff (PTS) prescribed for a Learner Support Centre (LSC) is dependent on the student enrollment. Many a time, the staffing pattern at a Learner Support Centre (LSC) is dependent on the type of Learner Support Centre (LSC) – Regular Study Centre *(having multiple programme learners with recoupment of fund as claimed for settlement on the basis of norms),* Programme Study Centre *(having specific discipline of programme like Computer programmes, Health Science Programmes with recoupment of fund as claimed for settlement on the basis of norms)* and Special Study Centre *(having multiple programme learners in remote areas with limited fund from the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI)).*

For instance, IGNOU has the following staff pattern for the Learner Support Centre (LSC) notified through the Regional Services Division (RSD)- the division responsible for the coordinating the second tier administrative structure of the Regional Centre *(Source RSD notification dated 30.01.2013)* as given below:

Regular Study Centres: The head of the Regular Study Centre is the Coordinator, who is also the drawing and disbursing officer at the Regular Study Centre. Regular Study Centre has multiple programme learners with recoupment of fund as claimed for settlement on the basis of norms.

Table 1

Student enrolment	Coordinator	Assistant Coordinator	Assistant	Attendant	Safaiwala
Up to 100	1	-	1	1	1
100 – 250	1	1	2	2	1
250 – 350	1	1	3	2	1
350 – 500	1	2	3	3	1
500 – 850	1	4*	4	4	1
850 – 1200	1	5*	5	4	2
1200 – 1500	1	6*	6	5	2
1501-2000	1	6*	7	6	2
2001 – 2500	1	7*	8	7	2
Above 2500	1	8*	9	8	2

(* This is inclusive of the provision of one Assistant Coordinator to look after the evaluation of assignments)

Programme Study Centres: The head of the Programme Study Centre is the Coordinator, who is also the drawing and disbursing officer at the Programme Study Centre. Programme Study Centre has specific discipline of programme like Computer programmes, Health Science Programmes with recoupment of fund as claimed for settlement on the basis of norms.

Table 2

Enrolment	Programme In Charge (PIC)	Assistant Programme In Charge (APIC)	Assistant	Attendant	Safaiwala
Up to 30	1	-	1	1	1
30-300	1	1	2	1	1
300-600	1	1	2	2	1
Above 600	1	1	3	2	1

Special Study Centres: The head of the Special Study Centre is the Coordinator, who is also the drawing and disbursing officer at the Special Study Centre. Special Study Centre has multiple programme learners in remote areas with limited fund from the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI).

Table 3

Enrolment	Coordinator	Assistant Coordinator	Assistant	Attendant	Safaiwala
Up to 300	1	-	-	-	-
Above 300	1	1	-	-	-

8. ISSUES ENCOUNTERED IN MOBILIZING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR MANNING LEARNER SUPPORT CENTRE (LSC)

Often, in real life situation of the functioning of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI), the request to establish a Learner Support Centre (LSC) of Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) originates from the educational institution in an area within the jurisdiction of the DTI. Such willingness from an educational institution is always taken as an optimistic look by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to ensure reach for the aspirants of education in that locality. It is the fact that before establishment of a Learner Support Centre (LSC), a visit is

made to the soliciting educational institution to verify about the infrastructure facilities, the human capital available for mobilizing for empanelment to man the Learner Support Centre (LSC), to serve as academic counselors, to be empanelled as evaluators and the like. Besides this, the cost effectiveness of establishing the Learner Support Centre (LSC) is also envisaged by the student strength of the host institution and the ability of the management in encouraging the learners to opt another programme of study through the distance mode to enhance their employability after completion of their programme of study in the face to face mode.

In real life situation, the mobilization of human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC) is dependent on the following factors:

8.1. Preference of the Head of Institution

In spite of the eligibility conditions prescribed by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI), the right candidate nominated from the host institution is dependent on the preference of the Host Institution. At times, when the newly recruited candidate employed at a host institution is under observation for knowing the quality of the person, in spite of the fulfillment of the eligibility prescribed by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI), the person is not nominated for empanelment as part-time Staff (PTS) in a Learner Support Centre (LSC). In such a case, the part-time Staff (PTS) strength remains vacant in spite of reminders from the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and becomes an issue to render optimum student support services at the right speed to the student enrolled. Similarly, o ensure the unity of command and fear of Senior Staff overtaking he Head of the institution, the Senior staff are not nominated for empanelment as Part-time staff. Instead, amateur novice new entrants are nominated for empanelment, which makes training and re-training of the Part-time Staff (PTS) by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to minimize the learning cycle. In certain cases, the person for the same office is constantly changed so that no individual becomes a master in the task, which not only develop the challenge of consistency and continuity in the job but also to ensure that there is no missing link when individuals give charge and take over charge. Thus, the preference of Head of Institution determines the manning of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) as prescribed to the student enrollment.

8.2. Employee Dynamics in Host Institution

Upon nomination and empanelment of part-time Staff (PTS) in a Learner Support Centre (LSC), employee dynamics out of their non-preference by the host institution is expressed by way of signed / anonymous letters to the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and at times to the competent authority at Head Quarters. Such occasions do always create ripples in human relations and make the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) focused on the individual staff referred in the letter and nominated by the host institution. At times, the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) also has a view of whether the claim in the letter is true. In certain cases, the employee under discussion leaves the part-time Staff (PTS) of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) – which is again a loss to the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) for it creates a time lapse for empanelling another person and training the newly empanelled person. Thus, the employee dynamics in the host institution affect the availability of part-time Staff (PTS) to man the Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.3 Interaction between Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and Host Institution

It is generally said that the execution of task is always from the heart of an individual and not on the basis of the office order which specifies the individual work description. Even though, it is expected that the host institution should function to the optimum level irrespective of who

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is heading the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI), many a time, the host institution performance changes with the person officiating as head of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). It can be envisaged that at times, the host institution takes time to accustom to the new leadership in the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) or the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) official do not exhibit a unbiased attitude to the Learner Support Centre (LSC). In both the cases, the support of the host institution for the activities of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) gets affected.

The part-time Staff (PTS) renewal / new empanelment is a periodic venture in a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and the host institution exhibit their displeasure evolving between the interaction of them as the Host Institution and the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) by not nominating the part-time Staff (PTS) for new empanelment or renew them for continuous use in the next calendar year. It is pertinent to mention that the cycle of admissions in the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) are fixed and the delay in part-time Staff (PTS) renewal / new empanelment affect the student support services of the current session and the enrolment in the consequent sessions. Thus, the interaction between Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and host institution affect the mobilization of human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.4. Employee Qualifications against their availability at ease for use of Distance Teaching Institution (DTI)

In spite of the availability of experienced well qualified staff in the host institution, their preference for work – life balance limits their availability for empanelment as part-time Staff (PTS) in the Learner Support Centre (LSC). Certain occasions when the person without interest is nominated by the host institution as a part-time Staff (PTS) in Learner Support Centre (LSC), lead to deferred interest in the work and expression of displeasure during face to face interaction at the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) for training programme, non-cooperation to the head (Coordinator) of the Learner Support Centre (LSC), suppression of other staff in the Learner Support Centre (LSC) do get manifested. Hence, at all times, it is preferable to empanel the staff nominated by the host institution and get the willingness of the concerned official while issuing the empanelment letter. Thus, the issue of employee qualification against their availability at ease for use of Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is a concern for continuous support from the host institution and for having the right person empanelled at the Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.5. Availability of Superannuated Professionals / New Recruits

Many a time, work – life balance of full-time staff of the host institution demands the host institution to nominate either superannuated professionals or new recruits as part-time Staff (PTS) for empanelment. In the event of nomination of superannuated professionals, issue related to health, deferred values with current learners, travel for training programmes, and non inclusive attitude towards newcomers/novice become a concern. However, such individuals because of their expertise and previous experience do fill in the gaps across the cadre of the head of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) against their peers. On the other hand, the new recruits even though exhibit interest, do have concern to juggle the distance education policies with that of their functioning in a conventional educational system. However, since the interest of the new recruits is always at optimum – to fulfill their personal career needs besides expressing their ability to perform well, such person can easily be trained by the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and equip them with frequent training (in house and pooled training) to accustom with the Open and Distance Learning System. Thus, the

availability of superannuated professionals / new recruits has a determining value in mobilizing human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.6. Availability of Early Entrant Versus Experienced Staff

The difference between a superannuated professional and an experienced staff in a host institution is their ability / availability to have a say in the matters related to the functioning of the host institution. For instance, a former Head of the Department empanelled as academic counselor and not favourable to the policy of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) have less repercussions when compared to the experienced in Service /on duty Head of the Department empanelled as academic counselor and not favourable to the policy of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). This is because, a former Head of the Department empanelled as academic counselor can be replaced with the support of the host institution by citing the reason as that the specific person is not favourable to the policy of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). However, the experienced in Service /on duty Head of the Department empanelled as academic counselor and not favourable to the policy of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) can hamper support services to the learners and even stop activity by their verbal communication with the management of the host institution. Many a time, at such instances, the management of the host institution plays safe without explicit expression of support to the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI).

8.7. Frequent Dislocation among Employees of Host Institution

In certain host institutions, periodical transfer with or without transfer policy do exist. In such a situations, in a financial / calendar year the same work gets changed between various hands where seamless continuation becomes an issue. At times, once a staff is transferred or dislocated or encountered career mobility, the host institution does not recommend / takes time to recommend the next person for empanelment. In such case of dislocation, the handing over of the charge at the field level becomes the responsibility of the head of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) in the event of non availability of the same cadre of the person. Thus, frequent dislocation among employees of host institution affects the staff strength of a Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.8. Non-Fulfillment of Pre-Requisites for Empanelment

The pre-requisites for empanelment of part-time Staff (PTS) and their subsequent renewal depend on the government policies in vogue at the time of action. For instance, with the encouragement for use of digital money, the payments of a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) are mandatorily to be paid through Fund Transfer into a bank account held in that specific person's name. It is a general accepted practice to disburse the funds to the lower staff in a Learner Support Centre (LSC) by the head of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) by drawing the money through a 'self-cheque'. In such instance, the book of accounts, do not depict each payment but only give a consolidated view of the payment. This act necessitates the linking of the part-time Staff (PTS) on rolls and the amount disbursed through a 'self-cheque'. Employee dynamics in a host institution may highlight the 'self-cheque' disbursement as inappropriate questioning the authority of the Drawing and Disbursing power of the head of the Learner Support Centre (LSC). Hence, even though the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) encourages cheque payment from the recouped amount to the Learner Support Centre (LSC), change in policy level in the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) for direct transfer of the claims after settlement of the bill necessitated the possession of Bank Account details at the time of empanelment / renewal of the part-time staff. Such, change in the disbursement make already empanelled part-time Staff (PTS) in the Learner Support Centre (LSC) to be hesitant to disclose confidential details like furnishing the Permanent

Account Number for remittance of Income tax (PAN), Bank Account details at the time of empanelment / renewal. Take the case of IGNOU Regional Centre Cochin, which elicited Bank Account details at the time of empanelment / renewal from November 2019 is yet to receive from all the Learner Support Centre (LSC) under its jurisdiction. Every December, the renewal of the part-time Staff (PTS) happens and the non-receipt of Bank Account details at the time of renewal has slowed down the process of renewal as an activity itself. The intensity of this issue gets augmented as the financial year comes to an end and the new admission scholar list to be sent to the Learner Support Centre (LSC). Thus, the part-time Staff (PTS) in the Learner Support Centre (LSC), being hesitant to disclose confidential details like PAN, Bank Account details at the time of empanelment / renewal, affect the mobilization of human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.9. Time Delay for Execution of the Renewal / Empanelment Activity

The time delay for execution of the renewal / empanelment activity can happen both at the host institution end and at the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) end. But in either of the cause of time delay, it is only the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) which gets affected by the non-availability of part-time Staff (PTS)who render the student support services through the Learner Support Centre (LSC). Thus, time delay for execution of the renewal / empanelment activity affect the mobilization of human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC).

In spite of the pressure encompassing the mobilizing the manpower for empanelment as the part-time Staff (PTS), only manpower "showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve" (Daniel Chapter 1 verse 4) should be empanelled, which would be the reason for the successful execution of the task at the Learner Support Centre (LSC).

8.10. Nepotism

The organization structure in a Learner Support Centre is at times defined by the interaction between the Host Institution and other association functioning in the campus, making the coordination of the staff engaged in the part-time basis a challenge for the head of the Learner Support Centre (LSC). Hence, many a time, the Head of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) is compelled by the situation to demand cooperation from all sides for the smooth functioning of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) to engage the relatives/ kith and kin of the associates of the Host Institution or the administrative office of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). Such act of nepotism leads to following/tracking the bill for settlement as claimed, release of the confidential movement order issued to monitor the counseling session scheduled at the Learner Support Centre (LSC) and seamless discussion for activities related to the Student Support Services, which at times defer the unity of command.

9. FACTORS AFFECTING NON-CONTINUUM OF HUMAN CAPITAL IN LEARNER SUPPORT CENTRE (LSC)

Irrespective of the cause for non mobilization of human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC), it is the activity of the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) which gets affected at the end. Some of the areas which get affected due to non-continuing of human capital in Learner Support Centre (LSC) are discussed below:

9.1. Academic Transaction Related Activities

The Student Support Services at Learner Support Centre (LSC) are the backbone for the fulfillment of the academic transactions for the successful completion of the programme of

study by the learner upon enrolment by means of admission. Due to non continuance human capital in Learner Support Centre (LSC), generally there is no staff for such activities related to academic transactions. For instance, the Counselling session schedule is not prepared for display in the Notice Board / Website; Assignment response from the learner is not procedurally collected for movement to empanelled academic counselors for evaluation; effort for non preparation of calendar of events to conduct promotional meetings at the host institutions / neighbouring educational institutions - happen at the Learner Support Centre (LSC).

9.2. Fiscal Transaction Related Activities

For every activity performed at the Learner Support Centre (LSC) for the execution of the prescribed functions as Learner Support Services, the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) recoups the amounts spent upon submission of the bill claim. In the event of non-availability of personnel at the Learner Support Centre (LSC) for the reasons not highlighted for a specific activity, the financial claim of that particular Learner Support Centre (LSC) is deferred from following a schedule of activity to submit the bill. In addition, in the event of non availability of the staff to man a Learner Support Centre (LSC), the book of accounts of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) are not maintained; the bills to be paid are not tracked for preparation/ subsequent settlement to the individuals involved in the execution of the task; no follow-up made for the imprest to be recouped; the physical stock credibility is not accounted with responsibility culminating in non-submission of the report related to physical verification of stock; the periodical entry of the pass book for the savings bank account of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) is not ensured leading to subsequently to non-remittance of bank account interest to the DTI; request for bank instruments not placed as per the demand for the settling the claims leading to undisbursed fund in the bank account.

9.3. Sustenance Related Activities

In the event of non availability of continuous presence of human capital in a Learner Support Centre (LSC), the continuity of Learner Support Centre (LSC) as an identity becomes an issue for sustained continuance. Many a time, the management of the host institution especially when the head of the institution also changes, pose the threat for closure exhibiting the non-availability of part-time Staff (PTS) at the particular Learner Support Centre (LSC); suggest alternate venues in the sister institutions of the same management posing threat for shifting; expressing inability to accommodate all learners as per the consolidated scholar list prepared after the closure of the admission session creating the threat of partial acceptance of scholars to be attached at the Learner Support Centre (LSC).

10. MEANS OF RESOLVING HUMAN CAPITAL ISSUE RELATED TO MOBILIZING FOR USE IN LEARNER SUPPORT CENTRE (LSC)

Irrespective of the cause for non-empanelment or non-renewal of the part-time staff at a Learner Support Centre (LSC), it is a major concern only for the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) when compared to the host institution – even though the reputation is at stake for both of them. Hence, it becomes a responsibility with accountability for the students enrolled at the specific Learner Support Centre (LSC) on the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to resolve the human capital issue related to mobilizing for use in Learner Support Centre (LSC).

Some initiation for discussion with the management of the host institution by creating rapport through frequent visits to the host institution, creating awareness among potential human resources about the creditability of the empanelment through Distance Teaching

Institution (DTI) for its administrative and academic transactions, negotiations with placement services of conventional educational institutions, which may be linked for use by Learner Support Centre (LSC) besides creating avenues for hands on training / internship opportunities for the part-time staff. In all ventures of negotiations, a win-win situation should be ensured to be prevailed creating sustained solution irrespective of the continuous presence of the same leadership at either end.

11. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The following terms have been used in this paper:

Learner Support Centres (LSC): The Learner Support Centres are the educational Institutions, which serves as the host to render the academic and physical infrastructure facilities for executing the academic transactions *(academic counseling, Submission of assignment response, peer interaction, induction into the distance education system in general and into the programme enrolled in particular)* involved in the programmes activated in that particular Learner Support Centre. Thus, learner support centre (LSC) serves as a venue for peer interaction, for academic Counselling, for submission of the Assignment Response-which contributes to the internal assessment. The Learner Support Centres (LSC) is the field level functionaries and work under the supervision of the Regional Centre. The Regional Centre has specific jurisdiction to facilitate the monitoring process of the Learner Support Centre (LSC). The establishment of the Learner Support Centre (LSC) strengthens the network of IGNOU at the grassroots and optimises the reach of IGNOU as a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) in the geographical terrain where the Learner Support Centre (LSC) is located (Dorothy, 2018).

Distance Teaching Institution (DTI): Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is educational institution facilitating Open and Distance Learning.

12. CONCLUSION

It is the people who make a difference in any society. The Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) is also based on societal needs of catering to the aspirants of education. The human capital at the grass root level i.e., Learner Support Centre (LSC) is the key feeder for execution of all activities related to student support services in a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). The absence, the presence and the deferred presence of the part-time Staff (PTS) do hamper the quality of student support services in a Learner Support Centre (LSC). The interaction between the Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) and the host institution, the continuation of the service minded intention to establish a Learner Support Centre (LSC) of a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) in a host institution by the founding fathers through the successors and individual dedication for their work are significant contributors for the smooth functioning of a Learner Support Centre (LSC). This paper discussed about the uniqueness of the human capital in the Learner Support Centre (LSC) and the issues encountered in mobilizing the human capital for manning Learner Support Centre (LSC), factors affecting non-availability of human capital continuously at a Learner Support Centre (LSC) and the impact on the quality of student support services in the ambit of Learner Support Centre (LSC) of a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI).

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