

Bid to bridge the rural-urban divide

The mission with two major components - content generation and connectivity - will provide access to electronic journals and information that is required for collegiate education

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 21-4-2009 (COCHIN)



Jagdish Arora, Director, Information and Library Network, UGC, Ahmedabad, inaugurating the five-day national workshop on DSpace organised by the Cusat and INFLIBNET-UGC.

**Sudha Nambudiri | ENS
Kochi, April 20**

THE National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) project will bridge the gap between urban and rural institutions as more than 6,000 colleges will be networked across the country through the UGC-INFO-NET, said Jagdish Arora, Director of Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, UGC Ahmedabad.

The mission with two major components- content generation and connectivity-will provide access to

electronic journals and information that is required for collegiate education.

It will also provide high quality personalised and interactive knowledge modules through the internet for all the learners in higher education institutions, he said. Already an amount of Rs 25 crore has been allocated for the first phase.

In an interview to 'Express', Jagdish Arora said that e-books will not be a faraway dream though the publishing industry was not interested in digitising textbooks.

"In the later stage, the UGC might finance the writing of the syllabus

for e-learning which could help create high quality e-content for the students as well as the teachers.

The scheme, submitted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), will leverage the potential of information and communication technology and is expected to be a major intervention in enhancing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period as also recommended by the Oversight Committee and the National Knowledge Commission (NKC).

He said that the Department of Information Technology has initiated a Rs 100-crore project to network all the research institutions and universities by providing connectivity and increasing the capability of the existing networks.

Stressing on the need to digitise libraries, Arora said that the figures indicated that the increasing information flow has generated an increase in the number of articles and research papers.

"A library learning is reflected in terms of the impact on research," he added.

The INFLIBNET has already networked 157 universities including 12 private ones in different gradations.

The first 50 universities have access to 5,000 electronic journals, the second 50 to about 4,000 and the last 57 as per their requirement, he said.

The private universities are part of a consortium and they pay for their subscription.

Arora is in Kochi to participate in a five-day national workshop on DSpace organised by the Cochin University of Science and Technology, the INFLIBNET and HP India.