UG S1 04
(IDC)

FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER - I

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Indira Miri School of Education

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE INTRODUCTION (COURSE UG ED S1-01, IDC1)

This courses is multidisciplinary in nature. In this Inter Dicipilinary Course UG ED S1 01 IDC1, we are going to discuss about Distance education. The course UG ED S1 01 IDC1 contain 11 units.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

The First Unit deals with the relevance and growth of distance education . The Second Unit deals with the basic concept of learner support services and different medium of it. The Third Unit discusses the concept of Self learning Materials and various components of SLMs in detail. The Fourth Unit shall explain the need and importance of study skills in education particularly in ODL system. The Fifth Unit discusses the process and major approaches of curriculum development in ODL. The Sixth Unit deals the need and aspects of curriculum evaluation in ODL system.The Seven Unit deals with the role of distance education in women and rural development. The Eight Unit explains the concept of quality education and quality assurance in distance education. The Nine Unit highlights the meaning, purposes and types of assessment in ODL. The Ten Unit deals with the nature and growth of information and communication technology and their uses in distance education in India. The Eleventh Unit discusses the concept of open educational resources, their use in education as well as various problems and prospects of ODL system in India.

While going through a unit, you will notice some along-side boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult, unseen terms. Some “ACTIVITY’ (s) have been included to help you apply your own thoughts. Again, we have included some relevant concepts in “LET US KNOW” along with the text. And, at the end of each section, you will get “CHECK YOUR PROGRESS” questions. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. It will be better if you solve the problems put in these boxes immediately after you go through the sections of the units and then match your answers with “ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PPROGRESS” given at the end of each unit.

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UNIT 4 : Study Skills in Distance Education **72-90**

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UNIT 1: GROWTH OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Concept of Distance Education

- 1.3.1 Growth of Distance Education in the world
- 1.3.2 History of Distance Education in India
- 1.3.3 Growth and Relevance of Distance Education in India

1.4 Let Us Sum Up

1.5 Further Reading

1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.7 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJCETIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- understand the concept of distance education
- explain the growth of distance education in the world and the history of distance education in India
- discuss the growth and relevance of distance education in India.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Education is a life long process from which people gather life experiences that are needed by them for a meaningful existence in society. Therefore, education is termed as the most important pillar of our socio-economic development. Education provides knowledge to the people, equips people with some need based skills, and directs their attention in a positive direction. It is for this that education is a vital pre-requisite for the development of a country which is necessary to bring about the welfare of the people as a whole.

Besides, education is the main indicator of human capital formation. At present, India, as a developing country, has the basic motto to accelerate human mobility. Although demographically India as a whole has great potential, the growth of manpower and the level of its engagement in productive activities are yet to be fully harnessed. The literacy rate in India is rather low compared to that of the developed countries and even compared to many of the developing countries like Sri Lanka, China etc. Even within India there are considerable differences among the states and regions in terms of employment, gender differences in all stages of education, regional disparities in Gross Enrolment Ratio and literacy level etc. Besides, we have to achieve the target of ***inclusive growth***, the progress towards millennium development goals and the target towards the formation of human capital. Education is the only way to achieve these goals as per our needs and desire. Because, educated and trained people are generally better productive workers. They can use the resources more effectively, adopt new technologies and learn from their mistakes. To have access to education is one of the important human rights for everyone living in our country. Therefore, it is an urgent need to disseminate information and knowledge to the people through the various modes of education. Open and distance learning is the most viable option for making education as accessible as possible for all. It has emerged as an effective means to bring education to the door step of those who are deprived of the educational opportunities in the conventional mode in the mainstream educational institutions. This system offers opportunities to millions of underprivileged learners including those like the self-employed and the housewives who desire for an enlightened and productive way of life. Under these circumstances it has become necessary to discuss the various aspects of the ODL system in an effort to remedy its shortcomings, if any, and to highlight its strength. The following content of this unit is designed to meet this objective.



Inclusive growth: It encompasses equality, equality of opportunity in terms of access to market, resources, health services, educational opportunity and so on.

1.3 CONCEPT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education means a mode of learning through which education can be accessed by the people irrespective of geographical barriers, physical existence of teachers, space, time, age etc. In a knowledge-based society, open and distance learning is the most demanding medium of education for the people. The 11th Five Years Plan of the Government of India has made a target to covering around 40% the total number of students under open and distance learning system. Today, for its flexibility, this system is considered indispensible as 3As as far as education is concerned i.e. getting education at any time, anywhere and for any one. The basic objective behind this system is to make democratization of education possible in India. Better access, lower costs, greater flexibility, high quality are some of the objectives of Open and Distance Learning. In the words of Perraton (1981), distance education is "an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space/ or time from the learner". According to Ochoa (1981) "distance education is a system based on the selective use of instructional media both traditional and innovative that promotes the self-teaching learning process to achieve educational objectives, with a potentially greater geographic coverage than the traditional face-to-face system of education".

Thus from the above definition it is clear that distance education means:

- Separation of teachers and learners
- Institutional accreditation
- Use of mixed-media courseware
- Two-way communication
- Possibility of face-to-face meetings
- Use of industrialised processes

The ODL system is the only corridor through which those sections of population who were once deprived from the purview of higher education in conventional system for one reason or other, can pursue life-long learning in a flexible and cost-effective mode. These sections of population include,

inter alia,

- those who dropped out from schools and colleges on economiccompulsions and are now engaging themselves in trade, business etc;
- those women who got married early and discontinued their education in schools and colleges ;
- those who work in offices and industries without completing degrees, diplomas required for their professions ;
- those persons including housewives who simply could not carry on their studies in the conventional system in time and now they are desirous to pursue education;
- those who want to get further education for their better employability in future
- Besides, the ODL system enables the in-service persons or professionals to enhance their professional qualifications and training while on the job.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : What do you mean by distance education?

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Q 2 : Why do you think that distance education is important?

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1.3.1 Growth of Distance Education in the World

Distance education has a long history. Earlier, it was known as correspondence education. Correspondence education refers to the teaching learning situation where the teacher and the learner have no face to face contact. They interact only through postal correspondences. Print is the only medium of instruction and the printed lessons are the only source of learning for the learner. The correspondence education took formal shape in England in 1840 through Issac Pitman who started using postal tuition to teach shorthand to many of his students spread all over England. At international level, distance education was started in 1883 when a private tutor taught English composition to his students by post providing two-way communication. Later, the scope of Correspondence education was widened terming it as distance education under which various forms of Learner Services are provided for effective teaching-learning process. In distance education, student support services and a variety of evaluation methods are an important component. It is a learner-based approach. Apart from the print media it includes the non-print media such as radio, telephone, audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer and other electronic media.

Open learning was named in one of the issues of the Pitman's Journal in 1929 (Rowntree, 1992) long before the first open university in the world (UKOU) was established in U.K. in 1969. Pitman was the pioneer who introduced the shorthand education through correspondence system for the first time. Open learning and open education are closely associated. Today, the open and distance learning is the most popular media of learning through which people can easily access the global learning in his or her own door step.

Common Wealth of Learning (COL) is an organisation that helps the Commonwealth Member States to harness the potential of distance education and technology to enhance the people's access

to learning that contributes to development. One of COL's priorities is providing equitable access to quality learning. COL first started its operations 1988 when there were only 10 open universities in the Commonwealth countries and in 2008, the number increased to 27. This shows the huge expansion in dedicated ODL institutions, linked to the phenomenon of the massification of higher education, especially in the developing Commonwealth countries. Asia has the largest number of adult ODL learners in the world with over 70 open universities, 13 of which are mega-universities! India alone has a growing network of 15 open universities, about 14 open schools and nearly 117 dual-mode institutions which collectively cater to over 7 million learners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What do you mean by correspondence education, distance education and open learning?

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1.3.2 History of Distance Education in India

In India there were only 20 conventional universities and about 500 affiliated colleges at the time of independence. After Independence, the need for horizontal and vertical expansion of higher education was very much felt keeping in view the need of the economy and aspiration of the people. In 1961, a ten-member Commission headed by Dr D S Kothari was constituted by the government of India to suggest, the ways and means to increase the access of people to higher education and the Commission recommended the introduction of Correspondence Courses at the university level with equivalent status of conventional study.

Accordingly, the University of Delhi established the School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in 1962 as a pilot project which received a favourable response of the aspirants. Subsequently, several conventional Universities set up their own Directorates of Correspondences Courses. To-day there are more than 200 Universities that have Directorates of Distance Education offering programmes through distance mode. The full-fledged form of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) started globally after the establishment of the first Open University in United Kingdom, namely the Open University, UK in 1969. This had its bearing in India too. Subsequently, the first Sate Open University in India, namely, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Hyderabad, (formerly Andhra Pradesh Open University) was established by an Act of State Legislature on August 26, 1982 on the line of the British Open University. The first Indian Open University's mandate was to provide educational opportunities to adult learners who could not get a chance of pursuing higher education in the conventional universities and to democratise higher educational opportunities to the disadvantaged sections of the society.

The second Open University to be established was the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in 1985 by an Act of Parliamentas National Open University, with its jurisdiction throughout the country. Following this trend, Kota Open University (2002), Nalanda Open University (1995) Yashwant Rao Chawan Maharastra Open University in Maharastra (1989),etc were established as the State Open Universities by the respective State Governments and the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University was established in 2006 by the Government of Assam. Odisha State Open University is the most recent one being established in 2015 by the Government of Odisha. At present there are fourteen State Open Universities in India besides the only national Open University, IGNOU. The basic motto behind the ODL institution is to make democratization of education in India. At present, distance

education constitutes about 11.45% of the total enrolment in higher education. (AISHE 2016-17).



LET US KNOW

National Open University in India:

1. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), 1985

State Open Universities in India:

1. Andhra Pradesh: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University , Hydrabad 1982
2. Maharashtra: Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, 1989
3. Madhya Pradesh: Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, 1991
4. Gujarat: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, 1994
5. Bihar: Nalanda Open University Nalanda Open University, 1995
6. Karnataka: Karnataka State Open University, 1996
7. West Bengal: Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata, 1997
8. Uttar Pradesh: U. P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University, 1999
9. Rajasthan: Vardhman Mahaveer Open University (Previously Kota), 2002
10. Tamil Nadu: Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai, 2002
11. Vihar (Chattisgarh): Pt. Sunderlal Sharma (Open) University, Chattisgarh, 2004
12. Uttaranchal: Uttaranchal Open University, 2006
13. Assam: Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, 2006
14. Odisha: State Open University, 2015



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4 : Fill in the blanks:

i. In the world, the first open university was established in the year of ……..…..

ii. At present in India, there are …… state open universities

and ……....central university

iii. Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in the year…….....

iv. Krishan Kanta Handiqui State Open University was established in the year of …….....…

v. Delhi established the School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in…….....…..

1.3.3 Growth and Relevance of Distance Education in India

Whenever we talk about the growth and development of distance education it has passed through many stages. In this connection, Prof. James C. Taylor had divided distance education into five generations, which are as follows:

- Correspondence model based on print technology
- Multimedia model, based on print, audio and video technology
- Tele-learning model, based on applications of telecommunications technologies providing synchronous communication
- Flexible Learning model, based on online delivery via Internet
- Intelligent flexible learning model, based on advanced online technologies

Today the pedagogy of ODL includes:

- Delivery Interactive multimedia, CD-ROM Internet based tutoring
- Learner Support Enhanced quality interaction anywhere, anytime
- ***Synchronous & asynchronous*** communication
- Equal opportunity for learners to participate/contribute
- Interpersonal interaction- tutor, learner, peers
- Social Networking and CollaborationThus it has seen that the open and distance learning in our country has already crossed many phases but still it has a long way to go in providing quality education to all. The following table shows the trend of the growth of distance educational institutions and the number of learners in our country.



Synchronous : Synchronous tools enable real-time communication and collaboration in a "same time-different place" mode. These tools allow people to connect at a single point in time, at the same time. Synchronous tools possess the advantage of being able to engage people instantly and at the same point in time. Audio conferencing, video conferencing, web-conferencing, chat etc are some synchronous tools.



Asynchronous : Asynchronous tools enable communication and collaboration over a period of time through a "different time-different place" mode. These tools allow people to connect together at each person's own convenience and own schedule. Asynchronous tools are useful for sustaining dialogue and collaboration over a period of time and providing people with resources and information that are instantly accessible, day or night. Asynchronous tools possess the advantage of being able to involve people from multiple time zones. In addition, asynchronous tools are helpful in capturing the history of the interactions of a group, allowing for collective knowledge to be more easily shared and distributed. Dialogue board, web logs, messaging in form of e-mail, web book etc are some forms of asynchronous tool.

Table 1: Growth of Open and Distance Learning Institutions in India: 1962-2010

Year	Dual Mode Universities	Single Mode Open Universities	Total Distance Education Institutions
1962	1	-	1
1975	22	-	22
1982	34	1	35
1985	38	2	40
1990	46	5	51
2000	70	9	79
2005	106	13	119
2010	242	14	256
2017	117	15	132

Source: Distance Education Bureau, UGC

From the above table it has been observed that the trend of establishing open and distance universities and institutions is moving fast and thereby the ODL system is contributing significantly to making education accessible to a large number of people in our country. Table 2 also shows the enrolment trend of the learners in distance education.

Table 2: Growth of Enrolment in Distance Education

Year	Total Enrolment in DE (approximate)
1983-84	6231
1988-89	62923
1993-94	170372
1998-99	341444
2003-04	750342
2008-09	1472379

2013-14	2104291
2014-15	3811723

Source: Distance Education Bureau, UGC

Thus, open and distance learning is a viable option through which it has been possible to make accessible to all without any social, economical and cultural discrimination.

Open Learning system aims to redress social and educational inequalities and to offer opportunities to those who are deprived of getting education as well as to those who want to continue their education. Open learning facilities the removal of the barriers and restrictions sometimes placed on students in the conventional education system. It does so by opening up learning opportunities to a wider range of people, and enabling them to learn more congenially and periodically.

ODL is a cost-effective way or providing education. It is effective as the learning materials-both print and multimedia are produced one time and of course subsequently modified, reprinting the learning materials for number of batches. The benefit of low cost of production of SLM is perculated down to the learners and so the total cost of education in ODL is much lower and affordable compared to the conventional system. The conventional system, again, is basically teacher-centred rather than learner-centred. Open schools and open universities play a vital role in promoting the accessibility of education to all. The basic purpose of the Open University and Open School is to provide instruction to the learners at their doorsteps through various media and technologies. The mode of open and distance learning is also called 'Independent Learning', 'Flexible Learning' as well as 'Self-Learning'. Open and Distance Learning has greater scope to innovate and to put flexibility into the system in order to cater for the needs of heterogeneous learners keeping in view the changes of time and need and requirement of the society. Therefore, today, the

open and distance learning is gaining more importance in the entire world. Choice-based credit system and convergence approach are two advantages of open and distance mode of learning which at a higher level, can play a pivotal role in bringing multifaceted human resource development, enabling the learner's absorption in the job market and self-employment. By taking innovative and flexible ideas it is responding to the paradigm shift in education today. In the context of India as a whole and the North Eastern Region in particular, distance education is becoming a viable option for the people who want to acquire quality education.

In North East India, the ODL system was introduced in 1986 when IGNOU established its first study centre in the Gauhati University campus.

Currently its operation in the NE region is made through Regional Centres set up at all State capitals of the NE States besides having its study centres in a number of colleges and educational institutions of the region. Besides the National Open University, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is only one State Open University (established in 2006) in the whole of North East Region located at Guwahati (Assam) and there are other Directorates of Distance Education attached to Gauhati University in 1998 (State University), Guwahati (Assam); Dibrugarh University in 2001(State University) , Rajib Gandhi University (Central University) in 2005, Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); North Eastern Hills University (Central University) in 1996 , Shillong (Meghalaya), Tripura University (Central University) in 1996, Agartala (Tripura) and Tezpur University (Central University) in 2011, Assam. All the above mentioned Universities are managed by Central/State Governments. Recently, private Universities have been set up in NER that have also introduced programmes through distance mode, namely, Sikkim Manipal University, Gangtok (Sikkim), ICFAI University, Agartala (Tripura) and ICFAI University, Aizwal (Mizoram). Besides the above mentioned private universities, there are a number of universities

located in other States of India that are functioning in the NER through their Study Centres and have enrolled people from this region. However, these outside Universities are operating their study centres in the N.E. region against the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on territorial jurisdiction and in clear violation of the circulars of University Grants Commission issued from time to time. Because of latest UGC's notification on territorial jurisdiction, the operation of ODL programmes of universities located in rest of the country has been discontinued in the NE region. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University has performed a unique role in providing education to the inmates of Jail of Assam. Even, this university plays a vital role in growing inclusive education by providing free education to the blind learners and differently-abled learners in the State.Thus, the ODL system through its flexible and non-formal approach has ensured basic human right like the right to education for the people and has emerged as a convenient mode of education system that would benefit the country as a whole.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5 : What are the relevance of open and distance learning?

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Q 6 : What are the ODL institutions situated in northeast of India?

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1.4 LET US SUM UP

- Education is termed as the bedrock of the socio-economic development of a country.
- Education provides knowledge to the people, acquaints them with some need based skills, and directs the attention in a positive direction.
- Demographically India as a whole has great potential, but the growth of manpower and the level of its engagement in productive activities are yet to be fully harnessed.
- Even within India there are considerable differences among the states and regions in terms of employment, gender differences in all stages of education, regional disparities in Gross Enrolment Ratio and literacy level etc.
- Besides, we have to achieve the target of inclusive growth, the progress towards millennium development goals and direct our effort towards the formation of human capital.
- Education is the only way to achieve these goals as per our needs and desire. Because, educated people are generally better productive workers, who can use the capital more effectively, can adopt new technologies and learn from their mistakes.
- To get access to education is one of the important human rights for everyone living in our country. Therefore, it is an urgent need to disseminate information and knowledge to the people through the various modes of education.
- Open and distance learning is the most viable option for making education as accessible as possible for all.
- Distance education means a mode of learning through which education can be accessed by the people irrespective of the geographical barriers, the physical existence of the teachers, space, time and age etc.
- The 11th Five Years Plan has made a target to covering around 40% the total numbers of students under the Open and Distance Learning system.

- Today for its flexibility, this system is considered suitable for attaining the 3As i.e. getting education at any time, anywhere and for any one.
- The ODL system provides an opportunity of pursuing life long learning in a cost effective mode to those who find themselves deprived of higher education in the conventional system for one reason or the other.
- This system of education was earlier known as correspondence education. Correspondence Education means the teaching learning situation where the teacher and the learner have no face to face contact. They interact only through postal correspondences. Print is the only medium of instruction and the printed lessons are the only source of learning for the learner.
- The correspondence education took formal shape in England in 1840 through Issac Pitman who started using postal tuition to teach shorthand to his many students spread all over England.
- Later, the academicians thought that 'distance education' was a more appropriate term than the term 'correspondence'. In distance education, student support services and a variety of evaluation methods are an important component. It is a learner-based approach. Apart from print media it includes the non-print media such as radio, telephone, audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer and other electronic media.
- Today distance education is commonly known as open and distance learning. Open learning was named in one of the issues of the Pitman's Journal in 1929.
- Open learning and open education are closely associated. Open University was first established in UK in 1969.
- Today, the open and distance learning is a very popular system of learning through which people can easily access various facets of global learning at his or her own door step.
- At present in India there are Fourteen (14) State Open Universities and One National Open University i.e. IGNOU
- ODL system has passed through many stages or phases to come to use the present day online technology.

- The trend of establishing open and distance universities and institutions are fast increasing and thus it contributes significantly towards making education accessible to the people.
- Open learning includes removing the barriers and restrictions placed on students as evident in the conventional education system by opening up learning opportunities to a wider range of people, and enabling them to learn more congenially and periodically.
- ODL is a cost-effective way covering a wide section of the people in a society at one time cost.
- The printed materials prepared by an ODL institution require expenditure to be spent only once as its cost of production and the same materials are used for many years.
- The mode of open and distance learning is also called 'Independent Learning' 'Flexible Learning' and 'Self-Learning'.
- Open and Distance Learning has greater scope to innovate and to put flexibility into the system in order to cater for the needs of heterogeneous learners keeping in view the changes of time and need and requirement of the society.
- In North East India, the ODL system was introduced in 1986 when IGNOU established its first study centre in the Gauhati University campus.
- Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is the only State open university in the NE region and has the unique distinction of providing education for the learners among the inmates of Jail of Assam and differently-abled learners.



1.5 FURTHER READING

1) Baruah, Srinath (2011): "Education Beyond Barriers: Role of Open and Distance learning with special reference to Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University", Horizon, The Newsletter of KKHSOU, Vol-V, No II, July 2011

2) Kanwar, Asha (2011): "Crisis in ODL: What is the response?", Lecture presented at Symbiosis International Conference on ODL, 23rd February, Pune, India

3) Srivastava, Manjulika and Swaraj Basu, " Distance Learning in North East : An Overview ", University News, 48 (38) September, 2010

4) STRIDE Handbook on Distance Education, IGNOU.



1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Distance education means a mode of learning through which education can be accessed by the people irrespective of the geographical barriers and the physical existence of teachers, space, time, age etc. This system offers opportunities to millions of underprivileged learners including those like the self-employed and the housewives who desire for an enlightened and productive way of life.

Ans to Q No 2 : The ODL system is the only corridor through which those sections of the population who were once deprived of the benefit of higher education in the conventional system for whatever reasons can pursue life-long learning in a flexible and cost-effective mode. It is very helpful for those:

- who dropped out from schools and colleges on economic compulsions and have now engaged themselves in trade, business etc ;
- women who got married early and had to discontinue their education in schools and colleges ;
- who work in offices and industries without completing degrees, diplomas required for their professions ;
- persons including housewives who simply could not carry on their studies in the conventional system in time and now wish to pursue education;
- who want to get further education for their better employability in

future

- Besides, the ODL system enables the in-service persons or professionals to enhance their professional qualifications and training while on the job.

Ans to Q No 3: Correspondence education means that the learners can study at their place of work or of living with the help of the lessons supplied by the educational institutions through postal correspondence.

Distance Education is a method of learning where content is delivered through the use of media. In this system, teacher and learner occasionally meet to solve academic, administrative, technical & personal problems. Teacher-Learner communication is possible by using media and technology.

Open Learning is a system of learning that goes beyond the traditional convention of teaching-learning. Flexibility in terms of admission rules, number of seats, attendance, examination, course duration, subject combination etc. are some of the criteria of open learning. In 1929, Pitman's Journal introduced the term 'Open Learning'. It is an educational system accessible to every individual with minimal restrictions. Due to the nature of flexibility in this system, education can be accessed by the people irrespective of the geographical barriers, physical existence of teachers, space, time, age etc.

Ans to Q No 4:

i. 1969
ii. 14 State Open Universities and 1 Central University
iii. 1985
iv. 2006
v. 1962

Ans to Q No 5: The relevance of open learning basically indicates the following things, which are:

- The open learning system is very important in the present society because it aims to redress social or educational inequalities and to offer opportunities to those who are deprived of getting

education as well as to those who want to continue their desired education. Open learning includes removing the barriers and restrictions placed on students in the conventional education system. It opens up learning opportunities to a wider range of people, and enables them to learn more congenially and periodically.

- ODL is a cost-effective way covering a wide section of the people in a society at one time cost. For instance, in online courses, the expenditure is a one-time cost for preparing it, which covers a large number of people for many years. The printed materials prepared by an ODL institution require expenditure to be spent only once as its cost of production and the same materials are used for many years. In this sense the ODL system is more cost effective and gives more cost benefit compared to the conventional system which attracts heavier school fees from the students
- Open and Distance Learning has greater scope to innovate and to put flexibility into the system in order to cater for the needs of heterogeneous learners keeping in view the changes of time and need and requirement of the society. Therefore, today, the requirement of the open and distance learning mode is gaining more importance everyday in the entire world

Ans to Q No 6: In North East India, the ODL system was introduced in 1986 when IGNOU established its first study centre in the Gauhati University campus. Currently IGNOU's operation in the NE region is made through Regional Centres set up at all State capitals of the NE States besides having its study centres in a number of colleges and educational institutions of the region. In addition to this the national Open University and Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, only State Open University in Assam(established in 2006) located at Guwahati. There are other Directorates of Distance Education attached to some universities of the region namely: Gauhati University in 1998 (State University), Guwahati (Assam); Dibrugarh University

in 2001 (State University), Rajiv Gandhi University (Central University) in 2005, Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); North Eastern Hills University (Central University) in 1996 , Shillong (Meghalaya), Tripura University (Central University) in 1996, Agartala (Tripura) and Tezpur University in 2011. All the above mentioned Universities are managed by Centra/State Governments. Recently, some private Universities have been set up in NER that have also introduced programmes through distance mode. These are: Sikkim Manipal University, Gangtak (Sikkim), ICFAI University, Agartala (Tripura) and ICFAI University, Aizwal (Mizoram).



1.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1 : Why is education important?

Q 2 : What do you mean by distance education?

Q 3 : Why is distance education important?

Q 4 : What is the relevance of distance education?

Q 5 : What do you mean by the growth of distance education?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1 : Why do you think that open and distance education is very important in the present situation? Explain

Q 2 : What do you mean by correspondence education, distance education and open learning or open education? Explain

Q 3 : Write briefly about the growth of distance education in the world.

Q 4 : Explain the history of distance education in India.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1 : Highlight some of the basic advantages of open and distance learning system in India. Discuss

Q 2 : Explain the growth and the relevance of distance education in India.

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UNIT 2: LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Learner Support Services (LSS): Basic Concepts

- 2.3.1 Meaning and Scope of LSS
- 2.3.2 Role of LSS in Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

2.4 Role of Study Centres in ODL

2.5 Counselling in ODL

2.6 Different Mediums of LSS

- 2.6.1 Audio-visual Aids
- 2.6.2 Electronic Devices
- 2.6.3 Other Mediums or Components of LSS

2.7 Let Us Sum Up

2.8 Further Reading

2.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

2.10 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the basic concept of learner support services
- derive the meaning and scope of LSS
- list the different mediums of LSS and evaluate their role
- state the role of study centres
- discuss the role of counselling and how the cousellors guide the distant learners.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

We all know that the teaching-learning methodology in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system is expected to be different from the

conventional class room system. As a result, the learners in the ODL system need to be provided with various kinds of resources like: Self Learning Materials (SLMs), library services for consultation and additional resources, counselling sessions for guidance and clearing doubts and confusions of the learners, SMS services for updating them with the important recent/ upcoming activities or events with the help of postage services or email or advanced electronic tools like blogs, social networking, discussion forum etc, interaction with other members/co-learners, audio-visual aids to supplement the learning materials and many more such services. These services are termed as learner support services (LSS). It can be well said that well designed Self Learning Materials (SLMs) and Learner Support Services (LSS) are the cornerstones of a Distance and Open Learning System.

This unit deliberates on Learner Support Services (LSS). After going through this unit, you will be able to discuss the concept of LSS, know the different types of LSS and the role played by it in the ODL system of education. Apart from these you will also be able enumerate the different stages of development of the audio-visual aids and other electronic devices as the tools of LSS.

2.3 LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES: BASIC CONCEPTS

Learner Support Services (LSS) play a very important role in distance education. The learning environment of a distant learner is much different from that of the traditional learner. Unlike the traditional learner, a distant learner has to learn on his/her own, without any regular guidance from teachers. This requires that such learners are helped through the use of a range of services/products that not only compensate the lack of resources/ facilities as is easily accessed by a traditional learner, but at thesame time also supports the self-learning environment of the distant learners. Now-a-days, the advancement in information and communication technologies (ICT) has brought to us newer and newer tools that can be very effectively used

for this purpose. These tools are comprehensively termed as Learner Support Services; basically because these support the learning environment of the distant learners.

2.3.1 Meaning and Scope of LSS

Learner Support Service is an umbrella term which encompasses many components under it. Almost all the services/products used in the ODL system to facilitate the learning experiment are included under the generic term Learner Support Services (LSS). Thus, in loose terms, the term LSS may be defined as any medium, service or product used to facilitate the learners in the ODL system. It should be noted that the ODL institutes or Universities do not use all the available mediums or components of LSS that we have today. Often, they provide combinations of such media. We shall discuss the different mediums of LSS later in section 2.6.

2.3.2 Role of Learner Support Services in ODL

The role of Learner Support Services (LSS) in ODL can best be appreciated if we consider the environment of the distant learners. As a learner of an ODL system, you can yourself judge the learning environment faced by you and can easily appreciate the following points:

- **Lack of face to face interaction with teacher:** The lack of face to face interaction with teachers is one of the basic features of distance education. Most of you have had some amount of conventional education. As such, you would agree that any query you made to your teacher was immediately solved. But in distance education, this is not possible. So, in the absence of a teacher, how to solve the queries? On account of such factors, learner support services become necessary. In distance education, we see counselling sessions being organized at least once a week. This helps the learners like you in getting the

queries met. Apart from the counselling sessions, an ODL provider may offer additional resources like: Audio CDs, Audio-Visual CDs/DVDs, telecast of TV programmes, FM Radio programmes, Phone-in-programmes, Internet-based services etc. to help its learners in overcoming the problem of the absence of face to face interaction with the teacher.

- **Lack of interaction with fellow learners:** In the conventional system of education, you can easily form a group among your fellow learners. This helps in your academic matters. You get the opportunity to discuss among yourselves and solve many queries. In distance education, formation of a group is not very easy. In many cases, the learners of the same programme, even from the same study centre may not know one another. In such cases of absolute 'isolation', learning becomes very difficult. Learning theories suggest that learners can learn better when they are in a group, rather than when they are alone. As such, it becomes necessary to facilitate interaction among the fellow learners.
- **Learner's autonomy versus lack of motivation:** One of the virtues of distance education is that it offers its learners ample freedom. As a learner of conventional education, you may have to follow the strict routine in attending classes, completing home works, assignment etc. But a learner of ODL, you are free from such bindings and you get to learn at your own pace and time. However, this same virtue may turn out to be a disadvantage for the learners. This is because, in the absence of constant guidance and pursuance received from the face to face interaction with teacher or the pressure to complete the course in time, the learners in the ODL system may lack the motivation to study regularly on his own. As such, the learners may get distracted from regular study and would try to complete the curriculum just at the eleventh hour at the time of term end examination.

To overcome such issues, learner support services become necessary. Assignments are provided to learners so that the learners study on their own and complete the assignments within the specific period of time. Similarly, broadcast of FM programmes helps the learners to be in touch with their study even when they are busy otherwise. Counselling sessions help them find answers to the queries as well to motivate them for self-study.

- **Lack of easy access to resources:** As a distant learner, you might lack an easy access to additional resources you might require when you go through a curriculum of study. In the conventional system of education, the learners get access to the departmental library, central library or other services like e-journals, journals etc much more easily. But in case of a distant learner, those facilities are not easily available. As such, in the ODL system, it becomes imperative to provide a range of LSS so that the learners can compensate the lack of easy access to additional resources.
- **Striking a balance between work and study:** Let us consider this hypothetical example: just after passing out the Matriculation Examination, Mr. Anil Borah joined Indian Railway as a Clerk in the year 1995. In the last 15 years, based on seniority, he has received a few promotions. However, he cannot move up the ladder further, as that requires a candidate to be a Graduate, even after having the stipulated years of in-service experience. Thanks to the ODL system! Mr. Borah can become a Graduate, even when he continues his current profession and ultimately got his/her promotion.

This fact highlights yet another virtue of distance education. It allows its learners to pursue study even when the learner is regularly engaged in some other work. More importantly, the learner can enroll in a programme which will help him/her in getting a promotion even when he/she is busy in his profession.

Striking a proper balance between work and study however is not very easy. Learner support services can help a learner to utilize their free time and ultimately achieve the ultimate objective of attaining the qualification they were aiming at. In the conventional system of education, this may not be possible.

- **Locational impediments may be overcome:** Locational impediments may adversely affect the learning environment of a learner. Due to locational disadvantage, a learner may find it difficult to join a programme in the conventional system of education. The ODL system can reach the unreached and overcome all such barriers. Through LSS, an ODL Institute/ University can help a learner to enroll into a programme and complete it successfully. For example, as we have already mentioned, the services like FM Radio, TV programmes can reach a remote learner much effectively.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How does a working person benefit from the ODL system? (Answer in about 50 words).

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Q 2: How does LSS promote self learning in the ODL system?

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2.4 ROLE OF STUDY CENTRES IN ODL

A study centre plays a very important role in the system of open and distance learning (ODL). The study centre establishes the link between the ODL institute/University and its learner. As such, the learners may not have

any direct contact with the University. A study centre offers the following services to a learner:

- **Getting admitted to a programme:** In general, a learner gets admitted to the programme of an Open University or an ODL institute through a study centre. The learner collects prospectus from the study cente and deposits the necessary fee to the university/institute through the study centre only. Now-a-days, most of the open universities or ODL institutes offer the learners to download the prospectus/application form from its website and then submit the filled-in application form to the study centre of one's choice. Again, for the payment of fee to the university, now-a-days, Demand Draft is the most preferred mode rather than Cash.
- **Acts as a Connecting point:** A study centre also acts as the connecting point between the University/Institute and the learner. Learners collect their study materials from the study centres. Again, on behalf of the learners, most of the administrative activities are undertaken by a study centre. From getting admitted into a programme to the receipt of the mark sheets/certificate of pass out, all the tasks involving he learners are undertaken by a study centre.
- **Conduct of counselling sessions:** A study centre also conducts counselling sessions. In general, these counselling sessions are conducted in weekends. The counselling sessions play an important role in the learning process. We shall discuss this aspect in some detail in the next section.
- **Continuous evaluation:** Apart from conducting the counselling sessions, a study centre also undertakes continuous evaluation. It should be noted here that continuous evaluation occupies an important place in distance education. As a part of the curriculum in distance education, a learner is needed to submit a few assignments. Learners submit such assignments at the study centre. It is a general practice to evaluate the assignments at the study centre itself. After evaluation, the assignments are returned to the learners with comments on them. This helps the learners perform better in the term end (or semester/

annual) examinations.

- **Library Services:** A study centre also offers the facility of library services to its learners. It should be noted here that most of the study centres of an open university/ODL institute are located in traditional colleges/educational institutions. As such, the study centre may allow the learners of the OU/ODL institute to use its existing library facilities, or it may have other alternative arrangements with or without the assistance of OU/ODL institute.
- **Conduct of examinations:** Some of the study centres also act as the examination centres of the term-end examinations. However, it is not mandatory that a study centre will also be a examination cetnre. In general, depending on the number of learners, easy communication facilities, and other factors more than one study centres may have a common examination centre.
- **An activity centre of its learners:** A study centre may become an activity centre for its learners. A study centre helps a learner to interact with other fellow learners who can thus form a group among themselves. This helps them undertake group activities related to the curriculum of study or in other areas outside the curriculum.
- **Grooming of personalities:** We all know that a learner will find it difficult to get a job/service unless he/she is not equipped with certain soft skills like self-presentation, an effective communication skill (both verbal and non-verbal), writing a suitable bio-data as per the requirement of the job and the personal traits and skills possessed by the learner, computer skills etc. Even when a learner may have very good academic career, such soft skills are very much important. A study centre may help the learner to equip himself/herself with such personal traits/skills. Sometimes, these may be made a part of the curriculum, while in other cases a study centre may take up such training sessions on their own.
- **Placement services:** It is true that learning is a life-long process and has its own value. As such, getting engaged into a job after the successful passing out of a programme may not be the ultimate aim

of a learner. However, keeping in view the burning problem of unemployment, it is desirable that the learners get into some job/ service after the successful completion of a programme. The open university/ODL institute through the study centres may offer such placement services to its learners. However, sometimes, the OU/ODL institute may do this centrally, on its own. Again, the study centre may take such activities on their own, with or without the help of the OU/ ODL institute.

- **Other activities:** A study centre may also undertake some activities not directly related to the curriculum of study. For example, a study centre may conduct workshops/lectures/seminars on issues relating to the ODL system or other general topic which attracts and benefits the learners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : State whether the following statements are True or False.

a) In the system of distance education, it is customary to conduct examination in the study centres only. (T/F)

b) Placement service is an integral part of distance education.(T/ F)

Q 4 : What do you mean by continuous evaluation? Why is it necessary? (Answer in about 50 words).

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2.5 COUNSELLING IN ODL

One of the basic features of distance education is the absence interaction with a regular, face-to-face teacher. This puts the learner at the centre point of learning. Unlike a regular student of the traditional system of

education, a learner in the ODL system of learning does not get the guidance of a face-to-face teacher. The learner may not be able to clear his doubts/ queries as he/she undertakes the study of a topic. Thus, without any guidance from a teacher, a vacuum will be created. To overcome such vacuum, counselling sessions are being incorporated in the ODL system of learning. We shall now discuss the different aspects of the counselling sessions, and the role a counsellor plays in the ODL system of learning.

A counselling session may be defined as an activity undertaken by a trained/skilled professional that seeks to clarify the doubts/queries raised by the learners of an academic content. In addition to that, counselling also implies that the counsellor is an overall guide to the learners.

In the above definition, two aspects are inter-related, viz., the counselling sessions and the counsellors. While counselling sessions are the activities, counsellors are its real actors. Let us discuss the role played by each of these.

Role of counselling sessions in distance education: It is a basic tenet of the system of distance education to provide its learners study resources in the form of Self Learning Materials (SLM). The basic philosophy behind the design of the SLMs is that it makes studies easier for the learners. It is expected that the learners can self-learn from such SLMs without much difficulty. But even then, there may come up a number of doubts in the minds of the learners. As such, counselling sessions or personal contact programmes are undertaken by the study centres or the University. These personal contact programmes help in resolving the issues learners may encounter in their course of study.

Another aspect of the counselling sessions is that the number of such counselling sessions is very limited. Generally, counselling sessions are undertaken one day or two days a week, in most cases in the weekend. As such, as compared to the traditional mode of education, the number of counselling sessions allotted for a given curriculum of study is bound to be very limited.

Another important aspect of counselling sessions is that in most of the cases, attending the couselling sessions is not made compulsory. This

is unlike the traditional mode of education, where attending a given number of classes is made compulsory. However, in the ODL system as well, attending practical/lab classes may be made compulsory, if the programme has certain practical /lab classes.

Role played by the counsellors: The term 'counsellor' in distance education has a different connotation. We have already discussed the learning environment of a distance learner; and as you are yourself involved with the ODL system, we suppose, you will very much agree with that. The counsellor in a distance education system is much different from a conventional teacher. He/she needs to facilitate the learning process of the learners. Owing to the lack of regular guidance from a teacher or a regular study routine, a learner of the ODL system may turn out to be a passive learner. The counsellor should try to motivate the learners and encourage them to go through the curriculum of study on their own and raise their queries, if any.

Again, unlike traditional mode of education a counsellor should not aim at 'completing' a given curriculum of study. In fact, as the number of counselling sessions is very limited, a counsellor may find it an uphill task to 'complete' the curriculum. Thus, the basic aim of a counsellor should be to solve the queries of the learners and guide them to study on their own.

Another aspect of the personal contact programmes is that these help the learners to form a peer group among themselves. Such peer group can help the learners in solving many problems. Various studies have shown that a distance learner having his/her peer group can learn better than if he/she can learn alone. As such, the counsellor of the personal contact programmes should aim at forming 'peer group' among his/her learners who can be assigned some 'group activity' in this regard.

The learners may also become interested in gaining some hints relating to higher studies or career. In such cases, the duty of the Counsellor is also to help the learners get their queries resolved. Therefore, a counsellor functions as a guide or a mentor to the learners, rather than a tutor/counsellor only.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: State whether the following statements are True or False.

a) In the system of distance education, it is the job a cousellor to cover the given curriculum of study at the earliest. (T/F)

b) To attend the counselling sessions is not compulsory for the learners. (T/F)

c) A programme in ODL never has any lab/practical classes as such courses cannot be taught through ODL. (T/F)

Q 6: Define the term 'counselling session' (Answer in about 40 words).

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2.6 DIFFERENT MEDIUMS OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

We have already stated that Learner Support Services (LSS) is an umbrella term which encompasses a range of mediums. In this section, we shall discuss the major services/products that are generally used in the ODL system under three major heads, viz., audio-visual aids, electronic services and other mediums of LSS.

2.6.1 Audio-Visual Aids

- Use of Audio-Visual Media: The use of different audio-visual media is very common in distance education. These may include audio tapes, audio CDs, video tapes, Video CDs, DVDs, animation film, documentary, etc. These mediums are very

interactive, informative and can be used with much ease as per the convenience of the learners.

- An issue with audio-visual mediums is that in most of the cases, these are priced, and as such, they become a burden on the part of the learner. However, this may be overcome by using these in the study centres during the counselling sessions or as reference materials in the library.
- Use of Radio: Use of radio is also very effective. Radio services, especially the FM Radio Services, are very effective as through the use of these learners and others may be communicated easily.

  IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) launched its FM Radio Station 'Gyan Vani' in 2001. At present, IGNOU has established 31 FM Stations throughout the country. In Assam, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University had launched its FM Radio Station 90.4 Jnan Taranga in 2010. This was in fact the first education FM Station in the North East. The other educationalFM Station launched in Assam is the 90.8 Luit, launched by the IDOL (Institute of Distance and Open Learning) of Gauhati University in 2010.
- Use of TV: Use of Television (TV) is another effective tool for the distance learners. Distance education provider may use TV for telecasting educational programmes and thereby reach a large population of its students and other members of the community. As an educational tool, a few programmes are through Gyan Darshan,an initiative jointly undertaken by IGNOU and UGC (University Grants Commissions), New Delhi.

2.6.2 Electronic Devices

- **Use of Web Technology:** The rapid advancement in information and communication technology (ICT) has immensely helped the distance education system a lot. This has in fact brought a paradigm shift in the field of Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

Now a learner can opt for admission into an ODL programme without visiting a study centre or the University. He can get the SLMs by downloading those from the University Website, submit assignment online, get all the queries solved online, can interact with the members of the peer group and the counsellor in the discussion forum, even sit for examination on online and get his certificate delivered without visiting the University even for once.This concept is called 'Virtual University'.

However, this concept of Virtual University has seen its maximum growth in the advanced countries and has had very limited impact in the developing countries. In our country as well, the concept of Virtual University has not much flourished. However, this does not mean that the use of the internet services has been very limited in India. Most of college/institute/ Universities in India have used the internet services at a varied degree. For example, to mention it in the context of ODL, IGNOU has made extensive use of internet services. Students of IGNOU can download most of the materials of most of its programmes from its website (e-Gyankosh). Students can use its website for all types of queries, including academic and non-academic matters.

In Assam, KKHSOU has designed the website www.kkhsou.in and launched the e-portal known as 'e-vidya' services for its learners. Another such internet learning portal from the state is 'e-bodhidroom' launched by IDOL, GU.

- **Use of Mobile Technology:** Use of mobile phones has become quite common among the people of all the age groups. As such, educational institutes, especially the ODL institutes/Universities have used mobile as a tool of learning. For example, if you type SNKKHSOU and send them to 9870807070, you will be able to get all the important updates from Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University. Such updates include announcement of admission, examination, results etc. Similarly, IDOL, GU also

has launched a similar service whereby a learner can get any information relating to admission, fee and results by sending a sms at 56070. For detail, you can log on to: www.idolgu.org/sms.pdf.

2.6.3 Other Mediums or Components of LSS

- **Self-Learning Materials (SLMs) in print form:** Even when there have emerged a number of components of LSS in the recent times, the basic component of LSS is however the Self-Learning Materials (SLM). The basic difference between any print book and a print book in SLM format is that the SLMs are designed as self-explanatory, and easy to follow study materials. The basic consideration in the design of a unit in SLM format is the environment of the distance learner. Emphasis is laid such that a learner can learn of his/her own. As such, a Unit is the SLM format is designed keeping in view the pedagogical issues of open and distance learning. Another aspect of SLMs is that they are designed in a particular and based on the house-style of the ODL institute/Open University. Thus, the units in a SLM are designed based on the house-style of the particular ODL institute/Open University. This helps them look similar as well as helps the learners follow with much convenience.
- **Advice or Counselling Sessions :** Learners may have to contact a study centre or the institute/university to get his query solved. For this, the learner may undertake personal visit to or may make phone calls to the study Centre/University. For example, to know the range of programmes or the time of admission, nearby study centres offering the programmes of your choice, fees, dates of examination etc., you may have made calls to the University or the study centre.
- **Peer Group Support :** While the formation of a peer group is very important to enhance the learning skills of the learners,

such peer groups should be given adequate support as well. The distance education provider should provide a platform that medium sets a communication between the tutor/ counsellor and the learners. While the learners may communicate themselves through the use of mobile phones, but such communication in the absence of a counsellor/ tutor may have very limited effect. As such, the distance education provider should offer a common platform. Such common platform can be very easily provided through the use of internet technologies. Tools like social networking, blogs, and discussion forum can offer such advance technologies. Then peer group support become easier. Personal contact programmes may also be an effective medium of peer-group interaction in certain cases, but it has many limitations. This is because the learners have to be physically present during the counselling sessions.

- **Feedback concerning assessment and progress :** In the system of distance education, it is very important to provide feedback with respect to the assessment and progress of study of the learners. For this, various types of assessment are used. The SLMs provided to the learners include Check Your Progress or Self Check Your Progress type of questions. These are based on the immediumste matter of discussion. In this case, certain short questions or objective-type questions are included. In most of cases, answers to such questions are included at the end of the Unit. Alternatively, hints to answer the questions may also be provided.

  Another mechanism of assessment is the home assignments. These home assignments are provided so that the learners go through the SLMs and answer the questions of their own after thoroughly going through them. The usefulness of home assignments lies in the fact that the learners get the Tutor's Comment. As such, they get to know the various ways of improving upon their efforts. These help them in improving

their performance in the final assessment, i.e., the annual or the term end examinations.

- **Library Services :** Another important component of the LSS is the library sevices. In the system of distance education, attempts are made to provide the SLMs which are self learning and self contained. In this sense, SLMs are designed in such a way that they contain all the necessary information the learners may need to know in a topic. Even then, to facilitate better performance on the part of the learners, especially to meet the demand of references in the programmes of post-graduate, professional and research studies, adequate library service is a must. Library sevices may be offered in the study centres itself. In most of the cases, the study centres happen to be an existing college or other such institution. In such cases, the distance education provider may have formal arrangement with the study centres so that they can provide its distance learners an easy access to the existing college/institution libraries. Otherwise, a library cell specific to the distance learners may also be established at the centres.

  Another mechanism adopted by the distance education providers is the 'library bag' services. In this type of service, a bundle of selected reference books are sent to the learners. Learners need to return the same at the end of the course. Thus, the same set of books can be repeatedly sent to the subsequent learners a number of items. A refundable caution deposit is collected from the learners to ensure a safe return of the books.

- **Acquiring of Skills :** We all know that education is a life-long process and one of the objectives of education is to impart skills. Distance education is not an exception. Skill enhancement is an important objective of distance education. Even when the learners may reside at a distance place, they also need to

acquire certain skills. Counselling sessions or Personal Contact Programmes may help the learners to acquire new skills. For example, learning the presentation skills or effective communication skills may become very essential for a distance learner to get suitable job in the market.

An ODL institute/ University may also take the help of Audio-Visual Materials to impart skills to its learners. Still, other tools may be Project work, Activities, etc.

- **Career Guidance :** Career guidance is another very important component of the ODL system. To get a job, the learners may require certain soft skills like writing a Resume, facing an Interview, presentation Skills etc. The study centres may also conduct campus interviews to attract the prospective employers which ultimately helps the learners get good openings.

  Many ODL institutes/ Universities have opened a Career Counselling Cell at the University Level to help its learners in matter relating to career and future prospects.

- **Administrative Problem Solving :** In the course of study, beginning from the pre-admission stage to the post-pass out stage, a student may face various issues. The ODL institute/ University must solve the problems of its learners.

  In certain cases, the institute/ University may offer its learners or the community at large a Toll Free Number, where they can make calls and get their quires solved without paying any money for that. Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) has also been used. As a learner of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, if you face any problem, you call at the Toll Free Number of the University: 1800-345-3613.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7 : State whether the following statements are True or False.

a) Gyan Darshan has been jointly undertaken by IGNOU and UGC. (T/F)

b) IGNOU has established more than 100 FM Stations throughout the country. (T/F)

Q 8 : Match the following Set B with Set A.

Set A	Set B
a) Jnan Taranga	i) E-learning portal of IDOL, GU
b) Radio Luit	ii) FM Station of KKHSOU
c) e-Gyankosh	iii) FM Station of IDOL, GU
d) e-vidya	iv) E-learning portal of IGNOU
e) e-bodhidroom	v) E-learning portal of KKHSOU

Q 9 : What do you mean by library bag service? (Answer in about 50 words)

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Q 10 : What do you mean by career guidance? (Answer in about 50 words)

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

- Learner Support Services (LSS) play a very important role in distance education.
- Learner Support Services not only compensate the lack of resources/ facilities as is easily accessed by a traditional learner, but at the same time also supports the self-learning environment of the distant learners.
- The role of Learner Support Services (LSS) in ODL can best be appreciated if we consider the environment of the distant learners.
- A study centre plays a very important role in the system of open and distance learning (ODL). The study centre establishes the link between the ODL institute/University and its learner.
- One of the basic features of distance education is the lack of a regular, face-to-face teacher. Thus, in the absence of any guidance from a regular teacher, a vacuum is created. To overcome this vacuum, counselling sessions have been incorporated in the ODL system of learning.



2.8 FURTHER READINGS

1) V P Mathes Waran (2005): Distance Education: Student Support Services, Anmol Publication, New Delhi



2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : The ODL system allows its learners to pursue study even when the learner is regularly engaged in some other work. More importantly, the learner can enroll into a programme which will help him/her in getting a promotion even when he/she is busy in his/her profession.

Ans to Q No 2 : LSS in the ODL system utilizes advanced information and communication tools like internet, mobile, phone, web, teleconferencing etc. Learners can learn of their own as well as they can form virtual groups among themselves. All these help in self-learning.

Ans to Q No 3 : a) F b) F

Ans to Q No 4 : As a part of the curriculum in distance education, a learner is needed to submit a few assignments. Learners submit such assignments at the study centre for evaluation. This is form of continuous evaluation.

After the evaluation of the assignments, they are returned to the learners with comments on them. This helps the learners to perform better in the term end (or semester/annual) examinations.

Ans to Q No 5 : a) F b) T c) F

Ans to Q No 6 : A couselling session may be defined as an activity undertaken by a trained/skilled professional that seeks to clarify the doubts/queries raised by the learners of an academic content, apart from being an overall guide to them.

Ans to Q No 7 : a) T b) F

Ans to Q No 8 :

Set A	Set B
a) Jnan Taranga	i) FM Station of KKHSOU
b) Radio Luit	ii) FM Station of IDOL, GU
c) e-Gyankosh	iii) E-learning portal of IGNOU
d) e-vidya	iv) E-learning portal of KKHSOU
e) e-bodhidroom	v) E-learning portal of IDOL, GU

Ans to Q No 9 : Library bag service is one of the learner support services. In this type of service, a bundle of selected reference books are sent to the learners. Learners need to return the same at the end of the course. However, a refundable caution deposit is collected from the learners for the safe return of the books.

Ans to Q No 10 : To get a job, the learners may require certain skills like writing a Resume, facing an Interview, presentation Skills etc. Again, to help the learners to get a job, campus interviews may be organized

to attract prospective employers which ultimately help the learners to get good openings into them. In an comprehensive term, all these may be termed as career guidance.



2.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1: What is counselling?

Q 2: What do you mean by learner support services?

Q 3: What is meant by library bag services?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Discuss the meaning and scope of Learner Support Services.

Q 2: Evaluate the role played by Learner Support Services in the ODL system.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the environment of a distant learner. How do the different components of LSS help a learner to overcome the barriers faced by him/her?

Q 2: Evaluate the role played by the study centres in the ODL system.

Q 3: Briefly enumerate the learning environment of an ODL learner. What complementary role can a study centre undertake to help its learners get a suitable job?

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UNIT 3: SELF LEARNING MATERIALS

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Concept and Nature of Self Learning Materials

- 3.3.1 Differences between SLMs and Text Books
- 3.3.2 Features of SLMs

3.4 Design and Structure of SLMs

3.5 Let Us Sum Up

3.6 Further Reading

3.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.8 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define the concept, need and importance of Self Learning Materials
- explain the characteristics of SLMs
- discuss the design and structural pattern of SLMs.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units of this course, we have already discussed the needs and significance of open and distance learning system which is prevalent particularly in a country like India, and the various learner support services that help in reaching the unreached with the help of education. In this unit, we are going to discuss one of the important aspects or components of distance education through which the whole teaching-learning process is running. The Self Learning Material is one of the important aspects of learner support services in the ODL system.

Self Learning materials are basically learner-centred materials which

are very flexible in nature. Open and distance learners usually depend on SLMs, because they have to learn on their own, at a time, pace and place of their own choice. With the help of the SLMs, the ODL mode makes education as accessible as possible for all, besides emerging as an effective means to bring education to the door-step of those who are deprived of getting educational opportunities in the conventional mode of the mainstream educational institutions. This system offers opportunities to millions of underprivileged learners including those like the self-employed and the housewives who desire for an enlightened and productive way of life.

3.3 CONCEPT AND NATURE OF SLMs

Self learning materials are those materials where the contents are designed in such a way that without taking much help from the teacher, a learner can easily grasp and understand their learning contents. While a learner go through his or her materials, he or she may feel that someone is talking to him or guiding him or her to achieve his or her educational objectives. The activities and functions of a teacher seems to be inbuilt in the study material itself, as if the teacher is teaching in the classroom and a student is listening in his or her class. Thus, SLMs include all the materials which are prepared to stimulate independent study or learning. In the open and distance learning system, the learners have lesser opportunity to meet the tutor or teacher on regular basis than in the conventional mode, and hence they totally depend on specially prepared teaching materials which are mostly pre-planned, pre-produced and pre-packed. Thus, the SLMs are designed for the smooth running of the educational programmes, and the contents of the SLMs are varied in each programmes. Self Learning Material provides adequate mechanism for the learners to provide feedback on their understanding of the subject. Besides, Self Learning Material should be revised periodically from the perspective of improving quality as well as meeting the needs and requirements of the situation so that the SLMs may provide the adquate information to the learners and upgrade their knowledge in connecting with the present context.

In the context of SLMs, materials in both print and non-print forms are to be found. These are as follow:

- Books
- Workbooks
- Worksheets
- Audio-Visual materials
- Online materials
- Computer based training (CBT) packages (Computer based materials)
- Multimedia etc

In fact, Self Learning Materials should be designed by considering the following points, which are suggested by the Distance Education Council (Now it is known as Distance Education Bureau):

- SLMs, must contain some clearly stated objectives
- It should be user-friendly
- Easy language while writing the SLMs to be used
- One should get short, manageable chunks of learning
- Plenty of helpful examples are to be provided
- Reference to the learners' prior experiences
- Use of illustrations where they are better than words
- Headings to help learners to find their way around
- Links to other media where appropriate
- Obvious awareness of the needs of different learners
- Exercises and activities that help the learners to use the material
- Space for learners to write down their own ideas
- Feedback to help learners to check their own progress
- Suggestions about getting help from other people
- Glossary and summary should also be included

The latest policy on Distance Education, formulated by UGC in 2017 suggested that Self Learning Material should be in Printed material, Audio-Video material, Online material and Computer-based material. (You can have a look at the Regulation details in the UGC website i.e. *www.ugc.ac.in)*

In terms of ***Print materials***, the materials should be developed in self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating and self-

evaluating approach. Besides, for maintaining the quality of the print materials, the New Policy on Distance Education, formulated by UGC has suggested the following points:

- The Self Learning Material shall be designed with the approach of two-way communication between the learner and content.
- The Self Learning Material shall involve the learners actively through various experience-based activities and assignments.
- The learners should get clear information about the structure of the programme and course from the SLM.
- There shall be a detailed learning map in Self Learning Materials for the learner so that he or she will be self-directed for completion of his or her studies.
- The contents of Self Learning Materials shall be developed with **dialogue and personal system of writing method** which will create the nature of interactivity in Self Learning Material.
- The Self Learning Materials shall encourage learners to apply new knowledge and skills.
- There shall be clear definition of the learning objectives and outcomes.
- The contents shall be divided into small sections (blocks) and sub-sections (units & sub-units) for effective learning.
- There shall be an assignment on each learning objective for self-assessment.
- The learner shall be directed through problem solving activities as applicable to the nature of the course.
- The Self Learning Material shall be developed in defined formats with the following features :
  - Consistent layout and format.
  - Inclusion of overview of content.
  - A unit structure at the beginning of the unit.
  - Plenty of examples.
  - Reference to prior learning.
  - Inclusion of national or international caselets and case studies.
  - Content in segments synchronised with the learning objectives

and outcome.

- Explanation of icons used in the content part of the SLMs.
- Appropriate sequence of material.
- Explanation on technical, new, difficult terms or word in a glossary section.
- Inclusion of adequate suggested reading (both print and online).

In terms of ***Audio–Visual Materials,*** for maintaining Quality Standards, the New Policy on Distance Education, formulated by the UGC suggested that:

- There shall be adequate consideration of learners' prior knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- The level and style of language shall be appropriate.
- There shall be clear information on types of support materials and study activities to be used by the learner.
- It shall be clear and unambiguous, also preferably free from pedagogic jargon.
- The aim, objective, and target audience for the Audio Video material shall be clearly defined.
- It shall be capable of being evaluated to conform to the learning out comes.
- There shall be clear guidelines with regard to the use of the Audio or Visual material vis-a-vis other contents of the course.
- AV Material shall be developed in forms and formats that will be easily accessible by the learners.
- There shall be separate Audio Visual manual for giving the guidelines of using the Audio Video material in study.
- There shall be synchronisation of Sound and Image in Audio Visual material.
- There shall be appropriate graphics and animations relevant to the course content.

Again in connection with the materials provided through Online form, the latest UGC regulation on Distance Education suggested the following points:

- The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in complex ways.
- In the online courses, there shall appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.
- The contents shall provide for periodical feedback about the learning process.
- The course shall be easy to navigate.
- There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete the course
- The contents shall be accessible on various devices.
- The online materials shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities.

Regarding Computer-based materials, for maintaining the quality standards of the materials, the Regulation of UGC 2017 recommended that:

- The Computer-based material shall provide an environment for practice, at the learner's own pace and in his own time.
- The Computer-based material shall provide an environment for self-assessment, and it shall allow learners to develop analysis and decision-making skills, to discover principles and concepts for themselves.
- There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning.
- The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasing by complex ways.
- There shall appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements and also it should fulfill the needs of learners with disabilities.

Thus, it has been proved that the self learning materials should be designed in such a way that learners can easily understand the materials without much external help and support. Besides, the learners can also learn the content in details with guidance of references or link of more

reading materials which are provided in the SLM itself by the course writers in each unit.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is meant by the term SLM?

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Q 2: What are the different types of SLMs?

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Q 3: Identify some common features of SLMs.

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3.3.1 Differences between SLMs and Text Books

Self Learning Materials and Text Books are the sources which help for running a course for a definite period of time. The contents and syllabi are prepared for teaching the students by considering their mental level, and also the needs and demands of a situation. The text books are generally made for meeting the needs of the syllabus of the students in the conventional learning, but the SLMs are specifically designed for the learners of open and distance learning system. In the SLMs, the contents and syllabus are divided into units, and these units, are well-prepared for the learners where they are totally dependant on the materials for their learning in each

course or programme.

There are some major differences between text books and Self Learning Materials which are as follows:

- In text books, it is assumed that they will develop interest among the learners, whereas in case of SLMs, it should definitely arouse the interest of the targeted group of learners.
- The text books are written **for serving the purpose of teachers' use,** on the otherhand, the SLMs are prepared primarily for learners' use.
- In text books, there is no indication of study time, but in SLMs, there are given estimated study time.
- In text books, there are rarely stated aims and objectives whereas in the SLMs, aims and objectives are clearly stated.
- The text books are written with a target of covering a wide range of market, whereas SLMs are written or designed for a particular learner group.
- The text books are structured for the teachers and specialists, while SLMs are structured according to the need of the learners.
- In text books, there are little or no self assessment, on the other hand, in the SLMs, major emphasis is given on self assessment.

Thus, it has been found that although both the text books and SLMs are written for serving the educational purpose of the learners, there are some basic differences between text books and SLMs in terms of their utilisation. Thus, these kinds of educational materials should fulfill the learning objectives and interests of the learners. In the teaching learning process, the learning objectives and interests are concerned mainly to develop the three domains of the learners i.e. the cognitive, the affective, and the psycho-motor. The Cognitive domain involves the intellectual components of the learning objectives pertaining to the development of mental processes like remembering, thinking, analyzing, solving problems and so on. The affective domain reflects the emotional and attitudinal components

such as development of interest, attitudes, values toward certain ideas and activities. The Psychomotor domain involves those objectives concerning body movement. Practical skills involved in manipulating tools/machines or performing experiments, engaging construction of buildings and so on.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What are the differences between text books and SLMs?

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3.3.2 Features of SLMs

Self Learning Materials are the instruments for learning. In order to make the materials easy to understand on the part of the targeted learners, so that they ddont require much help from other external sources, the SLMs should be designed and prepared by considering the features as mentioned bellow:

- **Self-Explanatory**: The SLMs should be designed in such a way that the learners can understand them without external support.The contents should be self-explanatory and conceptually clear. Besides, the content or the structure of the unit should be logically analysed in a systematic way. The order of the writing style of the content should follow continuity and consistency. Thus, SLMs promote self-learning of the learners.
- ***Self-Contained:*** The SLMs must be self-sufficient in nature, because learners may not require other additional sources for getting an idea on a particular subject. In the ODL system, it is not always possible for a learner to meet the teacher physically due to their geographical, physical and psychological isolation,

and in this context, the SLMs are the only way for guiding the learners. For this reason, the units of the SLMs should be visualised in detail, and also they should cover all adequate information that a learner shall have to learn during his or her learning period.

- ***Self-Directed:*** The study material should aim at providing necessary guidance, hints and suggestions to the learners at each stage of learning. In order to make the SLMs self-directed learning materials, they should contain some basic elements such as easy explanation, sequential development, illustrations, learning activities, check your progress etc. The materials perform the role of a teacher who can guide, instruct, moderate, and regulate the learning process in a classroom situation.
- **Self-Motivating:** In open and distance learning system, the learners are mostly dependant on SLMs, and they get rare opportunity for face to face contact with the teachers. Therefore, the study materials are like a live teacher who should be highly encouraging for the learners, and these materials should arouse the curiosity among the learners to learn. The entire credit for creating motivation among the learners to learn goes to the course writers for making the SLMs meaningful and fruitful. The sense of reinforcement should be strengthened at every stage of learning and retention.
- ***Self-Evaluating:*** For making the learning effective, there should be the scope for feedback from the learners whether they are able to grasp the study materials or not, what are the problems they are facing while studying the materials and so on. Self evaluation in the form of self check questions, such as Check Your Progress, Activities, Exercises etc. provide the feedback to the learners about their progress, reinforcement and motivation towards learning. Apart from the activities like Check Your Progress, exercises in the text of SLMs of each unit, the SLMs should also contain some model questions or possible

questions at the end of the unit for providing feedback to the learners on their performance while they are learning a course in an ODL mode.

- ***Self-learning:*** Self learning materials are based on the principles of self learning where learners learn the materials without taking much help from the other external sources. Therefore, they should provide the study guide, directions, hints, references, illustrations, activities, check your progress, exercises, model questions or possible questions to the learners in each unit of a SLM. In fact, the SLMs must be comprehensive enough so that the learners learn of their own. Therefore, the SLMs must be interactive in nature.

For developing and preparing SLMs, the above mentioned principles must be followed to make the SLMs independent learning materials.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Explain some imporatnt features of SLMs.

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3.4 DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF SLMs

The preparation of the SLMs is mainly based on three stages or principles: first stage is the preparation or planning of the course (thinking about the course), second is developing the Course (writing the contents) and the final stage is producing the course content in the form of SLMs which need editing, reviewing, and then the making of the layout, and finally printing.

The Course contents in SLMs are designed for smooth running of the

programmes of an open and distance learning institution. The SLMs are designed in different terms such as Programme, Course, Block, Unit, Section, Sub-section etc., which are mentioned below in some detail:

Programme: A programme means the curriculum or combination of courses in a particular field of study. For examples, Undergraduate Programmes, Master's Programme (i.e. M.A.) in Education, Diploma Programme in Mass Communication, Post-graduate Diploma Programme in Distance Education, etc.

Course: The Programme is divided into courses. In the conventional system, courses means the subjects such as post graduate Physics, undergraduate Chemistry, primary level Mathematics and so on. But, in open and distance learning, the term course is used to describe teaching and other components of the study. In the ODL mode, the course consists of a number of booklets or Self Learning Materials, Development and Revision of SLMs as printed materials, audio-video material, online materials and computer based materials. Besides, in the ODL system, the course also consists of counselling and contact sessions, assignments, library work, laboratory work, project work, etc.

Block : A course is divided into blocks. In SLMs, the standard size of a block contains around 60-80 printed pages. Each block must have a thematic perception. The printed SLMs are sent to the learners and an attempt is made to provide a feeling of attachment and contact with the learners, although the learners are off campus for their learning. Besides, the learners may feel a greater sense of achievement if he or she completes a block in each time. Again, from pedagogical point of view, a block is better or more motivational for completing the course than a single big book.

Unit: In SLMs, a block consists of some units. There is a structured writing style of a unit where a particular content of the course is precisely written for the learners sothat the learners get the required information and knowledge on a particular topic of their given curriculum of the course. Thus, a unit, is a self-contained portion of a block, covering one or more interwoven learning concepts. Each unit is broken into sections and

subsections for the clarity of the presentation of concepts, information, illustrations, etc.

For writing a unit, there is a definite structure which may be developed by the ODL institutions. Each ODL institution can design specific structure of wrtiing a unit of their own. In a block of the SLMs, there is a cover page which may be designed by the Course-Coordinator in consultation with the dean (academic) or any higher academic body for the course. Besides, in each block, each unit should have a clear title that tells the learners what the unit is all about. For instance, to draw out the clear and explicit picture of a unit, the title of the unit should be comprehensive enough. In a unit, the structure with itemized sections and subsections should be given in order of the occurrence of the content in the material. The structure draws the learner's attention to the subject matter.

Apart from these first layout or format of a unit, there are some other important points such as the objectives of the units. They should be defined clearly in behavioural terms. Again for making the unit more comprehensible and easy to grasp on the part of the learners, the units can be divided into sections and sub-sections. In a unit, if some difficult terms are included, they should be indicated distinctly by bold typeface, and explain the meaning of the indicated terms as Glossary in the blank side of the pages of the units. For giving more clarity of the content to the learners or to assess how much a learner is able to graps the content of the unit, there may be inclidced some questions as 'Check Your Progress' in a few sections and sub-sec tions. These have been designed to self- check of the learners' progress of study. It will be better if a learner is able to solve the problems himself or herself immediately after going through the sections of a unit, and then match the answers with "Answers to Check Your Progress" given at the end of each unit. For developing the capacitiy of critical thinking as well as writing skills of the learners, in eacch unit, some activities are to be given by the unit writers so that the learners may not feel isolated from their learning contexts. Besdies, providing actitivities, illustration, excercises in a unit, additional information under the heading of 'Let Us Know' is also given for making the unit more interactive in nature. In the last section of

each unit, under the heading 'Let Us Sum Up', an attempt is also made to summarise the whole unit for the purposes of recapitulation on the topic in detail. In the latter part of a unit, a few links such as 'Further Reading' are also provided as they can guide a learner to read more if he or she is interested to know the topic in detail. And, finally at the end of a unit, possible or probable questions under the heading of 'Model Questions' are also provided, as through such questions, a learner can prepare himself or herself for the term end examination.

Thus, it has been found that all the units, blocks and courses of a programme are interrelated. Again, there must be some kind of uniformity following which the size of the unit or the limits of the words of a unit has to be standardised. Again, each ODL institution should have some policy with regards to the uniform pattern of payment to the course writers. Besides, they should also have a programme guide for each programme, where the entire map of how to study, what to study, when to study are made availbale to the learners. Apart from these, the ODL insstitutions should carefully follow the maintenance guidelines of the SLMs which are prepared for running the programmes in an ODL institution. The updating of the curriculum as well as the contents, revision of the SLMs, updating the data, minor changes in the content or units in a SLM which are based on the feedback received from various sources (like learners, counsellors, academicians, reviewers etc) should be done on regular basis for maintaining the quality of the SLMs which are prepared solely for the learners. Apart from the printed materials, the multi-media self-learning materials, assignments and manuals, tele-conferencing and interactive radio counselling, laboratory and hands-on experiences and the entire range of learners' support programme delivery mechanism should be relooked, redesigned and updated for making teaching-learning more effective and efficient.

Credit: Besides the preparation of the SLMs in various forms, the size or the weightage of the unit is credit based. There shall be description of credit value of each module or unit in the course. Credit is a standardised transparent system which is necessary for smooth running of the educational

process in a definite time period. It is used for determining the study hours.

- In a standardised scale, per credit indicates 30-32 hours.
- For a 4 credit course in a programme, a total of 120 hours are allotted for study. Out of 120 hours, 12 hours are fixed for counseling classes i.e. 10% from the total study hours.
- For a 6 credit course in a programme, the total study hours should be 180 hours, from which 18 hours is allotted for counselling classes in the study centres, which is 10% from the total study hours.



LET US KNOW

The New Education Policy of UGC on Distance Education 2017, clearly suggested the credits for the SLMs in a very clear manner. The UGC Regulation has accepted the suggestions which were provided by the Madhava Menon Committee with regards to the credits, how many units, an SLM should contain, how many should be the counselling hours, how many assignments should be given to the learners in ODL system etc. The following table shows the guidelines of the UGC towards the credit system that should prevail in the ODL system.

Table 1: Norms for offering programmes through Distance mode based on credit system

Duration of the Programme	Credits	Level of the Programme
3 Years	96-100	Bachelor's Degree (General)
2 Years	64-72	Master's Degree (General)

Table 2: Norms for delivery of courses through distance mode

No.of Assignments	Practical Sessions	No.of Counseling Sessions Theory (10% of the total study hours)	Size of SLMs Range (in terms of units, to be divided into blocks)	Study input	Credit Value of the Course
1	60 hours	6 hours	6-8 units	60 hours	2 credits
2	120 hours	12 hours	14-16 units	120 hours	4 credits
3	180 hours	18 hours	20-24 units	180 hours	6 credits
4	240 hours	24 hours	30-34 units	240 hours	8 credits

Table 3: Norms of Credit Structure for Self Learning Material Development Non-Print Form

No.of Counseling Sessions (Theory)					
Syn. Chat 5%	Asy** Discussion forum (comp)	Syn* (f2f)# (opt1) 10%	Size of e-content (in terms of units)	Study input	Credit Value of theCourse
3hrs	2-10 topics per course as per the subject	6 hrs	6-8 units	60hours	2 credits
6hrs	-do-	12hrs	14-16 units	120 hours	4 credits
9 hrs	-do-	18hrs	20-24 units	180 hours	6 credits
	-do-	24hrs	30-34 units	240 hours	8 credits

* Syn : Synchronous

**Asyn : Asynchronous

f2f : face-to-face

Thus, while preparing the SLMs, the ODL institutions must follow the above mentioned criteria in terms of size of the SLMs, credit values, assignment, study and conseling inputs etc. as suggested by the New Regulation of UGC on Distance Education in 2017.



ACTIVITY 3.1

Please read the section (section 3.4 of this unit) carefully on the structure of preparing a unit and then design a unit structure in your own interest topic.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What is meant by a Programme, Course and Block of an SLM?

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Q 7: Define credit.

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

- Self learning materials are those materials where the contents are designed in such a way that without taking much help from the teacher, a learner can easily grasp and understand their learning contents.
- Self learning materials are in different forms such as print material, audio-video material, online material and Computer-based material.
- Self Learning Materials and Text Books are prepared for running a course for a definite peroid of time, but there are some basic differ-

ences between them.

- Self explanatroy, self-contained, self-motivating, self-evaluating, self learning are the basic features of a SLM that makes the learning material effective and interactive.
- The SLMs are designed in different ways such as Programme, Course, Block, Unit, Section, Sub-section etc.
- The SLMs are designed for running a programme. A programe means the curriculum or combination of courses in a particular field of study.
- In the ODL mode, the course consists of a number of booklets of Self Learning Materials Development, and Revision of SLMs as printed materials, audio-video material, online material and computer based material. Besides, in ODL system, the course also consists of counselling and contact sessions, assignments, library work, laboratory work, project work, etc.
- A course is divided into blocks. In SLMs, the standard size of a block contains around 60-80 printed pages. Each block must have a thematic perception.
- In SLMs, a block consists of some units. A unit is a self-contained portion of a block covering one or more interwoven learning concepts. Each unit is broken into sections and subsections for the clarity of the presentation of concepts, information, illustrations, etc.
- Besides the prepareation of the SLMs in various forms, the size or the weightage of the unit is credit based. There shall be description of credit value of each module or unit in the course.
- Credit is a standardised transparent system which is necessary for smooth running of the educational process in a definite time period. It is used for determining the study hours.



3.6 FURTHER READING

1) Self Learning Materials, STRIDE, IGNOU



3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The SLMs are those materials where the contents are designed in such a way that without taking much help from the external sources, a learner can easily grasp and understand their learning contents. The SLMs are designed in such a way that it should guide the learners to achieve his or her educational objectives. The activities and functions of a teacher seem to be inbuilt in the study material itself as if the teacher is teaching in the classroom and a student is listening his or her class. Thus, an SLM should include all the materials which are prepared to stimulate independent study or learning a way that can ameliorate the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domain of the learners.

Ans to Q No 2: In the ODL system, the SLMs are found in both print and non-print forms such as:

- Books
- Workbooks
- Worksheets
- Audio-Video materials
- Online materials
- Computer based training (CBT) packages (Computer based materials)
- Multimedia etc

Ans to Q No 3: Although the SLMs are found in varied forms such as print materials, audio-visual materials, online materials and computer based materials, the nature of the SLMs must be interactive and up-to-date. Generally, an SLM should be designed by considering the points suggested by the Distance Education Council (Now it is known as Distane Education Breau), which are as follows:

- In SLMs, there should be some clearly stated objectives
- It should be user-friendly

- Easy language must be used while writing the SLMs
- There should be short, manageable chunks of learning
- Plenty of helpful examples are to be used
- Reference to the learners' experiences
- Use of illustrations where they are better than words
- Headings to help learners to find their way around
- Links to other media where appropriate
- Obvious awareness of the needs of the different learners
- Exercises and activities that get the learners to use the material
- Space for learners to write down their own ideas
- Feedback to help learners to check their own progress
- Suggestions about getting help from other people
- Glossary and summary should also be included.

Ans to Q No 4: Although text books and SLMs are designed for smooth running of a programme in an educational institution, there are some basic differences between the SLMs and the text book, which are as follows:

- In text books, it is assumed that they will develop interest among the learners, whereas in case of SLMs, they should arouse the interest of the trageted group of learners.
- The text books are written for serving the purpose of teachers' use, on the otherhand, the SLMs are prepared primarily for learners' used.
- In the text books, there is no indication of study time, but in SLMs estimated study time is given.
- In the text books, aims and objectives are rarely stated, whereas SLMs always contain clearly stated aims and objectives.
- The text books are written with a traget of covering a wide range of market, whereas the SLMs are written or desined for a particular group of learners.

Ans to Q No 5: Self Learning Materials are the instruments for learning. The SLMs must followed the following features:

- **Self -Explanatory**: The SLMs should be designed in such a

way that learners can understand them without external support.The content of the SLMs should be self-explanatory and conceptually clear.

- ***Self-Contained:*** The SLMs must be self-sufficient in nature, learners may not require other additional sources for getting an idea on a particulalr subject.
- ***Self-Directed:*** The study materials should aim at providing necessary guidance, hints and suggestions to the learners at each stage of learning.
- **Self-Motivating:** The study material is like a live teacher and should encouage the learners, should arouse the curiosity among the learners to learn. The entire credit for creating motivation among the learners to learn goes to the course writers for making the SLMs meaningful and fruitful. The sense of reinforcement should be strengtened at every stage of learning and retention.
- ***Self-Evaluating:*** The SLM must contain the entire features of writing that helps the learners to self assess themselves without taking any external support. Self evaluation in the form of self check questions such as check your progress, activities, excercises provides the feedback to the learners about their progress in learning. Apart from the activities like check your progress, excercises in the text of SLMs of each unit, the unit must contain questions like model questions or possible questions for providing feeback to the learners on their performance, while they are learning a course in a ODL mode.
- ***Self-learning:*** Self learning materials are based on the principles of self learning where learners learn the materials without taking much help from the other external sources.

Ans to Q No 6: The SLMs are designed for running a programme. A programme means the curriculum or combination of courses in a particular field of study. For examples, Undergraduate programme, Master Programme (e.g.M.A.)in Education, Diploma programme in

Mass Communication, Post-graduate Diploma programme in Distance Education, etc.

Course : The programe is divided into courses. In the conventional system, the courses refer to the subjects such as post graduate physics, undergraduate chemistry, primary level maths and so on. But, in open and distance learning, the term 'course' is used to describe teaching and other components of the study. In the ODL mode, the course consists of a number of booklets in the form of printed materials, audio-video materials, online materials and computer based materials. Besides, in the ODL system, the course also consists of counselling and contact sessions, assignments, library works, laboratory works, project works and so on.

Block : A course is divided into blocks. In SLMs, the standard size of a block contains around 60-80 printed pages. Each block must have a thematic perception.

Ans to Q No 7: The size or the weightage of the SLM is based on credit system. Credit is a standardised transparent system which is necessary for smooth running of the educational process in a definite time period. It is used for determining the study hours.

- In a standardised scale, per credit indicates 30-32 hours.
- For a 4 credit course in a programme, a total of 120 hours are allotted for study. Out of 120 hours, 12 hours are fixed for counseling classes i.e. 10% from the total study hours.
- For a 6 credit course in a programme, the total study hours should be 180 hours, from which 18 hours is allotted for counseling classes in the study centres, which is 10% from the total study hours.



3.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1: What is meant by SLM?

Q 2: What is the need of SLM for running a programme in an ODL institution?

Q 3: What is meant by a Programme in the ODL system?

Q 4: Explain the concept of a Block of the SLM.

Q 5: Define the necessity of a Unit of the SLM.

Q 6: What is meant by credit?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Explain some nature of SLMs.

Q 2: How would you like to differentiate SLMs from text books?

Q 3: Point out some basic features of a SLM.

Q 4: Explain the credit system in the ODL mode of learning.

c) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: What are the different types of SLMs? Explain the nature of different types of SLMs.

Q 2: Discuss the necessity and features of the SLMs.

Q 3: There is specific structure and design for developing a unit of the SLMs.' Discuss the design and structure of a unit of the SLMs.

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UNIT 4: STUDY SKILLS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Meaning and Importance of Study Skills

4.4 Developing Effective Study Skills

4.5 Strategies for Developing Study Skills

- 4.5.1 Effective Listening
- 4.5.2 Effective Reading
- 4.5.3 Effective Writing
- 4.5.4 Communication Skills
- 4.5.5 Time Management

4.6 Study Skills and Distance Learning

4.7 Let Us Sum Up

4.8 Further Reading

4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.10 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- define ‘Study Skills’;
- explain the importance of study skills in learning;
- describe the means to develop effective study skills in learning;
- identify the importance of study skills for distance learning.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In any teaching learning process, there are some ways or techniques which help the learners to grasp or reap the learning outcome in a systematic way. For a distance learner which is known as independent learner in the ODL system, it is necessary to know some basic skills to learn the courses

at his or her own pace. In this unit, an attempt has been made to highlight the various ways in which a learner can also improve his or her learning process. Besides, after going through this unit it will also help the learners to understand the various methods and skills or tactics of learning which will help them to enhance their learning in order to acquire knowledge and information. Some related topics like listening skills, reading skills, effective communication and writing skills and time management skills have also been discussed in this unit. Finally, the learners will learn how study skills are essential for studying in the distance mode.

4.3 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY SKILLS

As you know we need cognitive skills such as literacy and numeracy skills for our academic pursuit, whereas aspects like time management and organisational skills and the skills needed to find one's way around a complex structure are also equally important in the process of learning. So, study skills may be defined in its broadest way as one which amounts to all the generic non-course specific skills that a student needs to develop in order to be an effective independent distance learner. In layman's term, 'study skills' are 'the different aptitudes that can be developed in order to improve a learner's capacity to learn'. Distance learning is basically self-learning. So, good use of these skills can lead one to becoming a proficient and effective learner.

Now, the question is why you need to know about Study Skills? The knowledge of study skills will help you to reach the optimum level of your understanding and knowledge by your own efforts and will also motivate you to develop your own independent style of learning. These skills will help you in avoiding poor study habits and lead you to keep your studying in right track. Further, these skills will help you to learn more in less time and enable you to engage yourself in active studying rather than rote learning.

4.4 DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS

You might have observed that no two people study in the same way. The method or technique you use for study may not be the same for your friend or others. People differ in their choice of subjects and abilities. Suppose you love the subject X so while studying that subjects you need not put much special effort. Since the subject is loved by you so naturally you enjoy studying it. But the same thing may not happen to your friend who does not love or has no interest in subject X. For learning the subject X, he has to put special efforts. to study the subject. As a learner your learning is dependent on your ability to study effectively and efficiently. And study skills are instrumental for you to do so. Here, one thing is clear that just mere thinking about study skills will not work for you. In order to develop effective study skills you should keep the following in mind:-

- **A Plan of Study:** It is said that a good plan for anything means that half of the work is done. So, the preparation of the study schedule is the first and foremost task at your hand for effective studying. You can prepare your study planning on a daily basis or weekly or monthly basis. This plan will help you allocate your time properly and allocate timings for different subjects. But you have to remember another important thing that a good plan may also fail if it is not executed properly and sincerely. So, it is important that once you prepare the study plan you stick to it and follow it.
- **Timing of study:** There should not be any fixed prescription in timing of study. Many learners face problems in identifying the right timing of study. Many of them are unable to decide when to study. But it is vital to take a right decision by the learner when to study for effective studying. It is suggested that one should sit for study when she or he feels comfortable physically and mentally and is free from any tension or anxiety. So, you should study when you are relaxed and feel free to study.
- **Place of study:** After knowing the right timing of study you must be

eager to know about the place where to study. Many of you might think that for study you need a beautiful study room with all requisite facilities. But in reality for effective study you can study anywhere. The important thing is that when you choose your place for study you keep in mind that it should be suitable for your learning and must be free from any kind of distraction.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define the term 'Study Skills'.

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Q.2: Write the important points that you should keep in mind for developing your effective study skills.

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4.5 STRATEGIES OF STUDY SKILLS

For improving your study skill you can use different strategies which will facilitate your efforts for effective learning. The different strategies are: thinking skills, SQ3R method, note-taking skills, highlighting text etc. We shall discuss them in detail.

- **Use your thinking skills purposefully**

  We all have the ability to think. We can think about different things at the same time. You also definitely have the ability to think and you do think about many things. But do you always use your thinking skills purposefully? Your answer must be in the negative. But it is very important to use your thinking skills effectively for your learning purpose. It will help you to develop your good study skills. So, one

must develop his/her thinking skills gradually and use it for his/her learning purpose.

- **SQ3R Technique**

  SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review. This five-step strategy will help the learners to become self-sufficient learners in reading the study materials. We shall discuss in detail the SQ3R strategy in the section on reading skills.

- **Taking your note correctly and legibly**

  Note-taking is an important skill associated with study skills. Taking note correctly and legibly is important in studying; otherwise, it will be difficult for you to read your own hand writing after taking down the notes. Your note will be of no use to you if you are unable to use it later.

- **Highlighting a text**

  It is observed that students are able to learn faster the text which has been highlighted. So, while you read a text, you should in the process keep on highlighting a text which you consider to be an important one.

4.5.1 Effective Listening

As a learner of distance education you have to attend face-to-face tutorial, academic counselling, teleconferencing, listening to audio-programme, and so on. In all these cases your listening is very important for effective communication. Unless you listen carefully you may not learn effectively or express yourself fully. To learn effectively one should listen effectively. It will help him in developing better communication skills. One should remember that hearing and listening is not the same thing. They are completely different. Hearing is when you experience the sound waves and noise by ears, but listening is when you receive the sound waves and understand it by paying full attention to the words and sentences of the speaker. You can have the ability to improve your listening ability. The following are the ways you can try for improving your

ability to listen:-

- **Try to find out the meaning:** As a listener or learner when you attend a counselling or any mode of programmes, pay attention to not only to the words being spoken by the counsellors or speakers but to the thoughts and messages they try to convey. By doing this you will be able to identify the main idea and the context in which the speakers have spoken the words. Further, you have to follow the examples and description very attentively that the speakers have given in their deliberations. It will help you to comprehend each word spoken by the speakers in appropriate terms.
- **Note down the important and relevant points:** When you attend any counselling session along with attentive listening you should note down the important points. Later on you will be able to put together all these points which will be very helpful for you to understand the topic(s) of the counselling sessions. Regarding taking notes, it is advisable to take notes of the relevant points only. If you go for taking long notes then you may miss some important points what your teachers are saying during their class. This may be happen when you try to take note of everything and anything whatever your teachers would say.
- **Concentrate while you learn:** Your concentration level is the determining factor in your rate of learning. Merely hearing the words that is spoken by your teacher will not ensure your effective learning. You have to process the information received from your teacher for effective learning. For this your concentration level during the class is very crucial. Effective listening requires that you concentrate on and pay attention to what your teacher says in his or her lecture.
- **Prepare for the class beforehand:** Your attentive listening in class depends upon your preparation level before the class. It is helpful for you if you read the topic which has already been

taught and which is likely to be taught in the next class. If you come to the class in this way it will be easier for you to concentrate on your class, participate actively in the class and to understand better what is being taught.

- **Grow interest in the class:** When you attend the class you should put conscious effort for being interested what is being taught. Otherwise, it may be difficult for you to understand what is explained by your teacher. So, as a student you should always come to the class with the determination that you will give full interest to the subject matter being addressed by your teacher. This is very essential for you to listen more intently and effectively.
- **Observe or follow your speaker minutely:** For a better understanding of the lecture of your teacher you need to observe him very minutely. When your teacher delivers a lecture, follow his non-verbal signs that he sends out when s/he speaks. This will improve your listening ability and reduce your frequency of distractions.
- **List out your expectations from the class:** You are definitely not listening attentively in class if you do not have any expectation from the class. So, always identify your expectations from the class before entering in it. Listen for your identified things as your teacher talks. This process will help you to listen effectively and purposefully in the class.
- **Enter your class with a positive mindset:** Do not enter your class with a fixed opinion on the teacher and the topic to be discussed. Listen positively to what your teacher has to say. If you have entered in class with your fixed preconception on the teacher and the topic to be discussed then it is very difficult for you to listen attentively once your preconception does not match with the proceedings of the class.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 3 : Why is note-taking important in learning?

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4.5.2 Effective Reading

As mentioned above the SQ3R method has been a proven way to sharpen study skills. This is a study technique which was discussed by Robinson in 1961. This technique was modified into a system called SQ4R by Thomas and Robinson, 1972 (Glyn and Muth, 1994). Later, it was further modified by other researchers as SQ5R, SQ5WR and so on. We shall discuss them in detail in the given order.

- **SQ3R Technique**

  - **Survey-** When you enrol yourself in a programme of study you are provided with the course materials. After receiving the course materials you tend to open the materials and give a first look at the contents. This is called survey. By this survey you come to know how the programme has been divided into courses, how many courses are there and how many blocks are there in each courses etc. Further, this survey helps you to know the structure of the programme you have chosen. Also, a survey of the content makes you aware about what topics you are dealing with during your study. So, your first bird's eye view of the course gives you an initial idea of your opted course which at later stage helps you in going through it without difficulties.

  - **Question -** Learning is a purposeful activity. So, there is definitely a purpose for reading a particular content of the

course material by you. When you are going to read a particular content of your course you should ask yourself questions of *five Ws-what, why, when, who* and *where* of the study content. It will also 'explain' the *how* of a particular subject. And the answers that you draw from these questions will help you in understanding the study content and you will remember it more easily because the process will give you an idea about the contents of the subject. So, whenever you go through a content of your course write your questions in the margins of your course materials and do not hesitate to answer those questions along with your reading. It will help you immensely in your effective self-learning.

- **Read -** As a learner, your active participation in the study of the course materials is very essential. You also need to develop a critical mind so as to answer questions you have asked yourself in relation to the contents of the subject matter. Moreover, reading self-instructional materials is not same as reading a book, magazine and newspaper etc. You read the self-instructional materials as if you are interacting with the teacher that has been built-in into the course materials. Read your course materials with a pace convenient for you and try to grasp the main ideas contained in the materials. Try to read everything in the content, including tables, graphs and illustrations as they can be more helpful at times for your understanding the content. It is not advisable to make notes of or underline the word or phrase while you read. At the reading stage, you just read the content to get an idea inherent in the content. After reading through the entire text you may start underlining or marking the important points.
- **Recite –** Reading is always related to retention. As a learner what you have read needs to be retained. Otherwise,

reading is meaningless. After reading through a unit or a chapter you should try to recite or mentally recollect the important concepts and information. This will help you to remember what you have read. After reading the unit, you try to develop an overall concept of in your own words and thoughts what you have read.

- **Review –** Review is nothing but a quick repeat of the other four steps we have discussed above. By this process you can assess yourself what you as a learner have achieved while reading the content. You can also review your notes that you have written that help you to clarify the points that you may have found difficult in understanding. The best time to review is when you have finished reading the whole blocks.

- **SQ4R Technique :** This technique denotes the six steps that should be followed in studying a text. These six steps are: *Survey, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite* and *Review*. Since we have discussed the other steps except the *Reflect*, so let us understand what Reflect means.

  - **Reflect –** Reflecting means to think carefully and deeply about something. A learner should reflect on the study materials while learning them. It allows him to develop more ideas about the content and the meaning of the text. Reflecting is very useful in remembering information that is contained in the text. Normally, you can start your reflecting on the content of the text during the second phase of your reading the course materials. In this phase you should try to find the relation between what you have read and what you already know. This will help you not only to retain what you have learnt but also to remember meaningful information.

- **SQ5R Technique:** There are seven steps that should be taken

in studying a text in SQ5R Technique; these are- *Survey, Question, Read, Reflect, Record, Recite* and *Review*. Here, let us understand what *Record* means. Since all the steps except 'Record' have been discussed we will explain this step here.

- **Record –** It is very normal that while reading you may come across some difficult sentences or paragraphs or certain words whose meaning you do not know. In such cases, you may note down and make a record of these difficult sentences or paragraph or words for further reference for clarifying your doubts.

➢ **SQW5R Technique:** SQW5R Technique involves eight steps that should be taken in studying a text; these are: *Survey, Question, Write, Read, Reflect, Record, Recite* and *Review.* Here, let us understand what *Write* means.

- **Write –** When you survey the course content, there will be some questions you may ask yourself regarding the text you are reading. At the beginning stage you may not have the answer to the questions; so, writing down the questions will be very helpful for reference later on. As you go on reading the text, maybe once, twice or thrice, you will be able to answer the questions by yourself. If you are still unable to answer any question then you may consult your academic counsellor with regard to the questions and get your doubts clarified.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: Explain the SQ3R method in your own word.

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4.5.3 Effective Writing

Being a distance learner your writing skills is very crucial for communicating with your teacher through writing assignments, reports or answering questions in examination. Your ability to write well is your added advantage in the system of distance learning. The more you write well the more effectively you will be able to communicate with your distance teacher. If you want to improve your writing, first identify to whom the writing is directed i.e., the teacher or someone else. Once you identify your target, you can start writing. Create an outline of what you want to write. For example, if you are writing a report, you should create the outline of the report before writing. It will help you to present your matter very systematically and in an orderly manner. To make your writing "reader friendly", use headings, subheadings, bullet points, and numbering whenever possible to break up the text. Also, try to avoid grammatical mistakes in your writing, otherwise, your writing may not convey the appropriate meaning. Always go for proofread twice after completion of your writing- once for grammatical and spelling mistakes and then for content. You can even give your writing to someone who is expert in proofread.

4.5.4 Communication Skills

Your ability to communicate effectively is very essential when you are getting your doubts clarified by your teacher or while you are discussing an idea with your teacher. Your reading or listening skills would be effective only when you have an effective communication skill. So, you should work hard to be a good communicator. There is no fixed way that can be followed to achieve good communication skills. Here are some suggested ways by which you can try to develop your communication skills:

- Listen attentively to others
- Develop your reading habit
- Maintain a good eye contact whenever you interact with

someone

- Begin your communication with short messages
- Never be afraid to ask relevant question
- Speak clearly enough to be heard by the listener.

4.5.5 Time Management

Personal time management skills are very important skills for a distance learner. You may be employed or unemployed or a home-maker or even a fresh student. If you do not use your time judiciously, you will never achieve your learning goals. For better time management you may follow the techniques that are mentioned below:

- Always set a goal for your work
- Always prioritize your work according to its importance moving from the most important to the least important.
- Have a plan for stable study time
- Don't put off work; always stick to the plan you have fixed for yourself
- Prepare a time-table
- Learn to say 'Yes' or 'No' to other things to stick to your plan.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: As a distance learner, your ability to write well is your added advantage in learning. Explain.

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Q.6: Write how will you manage your study time effectively.

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ACTIVITY 4.1

After going through the various strategies of learning skills, how do you feel that the skills that you have learnt during your study will help you to retain the academic progress in your life?

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4.6 STUDY SKILLS AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Study skills are very essential for the distance learner. In distance education the teacher is replaced by self learning materials which are interactive in nature. As a distance learner, your learning is depends upon how efficiently and effectively you interact with your course materials. So, study strategies or methods play a decisive role in distance learning. If you do not develop proper study skills, you may not be able to go through properly the self instructional materials in an effective manner. Moreover, as a distance learner you have to deal with the audio-visual materials. Here, also, to infer the appropriate meaning out of the content basically depends upon your acquired levels of study skills.

You might be thinking about how to develop your study skills and who will help you in developing the study skills? The answers of these questions lie within the text of the distance education course materials. As told you earlier, distance education course materials are self instructional in nature. The course design itself helps you develop skills for studying. When you go through your course materials you have already come across a sub-theme entitled 'Check Your Progress' or you have been given some assignments related to your course. There you can find some questions being asked to you to check your progress on the topic/unit you have gone through. If you use these questions while reading the text, it will not only help you in

understanding the text more effectively but also in developing skills to critically analyse the text. It will also help you note down important points and derive ways to solve a problem being asked in the form of 'Check Your Progress' and assignments. There is also another sub-theme you will come across in your course materials entitled 'Further Reading' where information is given to the learners about the various books/journals/websites etc. that have been referred to while writing the text. You may use these sources also for acquiring better understanding of your course content. You have been already acquainted with the fact that the distance learning materials contain a few blocks. Each block is divided into units which are further divided into sub-themes. There is also a brief introduction to what the learner will read and learn about while going through the text. The use of 'Let Us Sum Up' at the end of each unit is corporate with a view to helping the learners to put together what they have already read. Moreover, 'Let Us Sum Up' is also useful for the learners to grasp the main points presented in a unit at a glance. So, if you use and incorporate the features that have been discussed above in your study habits then you will be able to develop many important study skills. Of course, for improving your study skills you have to put in your serious and systematic efforts.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: How does the use of 'Let Us Sum Up' at the end of each unit of course materials help the distance learners?

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

- Study skills refer all the generic non-course specific skills that a student needs to develop in order to be an effective independent distance

learner.

- Distance learning is basically self-learning. As a learner your learning is dependent on your ability to study effectively and efficiently.
- Preparation of study schedule is the first and foremost task to be done for effective studying.
- One should sit for study when she or he is feeling comfortable, physically and mentally, and is free from any tension or anxiety.
- The different strategies for developing the study skills are: thinking skills, SQ3R method, note-taking skills, and highlighting text etc.
- To learn effectively one should listen effectively. It will help him in developing better communication skills.
- Regarding taking notes, it is advisable to take notes of the relevant points only.
- Learner's concentration level, the preparation before the class and the interest level are important factors for effective learning.
- The SQ3R technique was discussed by Robinson in 1961. This technique was modified into a system called SQ4R by Thomas and Robinson, 1972 (Glyn and Muth, 1994). Later, it was further modified by other researchers as SQ5R, SQ5WR and so on.
- SQ3R stands for initial letters of the five steps- Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review.
- SQ4R stands for initial letters of the six steps- Survey, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite and Review.
- SQ5R stands for initial letters of the seven steps- Survey, Question, Read, Reflect, Record, Recite and Review.
- SQ5WR stands for initial letters of the eight steps- Survey, Question, Write, Read, Reflect, Record, Recite and Review.
- Ability of the learners to write well is considered an added advantage in the system of distance learning.
- A learner's reading or listening skills would be effective only when s/he has effective communication skills.
- Personal time management skills are very important skills for the distance learner.
- A distance learner's learning depends upon how efficiently and effectively s/he interacts with the course materials.

- Distance education course materials are self instructional in nature. Study skills help a learner to go through self instructional materials in an effective manner.
- 'Let Us Sum Up' is useful for the learners to grasp main points presented in the unit at a glance.



4.8 FURTHER READING

1) Biswas, P. (2008). Study Skills and Psychological Skills for Better Performance: *A Handbook for the Learner Workshop*, IGNOU, New Delhi.

2) Johnson, M. (2004). Enhancing study skills: Developing self-help materials for distance learners. In Brindley, J.E., Walti, C., & Richter, O.Z. (Eds.), *Learner support in open, distance and online learning environments*, (pp.117-124). Retrieved from http://www.mde.uni-oldenburg.de/40574.html

3) Nembiakkim, R. (2012). Study Skills: How to Study Better. In the IGNOU's course material of MDE-413: *Learner Support System and Services*, Block 2, (pp. 25-41), IGNOU, New Delhi.



4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1: Study skill may be defined in its broadest way as one which amounts to all the generic non-course specific skills that a student needs to develop in order to be an effective independent distance learner.

Ans to Q. No. 2: For developing effective study skills a learner should have a plan of study beforehand, choosing the right time of study and also selecting the appropriate place of study.

Ans to Q. No. 3: Noting down the important and relevant points during counselling session will help the learners to put together all these points later on and it will be very helpful for the learners in understanding the topic(s) of the counselling sessions.

Ans to Q. No. 4: The SQ3R method is related to the reading skill. The knowledge of SQ3R will introduce the learner to the subject and assist in his/her learning process. The SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review. By following these steps one can effectively proceed in studying a text.

Ans to Q. No. 5: A distance learner normally remains away from the teacher. S/he communicates with the teacher through writing assignments, reports or answering questions in examination. So, more the learner writes well the more effectively will she or he be able to communicate with his/her distance teacher.

Answer to the Q. No. 6 For better study time management one should always set a goal for his/her work and arrange the work on priority basis according to the most important. One should prepare a plan for stable study time and always try to stick to the plan that have fixed for him/her. To prepare a time-table for study is very helpful in managing the time effectively and judiciously.

Answer to the Q. No. 7 The use of 'Let Us Sum Up' at the end of each unit helps the learners to put together what have already been read. Moreover, 'Let Us Sum Up' is also useful for the learners to grasp main points presented in the unit at a glance.



4.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Write about the importance of Study Skills for distance learner.

Q 2: Why is highlighting a text useful for distance learner?

Q 3: What is time management skill?

Q 4: How would you like to assess effective writing? Write briefly.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Effective learning requires effective listening. Explain.

Q 2: Explain the need and importance of SQW5R method.

Q 3: How do you develop your communication skills? Explain.

Q 4: The design of the course materials of distance learning helps the learners to develop their skills for self-learning. Explain how does SLMs help the learners in study?

Q 5: Discuss the various strategies of study skills that makes the teaching learning effective.

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UNIT 5: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Concept of Curriculum

5.4 Process of Curriculum Development in Distance Education

5.5 Major Approaches of Curriculum in Distance Education

5.6 Let Us Sum Up

5.7 Further Reading

5.8 Answer to Check Your Progress

5.9 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- explain the concept of curriculum.
- enlist the different processes of curriculum development in distance education
- describe the major approaches of curriculum in distance education.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

One important aim of education in general is the harmonious and all round development of the individual. In order to achieve this, an educational institution organises different types of activities that provide educative experiences to the learner. Such activities are collectively termed curriculum. Thus, curriculum is a broad term used to mean the contents of education. It includes formal and informal educational activities, which are organized by the educational institution in order to develop the personality of the learner. It is an important part of the educational process. Therefore, curriculum includes the different types of activities organized inside and

outside the classroom in order to shape the future of the learner. Apart from formal education, in distance education also, curriculum is a necessary component. In this unit, you are going to learn about the concept of curriculum, curriculum development process, and the major approaches of curriculum in the field of distance education.

5.3 CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

The term “curriculum” is derived from the Latin word “currere” which means ‘run’. It signifies a ‘run-way’ or ‘a course’ which one runs to reach a goal. Thus, curriculum means a course to be run for reaching a certain goal. Curriculum consists of the subject matter or content of education. It includes formal and informal activities, which are organized by the educational institutions in order to achieve the goals of education. It is an important factor in the process of education. Curriculum is a term used for properly planned activities and experiences, which are organized by an educational institution for the learner. It includes both the curricular and co-curricular activities. Curriculum refers to the total programme of the school organized for the students inside and outside the classroom. It is the sum total of good learning experiences that the students get in order to achieve the goals of education. It is framed in accordance with the educational policy of the nation.

Sometimes, two words—curriculum and syllabus are used interchangeably which is not correct. Curriculum is a comprehensive term used to signify all the educational activities organized by an educational institution, whereas syllabus is narrowly conceived as the subject matter framed keeping in view the term end examination. Whereas, a syllabus is the prescribed lessons for a particular subject and the standard to be maintained. Syllabus is not curriculum but a part of it. It is mainly concerned with the activities, which are organized inside the classroom.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is found that Curriculum stands for:

- A school’s written course of study and other curriculum materials

- The subject content taught to the learners
- The course offered in a school
- The totality of planned learning experiences offered to learners in a school.

Different renowned educationists and education commissions have put forward their views regarding the concept of curriculum. Some of them are mentioned below:

- **According to A. V. Kelly**, professor of Curriculum Studies at Goldsmiths College, University of London, "Curriculum refers to the total programme of an educational institution."
- **According to Munroe**, "Curriculum embodies all the experiences which are utilized by the school to attain the aims of education."
- **According to Cunningham,** "Curriculum refers to a tool in the hands of the artist (teacher) to mould his material (pupils) according to his ideal (objective) in his studio (school)."
- **According to Dr. Zakir Hussain,** "Curriculum implies study of languages, science and technology, social science, art, craft, music and physical education. It involves courses, activities, experiences and thus complete environment of the institution."
- **According to Crow and Crow,** "Curriculum includes all the learner's experiences, in or outside school that are included in a programme which have been devised to help him to develop mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and morally."
- **According to Rudyard and Kornenberg,** "Curriculum in its broadest sense includes the complete school environment involving all the courses, activities, reading and associations furnished to the pupils in school."
- **According to Pyne,** "Curriculum consists of all the situations that the school may select and consciously organize for the purpose of developing the personality of pupils and for making behaviour changes in them."
- **According to Froebel,** "Curriculum should be conceived as an epitome of the rounded whole of the knowledge and experiences of the human race."

- **According to Richmond,** "The curriculum is really the entire programme of the school's work. It is the essential means of education. It is everything that the students and their teachers do. Thus, it is twofold in nature being made up of the activities, the things done, and of the materials with which they are done."
- **According to the report of Secondary Education Commission (1952-53),** "Curriculum does not mean only the academic subjects traditionally thought in the school but it includes the totality of experiences that pupil receives through the manifold activities that go on in the school – in the class-room, library, laboratory, workshop, playground and in the numerous informal contacts between teachers & pupils. In this sense, the whole life of the school becomes the curriculum which can touch the life of the students at all points and help the evolution of balanced personality."

The curriculum of distance education is used to describe the teaching materials and other components of study. A typical Open University curriculum will consist of a number of texts, usually called units, audio and video components, counselling/contact sessions, assignment and correspondence teaching, library work, laboratory work, project work and so on.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is Curriculum?

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Q 2: Give a comprehensive definition on curriculum.

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5.4 PROCESS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The process of curriculum development for conventional education and distance education is not same. In the conventional system, the teachers depend on the syllabus, readily available textbooks, and model question papers and so on to teach the students in a classroom. Through classroom lectures and tutorials, the students comprehend the text and appear for examinations at the end of the term/semester. In this system, there is a greater opportunity for the students to come into contact with the teachers, discuss their academic problems and assess their performance in many formal and informal ways. However, in distance education, the whole system is different. Therefore, the process of curriculum development is also different. Distance learning has come a long way since its entry into the educational arena few decades back. The mode of teaching and learning, which initially started as a print medium of learning, has evolved into an online learning method supplemented by multimedia. With the availability of flexible technological tools, the development of a distance-learning curriculum has not become an easy job.

The task in developing a distance-learning curriculum is to ensure that the students are guided in achieving the intended outcomes in an effective and sustainable learning environment. In developing a curriculum, the designers need to be conscious about the disparities between traditional face-to-face learning and distance learning. The critiques are pointing to several deficiencies that could arise in a distance mode, namely:

- Lack of interaction
- Poor student mentorship
- Lack of motivation
- Inability to promote motor skill development
- Inefficient in promoting good attitudes
- Absent student—teacher bonding
- Failure in developing oral skills
- Inefficient feedback system, etc.

The distance education curriculum should be developed in such a way to minimize the negative impact caused by being at a distance. In order to achieve this, the following design strategies can be made use of.

- Identify the target learner group and analyse their characteristics such as learning style, prior knowledge, motivational factors, intention for doing the course and the ability to apply what was learnt, etc.
- Identify the learning outcomes of the course, and based on the target group, develop the objectives, which are both realistic as well as measurable in order to achieve the intended outcomes.
- Gather the content that should be made use of in the process of achieving the intended objectives.
- Identify the mode of delivery of instructional content in a proposed distance learning process.
- Identify the teaching tools available for the distance programme in the selected method of content delivery. These may be presentations, video, pod casts, pdf files, images, etc. in an online environment.
- Identify the methods available for interaction through the intended distance education system. In an online environment, discussion boards and chat areas would be the gateways for interaction.
- Develop the instructional material following consideration of available options, intended learner characteristics, learning objectives as well as the cost effectiveness.
- Present the Instructional content through designated strategies in a realistic time- frame with adequate mentorship. The programme should promote discipline as well as maintain adequate motivation.
- Develop a proper mechanism in which continuous feedback is encouraged.

Open and distance learning materials are based on the principles of learning theories to create desirable conditions that will facilitate effective self learning, i.e. knowing the objective, following the contents step by step, involving the students actively in learning and so on. A distance learning text is designed and written in a modular-format to help home-based students to learn

themselves effectively. The course material development process essentially overcomes the four stages: Pre-planning stage, Planning stage, Authoring stage, and Production stage.

Pre-Planning Stage:

In this stage, following works to be done:

- Preparing rough syllabus of the course,
- Finalization of the syllabus after discussing the same in workshops and curriculum development committees,
- Approval of the Academic Council of the Institution,
- Writers' and Editors' workshop,
- Preparation of the Model module, and
- Selection of Writers and editors.

Planning Stage:

When planning a course for distance education, the following questions are to be considered:

- What is the subject matter and content of the course?
- What is the aim and objective of the course?
- How much time will the students need to complete the course (study and assessment)?
- Who are the target audience (their levels of education, their employment status)?
- What are the other resources to be provided along with textbook?
- How will the course be assessed?
- How long will the course be? (i.e. approximately how many credits)

Authoring Stage:

This stage includes the following works:

- Manuscript authoring,
- Collecting the manuscript from authors,
- Sending the manuscript to referee,
- Editing the manuscript,
- Obtaining copyright permission.

Production Stage:

The following works are to be done in this stage:

- Word-processing and typeset
- Style editing
- First proof reading
- Team meeting
- Corrections/ illustrations
- Second checking for style and setting
- Second proof reading
- Corrections
- Final check by the author and instructional designer
- Printing

Apart from these technical issues and components, one of the most important things that should be kept in mind while developing the curriculum for the learners is that the basic function of curriculum is to prepare the young generation for the future. Therefore, the concerned authority designing and planning the curriculum must consider the changing times and the requirements of the people and situations. Some important questions are to be looked at before developing the curriculum in any stage of the educational level. They are as the following:

- What is the role of education in our society?
- Can the future of our society be influenced by the prevalent curriculum pattern in the educational institutions?
- How can we effectively involve others in planning the curriculum for the future of our society?

Besides these above-mentioned questions, there are some other aspects and evolving phenomena that influence the curriculum in the near future which are as follows:

- Demographic changes such as sex, age pattern, young population etc.
- Technological Innovations e.g. use of machines and increase in productivity.
- Social Innovations that necessitate new system of education.
- Cultural diffusion—transfer of idea, acculturation due to travel, trade,

employment, media etc.

- Global trend of education that include global learning, internationalisation of education etc.
- Rise of the interdisciplinary approach—knowledge of various disciplines.

For the learners of the ODL system, the curriculum should be designed in such a way that it is interactive in nature. In the ODL system, the curriculum is known as Self Learning Materials (SLMs). With the help of these SLMs, learners can learn independently without taking extra help and assistance. The contents must be significant in terms of their contributions to the basic ideas, concepts, etc., particularly to learning abilities. The utility criterion of the curriculum is concerned with the usefulness of the content. Feasibility is also one of the major criteria that compels the curriculum planners or SLM designers to analyse and examine the content in view of the time and resources available to the learner, costs involved, contemporary socio-political climate etc. The SLMs must be up to date, timely published, and necessary modifications should be done from time to time.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Mention some deficiencies of distance mode of learning.

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Q 5: Mention some strategies for curriculum development.

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5.5 MAJOR APPROACHES OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

An approach to curriculum reflects the person's view of the world, including what the person perceives as reality, the values he/she deems important, and the amount of knowledge he/she possesses. A curriculum approach reflects a holistic position of meta-orientation, encompassing the foundations of curriculum (the person's philosophy, or view of social issues), domains of curriculum (common and important knowledge within the field) and the theoretical and practical principles of curriculum.

The three major curriculum design models are implemented through the different approaches that are accepted by the teachers and curriculum practitioners. How the design is utilized, becomes the approach to the curriculum. The choice of accepting particular approach or design to the curriculum indicates the following things, which are:

- The bases of decisions about the types of experiences to be included in the educational programme.
- The role of teachers, students or learners and other agencies in the process of curriculum planning.
- The choice of method for determining the selection and organisation of learning experiences provided by the school or the educational institution.
- The factors influencing the selection of objectives.
- The use of subject matter or content, etc.

The main approaches of the curriculum of distance education are discussed below:

Learner-Centred Approach:

This approach to curriculum design is based on the underlying philosophy that the learner is at the centre of the educational process. Here, the curriculum is made based on the needs, interests, purposes and abilities of the learners. In this approach, the curriculum is also built upon the learners' knowledge, skills, learning, and potentials. This approach considers the following:

- A new respect for the learner is fundamental.
- A new freedom of action is provided.
- The whole activity is divided into units of work.
- The recognition of the need for using and exploring other media for self-discovery and self-direction is embraced.

While developing curriculum for distance education, the following essential questions are to be kept in mind always. These are:

- What kind of educational qualification do they have?
- Have they all reached the same standard of knowledge,or are they at different levels?
- What languages did they use for their earlier studies?
- If they use other languages from the one now proposed, what standard of language performance can we expect?
- What do they want or need to learn?

There are some sub approaches under the learner centred approach of curriculum development. These are:

- **Topic-by-Topic Approach:** In this approach, there are no set relationships among the topics, so the ordering is not critical.
- **Chronological Sequence or Historical Approach:** Moving from past to present is a very common and easy to implement organisational pattern.
- **Spiral Approach:** In this approach, the main topics or concepts are revisited throughout the course, with new information or insight developing each time.

Subject-Centred Approach: This approach of curriculum design prescribes different and separate subjects into one broad field. This approach considers the following:

- The primary focus is the subject matter.
- The emphasis is on bits and pieces of information, which are detached from life.
- The continuing pursuit of learning outside the school is not emphasized. Learning should only take place inside the classroom.
- The subject matter serves as a means of identifying the problems in living.

Problem-Centred Approach: This approach is based on a curriculum design, which assumes that in the process of living, learners experience problems. Thus, problem solving enables the learners to become increasingly able to achieve complete or total development as individuals. This approach is characterized by the following views and beliefs:

- The learners are capable of directing and guiding themselves in resolving problems, thus they become independent learners.
- The learners are prepared to assume their civic responsibilities through direct participation in different activities.
- The curriculum leads the learners to the recognition of concerns and problems and to seeking solutions. The learners are therefore considered problem solvers.

Human Relations-Centred Approach: In the planning stage, a curriculum or the course content should be designed to foster effective social and inter-personal relations among human beings. In Human Relations-Centred Approach, the teacher starts with the problems his or her own children experience in daily living in the neighbourhood community, the state, the region, and the world. The usefulness of the humanistic approach of curriculum is centred around the needs of the children living in a social group. It is also believed that children learn best when they feel the need to learn, and when their needs are being met by the particular approach of the curriculum. Through this approach, courses may be developed in areas such as environmental issues, bio-diversity and sustainable development, national and international understanding, racism, population, communication and technology, and so on.

The main characteristics of this approach are mentioned below:

- It is founded upon a professional knowledge of human growth and development and the ways in which human beings learn.
- It recognizes the practicalities of group life.
- It provides opportunities to solve the common problems of the group,as they are manifested by the individuals.
- It is concerned with the implications of the changes in the nature and complexity of modern life.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: Define the meaning of curriculum approach.

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Q 7: Explain briefly the approaches of curriculum

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5.1 LET US SUM UP

- The term "curriculum" is derived from the Latin word "currere" which means 'run'. It signifies a 'run-way' or 'a course' which one runs to reach a goal. The term Curriculum refers to the total programmes of the school organized for the students inside and outside the classroom. It is the sum total of good learning experiences that the students get in order to achieve the goals of education. It is framed in accordance with the educational policy of the nation.
- The task in developing a distance-learning curriculum is to ensure that the learners are guided in achieving the intended outcomes in an effective and sustainable learning environment. In developing a curriculum, the designers need to be conscious about the disparities between traditional face-to-face learning and distance learning.
- A distance learning text is designed and written in a modular-format to help home-based students to learn themselves effectively. Course materials development process essentially overcomes the four stages:

Pre-planning stage, Planning stage, Authoring stage, and production stage.

- A curriculum approach reflects the holistic position of meta-orientation, encompassing the foundations of curriculum (the person's philosophy, or view of social issues), domains of curriculum (common and important knowledge within the field) and the theoretical and practical principles of the curriculum.
- Major approaches of the curriculum of distance education are: learner centred approach, subject centred approach, problem centred approach and human relation centred approach.



5.2 FURTHER READING

1) IGNOU. (2008). *Manual for Course Writers, Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education.* Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, July 2008.

2) Koul, B.N., Singh, Baushise; Ansari, M. M. (eds). (1988). *Studies in Distance education.*

3) New Delhi, AIU. IGNOU. (2008). *Growth and Philosophies of Distance Education. New Delhi*. Study material of PGDDE programme,

4) Harichandan, D. (1999). Open University System: A broad based attempt at Distance Education. *University News*. Vol 27 No. 36 pages 3-7, New Delhi, AIU.



5.3 Answers to Check Your Progress

Ans to Q. No. 1 : 'Currere'

Ans to Q. No. 2 : Curriculum is a term used for properly planned activities and experiences, which are organized by an educational institution for the learner. It includes both the curricular and co-curricular activities.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : According to Cunningham, "Curriculum refers to a tool in the hands of the artist (teacher) to mould his material (pupils) according to his ideal (objective) in his studio (school)."

Ans to Q. No. 4 : Lack of interaction.

Ans to Q. No.5 : Identify the target learner group and analyse their characteristics such as learning styles, prior knowledge, motivational factors, intention for doing the course and the ability to apply what was learnt, etc.

Ans to Q. No. 6 : An approach to curriculum reflects the person's view of the world, including what the person perceives as reality, the values deemed important, and the amount of knowledge he or she possesses.



5.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words):-

Q 1: Define the term 'curriculum'.

Q 2: Mention the differences between curriculum and syllabus.

Q 3: Mention the stages of curriculum development process.

Q 4: Write a note on the planning stage of curriculum development.

Q 5: Explain the approaches of curriculum.

B. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words):-

Q 1: Write an essay on the different processes of curriculum development.

Q 2: Discuss the various approaches of curriculum.

Q 3: Discuss the problem-centred approach of curriculum development.

Q 4. Discuss the learner centred approach of curriculum development.

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UNIT 6: CURRICULUM EVALUATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Concept of Curriculum Evaluation

- 6.3.1 Meaning of Curriculum Evaluation
- 6.3.2 Definition of Curriculum Evaluation

6.4 Test, Assessment, Measurement and Evaluation

6.5 Need of Curriculum Evaluation

6.6 Aspects of Curriculum Evaluation

- 6.6.1 Evaluation of Planning a Curriculum
- 6.6.2 Evaluation of Instructional Materials
- 6.6.3 Evaluation of Learner Support Services

6.7 Let Us Sum Up

6.8 Further Reading

6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.10 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of curriculum evaluation
- define curriculum evaluation
- define test, assessment, measurement and evaluation and see the differences among them
- analyse the need of curriculum evaluation
- illustrate the various aspects of curriculum evaluation in distance education.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have studied about curriculum and the process of curriculum development. You may recall that it is the totality of experiences that is provided to a learner in school environments. In distance education, we may say that it is the totality of educational transactions, and academic and non-academic supports that is provided to the learners of an Open University or a Distance Education Institutions. It may include different subjects/courses, a set of planned activities, learner support with multi-media technologies, some strategies for achieving the desired goal and so on.

Due to rapid growth of information and communication technology (ICT), the higher education system has changed drastically and, as a result, systems like correspondence education, distance education, open education, online education or e-learning have gained a significant foothold in the area of education. With the changing circumstances, a learner can become a better learner in distance mode of education; but she/he needs proper supports, assistance to acquire better knowledge, to develop better skills and attitudes. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that for proper development of a country, its education system must be effective, efficient and productive. Here some questions arise: how can we identify the benefits and drawbacks of a curriculum, how can we measure the effectiveness, efficiency or productivity of a course/programme (or in other words curriculum of that particular course/programme), how can we improve/ modify quality of education etc? To get the answers to these questions we must know the concept of curriculum evaluation. Dear learners, in this unit, we will discuss Curriculum Evaluation.

6.3 CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Before discussing curriculum evaluation, you should be acquainted with both the terms curriculum and evaluation separately. As you are already acquainted with what curriculum is, let us now focus on the

term evaluation. Evaluation can be defined differently; it is a word used in a variety of ways, sometimes even with inaccurate and vague meanings. The verb "evaluate" means 'to judge' or 'to assess' the value of something. Thus, evaluation means the act of evaluating something. For example, we need to the evaluate pros and cons of something before taking a decision on it.

Evaluation is an activity, which consists of data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. Thus, curriculum evaluation may be an internal as well as an external activity and the process by which various data regarding the different aspects of the curriculum are collected, analysed, interpreted and finally reported to the various units of the education system. It is an activity conducted by the various units within the education system for their own respective purposes. These units may include national Ministries of Education, regional education bodies, institutional supervision and reporting systems, departments of education, school and communities.

6.3.1 Meaning of Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation is a process that tries to measure the relevance, performance and success of any curriculum systematically and objectively within a stipulated period. It is necessary to take a decision regarding the usefulness of the curriculum to the learners and to identify whether the learners are able to achieve the stated objectives. Based on the definition of the term curriculum, the objectives of curriculum evaluation are decided. It may include Curriculum design, Learning environment, Instruction Process, Resources and Materials used in instructional process, need assessment, accreditation, cost effectiveness etc. For example, before joining this course or programme, you have reviewed all the above-mentioned aspects and the merits/demerits, benefits, relevance of this course/programme in the present day context; this means you have evaluated this programme. Thus, it may be defined as management tool or a means to judge the accuracy of the curriculum.

Here, we have presented a few interpretations of the meaning of curriculum evaluation, so that you will get a proper idea about this:

- It includes all the aspects of school education right from objectives, syllabus, teaching aids, lesson plan, other materials and equipment, teacher performance, infrastructure and so on.
- It may simply be a judgement on the various processes of the institution. For example, views are taken from the different groups of people, from nonprofessionals to experts and society to the stackholders like students, teachers, parents, administrators etc. Finally, on the basis of the various views a judgement is made.
- It can be done by gathering relevant data with regard to various processes to find out whether the objectives of the curriculum are achieved or not.
- Evaluation can be made by other organization or body to access any curriculum or programme with respect to learners' progress.

Now, we shall discuss both the narrow and broader meaning of curriculum evaluation.

Narrow meaning of Curriculum Evaluation: It means the score or grades of the individual student on his/her whole performance. For example, educational institutions provide report cards to its students in which grades, scores or ranks of the students in terms of performance on various subjects are given. In other words, it means:

- Performance of the individual student with respect to his/her ability.
- Relative performance of the student among his/her peers.
- The position of the student with respect to national norms.

Broader meaning of Curriculum Evaluation: It is something more than a student's individual performance, and hence, it does not put emphasis on absolute standards. It means:

- Modification or change of the student's behaviour with respect

to achievement of the objectives.

- Use of different methods and approaches to gather evidence about the student's behavioural changes.
- Identification and interpretation regarding the student's modified behaviour that he/she achieves during the course of studies, which makes him/her more adjustable and competent with his/her surroundings.

From the above discussions, you must have developed an idea about curriculum evaluation. It is an essential component of curriculum development. Curriculum evaluation is started with the evaluation of the objectives of the curriculum and is wound up with the assessment of the achievement of the objectives.

6.3.2 Definition of Curriculum Evaluation:

You have already understood that curriculum evaluation is an essential phase of curriculum development. Let us now list here some of the definitions given by different experts in the field of Curriculum:

- Worthen and Sanders (1987): "The formal determination of the quality, effectiveness, or value of a programme, product, project, process, objective, or curriculum."
- Ornstein and Hunkins (1998): "A process or cluster of processes that people perform in order to gather data that will enable them to decide whether to accept, change, or eliminate something-the curriculum in general or an educational textbook in particular."
- Ronald Doll: "Evaluation as a broad and continuous effort to inquire into the effects of utilizing content and process to meet clearly defined goal."
- Stufflebeam: "Evaluation as a process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State whether the following are true or false:

a. Curriculum evaluation is a management tool to judge the accuracy of the curriculum. (.....)

b. Curriculum evaluation is purely an internal activity conducted by the respective institutions. (.....)

Q 2: Define narrow and broad meaning of curriculum evaluation.

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6.4 TEST, ASSESSMENT, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Whenever we discuss evaluation, there are three more terms that are frequently and simultaneously used, these are *Test, Measurement* and *Assessment*. However, they are not identical and have specific meaning.

Test: Test is a tool/instrument/device to obtain quantitative data on knowledge/ skill/ attitude/ belief of something from a particular group. It consists of some uniform and standard set of questions to be answered or some tasks to be performed. Setting of question papers by a teacher is an example of Test. Conducting examinations, taking interviews, administering questionnaires, achievement tests, rating scale, assigning projects etc. are some more examples of Tests.

Measurement: Measurement is the act of measuring something, an act of assigning numerical index on data. To assign numerical index on data, different types of tests like achievement tests, attitude scale, rating scale, observations, questionnaires, interview schedules etc, are used. In other words, we may say that it is the process of quantifying of how much a learner has learned. Let us elaborate this with an example. A teacher

conducts a test on science. The total mark is 100 and a student secures 95/100 in that test. That means the teacher is performing the act of measuring the student in Science.

Assessment: It is the process of getting information about a learner's learning, progress and achievement for the purpose of improvement in the current performance. That means up to what level a learner is able to comprehend the content of the course/programme or curriculum. After getting the information about a learner's progress, a value is awarded to her/him. For example, Sushruta got 95 % in Science test, or '**A+**' grade in project work.

Evaluation: Evaluation is a wider and inclusive term. It is the process of giving judgment, based on defined criteria and evidence (data obtained through tests, measurement and assessment). Thus, this includes all the three: test, measurement and assessment**.** It focuses on making a judgment about values, numbers or performance of someone or something. When we consider the score of a student with the scores of the other students and judge whether she/he is good/average or bad in a particular subject, we are evaluating that student.

The nature of assessment is diagnostic as it identifies the areas where the students need improvement and it provides ways to enhance performance in future. On the other hand, evaluation is judgemental, as it provides an overall grade on the basis of students' performance. It verifies whether the already defined standards are met or not. The aim of assessment is formative, i.e. to increase quality whereas evaluation is all about judging quality, therefore the purpose is summative.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Differentiate between test and measurement (within 40 words).

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Q 4: Differentiate between assessment and evaluation (within 40 words).

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EXCERCISE 8.1

Read more about this in the webpage: http://keydifferences.com/difference-between-assessment-and-evaluation.html#ixzz4oLA7BjjC

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6.5 NEED FOR CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Proper Education helps the future generation to take their due place in the society. With unsatisfactory and sub- standard educational goals, materials and methods of instruction, an educational institution is unable to produce knowledgeable, skilful and competent personnel who are necessary for social, cultural and scientific field. It is Curriculum Evaluation by which we can judge the efficiency of different programmes/ curriculum. After identifying the defects and deficiencies, new appropriate plans and actions can be undertaken to increase the efficiency or to decrease the defects and deficiencies. The need for curriculum evaluation may vary from institution to institution. It may depend on the nature and characteristics of the institutions. For example, the need for Curriculum Evaluation in primary or secondary school will be different from that of higher educational institutions. It will be different for Distance education system from the conventional face-to-face education system. Let us discuss the need for Curriculum Evaluation in two different headings—*Common Need for Curriculum Evaluation*, and *Need for Curriculum Evaluation in Distance Education*.

6.5.1 Common Need for Curriculum Evaluation

A good Curriculum Evaluation is a cooperative/joint mission from the planning stage to execution as well as implementation stage. Cronbach (1963) had given three types of preferences for which evaluation is used. They are:

- **Course Improvement:** selecting suitable instructional material and methods, and identifying necessary changes.
- **Decisions about individuals:** Identifying the needs of the students so that students choose that curriculum and grouping, acquainting the students with their own deficiencies.
- **Administrative regulations:** Judging the school system and individual teachers.

Here, we have listed some common needs for which evaluation is carried out within different educational institutions.

- To identify the strength and weakness of the curriculum/ programmes,
- To provide suggestions/decisions on operations, policy, strategy or approach related to ongoing or prospective curriculum.
- To exhibit accountability of a curriculum to the decision makers.
- To recognize the factors which are crucial and hostile for the curriculum and to identify the reason.
- To verify curriculum quality and management.
- To recognize the successful strategies for extension, growth, replication and reproduction of the curriculum.
- To modify and rectify unproductive strategies.
- To give an opportunity to the stakeholders of the curriculum to provide their views on the input, process and product/output of the curriculum.
- To determine the effectiveness of a curriculum and also to project intervention.
- To suggest improvement techniques related to future curriculum implementation.

6.5.2 Need for Curriculum Evaluation in Distance Education:

The Distance Education system is different from the conventional education system, structurally and functionally, so the need for Curriculum Evaluation is different in case of these two systems. DE system is an innovative approach to education. It is necessary to ensure whether the aims and objectives of education in this system are truly achieved or not. Some of the needs for which evaluation is carried out in Distance education institutions are as follows:

- To judge the achievement of aims and objectives of a curriculum as a whole,
- To judge the effectiveness of the course materials
- To find the inputs of a curriculum—number of staff, money and time spent, number of enrolled students, number and content of face to face contact programmes, time spent by the students, different types of multi-media employed and so on,
- To record the perception of the different stakeholders on the curriculum-learners, counsellors, administrators, parents etc,
- To explore, compare and find the most effective way among the different ways of providing the same service,
- To find whether there is any accidental effect of a curriculum on the stake holders,
- To get feedback on the progress of the curriculum towards achieving the aims and objectives,
- To judge the supports given to the learners of a curriculum at different stages,
- To explore the factors those affect the outcome of the curriculum.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: List at least three needs for Curriculum Evaluation in Distance Education.

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6.6 ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

You have already learnt that curriculum evaluation is a systematic process of gathering, analyzing and utilizing information or data to answer essential queries about strategies, policies and courses of a curriculum. It is necessary to gather information regarding its marketability, utility, economic viability, adequacy and appropriateness of its syllabus, contents and media support. Evaluation in open and distance learning is carried out to guide the administrators, policy makers, course writers and editors, media division, programme coordinators to provide better learning environment and to satisfy the stakeholders. Let us now discuss the whole process of Curriculum evaluation in DE system elaborately. Generally, when an institution is launching a new programme/curriculum, it initiates some evaluation activities. These activities include the need assessment of a programme or curriculum based on relevance and marketability of the curriculum in social context; i.e., whether the syllabus, contents and all the other experiences of the curriculum are able to satisfy the needs of the society, attract sufficient number of students, whether the curriculum is cost-effective and so on. Based on societal needs and cost-effectiveness of a curriculum, the utility of the curriculum in a country is measured.

There are three aspects of curriculum evaluation. They are:

6.6.1 Evaluation of Planning a Curriculum

6.6.2 Evaluation of Instructional materials

6.6.3 Evaluation of Learner Support Services

Let us now discuss these three aspects of curriculum evaluation in Distance education in details.

6.6.1 Evaluation of Planning a Curriculum

Evaluation of planning a curriculum means evaluation of a curriculum in terms of its need. Therefore, this consists of need assessment of the curriculum of a programme. This also includes the assessment of the curriculum in terms of marketability, utility, economic feasibility etc. A proper cost benefit analysis is done before launching a programme. Moreover, adequacy and appropriateness of the contents and media support of the various courses of the curriculum are also studied. Another important aspect of evaluation of planning a curriculum is identification of its target learners or prospective learners. Let us explain this aspect with an example. Suppose we want to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a curriculum or a programme. Then we have to consider various criteria to find how much to spend on preparing the course contents with media supports and what might be the earnings. Here, we need to consider the various criteria like cost of different committee meetings (expert committee, board of studies, board of management, academic council and so on), orientation programmes for course writers, honorarium for course writers and editors (content, language and format), cost of paper and printing , audio and video materials, support services and so on. These cost factors help in estimating the cost- effectiveness of a curriculum in relation to other curriculum. This kind of evaluation is very useful for the planning and decision making process of an education system.

6.6.2 Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Instructional Materials can be evaluated in the following two stages:

- **Didactic stage:** appropriateness of the materials for self-study, difficulty level, clarity and lack of ambiguity in texts, graphical presentation, audio-video aids etc.
- **Scientific stage:** a balanced and logical representation of different scientific approaches, learning methods according to

the target learners, upgrading of materials, integration of relevant research studies, bibliography etc.

However, it is necessary to consider both the stages while evaluating materials to get optimum results. There are *three* approaches to the evaluation of Instructional Materials: *Piloting, Special evaluation*, and *Routine evaluation*.

- **Piloting:** In this approach, a trial of materials is done with the first batch of students. Then, the pros and cons of that particular curriculum come out and accordingly modifications are done. Usually, the management applies this approach without considering the cost factor. As far as educational ethics is concerned, it is not advisable to use this approach as this approach uses the first batch of students as guinea pigs. Moreover, this approach has some other drawbacks like— immediate revision of the material after first launch; it adversely affects the distribution and support service. Moreover, cost of course design and pace of course production are adversely affected.
- **Special Evaluation:** This sort of evaluation is conducted for some peculiar cases like, if the students' performances are very unusual and peculiar, if there is an adverse reaction by students/ counsellors/academics to the materials, if an external funding agency enquires for such evaluation. This type of evaluation essentially has a purpose and, thus, it is selective by nature.
- **Routine Evaluation:** This approach is a part of management process. In this approach, the institutions and the faculties are in regular contact with the students, course materials and, accordingly, the institution, course writers/editors, academic counsellors are getting regular and continuous feedback. To maintain the standard of the course materials, sometimes-supplementary materials are also provided to the learners without wasting resources. Besides, instructional materials,

assignments and term-end examination question papers are also evaluated in the routine evaluation approach.

Dear learners, you have found here three different approaches of evaluation. However, in reality, no single approach can provide reliable and valid data for evaluation of instructional materials. A combination/ holistic/integrated approach may be a better one; eventually it is dependent on the circumstances, the constraints, the context etc. of the material evaluator team.

Classification of Study Materials and their Evaluation:

In distance education, we may classify study materials into three different categories. They are—Print materials, Electronic materials, and Television Based Materials. Here, we are presenting a very brief discussion on evaluation of each of these materials.

- **Print Materials:** These are the most popular technology used in DE system as they are the cheapest, and a wide range of learners, especially learners from remote areas, can get these materials. Texts, graphics and pictures with psychological inputs are main components of print materials. Many research studies have been conducted to find the most appropriate presentation of print materials for distance learners. Opinions are solicited from theoreticians, practitioners, psychologists, distance educators, distance learners and other users to make the material effective from the pedagogical and andragogical point of view. Questionnaire, attitude scale, rating scale, checklists, interview schedule, test etc. are some popular evaluating tools, which are used to gather opinion or data from the stakeholders. There are also different designs for evaluating the print materials.
- **Electronic Materials:** Radio broadcasts, audio tapes, computer based texts (e-contents) are some examples of electronic materials. Some instructional objectives, especially those that are based on skill and/or attitudes cannot be achieved through print materials alone. For example, language teaching,

especially phonetics teaching needs some audio lessons along with print materials. Criteria for evaluating audio tapes are-

- Simplicity—easy to use, can be played, paused, stopped for a period and replayed.
- Flexibility—can be added or complemented to other media.
- User friendly—learners can use them whenever they need, and they should be easy to handle.
- Humanizing tutor—they should be such as to help foster the tutor-student relationship besides giving proper guidance to the students.
- Stimulating and motivating learners by using sense organ ear, voice modulation, variations in phase etc.
- Time—they should not be too short or too long, according to target learners.

➢ **Television Based Materials:** Telecast, cable, satellite, video tape, videodisc etc. are some means through which the various Televisions based materials are used in DE system. Through telecast programmes, mass learners can be reached. Moreover, the combination of video tape, satellite, microwave, digital and cable technologies provide learning to specialized group of learners; allow two way and interactive learning. . Criteria for evaluating Television Based Materials are:

- Delivery mechanism
- Quality of audio and video
- Efficiency of operation
- Access and user friendliness
- Correctness, documentation and depth of the content
- Reliability and validity
- Life span of the material



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: List two drawbacks of piloting a programme

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Q 7: "In distance education, we may classify study materials into three different categories." What are they?

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6.6.3 Evaluation of Learner Support Services:

Learner Support Services (LSS) play a vital role in providing support to its learners. LSS is essential for making the two-way communication possible. It is an important subsystem of the ODL system. The purpose of Learner Support Services is to provide a warm, supportive atmosphere for the learners in achieving the instructional objectives. The planning, design, development and providing support services to learners in ODL have a lot to do with the implementation. They are highly depended on the other aspects of the system like suitable and adequate physical facilities viz. building, library, computer facilities and laboratories; suitable and adequate human resources viz. duly qualified faculty, administrator and supporting staff; programmes offered by the institution, the enrolment trend and allocation of fund in the budget of the institution. The evaluation of LSSs will help to meet the need of the learners.

Generally, we seek answers to the following questions while evaluating LSSs:

- Are these services able to satisfy the learners' enquiry promptly, adequately, effectively?

- Do these services provide guidance at the three stages pre, during and post courses to the learners and are they adequate and effective?
- Does the programme arrange adequate and effective counselling sessions?
- Do the learners receive assignment responses back with tutor comments?
- Does the website of the Institution consist of necessary information regarding the programme?
- Are the staff associated with these services dedicated towards their duty?
- Are these services easily accessible?
- How do the students rate the support services?
- Do these support services help the learners in getting good marks in examinations?
- Are these services able to decrease the dropout rate?

The answers to these questions may provide insights to the evaluation of the student support services. It is conducted to improve the quality of the support services. Moreover, based on the evaluation result or outcome, the management and the academicians can take decisions about the expansion or reduction of services. This evaluation includes evaluation of the —

- tutor
- face-to-face sessions, counselling sessions
- continuous assessment
- support system in general

Let us discuss them in detail below.

- **Tutor Evaluation:** This includes evaluation of the nature of communication/interaction between the tutors and the learners through various media like letters, e-mail, phone calls, SMSs, whatsapp or face-to-face situation; quality of their comments on assignment responses, the reliability, validity and objectivity of the assessment of assignment responses etc.

- **Evaluation of Face-to-face, Counselling Session:** Distance learners frequently need the advice and supports regarding the selection of a course, organizing his/her time, clarification of various doubts that come up during study, guidance as to what to do after the completion of the specific curriculum etc. This evaluation includes the evaluation of academic counsellors' punctuality, regularity, nature of rapport maintained with the learners, tutors' motivation and learner's satisfaction.
- **Continuous Assessment:** This includes the evaluation of reliability, validity and objectivity of the assessment of assignment, responses etc. This covers the process of setting up of assignment questions to the evaluation of assignment responses with specific comments, corrections, overall comments and a final grade; and the correlation of assignment questions with the questions set in the end of term examinations.
- ***Support system in general:*** This includes evaluating the quality and the quantity of support available to learners in relation to the programme at various study centres. This sort of evaluation helps in recruiting academic counsellors, providing necessary infrastructure, rearranging support with respect to local and socio-geographical constraints and so on.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: What are the purposes of LSS in DE system?

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Q 9: Why is the evaluation of LSS important? Write at least three points.

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6.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit, we have discussed the concept Curriculum Evaluation; need of curriculum evaluation, the difference among Test, Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation, and the various aspects of curriculum evaluation in DE system.
- Curriculum evaluation is a process of careful collection of information on a syllabus or some aspects of a curriculum in order to make necessary decisions.
- Tests, measurement, assessment and evaluation are similar terminologies having completely different meanings. However, evaluation is a wider term, which embraces all these three: tests, measurement and assessment.
- The need for curriculum evaluation varies from institution to institution; similarly, it is different for Distance education system from the conventional face-to-face education system. However, to judge the achievement prescribed by the aims and objectives of a curriculum is a must for all types of institutions.
- The three aspects of curriculum evaluation are:
  - Evaluation of Planning a Curriculum
  - Evaluation of Instructional materials
  - Evaluation of Learner Support Services
- Curriculum is the sum total of all the experiences to be provided to the learners by teachers and the institution. Evaluation is the process or activities meant for scrutinising the developed curriculum and accordingly it provides the management/academics the scope for modification. Curriculum evaluation is very important because a good curriculum is compulsory for the all round development of a child, proper growth of the system, society, and finally, for the development of the Nation.



6.8 FURTHER READING

1) Koul, B.N. (1991). Evaluation at Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India. In Redolf, S. (Ed). *Evaluation Concepts and Practices in Selected Distance Education Institutions.* Hagen: ZIFF.

2) Satyanarayana, R. et. al. (Eds.). (2013). Curriculum Evaluation. In *Curriculum Development for Distance Education,* SLM of MADE programme of IGNOU.

3) Chaudhary, S. V. S. & Dey, N. (2013). Assessment in Open and Distance Learning System (ODL): A Challenge. *Open Praxis.* Vol. 5, Issue 3, July–September 2013, pp. 207–216.



6.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : (a) True (b) False

Ans to Q No 2 : According to narrow meaning, curriculum evaluation is the score or grades of the individual student with respect to his/her ability. Whereas broader meaning of curriculum evaluation is the modification or change of the student's behaviour with respect to achievement of the objectives.

Ans to Q No 3 : Test is an instrument or device used to examine someone's knowledge/skill/ attitude of something. Whereas, Measurement is the act of measuring something, an act of assigning numerical index on data. In fact, measurement is a process of quantifying of how much a learner has learned.

Ans to Q No 4 : Assessment is the process of documenting one's knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs with the help of Test. The goal of assessment is to make improvements, as opposed to simply being judged. Evaluation is judgemental, as it provides an overall grade on the basis of students' performance. It verifies whether the already defined standards are met or not. The aim of assessment is formative, i.e. to increase quality whereas evaluation is all about

judging quality, therefore its purpose is summative.

Ans to Q No 5 : The process of curriculum evaluation is needed, because it helps:

- to judge the achievement of aims and objectives of a curriculum as a whole,
- to identify the effectiveness of the course materials,
- to find the inputs of a curriculum—number of staff, money and time spent, number of enrolled students, number and content of face to face contact programmes, time spent by the students, different types of multi-media employed and so on.

Ans to Q No 6 : The two drawbacks of piloting a programme are:

- The first batch of students are used as guinea pigs, which is against educational ethics.
- Immediate revision of the materials after first launch generally adversely affects distribution and support services.

Ans to Q No 7 : Print materials, Electronic materials and Television based materials.

Ans to Q No 8 : The purpose of Learner Support Services is to provide a warm, supportive atmosphere to the learners in achieving the instructional objectives and to make the two-way communication possible between the learners and the teachers/institution.

Ans to Q No 9 : Evaluation of LSSs is important as:

- It provides a clear idea whether these services are able to satisfy the learners' enquiry promptly, adequately, effectively or not.
- It is possible to judge whether these services are facilitating the educational transaction or not.
- It will help to meet the need of the learners.



6.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Explain the idea of Curriculum Evaluation.

Q 2: Differentiate between narrow and broad meaning of curriculum evaluation.

Q 3: Define Test, Assessment, Measurement and Evaluation and differentiate among them.

Q 4: What is the need for curriculum evaluation? Justify your answer

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Illustrate the various aspects of Curriculum Evaluation in Distance Education.

Q 2: Discuss the approaches of Evaluation of Instructional Materials.

Q 3: Discuss the different categories of study materials in Distance Education.

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UNIT 7: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ODL

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Concept of Rural Development

7.4 Distance Education and Rural Development

7.5 Women Empowerment and Distance Education

7.5.1 Courses of Study through the Distance Mode for Rural Development and Women Empowerment

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.9 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- define rural development and distance education
- discuss courses of study related to rural development
- outline the concept of empowerment of women.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

You must be aware of the fact that rural development is an essential index of a country's overall development. Rural development programmes aim at reducing poverty and unemployment among the rural masses and target all the socially discriminated classes and groups so that they can reap the benefit of development. Around 70% of the population in India lives in villages with agriculture and allied activities as their main occupation. The rural areas or the country stand at the opposite pole of the urbanized areas and perennially suffer from lack of facilities available for the urban

population. They have a low population density, and most of the land is devoted for agriculture and allied activites. Contrary to this, the urban area is characterized by higher population density and diverse occupations which are based on secondary and service sectors. Urban areas may be cities, towns or semi- urban places where the pace of development is visibly faster than the rural areas. But real development will take place only when the rural areas are developed and the rural - urban disparity becomes less pronounced. Infact, rural and urban developments are complementary to each other. Rural development means both the economic betterment of the people and greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are necessary. Initially, the main thrust for development was laid on agriculture industry, communication, education, health and allied sectors, but now it has been realized that accelerated development can take place only if the educational sector is developed at the grass root level.

Women empowerment is also closely connected with rural development. You may be aware of the fact that women constitute about 46% of the population and the 70% of women live in rural India (2011). It is also true that their literacy is low and they are mostly employed in the unorganized sector or unpaid employments. These problems can be addressed through education. Education is the most important requirement for inclusive growth and for empowering the individual and the society. To educate women is to educate the society. Providing education to all, whether belonging to the urban or rural areas is a formidable challenge for the planners. It is all the more important to provide education to the unreached and this is largely possible through open and distance learning. In this unit we will acquaint you with the concept of rural development and women empowerment and how distance mode can be effectively used for imparting useful knowledge and skill to the rural women through some academic courses so that they will be truly empowered to share the fruits of development.

7.3 CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Idyllic: extremely happy, peaceful and picturesque

Rural development in general refers to the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-Urban neighbourhoods, countryside, and in the remote villages. Here agricultural activities are prominent and economic activities primarily relate to the primary sector- the production of food stuff and raw materials.

Rural areas are usually referred to as small, inward-looking, and ***idyllic*** Communities are held together by kinship relations and support and interdependence among them in basic agricultural occupations. The characteristic features that differentiate the rural from the urban areas include: size, particularly areas inhabited by the people, low population density, homogeneity, presence of few social classes, low standard of living, presence of few / no social amenities such as electricity, pipe-borne water, low social mobility,agrarian character . The rural areas also produce the bulk of food items consumed in urban areas. Besides, there is the attendant problem of the drifting of young, able-men to cities in order to benefit from the urban resources and modern life.People living in rural areas are characterised by low capital investment, low savings, and low production.The poverty level is usually higher among women than men. Women continue to struggle with dual responsibilities of economic production and domestic labour and most of them are confronted by poverty, illiteracy, high health risks, inadequate access to productive resources, and lack of credit/market access.

Rural development programmes mostly aim at the social and economic development of the areas. These programmes generally flow from local or regional authorities and also from NGO's, national government and international development organisations. In fact, you can see that many of the developed-countries have very active rural development programmes. The main aim of the rural government policy is to develop the underdeveloped villages.

Around 70% of the State's populations are living in rural areas.Mahatma Gandhi is of the opinion that "India lives in their villages"

and it is equally true even today.To ignore the villages and the remote far flung areas is to the halt the march of progress and development. Ideally the people in rural areas should enjoy the same quality of life as is enjoyed by the people living in sub urban and urban areas. Further, there are cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centres causing slums and consequential social and

Rural development in general refers to the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-Urban neighbourhoods, economic tensions which lead to urban poverty and economic deprivation of a vast section of the urban population. Seen in this context, rural development is an imperative for the rural people to whom it provides adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs. In the today's context rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation,better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes for promoting wage and self-employment and vocational education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define rural development in 30 words.

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Q 2 : How are rural areas identified?

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Q 3: What does rural development action aim at?

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7.4 DISTANCE EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Distance education or learning refers to teaching and learning where the learner is physically separated from the instructor, but is still with regular contact. While there may be occasional meetings between the instructor and learner, the actual amount of face to face contact is always limited or sometimes non existent. Let me tell you that now-a-days, distance education is no longer a matter of choice but a compulsion of the times.

The mode of distance learning has emerged as a blessing in disguise to those who aspire to become learned and knowledgeable but could not access the regular mode of collegiate education due to their economic compulsions or for some other reasons. So, distance education plays a major role in rural development and it has rightly been given importance in the developing countries of Asia which are characterized by high incidence of rural poverty. Through this system even the low income people who have no access to education in formal universities can improve their knowledge base and acquire qualifications. This, in turn, contributes towards increasing the literacy rate, and in the long run can be useful towards eradicating poverty and other such problems.

So, you can see that despite the existence of large urban centers, India is still predominantly a rural society with approximately 70 percent of the population living in villages. Rural development implies the comprehensive and sustainable development for people and places in the rural areas. It depends on several interrelated components such as the development of appropriate production technology, dissemination of modern technology to the farming community, formulation of suitable policies for growth in the farm and rural non-farm economies, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and provision of infrastructure and social services. So, for achieving rural development and for responding to these global challenges their will be required trained professionals with a wide range of relevant expertises. They are needed to work in government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in the private sector.

Such professionals are needed who can formulate appropriate policies and plans, design and implement development projects, disseminate appropriate technology and information to farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs, and manage businesses and the efficient delivery of services in rural areas. Apart from that you can see that most of the Indian belonging to the rural weaker sections are village based illiterate agricultural labourers and most of the Indian tribes are forest based illiterates. Therefore,the need of the hour is the occupational modernization of these weaker sections and tribes and this can be possible only through education and particularly education in vocational areas. There are well established Open Universities in India which can serve the purpose. Most of these universities have started offering professional programmes in the field of rural and agricultural development. Indira Gandhi National Open University offers various programme in rural development. Besides IGNOU, other open universities have also launched various programmes in rural development. Infact,YCMOU (Yaswantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University) has done a commendable job in reaching out to the rural tribal people of Maharashtra for their sustainable development. Programmes through distance mode like plumbing, lathe operating etc. have been launched. It has also successfully launched ten crop based programmes for the farmers in the state. These open universities have rightly adhered to the objectives of making quality higher education available to the deprived and disadvantaged segments especially in rural and remote areas, women, SC/ST and besides tailor made innovative programmes. The concept of 'Prayog Parivar' launched by the university way back has been a successful venture. This concept provides the farmers a common platform with a common goal to discuss their problems, experiment and generate knowledge or record the locally available agriculture innovations based on their field experiences. IGNOU has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Institute of Rural Development to develop more rural development specific programmes in future. There are a few examples of how the universities in the ODL system can offer services in rural development.

Distance learning programs are increasingly being explored in many

areas of education. In particular, schools in rural settings, which have traditionally been underserved and dislocated from their urban counterparts, are now seeing the benefit of distance learning technologies.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Define distance education.

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Q 5: Recall any two steps that have been taken to empower the rural poor through education.

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7.5 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

The concept of empowerment refers to the process of bringing about a transformation in all walks of life of every individual citizen of the country. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'empower' as 'authorize, licence (person to do), give power to, make able (person to do)'. The need for empowerment arises from the inability of an individual or a group of people to realise their dreams and reach their greatest potentials due to artificial barriers created by individuals and other groups within the same society. Okeke (1995) stated that "to empower means to give power to, to give authority to, to enable a person or a group of persons gain power". Let me tell you that the word 'women empowerment' means many things to many people due to different ideological or preconceived notions. Women empowerment aims at ensuring a balance between the sexes so as to create a more equitable distribution of power in society.

The Constitution of India is considered a forward looking Constitution because its preamble recognises the principles of social, economic and political justice. Indian Constitution guarantees several rights to women. Constitutional provisions promise to provide equal opportunities to women by removing gender bias. Article 14 provides equality before law and equal protection by the law. Article 15 (1) assures not to discriminate on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 15 (3) declares the State to make special provisions in favour of women and children.

Article 16 reassures equality of opportunity for all citizens in public employment. Article 39 declares the state to direct its policy towards securing equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Similarly, Article 51 lays down the provision to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. So you can see that although the Constitution of India provides equality and justice yet in actual practice in India itself, women are the weakest segment of the disadvantaged groups. Females are not at par with their male counterparts and have remained deprived and underprivileged. Women at large experience multiple barriers in gaining access to employment, housing land, food and social security and education.The urban women are somehow able to manage their pace with the mainstream to some extent because of the availability of better facilities to them, in terms of education, employment etc; but the rural women are still at a considerable disadvantage in education and other sectors and the reasons for their backwardness are more than one. The low rate of literacy among women is caused by the low enrolment and high drop out rate among the school going girls. The women in rural areas maintain an over alllow profile. Different barriers like unequal status of women in rural society, their confinement to household, early marriage, negative attitude of parents towards their female children among others are some of the factors responsible for the illiteracy of women in rural areas. We know that women constitute about 48.46% of the population and that about 70% (Census of India 2011) of women live in rural India. It is seen that women are mostly employed in the unorganized sectoror unpaid employments and their literacy is low.

The first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "To

awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves" (quoted in Pillai, 1995; p. 62).

Women Education :

Education for girls is vital not only on the grounds of social justice but also because of the fact that it accelerates social transformation. As stated by Jawaharlal Nehru, by educating a woman we educate the whole family. Given that a woman has put the responsibility of the whole family on herself, an educated woman is better capable of taking care of health, nutrition and education of her children and more importantly can be an active agent in the social and economic development of the country .Let me tell you that economic success everywhere is based on educational success. Literacy is the basic building block of education. No society has ever liberate itself economically, politically or socially without a sound base of educated women. Education has a direct impact on women empowerment, as it creates in them an awareness about their rights, their capabilities and the choices and opportunities available to them. Education of girls has become a national goal. Considering education as an essential instrument of the nation building process in the Nehruvian era, the University Education Commission was established under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. It is known as the Radhakrisnan Commission and it submitted its report in 1949 with a full chapter on women's education. It is mentioned there that there could not be educated people without educated women. The First Five Year Plan put that the general purpose and objective of women's education could not be different from those of men's education. But the Mudaliar Commission of 1952-53 seemed to be less pre-occupied with gender differences. The National Committee on Women's Education, 1956 shifted its focus from higher education to school education.According to the recommendations of this committee a Council of Women's Education was set up. In 1964-66, Kothari Commission observed: "In the modern world, the role of women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with men the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects." In 1971 the Committee on

the Status of Women in India was constituted by a resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. The report of this committee is considered an eye opener to the stark inequalities existing between men and women in India. The culmination of all these government efforts was the National Policy of Education, 1986. The Policy states that education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The National Education System will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions will be encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development. Major emphasis will be laid on women's participation in vocational technical and professional education at different levels.

The Plan of Action, 1992 also had also special parameters on empowerment of women. But the National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001 had given a greater charter for women's empowerment in all fields. Among the most vital inputs for the empowerment, the policy envisaged equal access of women to healthcare, quality education at all levels , career and vocational guidance , employment etc.

Since already these are constitutional declarations, government policies, besides a number of commissions being set up to deal with the question of women empowerment the first decisive step to be undertaken is to enhance their literacy level and uplift their entrepreneurial skill and the Open and Distance learning can be used as a viable alternative to the traditional mode in addressing the issue. The ODL system has already been put to use. For example IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them to determine and exercise their life options, and influence the direction of change through their own control over crucial material resources. Education - especially professional and technical education - is also likely to enhance women's economic independence by equipping them with the skills necessary to take up paid employment opportunities. At the national level, educating women has resulted in improved productivity, improved income and economic development, as well as in a better quality of life, leading to a

notably healthier and better nourished population. Recently, the demand for skilled labour has risen significantly as a result of globalisation, changes in technology, and as a result of the re-organization of work. The process of skills development in the informal sector in developing countries is more important since formal training institutions do not have the capacity to train a large number of aspirants. Therefore, open and distance education has become an alternative tool for providing skills-based education and training. Open and Distance Learning otherwise referred to as Distance Education,is clearly a realistic alternative.

The mission of 'Open and Distance Learning' aims to include greater dimensions of openness and flexibility, whether in terms of access, curriculum or other elements of structure. The concept of open and distance education is a scheme that affords a nation the opportunity to transmit effectively the educational benefits to all its citizens and especially to those who are unreached or denied access on the basis of one social consideration or the other at an affordable cost.

Through the ODL, education can be imparted to the class of women who are full time housewives, many of whom have never had access to formal education or had to give up school at early stages of their lives. Women in this group are not usually enthusiastic about formal education because their husbands had indicated that they are to sit at home and take care of the home and the children. Such women are usually unable to leave their spouse and children to travel away to attend a conventional university system. The challenges posed by this social system is far reaching, in the sense that the woman cannot venture out of the home to a formal school or university system where she can pursue the much craved training, skills development and education. Many of them have to be content with seeing their dreams come alive in their children's lives and they unconsciously transfer their dreams to their children's lives. Women in this category will definitely be grateful for distance education, since it allows them to sit at home and study for a programme without affecting their family obligations or neglecting their children. It is certainly a means of fulfilling the life dreams of many women who have been saddled with the work of a full time house

wife. The issue of women education is essential for rural development. Women are not well equipped to contribute their useful quota to the society because of illiteracy and lack of education.

Again,distance education can cater to the needs of the working women in the unorganized sector. Many of them marry early without completing their school/ college education and the responsibilities of raising their children while still being engaged in an unrecognised and unremunerative labour make them discontinue their studies. They also have other responsibilities and obligations to bear in respect of their husband's family. All these make it impossible for them to go back to studies in a formal set-up. The Open and Distance Learning may be an answer to this unfulfilled desire for higher studies by offering varieties of courses which they can pursue without affecting their normal work schedule and family obligations.

So you can see that open and distance education is fast emerging as a dominant mode of education to meet the growing needs of aspiring learners in the fast changing world. This popularity of distance education is mainly attributed to its ability to accommodate a large number of aspirants through its flexible and cost effective structure. Empowerment of women has visible links with the educational attainment of a society. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and program of Action revised in 1992 placed women's education in the priority list and stated that it would play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women.The objective of the National policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 is to bring about overall advancement, development and empowerment of women. With the 'learner centred' mode of education, ODL enables students to 'earn while they learn' the ultimate goal being to create a learning society. It may be mentioned that the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) included for the first time in the history of the planning in India a separate chapter on ' Women and Development '. Vocationalization has becomea keyword in the higher education scenario where attention is being increasingly drawn to better linkages between education and employment.The purpose of providing education to women is to enable them to think critically, identify their strengths and take conscious, informed decisions, empowering them to play a positive

role on their own in the development of the nation. Empowerment of women through education implies the improvement of status in the family, community and society which helps reduce the gender gap and this empowerment is possible through open and distance learning.

Women of India have made considerable progress in the last 60 years after independence. But still the women's literacy rate in India is 65.46 percent (Census of India 2011). Inspite ofthe Constitutional provisions and recommendations of so many other problems confronting women in India are: early drop out of girls from school, dowry death, domestic violence etc. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) rightly states that there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes and related mechanisms on one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India on the other. In the 20th century education was a means for a women's empowerment, but today she has a right to education as a citizen.



LET US KNOW

To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by streng this meant brute strength, then indeed, woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power , then woman is immeasurably man's superior: has she not greater intuition , is she not more selfsacrificing ,has she not greater powers of endurance , has she not greater courage ? Without her man could not be. If non violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?

— Mahatma Gandhi



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6 : What is empowerment?

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Q 7 : How can open and distance learning can be useful in case of women empowerment?

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Q 8 : What is the objective of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001?

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7.5.1 Courses for Women Empowerment and Rural Development through Distance Mode

Distance education is specially designed to address the 'inaccessibility' of the weaker sections of the society or 'reaching out to the unreached'. Distance education has reduced the disciplinary constraints of the conventional university system and in India, in particular, distance education has opened up new disciplines that are relevant for self employmentand potential employability. Over a period , the open and distance education in India has emerged as complementary to conventional higher educationand has ben playing a significant role in bringing about empowerment as a whole .You can see that most of the open universities and dual mode universities are offering various programmes specially for women and rural folks. IGNOU is a pioneer in this field and other open universities,including K K Handiqui State Open University, are the following its lead.

IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them.They have developed courses such as M.A. in Woman and Gender Studies

and P.G. Diploma in Women Studies.Courses like child care guidance, jewellery designing, pottery making, Montessori training, knitting, fashion designing, beautician certificate course, course in nutrition are some of the programmes that can be offered by universities in the ODL mode. These courses are meant for self employment. IGNOU also offers a number of post graduate programs in rural development. Other state open universities of India also offer similar types of courses. Infact, in the context of Assam, K.K.Handiqui State Open University is taking a leading role in offering vocational courses in rural development and women empowerment. Courses like Scientific Piggery Farming (CSPF), Commercial Goat Rearing (CCGR), Commercial Broiler Farming (CCBF), Commercial Duck Farming (CCLF),Commercial Layer Farming (CCLF), Mobile Repairing, Maintenance and Repairing of Audio Video Equipments are offered. These are certain vocational programmes which can directly benefit the women and finally enhance women empowerment through self-employment and entrepreneurship development. These programmes include, inter alia, Fashion Designing, Beautician, Garment Manufacturing, Nursery Management, Food and Fruits Preservation etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9 : What kind of courses can be offered in the ODL system for rural development and women empowerment?

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7.6 LET US SUM UP

- Rural development in general is used to refer to the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, countryside, and remote villages.
- Rural development actions mostly aim at the social and economic development of the areas. These programs are usually top-down from the local or regional authorities, regional development-agencies, NGOs, national governments or international development organizations.
- Distance education or learning refers to the teaching and learning where the learner is not regularly in contact with the instructor, but still with regular contact through the use of ICT and othe forms of communication.
- Most Indian rural weaker sections being village based illiterate agricultural labourers and most Indian tribes being forest based illiterates, the need of the hour is the occupational modernisation of these rural weaker sections and tribes and this can be possible only through distance education and education in vocational areas.
- The concept of empowerment refers to the process of bringing about a transformation in all walks of the life of every individual citizen of the country.
- IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them to determine and exercise their life options, and influence the direction of change through their own control over crucial material resources.
- Various courses are developed by open universities to empower women and develop the rural sector.



7.7 FURTHER READING

1) BhatnagarTinku Paul, (2011) : Women, Employment and Empowerment New Century Publications, New Delhi

2) Pillai, J.K. (1995) : Women and employment,: Gyan Publishing New Delhi

3) Sharma, R. (1996) : Empowering women through distance education. Indian Journal of Open Learning.

4) Trivedi Tanuja.(2009) : Women and Rural Development, JnanadaPrakashan, New Delhi.



7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Rural development in general refers to the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, countryside, and in the remote villages. Here agricultural activities are prominent and economic activities primarily relate to the primary sector- the production of food stuff and raw-materials.

Ans to Q No 2 : Rural areas are usually referred to as small, inward-looking, and idyllic communities. They are held together by kinship relations and support and interdependence among them in basic agricultural occupations.

Ans to Q No 3 : Rural development actions mostly aim at the social and economic development of the areas.

Ans to Q No 4 : Distance education is a mode through which knowledge is imparted to the learners not by direct face to face classroom transaction but by indirect and informal manner of teaching through various learner support services including short contact programme

from time to time and use of ICT.

Ans to Q No 5 : The two steps that have been taken to empower rural poor through education are by way of offering professional programmes in the field of rural and agricultural development and enhancing skills through launching different courses in ODL system by various universities such as Indira Gandhi national open university and Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, YaswantraoChavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) etc.

Ans to Q No 6 : The concept of empowerment refers to the process of bringing about a transformation in all walks of life of every individual citizen of the country. The word 'Empowerment' includes self-strength, control, self-power, self- reliance, own- choices, life of dignity in accordance with ones values, capacity to fight for one's rights, independence, own decision making, being free and getting awakened about the one's capabilities etc.

Ans to Q No 7 : ODL, education can be imparted to the class of women who are full time house wives, many of whom have never had access to formal education or had to give up school or college at early stages of their lives.

Ans to Q No 8 : The objective of the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001, is to bring about overall advancement, development and empowerment of women.

Ans to Q No 9 : Various ODL universities and other distance education directorates can offer a number of post graduate programs in rural development and women empowerment such as Scientific Piggery Farming (CSPF), Commercial Goat Rearing (CCGR), Commercial Broiler Farming (CCBF), Commercial Duck Farming(CCLF), Commercial Layer Farming (CCLF), PG Diploma in Women Empowerment etc.



7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1 : Define the concept of empowerment.

Q 2 : What is the meaning of women empowerment?

Q 3 : What is distance education?

Q 4 : How do you differentiate rural areas from the urban areas?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1 : Write a short note on rural development.

Q 2 : What kind of courses can be launched for rural development and women empowerment?

Q 3 : How can open and distance mode of learning be useful in case of women empowerment?

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1 : Define women empowerment and how can it contribute to the India 's economy?

Q 2 : Discuss the role of education in the socio-economic development of a state.

Q 3 : Give your comment on the courses that are offered by various open and distance institutions for women empowerment and rural development. What according to you could be a major thrust area of women empowerment and how can distance education address the issue?

Q 4: How is open and distance education related to rural development?

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UNIT 8 : QUALITY ASSURANCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Leaning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Concept of Quality Education

8.3.1 Quality Assurance in Distance Education

8.3.2 Various Means of Quality Assurance in Distance Education

8.4 Let Us Sum Up

8.5 Further Reading

8.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.7 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- define the concept of quality education
- explain quality assurance in distance education
- discuss the various means of quality assurance in distance education.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

There is a close linkage between the human resource development and an all-round socio-economic and cultural development of a nation. In fact, the development and expansion of knowledge and skill, inter alia, is the key component of the human resource development. The qualitative improvement of education and training is estimated to have contributed about 20% of the national income of a country through the improvement in the quality of human resources.

Indian economy has been growing at a high average rate of 8 to 9

percent per annum during the last 7/8 years except in 2008, the year of global recession and it is moving towards a double- digit rate of growth in the near future. But for sustaining such a high rate of growth of the economy, India needs to be transformed into a major knowledge economy having adequate and abundance of skilled .and trained manpower. The present trend and rate of growth of skilled and trained manpower in the country is not very encouraging to sustain a high rate of growth of the economy.

The literacy rates in the country have shown substantial improvement after Independence. It has come up from mere 16.67 percent (in 1950-51) to 74.4 percent (in 2011). But mere increase in the literacy rate does not necessarily lead to major knowledge economy unless human resource of the country is moulded in the right direction for the need of the economy to attain sustainable development. The country has to build up skilled and trained manpower and it is possible through the expansion of quality higher education - both general , vocational and professional. Keeping these things in mind, we will discuss the importance of quality, how quality can be ensured in higher education for enhancing the effectiveness of the education system in India, particularly in open and distance learning etc.

8.3 CONCEPT OF QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality indicates the degree of excellence of particular things. It may be a norm, a rank or a standard which comes out after assessing the performance of the functions of a particular institution. Quality assurance is a development mechanism that is designed to maintain and enhance the institutional effectiveness as a whole. The improvement of quality is essential to enrich the dimension like curricula aspects, teaching learning process, research consultancy and education, health practice and students support service, extensive publication and co-curricular activities of an institution.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What do you mean by quality? Why do you think that quality is important in an educational institution?

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8.3.1 Quality Assurance in Distance Education

The present scenario of higher education in the country is not very encouraging to achieve the goal of a knowledge economy with abundance of skilled and trained manpower. During the time of independence and as the latest data available, the number of universities has increased from 20 to 758, colleges from about 500 to 39,071 colleges. Out of 758 universities, 267 Universities are privately managed, 43 Central Universities, 1 Central and 14 State Open Universities, 69 Institutes of National Importance, 316 State Public Universities, 5 Institute under State Legislature Act, 37 Deemed Universities Government and 6 Other Universities. (AISHE, 2016). Over and above, there are 14 State Open Universities, one National Open University and more than 117Directorates of distance education in the conventional Universities functioning in dual mode to cater for the need of the knowledge economy.

Keeping in view the objective of strengthening the knowledge economy, the Government of India during the Eleventh Five Year Plan targeted to establish 30 Central Universities (14 already established), 8 IITs (6 already established), 8 IIMs (4 already established), 10 National Institute of Technology (NIT) , 5 Institutes of Science and Research, 2 Schools of Architecture, 374 model

degree colleges etc, besides about 1000 polytechnics to build up trained and skilled manpower as demanded by the economy. Recently, HRD Minister, Government of India, has announced to establish 800 new universities in India.

Significantly, the present national GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) in higher education in India is exceptionally low when we look at the global scenario. It is about half of the world average GER (24 %) and 2/3rd of the average of the developing countries (18%) and far below the average of the developed nations (58%). Even compared with China, the GER in higher education in India was is lower than that of China by about 10% although it was comparable about 10 years back. There is very wide variation in the GER even across the states

The access to higher education is denied to a large section of the population in the relevant age-group not only due to limited seats in the conventional education system, but also due to the increasing cost of education, particularly in the private sector - that is virtually unaffordable and is beyond the reach of a very large deserving section of the Indian society.

There is a remote possibility of attaining the targeted 15% GER in higher education by the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan and 30% by 2020 through the conventional Universities - Central, State, Deemed and Private - and other educational institutions including the private players. This is mainly due to the fact that limited seats and high costs, particularly imposed by private players, are the main constraints for the access to higher education of a large segment of the population aspiring for it. This Herculean task of attaining the targeted GER can be made possible through an open, flexible and less expensive mode of education, which is provided by the open and distance learning (ODL) system. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) also placed a pivotal role for the ODL system to build up the knowledge society in the 21st. Century. The provision of relevant and quality education to all the citizens can be provided

preferably at their doorsteps by ODL system through its flexible, cost-effective and learners' friendly modes using information and communication technology (ICT). ICT enabled linkages through broadband and satellite network in the ODL system bring out teaching-learning process to "3As" scenario - Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere - making "Education Beyond Barriers". The NKC in its Report categorically stated "Open and distance education (ODE), enabled and delivered through information and communication technology (ICT) holds the promise to address the questions of access and provide new, alternative forms of capacity building" (NKC, 2009, page 4). Considering the wide scope of the ODL system to provide flexible access to higher education - general, professional and vocational , the governments, both at Centre and the States, are giving due emphasis on horizontal and vertical expansion of quality education through open and distance mode since 1980s.. This has resulted in the establishment of 14 State Open Universities, one national Open University (IGNOU) and about 117 Directorates of Distance Education of the dual mode conventional Universities. In fact, ODL accounts for about 12% of the total enrolment in the segment of higher education, and thereby contributing substantially towards raising GER. Quality is the major concern in providing access to education to all and therefore besides the conventional education, the open and distance learning institutions should start the frontier from the very beginning to achieve the goal of quality education. Provision and maintenance of quality education at all stages - primary, secondary and higher - is the need of the hour. Highlighting the importance of quality, the National Knowledge Commission states "the biggest challenge faced in higher education, therefore, is the provision of quality higher education to the greatest number, at the lowest possible cost to the learner" (NKC, 2009, page 5). All the stakeholders of the ODL system of higher education - open universities, dual mode conventional universities, deemed universities and the private players should see that the quality of

higher education is not compromised in the best interest of building a knowledge economy. But, unfortunately, there is a predominant feeling among the stakeholders that some Universities/Institutions are compromising the quality of education provided through ODL mode for the obvious reason of maximizing profit ignoring the social responsibility of providing quality education. In fact, the additional resources generated by most of the dual mode universities through their Directorates of Distance Education are usually invested for the improvement of conventional teaching programmes and a very little is left for investment on distance education, thereby adversely affecting the quality of education through ODL mode. For quality assurance through distance mode, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended the constitution of an External Quality Assurance Cell to assess and evaluate the ODL institutions at regular interval. Distance Education Council (DEC) , now known as Distance Education Bureau (DEB) also decided to have a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in all the open universities of the country.

In open and distance learning, the application of quality has a unique character. We know that in ODL system, learners are generally physically separated in space and time from the teaching institution and the staff. Therefore maintaining quality is a great responsible on the part of the open educational institutions. It should be systematically and self-consciously maintained. In ODL, the application of quality means attainment of the expected levels of knowledge and skills which are tools for further learning by actual work experience necessary for managing the learner's personal and social transaction in day-to-day life. This quality is to be attained by all distance learners, in a given time-frame. Following are some areas where special focus should be given for maintaining the degree of quality:

- Curriculum design and preparing the module for the learners in

locally, regionally, nationally and internationally,

- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Student performance, their progression and assessment
- Student support service and guidance



LET US KNOW

EQA: The External Quality Assurance (EQA) particularly in higher education is conducted for assessing the improvement of higher education and to provide reliable information on the current quality of activities of higher education institutions in regard to both teaching, and research. In Indian higher education system it is generally assessed by National Assessment and Accreditation Council which makes the report and finalises the rank of the colleges and universities.

CIQA: The Distance Education Council (DEC), now known as Distance Education Bureau (DEB) has made the setting up of a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) mandatory for all open universities in the country. Ahmedabad-based Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University has been entrusted with the task of working out a methodology for the same. The directorate of Distance Education Council supports CIQA with the seed money. The DEB has developed various guidelines, norms, policies for strengthening the academic capabilities of the distance learning universities and institutions.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: How is quality assurance in ODL system integrated with the creation of knowledge economy of a State? Explain.

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8.3.2 Various Means of Quality Assurance in Distance Education

The term quality usually denotes the standard of something where it is compared to something else. Quality also means excellence of performance in any human action. So when we talk of quality assurance in relation to distance education, we mean achieving a certain level of excellence in performing the tasks involved with dissemination of education and knowledge through that particular mode of teaching-learning process. The credibility and success of open and distance learning system depend on a number of factors, some of which are highlighted below:

- **Curricula of ODL system should be well thought-out, need-based, employment oriented and learner friendly.**

  Contrary to the conventional education system where learners are young having sole objective of entering into job market, the learners in the ODL system belong to all groups. Some of them are fresh and young targeting jobs, some of them are already employees targeting enhancement of qualification for promotion, while some of the learners are housewives and senior citizens targeting for life-time learning and enrichment. Hence, the curricula of the ODL system have to be framed carefully to make them learner friendly. Innovative course curriculum as well as need based courses like spoken English, Computer Application and Office Management, Cultural History of the country, Environmental Studies and Disaster Management etc. should be adopted and designed for the learners to gain them a better prospect of employment.

- **Self learning materials (SLM) both in print and audio-visual forms are the heart and soul of ODL system and they should be of high quality.**

  All SLMs in print form should have standardised house-style using simple and unambiguous languages and the learners

should feel the presence of a teacher in front of them while going through the SLMs. National Knowledge Commission recommended the creation of "Open Educational Resources" to make them available to all for capacity building in a knowledge society. DEC and IGNOU guide the ODL institutions in the preparation of standard SLMs with certain level of uniformity.

- **Adequate and effective counselling sessions should be provided through face to face interaction as well as through audio-visual form by using information and communication technology (ICT).**

  As per the DEC norm, counselling session of 3 hours should be provided per credit point of a programme. Besides arranging the counselling sessions through the Study Centres, Open universities and other directorates can produce audio and audio-visual SLM for the use of the learners and can also plan live telecast of counselling classes in the form of lectures and discussion.

- **Timely and adequate learners support services (LSS) should be provided for success of ODL system.**

  Timely provision of SLM, regular counselling, library facilities including e-library, provision of ICT facilities like audio-visual SLM, radio and television programmes, teleconferencing facilities, on-line programme etc. are some important ingredients of LSS that need to be provided timely and effectively. The educational radio and television channels like Gyan Darshan, a fully digital 24 hour exclusive Educational TV channel, GyanVani, a unique Radio Service of IGNOU, have played a prominent role in disseminating knowledge and information among the learners of the country. The recently established State Open University in Assam, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University has the distinction of providing the first Community radio programmes in the entire North East of India "Jnan Taranga", followed by "Radio Luit",

which has so far been the second Community radio Station in the North East set up by Gauhati University under the Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL). KKHSOU has another educational programme "Ekalabya" which is transmitted through All India Radio (Guwahati and Dibrugarh Centres) initially twice in a week for providing educational information and for arranging discussion on some educational programmes.

- **Quality of ODL system is immensely improved with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and in fact, ICT drawn ODL system only makes it possible to provide education with 3As - anyone, anytime and anywhere.**

  User friendly ICT in the form of radio, television, audio-visual SLM, internet broadband, teleconferencing, on-line courses etc. makes it easier to provide effective teaching-learning process in the ODL system. In fact, the National Knowledge Commission recommended the setting up of a national ICT infrastructure through state support to meet the technology demand of the ODL system. This recommendation of NKC has led to the constitution of a National Knowledge Network (NKN) which takes the responsibility of connecting the institutions of higher education (particularly the ODL institutions) for common sharing of knowledge through national networking.

- **Transparent and foolproof examination system is another very important ingredient for credibility and quality of ODL system.**

  Malpractices in the examination halls are quite common in the conventional educational system. Examination reforms need to be carried out in the ODL system so that examination system is transparent and there is no scope for malpractices. There are some provisions that can be adopted and followed for certain examination reforms to minimise the incidence of malpractices and errors in assessment. These are:

- photograph of the candidate is scanned and printed on the admit card and pass certificate;
- question papers are printed in the answer-book and adequate space is provided for the answers ;
- no provision of extra (additional) answer-sheet which is one of the sources of malpractices ;
- multiple sets of question papers of the same objective type questions are being mix-matched ;
- provision of re-scrutiny of answer-book;
- the learners can get the photocopy of his/her answer-script on request;
- if a learner is not happy with the marking even after getting the photo-copy of the answer-script, he/she is entitled to apply for complete re-examination of the answer-script by a second examiner;
- complete computerisation of the process of the declaration of examination results to avoid personal biasness ;
- Good governance is also a very important ingredient of quality assurance.

➢ **Quick and timely delivery of learners support services, timely holding of counselling classes, timely holding of examination and declaration of results etc. hold the key for good governance and the credibility of the ODL system.**

The open universities and institutions should provide and deliver the study materials and hold the counselling classes timely and effectively. Besides the websites that are developed by each university for their educational purpose, mobile phone alert can be used for transmitting the relevant information like date of examination, date of admission, declaration of examination results etc. to the learners and the functionaries of the study

centres or any member of the public from time to time. Even some universities and institutions following the ODL system have live phone-in programme where the top officials of that universities and ODL institutions can deliver some interactive sessions and directly talk with the learners on various issues and clear the people's doubts regarding the curricula of the Open University or its academic programmes, and get the ways and means for solution of their queries.

- **The future development of ODL system depends on the new innovation and research to improve the quality.**

  Innovation in the ODL system is utmost necessary and so the promotion of research is to be given due priority to develop ODL into a well-grounded discipline of learning. Ph.D. programme on ODL related issues and various research projects can be provided to the learners in order to encourage innovative research in ODL system.

  In fact, quality and credibility in ODL to build up quality human resources depends on the SLMs, both of print and audio-visual variety; ICT based radio, television, audio cassette, audio-video materials, tele-conferencing, computer based learning technology, on-line learning, web portal, internet-based learning, mobile and Learner Support Service, including Counselling. So, the ODL institutes need to concentrate on the quality and credibility of various academic programmes. What is needed not only the promotion of the ODL system but also to provide quality education for all through that mode.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : Write some ways or means that can ensure quality in education, particularly in open and distance mode.

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8.4 LET US SUM UP

- The qualitative improvement of education and training is essential for human resource development in a country.
- For sustaining a high rate of growth of the economy, India needs to be transformed into a major knowledge economy having adequate and abundance of skilled .and trained manpower.
- The country has to build up skilled and trained manpower and it is possible through the expansion of quality higher education - both general, vocational and professional.
- Quality indicates the degree of excellence of particular things. Quality assurance is a development mechanism that is designed to maintain and enhance the institutional effectiveness as a whole.
- The present national GER in higher education in India is exceptionally low when we look at the global scenario.
- The present scenario of higher education in the country is not very encouraging for achieving the goal of a knowledge economy which can be ensured by an abundance of skilled and trained manpower.
- This Herculean task of attaining the targeted GER can be made possible through an open, flexible and less expensive mode of education, i.e., the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system.
- ICT enabled linkages through broadband and satellite network in the ODL system can bring the teaching-learning process to the "3As" scenario - Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere - making "Education Beyond Barriers" in attainable goal.
- Quality is a major concern in providing access to education to all and, therefore, besides the conventional education, the open and distance

learning institutions should strive from the very beginning to achieve the goal of providing quality education to the learners.

- Highlighting the importance of quality in education, the National Knowledge Commission states that "the biggest challenge faced in higher education, therefore, is the provision of quality higher education to the greatest number, at the lowest possible cost to the learner"
- For quality assurance through the distance mode, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended the constitution of an External Quality Assurance Cell to assess and evaluate the ODL institutions at regular interval.
- Distance Education Bureau (DEB) also decided to have a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in all open universities of the country.
- Curricula of ODL system should be well thought-out, need-based, employment oriented and learner friendly while ensuring the quality.
- Self learning materials (SLM) both in print and audio-visual forms are the heart and soul of ODL system and they should be of high quality
- Adequate and effective counselling sessions should be provided through face to face form as well as through audio-visual form by using information and communication technology
- Timely and adequate learner support services (LSS) should be provided for ensuring the success of ODL system.
- Quality of education in the ODL system can be immensely improved with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and in fact, ICT drawn ODL system only makes it possible to provide education with 3As - anyone, anytime and anywhere.
- Research should be conducted and new areas should be explored for improving the quality in ODL system.
- Quality and credibility in ODL to build up quality human resources depends on - SLMs - print and audio-visual; ICT based - radio, television, audio cassette, audio-video materials, tele-conferencing, computer based learning technology, on-line learning, web portal, internet-based learning, mobile and Learner Support Service, including Counselling and so on.



8.5 FURTHER READING

1) Jadhav, Narendra, (2010) : "Higher Education in India: In Retrospect and Prospects", Fourth Foundation Day Lecture, KKHSOU.

2) National Knowledge Commission, (2008) "Recommendations of the Working Group on Open and Distance Education" Working Group on Open and Distance Education.

3) Srivastava, Manjulika and Swaraj Basu, (2010) " Distance Learning in North East : An Overview ", University News, 48 (38) September.

4) Thorat, Sukadeo, (2007), " Higher Education in India : Emerging Issues Related to Access, Inclusiveness and Quality", Nehru Memorial Lecture, University of Mumbai, 2007.



8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The term quality usually denotes the standard of something where it is compared to something else. Quality also means excellence of performance in any human action. So when we talk of quality assurance in relation to distance education we mean achieving a certain level of excellence in performing the tasks involved with dissemination of education and knowledge through that particular mode of teaching learning process

Quality assurance is a development mechanism that is designed to maintain and enhance the institutional effectiveness as a whole. The improvement of quality is essential in an institution to enrich the dimension like curricula aspects, teaching learning process, research consultancy and education, health practice and students support service, extensive publication and co-curricular activities of an institution.

Ans to Q No 2 : The present society is considered a knowledge society

where members should be acquainted with some need based skills that will help them to get better livelihood. Education is the only way through which knowledge and information can be disseminated among the learners and thus it helps in developing manpower in a society. To make higher education accessible for all is still a big challenge for the Government of our country. Open and distance learning is the most effective alternative way through which people can have access to education at their own doorstep.

Quality is a major concern while providing access to education to all and therefore in addition to the conventional system of education, the open and distance learning institutions should try from the very beginning to achieve the goal of quality education. For quality assurance through distance mode, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended the constitution of an External Quality Assurance Cell to assess and evaluate the ODL institutions at regular interval. Distance Education Bureau(DEB) has also decided to have a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in all open universities of the country.

Ans to Q. No 3: There are some ways through which quality can be maintained in an open and distance learning institutions. These are as follows:

- Curricula of ODL system should be well thought-out, need-based, employment oriented and learner friendly for ensuring the quality.
- Self learning materials (SLM) both in print and audio-visual forms the core of the ODL system and they should be of high quality.
- Adequate and effective counselling sessions should be provided through face to face form as well as through audio-visual form by using information and communication technology.
- Timely and adequate learners support services (LSS) should be provided for success of ODL system.
- The quality of the ODL system can be greatly improved with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and ICT drawn ODL system only makes it possible to have an education with 3As - anyone, anytime and anywhere.

- Research should be conducted and new areas should be explored for improving the quality in ODL system.
- Quality and credibility in ODL to build up quality human resources depends on - SLMs - print and audio-visual; ICT based - radio, television, audio cassette, audio-video materials, tele-conferencing, computer based learning technology, on-line learning, web portal, internet-based learning, mobile and Learner Support Service, including Counselling and so on.



8.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1 : What do you mean quality?

Q 2 : What do you mean by quality in education?

Q 3 : What is the importance of distance education?

Q 4 : What is the present status of higher education in India?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Why do you think that CIQA is important for assuring quality in an open and distance learning institution?

Q 2: Why is quality education important for making knowledge economy of a state?

Q 3: How is quality education related to human resource development in a country?

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1 : Do you think quality can be improved in an educational instruction? If so how will you suggest for that?

Q 2 : Discuss the ways or means that can ensure the quality in education particularly in the open and distance mode.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 9 : ASSESSMENT IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1. Learning Objectives

9.2. Introduction

9.3 Assessment and Evaluation

- 9.3.1 Meaning and definition of Assessment
- 9.3.2 Meaning and definition of Evaluation
- 9.3.3 Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

9.4 Assessment in Open and Distance Learning

9.5 Purposes of Assessment in Open and Distance Learning

9.6 Types of Assessment in ODL

- 9.6.1 Self-assessment, Continuous assessment, and Term-end examination
- 9.6.2 Marking and Grading
- 9.6.3 Other Forms of Assessments

9.7 Let Us Sum Up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.10 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

- define assessment and evaluation,
- differentiate between assessment and evaluation
- explain the role of Assessment in Open and Distance Learning
- elucidate the purposes of Assessment in Open and Distance Learning
- identify various types of Assessment in ODL.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Any educational process is controlled by three major academic activities. These are: e – the teacher teaches, the learner learns and again the teacher assesses. Everybody has to go through the assessment process after learning something. We are all aware about the examination system, its importance in educational system and its relevance in maintaining the quality of teaching-learning process. As a student, you have appeared in various examinations till now and hence you are all familiar with the assessment and evaluation system. Like conventional mode of education, in Open and Distance Learning system also assessment is an indispensable component. However, there is certain innovativeness for the typical nature of ODL such as the separation of the teacher and the learners, openness regarding time, age etc. In this unit we will discuss assessment in general and assessment in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in particular. While discussing assessment in ODL, we will give a look into the purposes and types of Assessment in ODL. Moreover, we will have a brief discussion on evaluation and some similar terminologies related to assessment.

9.3 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

In education, the term 'assessment' means the various methods/devices/ tools/instruments that educators use to estimate, measure, record the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. It is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether the goals of education are being met or not. All the decisions regarding grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, curriculum, funding etc. are guided by assessment. As in every other field of education, in assessment also there is a paradigm shift in both the modes, conventional as well as ODL. Earlier it was used only for grading and certification, but presently, it has been linked with learning and skill development of the students. Therefore, a variety of techniques and methods are being added to this process instead of a single paper pencil test. 'Evaluation' is another term which is frequently and simultaneously used with the term 'assessment'.

However, they are not identical and have specific meaning. There are two more terms, 'test' and 'measurement'; they are also used frequently and simultaneously. You may have a quick look on the sub-section-6.4 of Unit: 6, where we have discussed these four terminologies in detail. You may also recall that evaluation is wider, which includes all the other three concepts. Here we will also discuss evaluation, which we hope, will help you to comprehend the concept assessment in ODL system in a better way.

9.3.1 Meaning and Definition of Assessment

Assessment is the process of getting information about a learner's learning, progress and achievement. That means, up to what level a learner is able to comprehend the content of the course/programme or curriculum. The information about a learner's learning, progress and achievement is gathered with the help of various tools and techniques of tests and measurements. The word assessment is derived from the Latin word 'asseior' which means "to set" or "to settle". Thus, etymologically, it means to settle or to determine something. Hence it may be defined as all the activities that are used to collect, measure and interpret information/data on students' performances to determine and quantify student's performance. In the process of assessment, after getting the information about a learner's progress, a value is awarded to her/him. Let us try to understand this with an example. A student Sushruta, appears in a Science test and after checking his answer script, the teacher gives him 95 out of 100 marks. Thus he secures 95% in the Science test. So, a value is given to his performance, which means the teacher has assessed him. Similarly, another student Misiki may secure **A+**' grade in project work. Thus securing 90%, getting A+ grade are all examples of assessment. The purpose of assessment is to improve and modify the current performance.

Assessment is defined as a systematic and methodical means of obtaining and reviewing information about someone or something to make improvement wherever necessary. The term assessment

is interpreted in different ways; it may be educational, psychological, financial, taxation, human resource and so on. Educationally, it is the process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of a specific group in a systematic way.

It is a continuous interactive process which consists of *two groups*: *one* is the assessor and the *other* is the assessee. The assessor may be the teacher, the management or a regulatory/ statutory body; and the assessee may be the students, an institution or the various components of an institution. The assessor assesses the performance of the assessee on the basis of the already defined norm/standards of any particular institution (KKHOU or IGNOU) or regulatory body (UGC or NCTE). The aim of this process is to determine the effectiveness of the overall performance of the assessee and the areas of improvement.

9.3.2 Meaning and Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation is an activity which consists of data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. While compared to assessment, evaluation is a wider and inclusive term. It is the process of giving judgment, on the basis of defined criteria and evidence (data obtained through tests, measurement and assessment). It focuses on making a judgment about values, numbers or performance of someone or something. The term 'evaluation' is derived from the word 'value' which refers to 'usefulness of something'. This implies that evaluation is an examination of something to measure its utility.

Thus, evaluation may be defined as a systematic, methodical and objective process of judging someone or something / giving value to someone or something, with an aim of drawing conclusions with the help of set of standards/norms or by making a comparison of similar concepts. When we consider the score of a student with the scores of the other students and judge whether she/he is good/

average or poor in a particular subject, we are evaluating that student. On the basis of the example, Sushruta secures 95 % in Science test; we may make a judgement on Sushruta as a student that he is good in Science. This means we make an evaluation on Sushruta in the context of the subject Science. So we can say, evaluation is concerned with making judgments about values, numbers, things etc. Thus, it includes quantitative and qualitative description and also a value judgement. In your day-to-day life, you usually make evaluative comments about a movie, clothes, a restaurant, a book or someone's behaviour. You may enjoy a movie; admire someone's clothes, like a restaurant, adore someone's behaviour and so on and so forth. These are all simple, straightforward comments of value or worth.

9.3.3 Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

As discussed earlier, assessment is a part of the whole evaluation system. However, with regards to the aims and objectives, natures etc both of them are different from each other. Some of the differences between assessment and evaluation are discussed in the following points:

- The process of gathering, reviewing and using data, for the purpose of improvement in the present performance of the students, teachers, administrators, curriculum, institution or any other stakeholders of education system is called assessment in Education. While, giving judgment, providing value on the basis of defined criteria and evidence collected through assessment process is called evaluation.
- The nature of Assessment is diagnostic as its aim is to identify the areas of improvement. While, the nature of evaluation is judgemental as its aim is to provide an overall grade.
- The assessment provides feedback on the present performance, ways to improve future performance. As against this, evaluation determines whether the already set standards/norms are met

or not.

- The purpose of assessment is formative, as it increases quality. As against this, the purpose of evaluation is summative as it is all about judging the quality of assessed information.
- Assessment is an activity; it is concerned with the process, while evaluation focuses on product or output.

From the above points, it is clear that assessment and evaluation are completely different. While evaluation is concerned with making judgments, assessment is concerned with improving the deficiencies of the learners. They together play a crucial role in analysing and refining the performance of a person, product, project or process.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks :

i. The word assessment is derived from the .....word 'asseior'

ii. The term 'evaluation' is derived from the word 'value' which means.....

Q 2: Give some examples of Assessment and Evaluation

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Q 3: List two differences between assessment and evaluation.

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ACTIVITY 9.1

Find some more differences between assesement and evaluation and also list some similarities.

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9.4 ASSESSMENT IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Open and Distance Learning has two main aspects, one is distance and the other is open learning. Distance refers to the physical separation of the learners from the teachers as well as educational institutions, and open learning refers to flexibility in admission with respect to age, time, space and pace of learning. According to Slater (2007), "ODL reflects both the fact that all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in time and space from the learner and that the mission aims to include greater dimensions of openness and flexibility whether in terms of access, curriculum or other elements of the structure."

Assessment and evaluation are an integral part of the teaching-learning process; it is vital in certification and acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes in any educational system, whether in a conventional face-to-face system, or an ODL system. Already you have understood that assessment is a part of the whole evaluation process. Assessment is the process of acquiring information about the learner's knowledge, learning, progress, achievement etc., while evaluation is the process of judging the worth/finding the value/ estimating the quality of the learners knowledge or achievement. Although, both the terminologies are having different connotations, we cannot separate their activities. Assessment and Evaluation work together for achieving institutional as well as curriculum objectives and together they act as a very important sub-system of ODL system. Here we will mainly discuss

assessment.

In ODL, to ensure quality, assessment is an indispensible tool. As we all know, separation of the learners from the teachers and the institutions, openness/ flexibility regarding time, age, pace of study etc. are some specific characteristics of ODL system and these characteristics make this system more challenging. Different ODL institutions have different assessment strategies and these strategies are generally guided by the instructional design and delivery media adopted by the institutions, available time and resources, support service etc. Due to recent innovations in science and technology, there is a paradigm shift in ODL system. The ODL system has embraced e-learning, online learning, blended learning, MOOCs and so on; and accordingly, e-assessment/online assessments are also added to the evaluation and assessment process in ODL system.

9.5 PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Earlier, assessment was conducted for the purpose of certification and accreditation only. Therefore student assessment was conducted at the end of the academic session and institutional assessment was conducted in a long duration of five years or ten years and so on. We have mentioned earlier that there is a paradigm shift in the educational process as well as in the assessment activities. The purpose of assessment is not only certification and accreditation, but also to get overall feedback on the whole educational transaction within the stakeholders of the institution; to enhance two way communications between the learners and the institution or learners and the teachers, for overall improvement of the system.

Due to flexible, open and innovative nature, the learners of ODL system are heterogeneous. Therefore, ODL institutions offer different types and different levels of programmes. The distance learners study on their own with supplied study materials (SLMs with audio and video programmes), face-to-face and distance (postal, e-mail, telephonic, on-line etc.) tutoring and counselling, different kinds of supports and so on. Moreover, the learner population is very large in ODL. Hence, the ODL institutions have to develop

their own form of education system according to the target learners, available resources and media support etc. Thus, the teaching –learning process becomes very innovative, this revolves around the need of the learners and the teachers who have planned and designed the appropriate choice of media for effective learning. In this context, assessment in the ODL system has adopted a new form to provide feedback to its students in a better way; and at the same time to help the teachers to enhance their teaching and the administrators to run the institution efficiently and smoothly and so on. Thus, the purpose of assessment in ODL is also very innovative and it differs from institution to institution. Whatever may be the purposes, the primary purpose is to improve student's current learning and performance. Now, we will discuss the purposes of assessment in ODL in the following points.

- **Feedback to the Teaching and Learning Process:** The prime purpose of assessment is to achieve feedback on the teaching learning process. In other words, we may say that it is to improve the learner's learning and the teacher's teaching. As a teacher our prime focus is to make the learners and the deliberations given by us and also to make them capable of using that knowledge in their future life. An efficient teacher always fixes her/his objectives before starting the teaching and tries to achieve those at the end of the teaching. In this context, the teacher uses continuous assessment. Assessment is used as an effective medium for communication between the teacher and the learner. It is the assessment by which the students communicate their learning to their teachers and the teachers communicate back to the students with some marks, grades or value-judgement.

  Moreover, assessment works as a double-edged sword. When a teacher assesses her/his students, students also assess the teacher. In school, most of you may have made comments like, "Saikia Sir does not give good marks , Deka baideo teaches very well, in Kalita baideo's class we feel sleepy" and so on. Even by the performance of the students, a teacher may judge her/his teaching ability and accordingly may improve her/his teaching. Thus, the purpose of

assessment in ODL system is to :

- **Provide direction to the course writers:** A pre-test or entry level test informs the teachers about the previous knowledge and capabilities of the students and accordingly it provides the direction of a course. Moreover, the information acquired will help in identifying and bridging the gap between the existing knowledge and a desired outcome. An ideal teacher/counsellors/ course writer finds out what students already know, and use the prior knowledge as a base to develop new understanding. The same is true for the data obtained through assessment done during face-to-face contact programmes.
- **Motivate the students to learn :** A major extent of student's learning depends on their perception regarding their assessment process. Therefore, assessment must convey the right signal to students about what to study, how to study, and the relative time to spend on concepts and skills in a course. Tutor comments in assignment response play a significant role in this context.
- **Inform students about their progress : T**hrough assessment students are able to identify what they know and what they don't know about a subject. Moreover, the feedback provided to students directs them to improve their performance.
- **Guide the course coordinator in arranging print and other media :** Course coordinator can identify which media is suitable for what type of learners in a better way on the basis of the assessment.
- **Inform the counsellors/ tutors about the effectiveness of their teaching strategies :** Students performance helps a teacher to identify the strength and weakness of his/her teaching, and accordingly guide to what to modify and what to sustain.
- **Provide grades/ marks:** the purpose of assessment is to give grade or marks on the basis of students' performance :
- **Feedback on the System :** As a process, assessment gathers meaningful data to determine different ways to enhance student

learning. Assessment is done also to achieve feedback on the overall system and its various sub-systems. It diagnoses and identifies students' learning needs, strengths and weaknesses associated with educational transactions of a particular institution. It helps the various stake holders of the institution to know the pros and cons of the institution. Thus, the purpose of assessment in ODL is to :

- Help Parents, families, guardians of the students to know about their children's learning progress, so they can play an active role in their children's learning.
- Help the administrators and management to prepare future planning, to identify the areas where they need improvements to support their teachers, course writers, editors and determine professional development needs.
- Help the administrators and management to arrange Learner Support Services according to learners need.
- Guide the University or Institution to assist their governance role, to take decisions regarding staffing and resourcing in HQs as well as study centres.
- Help the Ministry of Education, Statutory Educational Bodies to review existing policy, improve old policies, and implement new policies for over all development in ODL system of the Nation.
- Assist and guide Government organization to take decision regarding government funding and policy intervention to improve learning outcomes of the students.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4 : Fill in the blanks :

i. Earlier, assessment was conducted for the purpose of .....and accreditation only.

ii. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student's current learning and.....

Q 5 : List two purposes of assessment in ODL.

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9.6 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT IN ODL

As a distance learner, you are facing different types of assessment activities; check your own progress, home assignments, MCQs, Term end examination, Project etc. In this section, we will discuss the different types of assessments generally used in the ODL system. Moreover, we will also discuss the different types of evaluation in ODL system. In distance education, both formative and summative evaluations are used with different kinds of questions. Let us now discuss briefly these two types of evaluation.

Formative Evaluations : These are concerned with identifying the learners' weaknesses in achieving the already fixed learning objectives of a programme and accordingly helping the learners to modify their terminal behaviour. These are continuous and designed to motivate learners, to help them to understand how they are progressing. Hence, formative evaluations are conducted in regular intervals during a programme. It comprises assignments, workshop related activities such as practical, micro teaching, community participation, field experience, school-based activities, hands on activities, seminars, group discussion, etc.

Summative Evaluation : These are conducted at the end of a course as the meaning of the term *summative* suggests. They aim at certifying and giving a total report on learners' achievement of the objectives. Summative evaluation may be the result of formative evaluation to finalize learners' level of learning or grade attainment of the objectives. Summative evaluation comprises term-end examination, project and dissertation/thesis evaluation.

Assessments in ODL system can be divided in different ways. In the following sub-section we will discuss the various types of assessment used in ODL system.

9.6.1. Self-assessment, Continuous assessment, and Term-end examination

Assessments are divided into three categories, namely self-assessment, continuous assessment, and term-end examination.

Self-Assessment : The self assessment questions (SAQ) or Check Your Progress Questions (CYP) are given throughout the Self Learning Material (SLM). These types of questions are put to compensate for the absence of class room teaching, absence of teacher to provide feedback in the process of teaching learning in ODL system. Whenever, a distance learner wants to know about his/her progress, no teacher is available to give her/him feedback. In this context, the SAQs or CYPs are the only ways to provide feedback to the distance learners immediately. These are the formative evaluation tools to help the learners to learn better. Mostly objective type questions and short-answer type questions are given in SAQs.

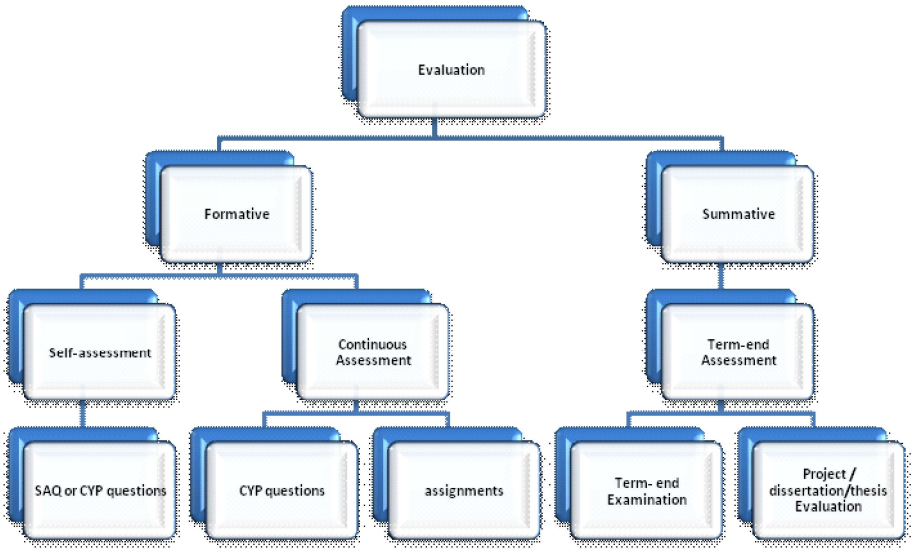
Continuous Assessment : In distance education, continuous assessment is done through assignments in most cases. A very few institutions also adopt MCQ examination as continuous evaluation. Normally, assignments carry 25-30 % weight in overall assessment. This is a two-way communication between the learner and the distance teaching institution or the tutor/teacher. Assignments also help the learner to decrease the sense of isolation as a distance learner. The assignment evaluator gives written feedbacks or comments on the assignment responses, these are very important as by these students are able to know about their positive and negative points and their overall academic progress. These comments are called “tutor comments” and they are divided into two categories based on their usage. One is marginal comments or specific comments; they are given in the margin of the assignment response. Another is global comments; they are given on a separate sheet to cover all the answers of the assignments. Moreover,

marginal comments are divided into eight categories. They are

- harmful comments
- hollow comments
- misleading comments
- positive comments,
- negative comments,
- constructive comments,
- null comments
- Personal comments.

Tutor comments should be always beneficial for the learners as these are expected to improve the student performance in the next assignment submission and also in the term end examination. Providing assignments to the learners and again giving suggestions through tutor comments to the learners is a kind of formative evaluation.

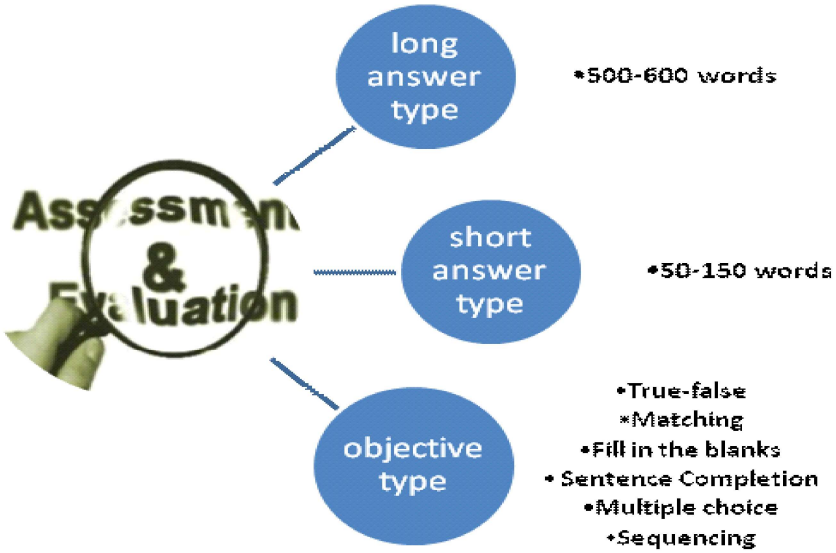
Term-End Examination : Term-End Examination is the final examination. This can be organised once or twice in a year depending on the institutional policy and the complexity of the course. In other words, we may say that in annual system it is organised once in a year and in semester system it is organised twice in a year. Mostly, this is a paper-pen based activity; however, in some programmes practical and project are also used to assess the learner's performance. The term-end examination normally carries about 70-75% weight in overall assessment. Term –End examinations are an example of summative evaluation. After appearing in Term-end examination, and the getting pass mark, a student is promoted to next semester or year or he/she achieves a degree.



Assessment and Evaluation in ODL system

The above three types of assessments, namely self-assessment, continuous assessment, and term-end examinations are common practices in distance education. However, the assessment of learners' attainment of the objectives could be achieved through three types of questions-objective type, short answer type (50-150 words) and long answer type/essay type (500-600 words). To assess higher order cognitive objectives like analysis, synthesis, evaluation etc., generally the short answer and long answer type questions are used. Objective type questions are used to assess the lower order objectives such as knowledge, understanding etc. These questions are most suitable to provide immediate feedback to the learners during study. There are six major types of objective type questions that are generally used to assess learners' performance in ODL system. They are:

- True-false
- Matching
- Fill in the blanks
- Completion of the sentence
- Multiple choice
- Sequencing



Different Types of Questions in ODL

In self-assessment, objective type questions are mostly used. Moreover, short answer type questions (within 50 words) are also given to assess the students learning. In case of Continuous assessment, both short answer type and long answer type questions are used. And, in Term-end assessment, all the three- objective type, short answer type and long answer type/essay type questions are given to the students.

9.6.2 Marking and Grading

While discussing assessment, we have discussed it with the examples- Sushruta secures 95% in Science test, Misiki achieves 'A' grade in Project work etc. Here, between the two students one is getting marks and another in getting grade. Thus, assessment is normally done through quantifiable marking and grading. Both the practices are followed in ODL system. Marking system means assessment of a student or an answer-script on the basis of numbers. That means providing marks from 0 up-to the total marks of the question paper. We are familiar with the marking system that follows a0-100 scale. Grading is the process by which different levels of achievements of the students in a course are converted to some symbols by applying standardized measurements. Grades are

generally assigned as some letters (A to F), as a range (for example 1 to 6), as some descriptive words (Excellent, very good, Satisfactory, Not satisfactory, Needs Improvement, poor etc.) or numerals (5, 4, 3, 2, and 1) and so on. However, the scale in the grading pattern could be five points, seven points or nine points.

Although grading is a more popular practice world over, in India we are using marking system to avoid the problem of conversion of grades into marks, particularly in ODL system to facilitate learners' mobility. But, to ensure quality adaptation of grading system by all the institutions is a must.

Letter grade	Qualitative level	Point grade	Percent (%)
A	Excellent	5	80% & above
B	Very Good	4	60-79.9%
C	Good	3	50-59.9%
D	Satisfactory	2	40-49.9%
E	Unsatisfactory	1	Below 40%

Grading System in IGNOU



ACTIVITY 9.2

What type of grade system is followed in your university? And compare that with the IGNOU's system.

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9.6.3 Other Forms of Assessments

Some other forms of assessments are also used effectively in distance education. They are as follows:

- **Peer assessment :** This method of assessment is used to assess the work done by students of equal status. Mostly it is

used in professional courses.

- **Project assessment :** To enhance the practical skills of the learners, project is used as a assessment tools.
- **Portfolio assessment :** Portfolio is a systematic record of performance of the learners to display achievement of certain set of objectives over a period of time.
- **Oral examination :** This is normally done in the form of viva-voce at the end of a project work. It is generally used in vocational and professional courses.
- **Seminar presentation :** it is conducted to assess and improve learners' language proficiency, leadership abilities and team spirit. It helps to know and develop learners' ability to make effective presentations.
- **Internship :** This is not a part of assessment; it is the actual work experience given to the learners to perform.

Here, we have discussed types of assessment practised in the ODL system in three different headings. However, all the different types of assessment can be again categorized in two types, ***On-line assessment*** and ***Off-line assessment***. *Online assessment or examination* is an innovation in the assessment system. It is also termed as e- assessment. It is conducting examination *online* to measure the knowledge, attitude of the participants on a given topic. With *online examination* students can perform the exam *online*, in their own time and with their own device, regardless of where they live. They need a browser and good internet connection. Gradually, On-line Examination System has become popular among the students. Moreover, due its speed and accuracy, it has become the most fast growing examination system. It also requires less manpower in every step of assessment process; .i.e. from setting of question paper to providing grades to the learners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: Assessments in ODL system can be divided into three categories, what are they?

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Q 7: List three objective type questions.

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ACTIVITY 9.3

Please watch the video to understand the on-line assessment process. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU6DBkb57Gs

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9.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit, we have discussed about assessment and evaluation in ODL system.
- Assessment is an activity by which we can know the progress or rate of achievements of the students in terms of learning outcome.
- On the other hand, whenever we have to act as an evaluator, we judge the qualitative and/or quantitative data or scores achieved by

test, measurement and assessment processes and assign 'value' or 'worth by giving judgement like excellent, good, fair or poor.

- As in conventional system, in ODL system also assessment plays a crucial role in quality assurance. Assessment in the ODL system has adopted a new form to provide feedback to its students in a better way and at the same time to help the teachers to enhance their teaching and the administrators to run the institution efficiently and smoothly.
- In distance education, both formative and summative evaluations are used with different kinds of questions.
- Assessments are divided into three categories, namely self-assessment, continuous assessment, and term-end examination.
- In distance education, continuous assessment is done through assignments in most cases. The written feedbacks or comments given by the assignment evaluators on the assignment responses, called "tutor comments". Tutor comments are divided into two categories based on their usage-marginal comments or specific comments, global comments.
- There are eight types of marginal comments; they are harmful comments, hollow comments, misleading comments, positive comments, negative comments, constructive comments, null comments and Personal comments.
- There are three types of questions by which assessment of learners' attainment of objectives could be achieved; they are -objective type, short answer type (50-150 words) and long answer type/essay type (500-600 words).
- There are six major types of objective type questions that are generally used to assess learners' performance in ODL system. They are: True-false, Matching, Fill in the blanks, Completion of the sentence, multiple choice and Sequencing.
- The recent developments in ODL system also bring changes in its evaluation and assessment process. As a result, with increasing demand for e-learning, online learning, blended learning, MOOCs

etc. among the students, e-assessment or online assessment also become an inevitable part of the evaluation and assessment process in ODL system.



9.8 FURTHER READING

1) Koul, B.N. (1991), Evaluation at Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India in S. Redolf, (Ed) *Evaluation Concepts and Practices in Selected Distance Education Institutions,* Hagen: ZIFF.

2) Mishra, S. (2007), "Assessment in Distance Education" in *Open and Distance Learning: Theory and Practice, Training Module for Academic Counsellors.* STRIDE, IGNOU. New Delhi.

3) Pradhan, B and Biswas, P.K. (2002), "Assessment and Evaluation in Distance Learning" STRIDE Handbook: 4. STRIDE, IGNOU. New Delhi.

4) Satyanarayana, R. et. al. (Ed.) (2013), "Curriculum Evaluation" in *Curriculum Development for Distance Education,* SLM of MADE programme of IGNOU.



9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : i. Latin, ii. usefulness of something.

Ans to Q No 2 : Assessment: Saki achieved 95 % in Mathematics. Evaluation : She is very good in Mathematics.

Ans to Q No 3 : The differences between assessment and evaluation are:

- The purpose of assessment is formative, while the purpose of evaluation is summative.
- Assessment focuses on identifying drawbacks and then improvement. But evaluation focuses on product or output.

Ans to Q No 4 : i. Certification

ii. Performance

Ans to Q No 5: The purposes of assessment in ODL are:

- to provide feedback to the teaching and learning process
- to provide feedback on the system.

Ans to Q No 6: self-assessment, continuous assessment and term-end examination.

Ans to Q No 7: True-false, Matching, Fill in the blanks.



9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1 : What is meant by Assessment and evaluation?

Q 2 : Differentiate between assessment and evaluation.

Q 3: Does Assessment in conventional system differ from Assessment in Open and Distance Learning? Justify your answer.

Q 4: Write short notes on

a. Formative and Summative evaluation.

b. Term-end examination.

c. Marking and grading system.

d. Objective type questions.

e. On-line assessment.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1 : Why do you think that assessment is important in ODL system? Discuss the purposes of Assessment in Open and Distance Learning.

Q 2 : Self-assessment is very important in ODL, explain.

Q 3 : How is continuous assessment conducted in ODL system? Explain it with the help of some examples

Q 4 : What are the different types of questions that are used in ODL to assess students' performance? Discuss.

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UNIT 10 : INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 What is ICT?

- 10.3.1 Growth of ICTs
- 10.3.2 Application of ICTs

10.4 Use of ICTs in Distance Education

- 10.4.1 Advantages of ICTs
- 10.4.2 ICT-Based Learning: Different Evolving Areas
- 10.4.3 Institutes offering ICT-based Education

10.5 Challenges of ICTs in Educational Use

10.6 Adopting Strategies for Effectiveness of Distance education

12.7 Use of ICTs in the North East of India

10.8 Let Us Sum Up

10.9 Further Reading

10.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.11 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- discuss the role and usefulness of ICT in Distance Education
- trace the growth and application of ICT in Distance Education
- find out the challenges of ICT in educational use
- develop strategies for effectiveness of ICT in Distance education

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology, commonly known as ICT, has opened up new avenues in the field of education in today's world.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs)-which include radio and television, as well as the latest digital technologies such as computers and the Internet-have been hailed as potentially powerful tools for educational change and reform. When used appropriately, different ICTs are said to help expand the reach of education, strengthen the relevance of education in increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by helping to make teaching-learning an interesting and engaging (innovative) process. Because of ICTs, students are no longer isolated but are actually connected with each other and with teachers in an electronically supported community. The use of ICTs in both school and higher education has developed greater self-direction and motivation in the learners. This has helped them move away from teacher-centric approach to self-learning approach. Instead of receiving information or knowledge from the teacher who is traditionally seen as the 'knowledge bank', students can now derive information at any time from anywhere and develop their understanding of the course-content without any external help with the use of ICTs. This unit will not only help you to explain the meaning of ICTs but will also encourage you to examine how ICTs have brought in a remarkable change in the various processes of educational transactions through open and distance learning in which the tools of ICTs have been best exploited.

10.3 WHAT IS ICTs?

ICTs stand for Information and Communication Technologies and are commonly defined as a 'diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information.' These technologies include print media, computers, broadcasting technologies like radio and television, telephony, and the internet, teleconferencing, web-technology etc. In recent years, there has been a worldwide interest in examining how computers, internet and web-technology can be used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education in both formal and non-formal settings. But, ICTs are more than just these technologies. For instance, till other day when we talk about the second generation of distance education, radio and television have been

abundantly used in both open and distance learning. However, print still remains the cheapest and most accessible medium and the most dominant delivery mechanism in the education system of both developed and developing countries. In a developing country like India, the use of computers and the internet is yet to gain momentum in the remote areas due to limited infrastructure and the high costs of access. Hence, still there is a scope of discussing the usefulness of ICTs in diverse situations.

However, different technologies are typically used in combination rather than as the sole delivery mechanism to enhance the effectiveness. For instance, if we take the example of the Kothmale Community Radio Internet in Sri Lanka, we find that it uses both radio broadcasts and computer and Internet technologies to facilitate the sharing of information and provide educational opportunities in a rural community in Sri Lanka. The Open University of the United Kingdom popularly known as UKOU, established in 1969, which is also the first educational institution in the world wholly dedicated to open and distance learning, still relies heavily on print-based materials supplemented by radio, television. Recently, they have also introduced online programmes to facilitate effective learning. The secret of the success of U.K.Open University lies in clearly identifying the needs of students, providing a strong student support service; and combining conventionally taught components with the use of latest technology including videotapes, audiotapes, television, e-conferencing, and discussion groups. Similarly, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India combines the use of print, recorded audio and video, broadcast radio and television, and audio conferencing technologies as tools of education. So, ICTs are extensively used for educational purpose all over the world and it is in the field of open and distance education that the resources of ICTs are best exploited.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : What is the meaning of ICTs?

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Q 2 : Which is the first Open University in the world? How has it used ICTs for education?

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10.3.1 Growth of ICTs

The growth of communication technologies has a long history. You perhaps know that communication is fundamental to the human civilization. It is because, a society can function only when communication is made possible among its members. In ancient times, human beings communicated through writings on stone or wood and communication was limited only to a small area. But, along with the advancement of civilization, other means of communication were also tried and invented. For example, the invention of the printing press revolutionized the processes of communication to a larger group. However, it took a lot of time to transform our society from symbols, gestures, signals to printed forms of communication system. Today however, we have the most sophisticated processes of communication, in print and non-print forms which have enabled increased ability to share experiences and information with each other in a much productive manner. The non-print communication technologies mainly include important media like audio, video, telecommunication and multimedia communication. Subsequently, more emphasis is given on the manufacture, storage, processing, editing and transmitting of information to be used by everyone. So, with the advancement of ICTs human beings have moved towards an information-based or knowledge-based society. Following are the different stages in the

growth and development of information and communication technologies.

- **Audio Media :**

The growth of Radio took place mainly around 1920s and 1940s. Since then, Radio has transformed our society like never before. With the development of new broadcasting facilities like FM Radio audio media has established itself as a powerful tool for entertainment as well as information. The use of radio for education came later. For accessing a large number of persons at the same time, radio was realised to be a potential medium for enhancing and exchanging knowledge. Apart from Radio, the development of technologies like gramophone records and cassettes can be seen as the most popular and easily accessible medium for the public. Although used mostly for entertainment, the audio tape has tremendous educational value. However, the idea of audio media has been given another boon with the invention of Compact Disk (CD) and DVD (Digital Versatile Disk) as they give better voice and sound quality.

- **Audio-Visual Media**

Along with the radio there emerged television in the late 19th and early 20th century. Subsequently, audio visual technologies rapidly expanded all over the world. This technology that began with broadcast television mainly in the developed first world countries now embraces video cassettes, cable TV, computers, video texts, video disks etc. The reach of TV is also increasing day by day as both the public and the private providers are offering programmes of all kinds according to the requirements of the target audience. It was on the basis of the effectiveness of the audio-visual media that it began to be used in a large scale for educational purpose.

- **Telecommunication :**

Telecommunication technologies began with the transmission of telegraphic signals over wires. With the invention of Grahame Bell's telephone set in 1876, telephony or long distance voice transmission became a popular word. Bell almost changed the way

human beings communicate. The invention of fax machine further intensified the processes of exchanging communication. The latest avatar of telephone is the mobile phones. This mobile technology which started as a medium to transmit audio at a distance can now transmit full media like audio, video, picture, text etc. The latest invention of 2G and 3G technologies have changed the entire experience of mobile telephony and internet connectivity which you all must be well aware of.

➢ **Multimedia Communication :**

Multimedia is a type of media and content that uses a combination of different forms of communication. As the term itself suggests, it is used in contrast to the traditional idea of media which only use traditional forms of printed or hand-written material. Multimedia includes a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video, and other interactive contents. Multimedia is usually recorded and played, displayed or accessed by information content processing devices. But they can also be part of a live performance. Multimedia also describes electronic media devices used to store and experience multimedia content. The emergence of satellite technologies, Internet and Intranet technologies since 1990s onwards has changed the ways of exchanging information. Consequently, multimedia technologies have tremendous potential as means of exchanging educational content. You pause for a while and try to think how computers and internet have changed your life-style in the last four or five years.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3 : How did the prehistoric people used to communicate?

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Q 4 : What are the different stages in the growth and development of information and communication technologies?

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10.3.2 Application of ICTs

Perhaps the most important point to remember while using technologies for educational purpose is to see if the resources of ICTs are actually used according to the requirements of different target audience. This means that the proper use and application of ICTs can still be considered a serious issue. There are two possible ways to see the application of ICTs in our society. ICTs have given us various efficient and worthwhile tools of communication. It has, at the same time, also widened and enlarged the horizon of human beings. The application of ICTs in education can be briefly understood in terms of the following two points: Access and Teaching

- **Access :**

  The desire to access more and more people at the same time has made human beings invent ways of faster communication processes.

  Thanks to modern communication technologies, it has been possible to reach out to a large number of people effectively in no time. For example, with the help of transmission networks and satellite based communication systems people have accessed a large section of the population. After telephones, fax machines and mobile phones, and now computers have brought new technologies to access people. This becomes possible because a huge amount of information can be stored and exchanged with a stroke in the computer key board. However, the latest trends in teleconferencing which includes audio conferencing, video conferencing and computer

conferencing,have made the application of ICTs much more productive and efficient. Subsequently, there emerged various other technologies to suit the requirements of the content being used for teaching.

The idea of access has changed drastically with the development of Internet and the World Wide Web. Electronic mail or E mail is cheap and instantaneous and has become the order of the day. Of late, Web 2.0 technologies have greatly transformed the educational environment with various tools like Blogs, Wikis and Rich Site Summary (RSS) as student support services irrespective of the mode in which one is conducting the teaching. Nowadays, E-portals and Social Networking Sites within the educational institutions are gaining tremendous popularity in bringing together all those concerned with a meaningful educational interaction. You may stop for a while at this time and try to see how SMS and Social Networking sites like ORKUT and FACEBOOK have changed today's world and how the sharing of information has become so instant and easy in the present context.

- **Teaching :**

Till the other day, education was considered to be a one-man-show played by the teacher in a conventional, face-to-face setting. Moreover, people believed that learning takes place only inside the four walls of a classroom. But, thanks to ICTs, this proposition does not fit into the present context of teaching learning. The emergence of distance education has proved that learning can be made available anytime anywhere. Communication technologies have replaced both the teacher and the text books and have made teaching learning an enjoyable activity by placing the learners at their own in the learning process.

In Open and Distance Learning, we often talk of a strong learner support service. And most interestingly, the distance

education systems of the whole world have responded positively and quickly to the revolution in ICTs. This has happened mainly because of three reasons-(a) ICTs have reduced the cost of education, (b) ICTs have enabled a large number of learners to enroll in need-based educational programmes, and (c) ICTs have reduced the time and space required for introducing newer programmes of studies by adopting new flexible means. For example, video conferencing facilities are developed to enable isolated learners to share learning with others in remote areas. Other than these, the ICT-enabled support services include the pre-admission counselling, admission process, delivery of study materials both in print media and audio visual forms, provision for subject specific academic counselling, audio visual viewing facilities, participation in teleconferencing and ICT-based e-learning. Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) satellite systems are increasingly seen as a powerful distribution mechanism for Internet based resources, with ready access to interactive learning tools and e-mail.

In India too, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) provides multi-channel, multiple media teaching-learning packages for instruction and self-learning. The different components used for teaching/learning include self-instructional print and audio-video materials, radio and television broadcasts, face-to-face counseling/tutoring, laboratory and hands-on experience, teleconferencing, video conferencing, interactive radio counseling, interactive multimedia CD-ROM and Internet -based learning, and the use of mobile phones for instant messaging. The university is developing interactive multimedia content and learner support through video-conferencing and web-based platforms by utilising both the Edu Sat and the Internet. Other than these, the Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC) in the IGNOU campus, is entrusted with the task of production of audio and video educational programmes.

EMPC coordinates the educational radio and television channels like Gyan Darshan and Gyan Vani, for enhancing and supplementing the teaching-learning process. The example of IGNOU shows that the application of ICTs is really effective in enhancing the learners support services above the conventional means and methods of learning. (adapted from http:// www.digitallearning.in)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5 : What do you mean by the word 'access' in educational use? How have ICTs enabled a better access?

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Q 6 : How have ICTs revolutionized the world of education?

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10.4 ROLE OF ICTs IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

You must note that for the developing countries of the world, the potentials of ICTs have enabled more access and delivery of quality secondary as well as higher education. ICTs have offered the developing countries unprecedented opportunities to enhance educational systems, improve policy formulation and execution, and widen the range of opportunities for all especially the unreached. However, as I have already told you, the benefits of ICTs can be best seen through its use in Open and Distance Education. Open and Distance learning is defined by the Commonwealth of Learning as "a way of providing learning opportunities

that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or both time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings; and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses." This means that both ICTs and the ODL mode of education should adopt an integrated approach to enhance a more meaningful teaching-learning process. In the following subsections you will read more about the role and use of ICTs in open and distance education.

10.4.1 Advantages of ICTs

The advantages of ICT can be understood through the following headings:

A. Easy Access to Education

One of main features of ICTs is the ability to transcend time and space. ICTs make room for asynchronous learning often characterized by a time lag between the delivery of instruction and its reception by the targeted learners. For example, Online Learning and E-Learning facilities provide course materials that may be accessed online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ICT-based educational delivery also dispenses with the need for a physical location for interaction to take place. Of late, teleconferencing and video conferencing technologies have enabled instruction to be received simultaneously by multiple, geographically dispersed learners. Thus, by using ICTs, it is possible to ensure global learning of education.

B. Access to Remote Learning Resources:

Because of ICTs, both teachers and learners no longer have to rely solely on printed books and other such materials for their educational needs. With the Internet and the World Wide Web, a huge amount of information on almost every subject can be accessed from anywhere at anytime of the day, and by an unlimited number

of people. This has gained tremendous popularity in the schools of both the developed and the developing countries. ICTs also have facilitated access to resource persons, mentors, experts, researchers, professionals, business leaders, and peers from all over the world.

C. Learner-Centered Learning Environment:

Appropriate use of ICTs has brought in a paradigm shift in both the pedagogical aspect of teaching and content delivery of contemporary education. When used appropriately, computers and Internet technologies enable new ways of teaching and learning rather than simply allow teachers and students to do what they have done before in a better way. These new ways of teaching and learning have constituted a shift from a teacher-centered pedagogy, characterized more by rote learning to one that is fully learner-centered.



LET US KNOW

Teleconferencing refers to "interactive electronic communication among people located at two or more different places." In open and distance learning, teleconferencing has been a useful tool for providing direct instruction and learner support.

There are four types of teleconferencing techniques based on the nature and extent of interactivity and the sophistication of the technology:

1) Audio conferencing: It involves the live exchange of voice messages over a telephone network.
2) Audio-graphic conferencing: It involves the exchange of text and still images such as graphs, diagrams or pictures along with voice messages.
3) Video conferencing: It allows the exchange not just of voice and graphics but also of moving images. Videoconferencing uses either a satellite link or television network.

4) Web-based conferencing: It involves the transmission of text, graphic, audio and visual media via the Internet. It requires the use of a computer with a browser and communication can be both synchronous and asynchronous.

10.4.2 ICT-Based Learning: Different Evolving Areas

In today's context, there is no doubt about the fact that ICTs are a potentially powerful tools for extending educational opportunities to the marginalized groups. These groups include-ethnic minorities, girls and women, disable persons, elderly people who are traditionally excluded from formal education due to cultural or social reasons. Following the usefulness of ICTs, various buzzwords in the education sector have been introduced all over the world. These are as follows

- **Active Learning:** Learners learn as they do and work on real-life problems, making learning less abstract and more relevant to the learner's needs and real life situation. In this way ICT-enhanced learning promotes increased learner engagement. ICT-enhanced learning is also "just-in-time" learning in which learners can choose what to learn when they need to learn it.
- **Collaborative Learning:** ICT-supported learning encourages interaction, cooperation and collaboration among students, teachers and experts regardless of where they are. ICT-supported learning provides learners the opportunity to work with people from different cultures, thereby helping to enhance learners' communicative skills as well as their global awareness.
- **Creative Learning:** ICT-supported learning promotes the manipulation of existing information and the creation of real-world products rather than the re-production of received information.
- **Integrated Learning:** ICT-enhanced learning promotes a thematic, integrated approach to teaching and learning. This approach eliminates the artificial separation between the different

disciplines and between theory and practice that characterizes the traditional classroom approach.

- **Evaluative Learning:** ICT-enhanced learning is directed towards students. Unlike the static, text or print-based educational technologies, ICT-enhanced learning recognizes that there are many different learning pathways and many different articulations of knowledge. ICTs allow learners to explore and evaluate their own learning rather than merely listen and remember.
- **E-learning/Online Learning/Web-based Learning:** Although most commonly associated with higher education and corporate training, e-learning, online learning and web-based learning encompass learning at all levels, both formal and non-formal. Such learning uses information networks-the Internet, an intranet (LAN) or extranet (WAN)-whether wholly or in part, for course delivery, interaction and facilitation.
- **Blended Learning:** Another term that is gaining currency is blended learning. This refers to the learning models that combine traditional classroom practice with e-learning solutions. For example, students in a traditional class can be assigned both print-based and online materials. There may be online mentoring sessions with their teacher through chat, and are subscribed to a class email list. Or a Web-based training course can be enhanced by periodic face-to-face instruction.
- **M-Learning :** The term M-Learning, or "mobile learning", primarily focuses on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices. One definition of mobile learning is-any sort of learning that takes place when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that takes place when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. M-Learning also means learning with portable technologies like MP3 players, notebooks and mobile phones. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner, interacting with portable technologies, and learning that reflects

a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population. (Extracted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MLearning)



LET US KNOW

Community Radio is a type of service that offers radio broadcasting through community radio stations that serve geographic communities and communities of interest. Since Community Radio reflects the activities of the Community, the broadcasting jurisdiction is small usually covering a radius of 15 km.They broadcast relevant and popular content to a local/specific audience, which may often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. Community radio stations are operated, owned, and driven by the communities they serve. Community radio is not-for profit system and provides a mechanism for facilitating individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own diverse stories, to share experiences, and in a media rich world to become active creators and contributors of media. Community radio has developed differently in different countries and thus the term has somewhat different meanings in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Even in India, more than 300 CR stations have been established. CR has also proved to be an important means of imparting education. We should know that the first community radio of the North East of India "Gnan Taranga" has been established under the auspices of KKH State Open University, Guwahati. This is followed by "Radio Luit" the second CR of the NE established by Gauhati University under the Institute of Distance and Open Learning.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7 : What are the three advantages of the use of ICT in education?

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Q 8 : Name the new concepts of learning that are increasingly being used in modern times?

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Q 9 : What is M-learning?

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Q 10 : Mention some institutes of the world which have used ICTs as the means of imparting contemporary education.

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10.4.3 Some Institutes Offering ICT Based Education

Many higher educational institutions around the world are offering courses through ICT -enhanced open and distance learning. The Virtual University of the Monterrey Institute of Technology in Mexico uses a combination of print, live and recorded broadcasts, and the Internet to deliver courses to students throughout Mexico and in several Latin American countries.

The African Virtual University, which was established in 1997 with funding support from the World Bank, uses satellite and Internet technologies to provide distance learning opportunities to individuals in various English-speaking and French-speaking countries throughout Africa.

At the Philippines Open University, course materials are still predominantly print based but online tutorials are becoming a convenient alternative to face-to-face tutorials especially for students. Internet and Web-based initiatives have also been developed at the secondary education level. The Virtual High School is a result of efforts of a nationwide consortium of school districts in the United States to promote the development and sharing of Web-based courses. In Canada, Open School offers a wide range of courses and resources to grades K-12 teachers and students that meet the requirements of the British

Columbia curriculum. Most importantly, course delivery is done through a mix of broadcast and video, while some courses are delivered totally online.

Over the last years many corporate universities have come into existence in the world. Corporate universities are primarily in-house organizations in large multinational companies that make use of videoconferencing and the Internet for the training of employees. If this growth continues, the number of corporate universities will exceed the umber of traditional universities by 2015.

In Asia, the 44 radio and TV universities in China (including the China Central Radio and Television University), Universities Terbuka in Indonesia, and Indira Gandhi National Open University have made extensive use of radio and television, both for direct class teaching and for school broadcasting, to reach more of their respective large populations. For these institutions, broadcasts are often accompanied by printed materials and audio cassettes.

Japan's University of the Air was broadcasting 160 television and 160 radio courses in 2000. Each course consists of 15 to 45-

minute lectures broadcast nationwide. Courses are aired over University-owned stations from 6 am to 12 noon. Students are also given supplemental print materials, face-to-face instruction, and online tutorials. Large broadcasting corporations that provide school broadcasts include the British Broadcasting Corporation Education Radio TV in the United Kingdom and the NHK Japanese Broadcasting Station.

South Korea has one of the most advanced ICT infrastructures in the world. The frequency of ICT use in South Korean society has changed the Korean higher educational system. South Korea currently has around 15 single-mode virtual universities that offer only ICT-based courses. Among these are the Korea Cyber University, the Korea Digital University, and the Open Cyber University. These universities specialize in lifelong learning and vocational education. Courses offered cover a wide range of fields, including technology, management, law, languages, social sciences, education, and theology. Online courses are also offered by more than 100 South Korean dual-mode universities. It began with the launch of the Virtual University Trial Project (VUTP) in 1998.

In developing countries, school broadcasts are often a result of a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information. General educational programming consists of a broad range of programme types-news programmes, documentary programs, quiz shows, educational cartoons, etc.-that afford non-formal educational opportunities for all types of learners. Even India is also not lagging behind. In India also more reputed institutes like the IITs and open universities like IGNOU, New Delhi, YCMOU, Maharastra, conventional universities like Jadavpur University, Kolkata are far ahead of other educational institutes, in applying the benefits of ICTs in imparting education.

10.5 CHALLENGES OF ICT IN EDUCATIONAL USE

Use of ICTs is not free from problems. One common challenge is bridging the gap between those who have access to technology and those who do no have. Because of this gap the introduction and integration of ICTs at different levels and in various types of education will be a most challenging undertaking. The failure to meet the challenge would mean a further widening of the gap and the increasing of existing economic and social inequalities between the rich and the poor. However, it is commonly accepted that there are four major challenges that an institute must try to cope with while introducing ICTs. These are in respect of effectiveness, equity, cost and sustainability. Let us have a closer look at them.

- **Effectiveness :**

  The effectiveness of ICTs mostly depends on how and for what purpose they are used. Moreover as a mode of educational delivery, ICTs may not work for everyone, everywhere in the same way. Consequently, one of the most difficult problems in trying to assess the effectiveness of ICT is that standardized tests cannot capture the kinds of benefits that are expected to be derived in a learner-centered environment. The impact of educational radio and television broadcasts on the quality of basic education still remains an under-researched area.

- **Cost :**

  Broadly speaking ICT enhanced teaching-learning processes is more expensive. For example, educational television broadcasts and computer-based online-learning programmes are more expensive than radio broadcasts. Heavy expenses on ICT infrastructure is a hurdle for the developing countries to make a meaningful shift towards ICT-enhanced learning.

- **Equity :**

  Given the wide disparities between rich and poor countries and between different groups in gaining access to ICTs, it is argued that the use of ICTs in education will widen the existing divisions among

the people. This will also intensify economic, social, cultural, geographic and gender-related problems. So, the use of ICTs in education, when done without careful considerations, may result in the further marginalization of those who are already disadvantaged or underprivileged. For example, women have less access to ICTs and fewer opportunities for ICT-related training compared to men mainly because of illiteracy and lack of education and mobility. Equal attention must be paid to ensuring that the technology is actually being used by the target learners.

- **Sustainability :**

  There is no one-to-one formula for determining the success rate of ICT integration in the educational system. The various challenges that policymakers and planners, educators, education administrators and other stakeholders need to consider include educational policy and planning, infrastructure, language and content development, capacity building, and financing. Attempts to enhance and reform education through ICTs require clear and specific objectives, guidelines and time-bound targets, the mobilization of required resources and the commitment at all levels to see the initiative begin.

10.6 ADOPTING STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN ODL

However, the experience of introducing different ICTs in the classroom and other educational settings over the past several decades suggests that the full realization of the potential educational benefits of ICTs is not regular. Instead, the effective integration of ICTs into the educational system is a complex, multifaceted process that involves not just technology but also curriculum and pedagogy, institutional readiness, teacher competencies and long-term financing, among others. This briefing is intended to help policymakers define a framework for the appropriate and effective use of ICTs in the educational systems by first providing a brief overview of the potential benefits of ICT use in education. Secondly, it addresses the four

broad issues in the use of ICTs in education-effectiveness, cost, equity, and sustainability.

The policy makers and stakeholders of education must, first of all, be clear about the outcomes of ICT based education. They should choose an appropriate technology but should also see the potentials of such technology. The potentials of each technology vary according to how it is used. ICTs like print, audio/video cassettes, radio and TV broadcasts, computers or the Internet may be used for presentation and demonstration. On the other hand, the full potential of networked computers and internet as educational tools will remain unrealized if they are used merely for presentation or demonstration.

Radio and television have been used widely as educational tools since the 1920s and the 1950s, respectively. There may be three possible approaches to the use of Radio and TV broadcasting in education-a. Direct Class Teaching where broadcast programming substitutes the teachers on a temporary basis; b. School Broadcasting where broadcast programming provides complementary teaching and learning resources not otherwise available; c. General Educational Programming Over Community which are national and international stations which provide general and informal educational opportunities.

Besides the above mentioned recommendations measures must be taken in terms of Education administrators, Technical Support Specialists, Teacher Professional Development. In this context, leadership plays a vital role in the integration of ICTs with education. Content development is another crucial area that is too often overlooked. The bulk of the existing ICT-based educational material is likely to be in English or of little relevance to education in developing countries especially at the primary and secondary levels. There is a need to develop original educational content in the vernacular languages too. Radio Programs, Interactive Multimedia Learning Materials on CD-ROM or DVD, Web-based courses etc. adapt existing content, and convert print-based content to digital media. These are the tasks for which educational content development specialists such as instructional designers, scriptwriters, audio and video production specialists, programmers,

multimedia course authors, course editor and web-developers are needed.

A rigorous analysis of the present state of the educational system is a must before the introduction of ICT. ICT-based interventions must take into account the current institutional practices and arrangements. Specifically, the barriers to ICT use need to be identified, including those related to curriculum and pedagogy, infrastructure, capacity-building, language and content, and financing. The specification of educational goals at different levels as well as the different modalities of the use of ICTs that can best be employed in pursuit of these goals. This requires of the policymaker an understanding of the potentials of different ICTs when applied in different contexts for different purposes.

10.7 USE OF ICTS IN THE NORTH EAST OF INDIA

In an economically underdeveloped and educationally stagnant Indian region like the North East where ODL still needs expansion, ICT-enabled education may be considered a solution to the various problems of outreaching. As we all can see, the growth and penetration of digital technologies in recent years have greatly influenced the educational practices in North East India as well. Of late, the North-East, like the other parts of India, has experienced tremendous growth in the use of technology to enhance learning through the distance mode. In the context of entering into ICT-based learning in Assam, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), Guwahati as well as the Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL), Gauhati University have taken a number of visionary initiatives. IDOL, GU has launched the first e-portal of the North-East namely www.bodhidroom.idolgu.org on November 13, 2009. The new portal has thus become a key tool for the delivery and development of educational contents to be used by teachers, experts and students not only in the North-East but also in the other parts of the world. Similarly, K. K. Handiqui State Open University has earned a distinction in the North East region by promoting the use of ICTs in higher education through its initiative to produce audio and audio-visual materials for the learners. It has also launched its

web portal shortly. Rightly proposed to be name this portal as e-dristi, this portal is intended to provide a number of facilities like provision of audio book and e-radio service, audiovisual programmes and so on. Besides various online social networks (such as www.snkkhsou.org, facebook, twitter, idolgu etc)have been launched and regularly conducted in KKHSOU as well as in IDOL, Guwahati for the purpose of fulfilling the various educational needs of the learners. Of late, in Guwahati, Assam Community Radio has gained tremendous popularity. You have already come to know the first Community Radio Station of the North East of India "Gnan Taranga" has been set up under the auspices of KKH State Open University, Guwahati. This is followed by "Radio Luit", which has so far been the second CRS of the NE set up by Gauhati University under the Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL). The Community radio of KKHSOU has been connected to Internet radio so that anybody from any part of the globe can listen to “Jana Taranga” not to speak of the learners spreading over Assam. You should note that such marked developments bear testimony to Assam's emergence large as a 'knowledge community' in a technology-driven world. Other institutes, as far as the latest information goes, are also making their own web-based systems for use very shortly. Such initiatives are sure to have a direct impact on the quality of education as well as on the increase of Gross Enrolment Ratio in the North Eastern Region.

While dealing with the issue of quality assurance in Open and Distance education, one cannot but refer to what the National Knowledge Commission of India has stated: "The biggest challenge in higher education, therefore, is the provision of quality higher education to the greatest number, at the lowest possible cost to the learner" (NKC, 2009, page 5). But, it is also important to note that the National Knowledge Network (NKN) project also aims at establishing a strong and robust internal Indian network which will be capable of providing secure and reliable connectivity. Using NKN, all vibrant institutions of India with vision and passion will be able to transcend space and time limitations in accessing information and knowledge, and derive the associated benefits for themselves and for the society. If NKN becomes a reality, it would be considered a significant step towards ushering

in a knowledge revolution in the country with connectivity to more than 1500 institutions from which the NE would be one of the most benefitted regions in India.



10.8 LET US SUM UP

- The meaning of ICTs and its educational use. Information and communication technologies (ICTs)-which include radio and television, as well as the latest digital technologies such as computers and the Internet-have been hailed as potentially powerful tools for educational change and reform.
- Open University of the United Kingdom popularly known as UKOU, established in 1969, which is also the first educational institution in the world wholly dedicated to open and distance learning, still relies heavily on print-based materials supplemented by radio, television. Recently, they have also introduced online programmes to facilitate effective learning.
- The growth of communication technologies has a long history. Now there is a system of multimedia communication. It is quite situational and based on changing time and explosion of innovative thoughts and ideas.
- In open and distance learning, ICT is very useful for making education self-instructional learning. Thus, the both ICTs and the ODL mode of education should adopt an integrated approach to enhance a more meaningful teaching- learning process.
- Various education open and distance learning institutions or universities of the world or in India as well as in Northeast, have their own design of technology to be applied in their educational purposes.
- Effectiveness, sustainability or longevity, cost and equity are some of the challenges that should be taken into account while introducing the ICTs in the educational programmes of the institutions.



10.9 FURTHER READING

1) Victoria L. Tinio: ICT in Education

2) Communication Technology for Distance Education (ES-318) of Staff Training and Research Institution of Distance Education, IGNOU

3) NKC Brochure in Website: http://www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/

4) NKN Brochure in Website: www.nkn.in



10.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: ICTs stand for Information and Communication Technologies. ICTs refer to the various set of technological tools and resources that help communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information of various kinds. These tools mainly include print media, computers, broadcasting technologies like radio and television, telephony and the internet. The use of ICTs has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of education in both formal and non-formal settings.

Ans to Q No 2 : The Open University of the United Kingdom popularly known as UKOU, is the first open university in the world. It was established in 1969. Although they still rely heavily on print-based materials supplemented by radio, television, they have also utilized the resources of ICTs by introducing online programmes to facilitate effective learning.

Ans to Q No 3 : In that time, human beings communicated through writings on stone or wood and communication was limited only to a small area. They made extensive use of symbols, gestures, signals to communicate among themselves. Gradually, other means of communication were also tried and invented. For example, the invention of the printing press revolutionized the processes of communication to a larger group.

Ans to Q No 4 : The different stages of the growth of communication technologies can be seen through Audio Media, Audio-Visual Media, Telecommunication, Multimedia Communication.

Ans to Q No 5 : Access in educational use means to be able to reach out to a large number of students. The invention of telephones, fax machines and mobile phones, and now computers have revolutionized the world of communication. However, the latest trends in teleconferencing like audio conferencing, video conferencing and computer conferencing, have made access much more efficient. The idea of access has further undergone drastic change with the development of Internet and the World Wide Web.

Ans to Q No 6 : ICTs have changed the educational sector in three possible ways: a) ICTs have reduced the cost of education, (b) ICTs have enabled a large number of learners to enroll in need-based educational programmes, and (c) ICTs have reduced the time required for introducing newer programmes of studies by adopting new flexible means.

Ans to Q No 7 : Anytime, Anywhere and Anyhow, Access to Remote Learning Resources, and Learner-Centered Learning Environment

Ans to Q No 8 : Active Learning, Collaborative Learning, Creative Learning, Integrated Learning, Evaluative Learning, E-learning/Online Learning/Web-based Learning, Blended Learning and M-Learning

Ans to Q No 9 : The term M-Learning, or "mobile learning", primarily focus on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices like MP3 players, notebooks and mobile phones. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner and learning that reflects a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population.

Ans to Q No 10 : Monterrey Institute of Technology in Mexico, The African Virtual University, Philippines Open University, Universitas Terbuka in Indonesia, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, Japan's University of the Air, Korea Cyber University, YCMOU, Maharastra.



10.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1: What is the meaning of ICTs?

Q 2 : How have ICTs affected the processes of education?

Q 3 : What are the evolving areas in ICT based learning?

Q 4 : Why is ICT important in open and distance learning?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1 : What are the different stages in the growth and development of information and communication technologies?

Q 2 : What is basic role of community radio in the society? Why is it used for the educational purposes? Explain.

Q 3 : Name the new concepts of learning that are increasingly being used in modern times? Explain.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1 : Do you feel that ICTs are advantageous tools for modern day education? If yes, please explain with detail.

Q 2 : Make a brief review of the challenges that the higher education system might have faced while upgrading the traditional education to ICT based one.

Q 3 : Give a brief overview of the use of ICT in the North Eastern educational system.

Q 4 : Make a survey of the use of ICTs in the North East of India.

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UNIT 11 : OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs) AND ITS CHALLENGES IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Concept of OERs

- 11.3.1 Need of OERs in Education
- 11.3.2 Scope of OERs in Education

11.4 Challenges of OER in the context of India

11.5 Let Us Sum Up

11.6 Further Reading

11.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.8 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- define the term Open Educational Resources better known as OER
- explain the concept of OER as a new addition to modern education
- discuss the need and scope of OERs
- enlist the challenges of OERs in the context of India.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit familiarises you with the concept of Open Educational Resources or OER, as it has been so coined. OER can be roughly understood as any kind of teaching-learning and research materials in any medium to be used in the public domain under an Open License that permits their free use. Thus, free availability and reusability of OERs are the key issues that can enable generations of learners to use them in both formal and non-formal mode of education. And, the digital revolution of the 21st

century has made OER the buzzword in any serious educational institute of contemporary times. OERs have enabled educators to be more creative as they have to deal with wide range of experiences in terms of capacity and background of the learners whom they may not meet. One key difference between OER and any other educational resource is that OER have an open license, preferably a Creative Commons License, which allows adaptation and reuse without having to request the copyright holder. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Open Courseware (OCW) initiative, in which teachers placed their lecture notes online for free use, inaugurated the movement globally. Thus, by the end of this unit, you will not only be in a position to explain the concept of OER, but will also be able to discuss the need and scope of OER and the challenges of OER implementation in a country like India.

11.3 CONCEPT OF OERS

"What is OER?" is perhaps the most important question for those who have not yet heard the term OER. Open educational resources (OER) are free and openly licensed educational materials that can be used for teaching, learning, research, and other purposes. But, before discussing the concept of OERs in detail, let us first have a look at some of the definitions of OERs that have been accepted worldwide to be the standard definition of the term.

- **The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation :**

"OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge."

- **Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development :**

"Digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students, and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning, and research. OER includes learning content, software tools to develop, use, and distribute

content, and implementation resources such as open licences."

- **UNESCO :**

"Teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions."

- **The Cape Town Open Education Declaration :**

"[O]pen educational resources should be freely shared through open license which facilitate use, revision, translation, improvement and sharing by anyone. Resources should be published in formats that facilitate both use and editing, and that accommodate a diversity of technical platforms. Whenever possible, they should also be available in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities and people who do not yet have access to the Internet."

- **The Wikieducator OER Handbook :**

"The term Open Educational Resource(s) (OER) refers to educational resources (lesson plans, quizzes, syllabi, instructional modules, simulations, etc.) that are freely available for use, reuse, adaptation, and sharing."

- **OER Commons :**

"Open Educational Resources are teaching and learning materials that you may freely use and reuse, without charge. OER often have a Creative Commons or GNU license that state specifically how the material may be used, reused, adapted, and shared."

Nearly all the definitions provided above mention that OER is a kind of 'content' or 'product' which is free and freely available, is suitable not just for higher education but for all levels of education, and are released under an open license. OER can be reused and repurposed to suit different needs and could be available in any medium- print, audio, video, digital. One key difference between OER and other educational resources is that OERs have an open license, which allows adaptation and reuse without having to request the copyright holder. The emergence of what is called 'global commons' powered by the collective efforts of some intelligent people around

the world led to the coining of the term Open Education Resources or OERs at a UNESCO meeting in 2002.

Now, let us have a discussion on the term OER is some detail. The Report of the Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries, UNESCO, Paris, 1-3 July 2002 purposefully showcased, perhaps for the first time, the need to provide educational resources for college and university faculties to adapt in accordance with their curricular and pedagogical requirements. By referring to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology University (MITU) Open Course Ware Initiatives, the participants of the Forum praised MITU's support in producing materials for approximately two thousand courses freely available for use by faculties and students from all over the world. A Forum like this, not only paved the ways for more recent discussions of intellectual property issues, but also helped define the primary stakeholders for such initiatives. One of the major contributions of the Forum was the adoptions of various educational projects in the developing countries. Following this, several OER initiatives have been taken in many of such countries.

A decade later, the World Congress on Open Educational Resources, UNESCO, Paris, 20 to 22 June, 2012, in order to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the 2002 UNESCO Forum, that coined the term Open Educational Resources, urged for developing and adapting OER in different languages to suit different contexts, encouraging Open Licensing of educational materials produced with the help of public funds. Since then, along with the emergence of various higher educational institutions of different sorts, there can be seen a major move by such institutions towards the creation of open educational contents along with printed text books and other reading materials. Besides MITU, other world-ranking universities like Stanford, Yale, University of Michigan, University of California, United Nations University have been offering courses on a wide variety of areas like Business, Energy, Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, science and technology, and have largely contributed internationally to improved teaching learning activities. Such initiatives have not only helped both the learners and the educators in general, but have also empowered the common masses

who can use these resources and reuse the contents for knowledge up-gradation in a competitive world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is OER?

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Q 2: What is an Open License?

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Q 3: What is the basic difference between OER and other educational resource?

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Q 4: Which are the two most important OER conferences stated to have established the importance of OER in the whole world?

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Q 5: Which are some of the world ranking educational institutes that have widely promoted OER?

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11.3.1 Need of OERs in Education

You will note that when the term OER first emerged, the primary focus was on education or higher education so to say. But with the passage of time, since 2002, when the world witnessed greater global participation in primary and secondary education, the concept of OER came to be included as part of institutional policy implementation encompassing many more areas. Besides, the increasing use of Internet in the world has helped realise the fact that OER is no longer a difficult issue among institutions in the Higher Education sector. Other than the internet, linking access and re-use of OER with the increased availability of affordable mobile phones have been the other key development in the 21st century.

Still, the point here is, do we really need OERs when there is a plethora of resources of any kind available in an institution? The answer to this question is that we do need OERs as the movement has resulted in a multi-directional flow of knowledge. OER has provided for a global exchange of knowledge, as we learn from different developmental works being carried out in different parts of the world. Open licensing as an approach to foster the spread of global public goods is another concern that has facilitated the spread of knowledge. In this context, Creative Commons has appeared to be the most significant licensing framework although licensing options can vary from country to country. OERs have two biggest advantages: One, they have the potential to cut costs of printed materials thus saving a whole lot of public money, the other is that OERs can increase access and improve the quality of education.

In the context of India, where the cost of education is increasing day by day, OER may be very useful for educating the poor people living in various adverse areas in which establishing formal educational institutes is a far cry due to geographical and socio-political barriers. For these people, the cost of enrolment into schools and colleges, and acquisition of texts books and other

reading materials is much higher than the family's monthly income. Hence, OER development may be a timely solution for reaching out to these people and realizing the mottos like Zero Rejection Policy and Inclusive Education. Besides, these resources can be usefully taught through the Community Colleges regarding the establishment of which there is clear guidelines under the MHRD, Govt. of India. However, the important point at this juncture is how to ensure the production and availability of educational contents produced with the help of public funds, which in a way fulfils one of the important objectives of the OER revolution today which is also to facilitate inclusive education for the differently- abled children.

Why People feel the Need to share?

The reasons that individuals and institutions are feeling the need of producing and sharing OER can be divided into *three* basic reasons. They are—(a) Technological and economic, (b) Social and (c) Legal Reasons. The technological and economic reasons include improved, less costly and more user-friendly information technology infrastructure (such as broadband), hardware and software. Content is cheaper and easier to produce and costs can be further reduced by sharing. New economic models are emerging around the distribution of free content. Legal reasons refers to new licensing schemes that facilitate free sharing and reuse of content. Social drivers include increased willingness to share.



LET US KNOW

The use, production and sharing of OER is never free from barriers. A technical barrier is lack of broadband availability. Lack of resources to invest in hardware and software for developing and sharing OER is an economic barrier. Barriers such as these are often mentioned as significant obstacles in the developing countries. Social barriers include lack of skills to use the technical innovations and cultural obstacles against sharing or using resources developed by other teachers or institutions.

There are *three* arguments for different Governments to support OER projects worldwide. These are :

- They expand the access to learning for everyone, mostly the non-traditional groups of students and thus widen the scope of this participation in higher education.
- They can be an efficient way of promoting lifelong learning for both the individual and the government.
- They can bridge the gap between non-formal, informal and formal learning.

However, despite all barriers, the following may be seen as the main motives of the rising involvement in OER projects.

- The altruism that sharing knowledge is in line with academic traditions and a very good thing to do.
- Educational institutions (particularly those publicly financed) should leverage taxpayers' money by allowing free sharing and reuse of resources.
- Quality of contents can be improved and the cost of content development can be reduced by sharing and reusing. Use of OER can be attractive to new students.
- There is a need to look for new cost recovery models, like an OER project, as institutions experience growing competition.
- Open sharing will speed up the development of new learning resources, stimulate internal improvement, innovation and reuse and help the institution to keep good records of materials and their internal and external use.

Whether institutions are engaged in OER projects or not, OER can be expected to affect curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. With thousands of (open courseware) courses from internationally reputed higher education institutions being available for free, teachers and educators will need to consider that students compare their curriculum with others. Since the teachers' role as supplier of reading lists and teaching materials is diminishing, OER is likely to accelerate changes in the traditional teaching role and the evolution of more

independent learners. An increase in non-formal and informal learning can be expected to enhance the demand for assessment and recognition of competences gained outside formal learning settings.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: State the two major advantages of OER in the field of education.

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Q 7: What are the three important barriers in the use of OER?

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Q 8: State two reasons for the rising involvements in OER projects.

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11.3.2 Scope of OERs

As you know, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada and UNESCO, Paris have been working for several years now to promote the development and use of OER around the globe. The 2012 World OER Congress was organised jointly in Paris to mark the tenth anniversary of the term OER, with generous support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Paris Declaration made 10 recommendations, out of which the following three are perhaps the most important:

- Foster awareness and use of OER
- Encourage the development and adaptation of OER in a variety

of languages and cultural contexts

- Encourage the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds

These recommendations can be seen as important developments regarding the idea and use of OER as different Governments tend to have accepted the benefits of OERs and have tried to incorporate an OER policy into their education system.

In this context, we must discuss the role of Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has played in popularising the term OER and extending its benefits in a globally competitive educational environment. You will learn that COL maintains an online directory service for OER from the Commonwealth countries which is easily accessible from their website: **www.col.org**. Besides, they have identified free courses from different institutions belonging to the Commonwealth Countries that can be used by other stakeholders in areas like higher education, secondary schooling, teacher education, education for women, and skill development. All these OER courses and materials are developed so that without duplicating effort, participating countries can directly access quality materials that they can adopt and adapt as and when necessary. COL has become one of the major publishers of the latest research and toolkits on OER. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, USA also came forward to support this work that combines the professional development of teachers with the development of OER.

Thus, COL has broadened the scope of OERs by resorting to the following *four* issues:

- Advocacy and awareness generation regarding the benefits and availability of OER.
- Policy development on OER at the national and institutional levels.
- Capacity building so that more governments, institutions and individuals are able to effectively harness the potential of OER.
- Promote research through its publications on OER and its Chairs

programme.

Besides what is mentioned above as part of COL initiatives, many international activities have undertaken OERs, by creating them, reusing them in their own contexts, and even localising them, spreading knowledge like never before and benefitting millions of people worldwide. Some of those activities include the following:

- China Open Resources for Education (CORE) has translated MITU materials into Chinese.
- COL's Instructional Design template, an OER, has been translated and adapted by the Open University of China.
- Materials from COL's website have been translated into Ukrainian, German and other non-Commonwealth languages.
- COL has developed free collaborative content on English Language Teaching which has been used to train teachers in Kenya.

In a country like India, the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) project funded by the MHRD was an important initiative undertaken by 7 IITs, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in 1999. So far, it has been instrumental in promoting e-learning through online courses on Engineering and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences etc. Following this, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad created a number of Open Access learning materials on agricultural practices under Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics (VASAT) to promote literacy on natural resources. Then, a premiere educational institution like IGNOU started the FlexiLearn project to promote personal learning by providing free access to its courses. Till this date, India has become a very large producer of OER in Asia along with other advanced countries like China, Korea and Japan. Today, many other universities and educational institutions in India have created OER. This means that OER is no longer a nascent phenomenon in India. It is important to note that such resources are not only being used in the Open and

Distance mode of education, but the concept of open access is also being increasingly used in the face-to-face and formal mode of education. Many of such resources are also gaining tremendous popularity as YouTube lectures. You will note that many of these premier institutes mentioned above, in partnership with the Government of India, have made their engineering and technology courses available as OER. These are being used in over hundreds of institutions, most of them in remote locations with very limited resources. But, the interesting point is that teachers and students from other educational institutes too are using the free IIT resources to improve the quality of their teaching and learning.

In the state of Assam, the decision taken by Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University to release its course materials and research activities under Open Licensing, has been seen by many as an important step towards the use and sharing of OER. KKHSOU is not only trying to identify the need of various stakeholders, but also making them producers of valuable e-contents. It has been producing important educational resources in the local languages to meet local requirements. Till now, as part of its OER policy, the university has adopted the CC-BY-NC-SA for all its resources. Besides, hundreds of educational videos are made available on YouTube which can be accessed through www.youtube.com/user/kkhsou. The experience of KKHSOU may be seen as a wake-up call for other premiere institutions of the state to develop their own policies of OER and Copyright, and contribute meaningfully to the whole mankind in general.

So, the scope of OER is immense internationally, nationally and globally in the context of the 2nd Decade of the 21st century. However, what incentives and other institutional mechanisms and processes need to be put in place to facilitate the growth and mainstreaming of OER in educational institutions is perhaps the biggest challenge of the time. The following initiatives need to be adopted for further extending the benefits of OERs:

- Developing an ICT policy within the institution
- Elaborating a policy on copyright
- Providing incentives for faculty members such as increments and recognition of OER towards promotions
- Developing a strategy for involving stakeholders from your perspective



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9 : Which are the two international organisations instrumental behind the spread of OER?

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Q 10 : What is the role played by COL in spreading the scope of OERs?

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Q 11 : Name some of the Indian initiatives to promote OER in the Indian contexts.

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11.4 CHALLENGES OF OER APPLICATION

In spite of the efforts made by the international and national OER communities for popularising and extending the benefits of OERs, there are certain major issues that need to be addressed for OER to realise its

transformative potential. These are briefly discussed below:

- First, the digital divide across the world is still continuing. Unlike in case of the developed countries, in a developing country like India, we certainly start with a disadvantage—technological barriers. However, the present debate on the use of OER has to focus not only on technology, but also on the stakeholders' engagement and the politics of power. Exclusivist politics needs to be abolished for the greater benefit of mankind.
- Secondly, one must also try to discuss in what ways OER can help address the issues of equity and inequality. Institutions and groups with better access to resources and infrastructure will make more use of the educational technology innovations such as free and open resources. So, they must ensure that even the low-income students have access to resources previously available only to students of advantageous background.
- Thirdly, against the fact that the opportunity gap between wealthy and poor has expanded like never before, lack of research may end up with the fact that every education technology initiative including OER which does not specifically target the needs of particular populations will benefit only the wealthy.
- Fourthly, many teachers and educators have felt that they did not have either the time or the capacity to locate, adapt, and re-purpose OER material relevant to their work. Lack of interest among the teachers themselves to explore the OER repositories, and unwillingness to learn have resulted in the damage of a vast reservoir of human resources.
- Fifthly, Learners too felt that OER should be fully open and materials should be accessible on alternative technologies such as mobile devices. While the management of the Institutions are only concerned about the challenges relating to intellectual property and copyright issues, lack of a proper understanding of copyright and open licensing has been another hindrance for OER development.
- Lastly, the incentives to be provided to teachers and educators

seriously involved to participate in this OER movement has long been undermined. Because the fundamental duty of a teacher is to improve the quality of education. But the irony is that when many of them have not heard of OER, how can one make them active participants in this movement?



11.5 LET US SUM UP

- From this unit, you have learnt that OER is used to mean any digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research.
- OER includes learning content, software tools, use and distribution of contents, and implementation of resources under an open licence. OER also refers to resources which can be adjusted, and which can provide benefits without restricting the possibilities for others to enjoy them.
- You have learnt that in the context of the knowledge era, sharing of educational resources has been one of the priority areas of the educational institutions. That is why, the need of OER, has been increasingly felt worldwide.
- Besides, the way OER has inaugurated a new era in education, it can be assumed that OER has immense scope internationally, nationally and locally in the days to come.
- The use and creation of OER face a lot of challenges. Some of the challenges are—digital divide across the world, issues of equity and inequality, lack of adequate research on the usefulness of OER, lack of interests and willingness among the educators to accept OER and so on.



11.6 FURTHER READING

1) Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational

Resources. Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development, 2007.

2) https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/What_is_OER%3F

3) www.col.org



11.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: OER can be roughly understood as any kind of teaching learning and research materials in any medium to be used in the public domain under an Open License that permits their free use.

Ans to Q No 2 : An open license, preferably a Creative Commons License, usually allows adaptation and reuse of a resources in any format without having to request the copyright holder.

Ans to Q No 3 : The basic difference is that OERs have an open license, which allows adaptation and reuse without having to request the copyright holder.

Ans to Q No 4 : 1. Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries UNESCO, Paris, 1-3 July 2002. 2. World Congress on Open Educational Resources, UNESCO, Paris, 20 to 22 June, 2012.

Ans to Q No 5 : Massachusetts Institute of Technology University, and other Universities like Stanford, Yale, University of Michigan, University of California, United Nations University and so on.

Ans to Q No 6 : OERs have two biggest advantages: One, they have the potential to cut costs of printed materials thus saving a whole lot of public money; the other is that OERs can increase access and improve the quality of education.

Ans to Q No 7 : Technical barrier is the lack of broadband availability, Economic barrier is the lack of resources to invest in hardware and software for developing and sharing OER, and social barriers are the lack of skills to use the technical innovations and cultural obstacles against sharing or using resources developed by other

teachers or institutions.

Ans to Q No 8 : One reason is that sharing knowledge is in line with academic traditions. The other reason is that educational institutions are using taxpayers' money by allowing free sharing and reuse of resources.

Ans to Q No 9 : Commonwealth of Learning, Canada and UNESCO, Paris have been working for several years now to promote the development and use of OER around the globe.

Ans to Q No 10 : COL maintains an online directory service for OER from the Commonwealth countries. Besides, they have identified free courses from different institutions belonging to the Commonwealth Countries in areas like—higher education, secondary schooling, teacher education and skills development.

Ans to Q No 11 : The NPTEL project funded by the MHRD, ICRISAT, Hyderabad created a number of Open Access learning materials on agricultural practices under VASAT, IGNOU's FlexiLearn project to promote personal learning etc.



11.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: What are the reasons behind the emergence of the OER movement in the 21st century?

Q 2: Write a note on the history of OER movement with particular reference to 2002 Paris Forum.

Q 3: Do we really need OER? Write a note on use of OER in the field of higher education of the 21st century.

Q 4: What is the scope of OER? Why are the people around the globe feeling the need to share?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: In what way, can a teacher or educator use OER himself or herself or help their students use OER for learning?

Q 2: Mention the benefits of an institution resorting to the production and sharing of OERs.

Q 3: Describe in detail the role played by Commonwealth of Learning in popularising the term OER.

Q 4: Many international activities have undertaken OERs. Discuss in detail.

Q 5: What is the current status of OER in a country like India? Describe.

Q 6: What are the major challenges of OER application in contemporary times? Discuss in detail.

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3) Communication Technology for Distance Education (ES-318) of Staff Training and Research Institution of Distance Education, IGNOU
4) Jadhav, Narendra (2010): "Higher Education in India: In Retrospect and Prospects", Fourth Foundation Day Lecture, KKHSOU.
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