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FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESETER-IV

Â

DISTANCE EDUCATION

SOCIOLOGY

Surya Kumar Bhuyan School of Social Sciences

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Subject Experts

1. Prof. Dulumoni Goswami, Dept. of Education, Gauhati University
2. Prof. Nil Ratan Roy, Dept. of Education, Tezpur University
3. Dr. Marami Goswami ,Dept. of Education, NERIM

Course Coordinator : Dr. Ritimoni Bordoloi

SLM Preparation Team

UNITS	CONTRIBUTORS
Units 1, 3	Dr. Ritimoni Bordoloi, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
Unit 2	Dr. Bhaskar Sarmah, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
Unit 4	Dr. Pranab Saikia, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
Unit 5	Dr. Utpal Kalita, R.G.Baruah College
Unit 6	Dr. Shrutidhara Mahanta, Dibrugarh University
Unit 7	Dr. Debasish Paul, Government Kamalanagar college Mizoram & Dr. Ritimoni Bordoloi
Unit 8	Dr. Pritima Sharma, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
Unit 9	Dr. Utpal Kalita, R.G.Baruah College
Unit 10	Prof. Srinath Baruah, Former Vice Chancellor, K K Handiqui State Open University
Unit 11	Dr. Shrutidhara Mahanta, Dibrugarh University
Units 12,13	Dr. Prasenjit Das
Unit 14	Dr. Ritimoni Bordoloi

Editorial Team

Content Editors	:	Units 1,2: Prof. Srinath Baruah, Former Vice Chancellor, K K Handiqui State Open University Units 3,4,5,6,7 (In-House Editing)
Lanquage Editor	:	Units 1,2,3,4,7: Professor Rabin Goswami, Former HOD, English Department, Cotton College Units 5,6: Dr. Prasenjit Das, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
Format Editor	:	Dr. Ritimoni Bordoloi, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University

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Head Office : Patgaon, Rani Gate, Guwahati-781017
City Office: Resham Nagar, Khanapara, Guwahati 781022
Web : www.kkhsou.in

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course is designed for UG 4th Semester learners who have chosen Education/Sociology as core course as well as minor course. This course intends to discuss various aspects of distance education.

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 *Seventh Unit* explains various courses for community development in the ODL mode.

The *Egiht Unit* explains how distance education are related to rural dvelopment and women empowerment. The *Ninth Unit* deals with the role of distance education in teacher training programmes. The *Tenth Unit* explains the concept of quality education and quality assurance in distance education. The *Eleventh Unit* highlights the meaning, purposes and types of assessment in ODL. The *Twelfth Unit* deals with the nature and growth of information and communication technology and their uses in distance education in India. The *Thirteenth* and *Fourteenth 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.

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

Q1 : 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 , Hydrabad1982
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 : 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.

- ***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.

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, re-designed 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 differences 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)

Q1: Write about the importance of Study Skills for distance learner.

Q2: Why is highlighting a text useful for distance learner?

Q3: 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)

Q1: Effective learning requires effective listening. Explain.

Q2: Explain the need and importance of SQW5R method.

Q3: How do you develop your communication skills? Explain.

Q4: 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.



7.9 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.

UNIT 7: COURSES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ODL MODE

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Community Development through Distance Education

7.4 Various Courses for Community Development in the ODL Mode

7.5 Problems & Challenges of Offering Courses for Community Development in the ODL Mode

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 -

- explain what is meant by community development
- explain the role of distance education for community development
- identify the various courses that can be offered through distance mode for community development
- describe the challenges of community development offered through ODL mode.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

A community or society is a place or unit where a group of people lives in the same place or possess the same characteristics in terms of norms, values, attitudes, religion, identity etc. In fact, people living in a particular geographical area form a community following some common principles of life. They maintain mutual understanding among the members

of the place or unit, which ensures their peaceful living by engaging themselves in different personal and social activities. Therefore, the members of a society or a community should be rational and educated so that a productive and progressive society can be ensured. Hence, each member of the society should have adequate experience that makes them mature enough to think about their own life in the constructive and positives way. The positive and constructive thinking of the people brings positive transformations into the society, into the community or into the nation to a great extent. In fact, an ideal community should fulfill all economic, social and spiritual needs of each of the members, and this could be achieved only through producing an educated, skilled and competent group of people in the society. Therefore, the educational institutions, which are built and managed by the people of a community in order to bring welfare to the people of that community, should play the prominent role by introducing some need-based courses that meet the expectations of the people of that community. Along with the conventional mode of education, the ODL system has been able to cater to the needs of the people of any community by enhancing their capacities and skills irrespective of location, gender, age, socio-cultural background and so on. In order to form a knowledge-enabled population or to produce knowledge economies, it has become more important to equip all people with higher order skills to become ***Human capital*** in the true sense. As higher educational institutions, the universities will have to evolve with the needs of the community by introducing programmes, infrastructural facilities and delivery methods, enhancing learning procedures and technologies that can reflect the community's demands and attitudes. ODL is the only way that can encompass the motto of life-long learning, equip the members of the community with some professional and vocational courses and training that will provide opportunity for self-development and career advancement to the members of a community. In this unit, we shall discuss the various courses that will help the learners to understand the needs and importance of the courses for community development, and how these courses will boost up the capacity of the members of the community to a great extent.



Human Capital:
Refers to the skills, knowledge and experience possessed by an individual or population viewed in terms of their value or cost to an organization or country. It is determined by education, training, medical treatment, and is effectively a means of production.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is a community?

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7.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

In the introduction part of this unit, we have already discussed what is meant by a community, why is distance education important for mobilising the capacity of the members of the community and so on. According to the Planning Commission of India, "Community development is an attempt to bring about a social and economic transformation of village life through the efforts of the people themselves." Mahatma Gandhi said that the true India lives in the villages and if India is to be developed, the villages cannot be ignored. Even after seventy years of India's independence, over 65% of the population is living in the rural areas, and they are primarily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Under such circumstances, it is essential to educate a poor farmer to be free from his miseries. Besides, it is also necessary to educate the rural masses with some need-based courses that would help them to lead a decent standard of life. However, the formal educational institutions are very inadequate to produce knowledge-enabled population, due to various restrictions. This has led to the adoption of distance education mechanism. Distance education, therefore, can play an important role to bridge the gap and can allow every individual to have some basic education and improve his or her living conditions.

The significance of distance education in the development of the Nation can be understood from the fact that today non-formal mode of education or open learning are encouraged at all levels of education. These programme are envisaged for providing a network of learning opportunities to those who cannot or do not avail the facilities of the formal system for one reason or the other. They would also provide opportunities for recurrent and life-long education and constitute a major means of promoting greater equity.

Community development, on the other hand, indicates to ensure the wellbeing of the people so that they may be able to realize the necessity of productive life. Education is the only way to make people productive and resourceful. The ODL mode is the only medium for transacting the knowledge and information to the people at anytime, anywhere and for any one irrespective of age, geographical location, time, class and gender. In fact, by using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), ODL can reach out to the unreached at a minimum cost. Therefore, in today's educational parlance, 'Bring your Own Device' into your academic and educational transactions has almost become a catchy way to address the need for the use of ICTs in education. However, the problems like gender disparity in education, digital divisions, deprivation and marginalization of education etc. are some of the problems, which need to be reduced with the help of the ODL system. The use of asynchronous technologies in the blended mood is the best way to reduce the digital division between the people in rural and urban areas, developed and under developed areas and so on. Open Educational Resources can create knowledge movement by giving new opportunities for learning. Distance education based on OERs removes the limits and offer the possibility of widening of participants in education. Thus, the democratization of education is possible only through the ODL mode where no one is supposed to be deprived of needful education.

It is also stated that the communities are at the 'grassroots' of a country, and they help in the progress and development of the society. Therefore, there is an urgent need to convert the general population to a

knowledge-driven or knowledge-enabled population. In this context, the higher educational institutions are the think tanks for making the knowledge-enabled population in the communities by introducing various need-based courses that would eventually help them to have a standard of livelihood. The ODL system is the most viable option mobilising the people to cope with the present need and making them trained to be productive and efficient citizens of the communities or the societies. Through launching various programmes, the open universities and other ODL institutions can build up the confidence among the people to develop a sense of critical mindset as well as a sense of realising the importance of environment and the changing situation of the present day world. Besides, different forms of awareness programmes on different issues such as population explosion, environmental challenges, entrepreneurial opportunities, understanding human rights etc. can be organised at the level of the community for making the people conscious about the burning issues affecting the lives of the people in the community.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: How does open and distance education help in community development?

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7.4: VARIOUS COURSES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The practitioners of community development have over many years developed a range of skills and approaches for working within the local

communities and with the disadvantaged people in particular. These include less formal educational methods, community organizational activities and group-work skills. Since, 1960s and 70s, through the various anti-poverty programmes in both the developed and developing countries, the community development practitioners have been influenced by structural analysis of the causes of disadvantage and poverty i.e. inequalities in the distribution of wealth, income, land etc., lack of political power and the inability of the people's power to effect social change. Thus, the influence of such educators as Paulo Friere, the Brazillian educator, famously rejected the banking system of education policy in his seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Because, the banking system of education allows only a few people to receive education in society. Freire wanted to provide pedagogy of education to all sections of people in a liberal way because he felt that the pedagogy of the oppressed and marginalised can only boost up the knowledge economy, and subsequently, all people in a society can contribute economically and socially in an equitable manner.

A number of different approaches to community development can be recognised, which may be discussed in terms of the following:

- Community Economic Development (CED);
- Community Capacity Building (CCB);
- Social Capital Formation; Political Participatory Development;
- Non-violent Direct Action;
- Ecologically Sustainable Development;
- Asset-based Community Development;
- Faith-based Community Development;
- Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR);
- Community Mobilization;
- Community Empowerment;
- Community Participation;
- Participatory Planning including Community-Based Planning (CBP);
- Community-Driven Development (CDD); and
- Different approaches to fund communities directly.

The theme behind all the aforesaid approaches is to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need for effecting changes within their communities.

Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University—the first Open University in India was started in 1982. By 2018, there are one national and fourteen state open universities functioning in the country. The courses on offer by these distance education centers are also varied in nature. It is true that many replicable courses parallel to the conventional higher education system are on demand, and they are also on offer in the Open universities. These courses are mainly for those who are school dropouts, neo literates, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, housewives, women and other deprived or marginal groups.

The open universities have been offering various courses for the masses as well as for the in-service professionals in highly specialized areas. The important features of such courses are the delivery mechanism(s) and the provision of teacher training at the work site. There are many areas of work under these courses, which are aimed at the grass root level workers. Some of such courses which are being aimed at self-employment or which would promote entrepreneurship are as the following:

- **Education and Child Guidance**
  - Education and Child Guidance courses
  - Early Childhood Education courses
  - Pre and Primary Teacher Education courses
  - Guidance courses
- **Community Development**
  - Food and Nutrition courses
  - Human Rights courses
  - Consumer Awareness courses
  - Rural Development courses
  - Women Empowerment courses
  - HIV and Family Education courses
  - Computer Literacy courses

- Youth Development Programme courses

- **Environment**
  - Conservation of Forest courses
  - Repairing of Radio and Tape Recorder courses
  - Fitter courses
  - Domestic Wiremen courses
  - Mechanic- Automobile courses
  - Plumber courses
  - Lathe Operator courses
  - Mason courses
  - Multi-skill Vocational Programme courses
  - Industrial Painting Technician courses
  - Gardeners Training courses
  - Computer Assembling courses
  - Certificate in Security Services courses
  - Agriculture/ Horticulture based Photography courses
  - Bee Keeping courses
  - Mushroom Cultivation courses
  - Fish Farming courses
  - Poultry Farming courses and others

Such classification of courses are usually done based on the type and target group of the courses. The courses listed above are mainly intended for the masses associated with the grass root level having varying eligibility criteria. There are a myriad of job titles for community development workers, and their employers include public authorities and voluntary or non-governmental organizations, funded by the state and by independent grant making bodies. Since 1970s, the prefix word 'community' has also been adopted by several other occupations from the police and health workers to planners and architects, who have been influenced by community development approaches. Unfortunately, in spite of the efforts undertaken to make education, particularly vocational, technical, professional and or entrepreneurship courses, available at the door step of all, the majority of

the beneficiaries have not benefitted much or they are not availing these opportunities. This calls for the development of a comprehensive policy of distance education that would addressed for individual and social development.



ACTIVITY 7.1

Identify and design some of the courses that are relevant to your locality for making people productive economically in your own community.

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7.5 PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFERED THROUGH ODL PROGRAMME

The global need for community development is greater in the early 21st century than ever before. According to UNESCO, half of the world's 195 countries will have to expand their stock of education significantly if the goal of the development target is to be achieved. Socioeconomic inequities, political instability, demographic changes and crises such as the HIV/AIDs epidemic have engendered huge shortfalls in teacher supply and low teacher quality in many developing countries. Education serves as the backbone in the development process. Open learning and distance education programmes are serving a pivotal part in the development process. It is to be kept in mind that expanding teacher education may not be adequate if

the current and projected shortfalls in teacher supply and low teacher quality are not properly addressed.

One of the basic objectives of this unit was to focus on how professional, vocational, technical and entrepreneurship courses offered through distance education can help a community to develop. Now, of course, community development should take place and if this development results in the availability of professional and technical resources and creates entrepreneurs and vocationally skilled personnel through distance education, it will be highly appreciated by all. However, India being such a vast country with uneven communication and infrastructure facilities, it is next to an impossibility to develop a uniform strategy for the implementation of such a strategy. Some of the pressing hurdles obstructing the success of distance education in India are listed below.

- Inadequate infrastructure facilities
- Adverse climatic conditions
- Mountainous landscape
- Border clashes and ethnic tension
- Sustainability of the motivational level of the learners
- Poor postal service leading to the delay in the delivery of stumaterials
- Lack of knowledge of the availability of courses which a learner can choose from
- Practice of early marriages in the villages and followed by early mother hood
- Absence of proper learning environment
- And, most importantly, the inadequate supply of knowledgeable tutors

The list of hurdles mentioned above is not all-inclusive and exhausted. There are many other challenges to address. The infrastructure and communication in the villages need major improvement irrespective of distance or disturbances. Perhaps, it is only then, that community development through distance education shall take place in the true sense and empowering the community dwellers in entrepreneurship, vocational skills, professional and technical knowledge can be achieved.

Before summing up, a word on the philosophy of open and distance education may be discussed. ODL is out and out an alternative mechanism

to supplement the formal education system by replacing its shortcomings. The students having a degree from the open and distance education system are always looked down upon and considered inferior to those holding degrees from a regular and conventional educational institution. This is perhaps the key behind the absence of absolute enrolment in the ODL system despite its having unlimited scope both in the rural and urban areas. This mindset needs to be changed, and for this to happen, the education reformers and administrators need to encourage the people to enroll in the ODL system, may be by means of giving them an extra weightage while providing employment. The ODL system should be made more interactive with the use of information and communication technology, so that it can reach out to all learners at the same time.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3. How can ICT make ODL more effective in community development?

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Q.4. State the various hurdles of ODL system towards effective community development

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7.6 LET US SUM UP

- A community is a place or unit where people live in the same place or have common characteristics in terms of norms, values, attitude, religion, identity etc.
- People living in a particular geographical area form a community following some common principles of life a mutual understanding among the members of the place or unit.
- Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect changes in their own communities. These skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda.
- Community developers must understand how to work with individuals as well as how to affect the positions of the communities within the context of larger social institutions. Since the 1970s, the word “community” has also been adopted by several other occupations from the police and health workers to planners and architects, who work with the more disadvantaged groups and communities.
- The need to overhaul the education system of today may also be region specific and need-based. Today’s educated youths are unemployed due to insufficient skills in the present day work market. Therefore, Open and Distance Education has to play a very proactive role not only to increase GER but also to offer quality skill based education to help the young masses become employable or entrepreneurs.
- Open and Distance Learning has the flexibilities to serve the aspirations of learners anywhere, anytime and at any place. Thus, ODL can connect the nation in terms of education and mobility of learners to acquire their desired knowledge.



7.7 FURTHER READING

1) Tahir Mumtaz et al. “Community Development through Open Learning and Distance Education”, Secondary Education Journal, Vol.-I, Issue-I, Pp. 1-14

2) Govt. of India, (1987): University System and Extension as the third Dimension- Report of the Review Committee appointed by the UGC, New Delhi

3) IGNOU (1995): Certificate in Guidance- Programme Guide, IGNOU, Delhi



7.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q No. 1: A community is a group of people, who live in a geographical area and have interaction among each other for the purpose of making a living. It is an exclusive term and is frequently used to encompass any and every effort towards the advancement of a community.

Answer to Q No.2: Open and Distance Education represents the approaches that focus on open access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and space and offering the learners flexible learning opportunities.

Answer to Q No. 3: The use of ICT can make distance education more effective, as the universities can make their contents available to millions of learners at a little or virtually no cost. For example, the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) provides different innovative ways that would provide new opportunities for learning through distance education. Distance education based on ICTs will remove the limits and barriers and offer the possibility of widening the participation in education.

Answer to Q No. 4: Some of the pressing hurdles obstructing the success of distance education are inadequate infrastructure, sustainability of the motivational level of the learners, delay in postal service leading to the delay in the delivery of study materials, lack of knowledge regarding the availability of the courses which a learner can choose from, practice of early marriages in the villages followed by early mother hood, absence of proper learning environment, absence of knowledgeable tutor among many others.



7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: What is meant by community development? Explain briefly.

Q 2: How does distance education help in community development?

Q 3: What are the various courses that can be taught/offered through open and distance education?

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

Q 1: Do you think distance education is a viable means of community development in India? Justify the answer with some appropriate examples.

Q 2: Discuss the difficulties and challenges of distance education as a means of community development.

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