UNIT 8: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ODL

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

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8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

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

8.2 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

development.

8.3 CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Idyllic: extremely happy, peaceful and picturesque

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

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

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

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

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

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define rural development in 30 words.

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Q 2 : How are rural areas identified?

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Q 3: What does rural development action aim at?

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8.4 DISTANCE EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

So, you can see that despite the existence of large urban centers, India is still predominantly a rural society with approximately 70 percent of the population living in villages. Rural development implies the comprehensive and sustainable development for people and places in the rural areas. It depends on several interrelated components such as the

development of appropriate production technology, dissemination of modern technology to the farming community, formulation of suitable policies for growth in the farm and rural non-farm economies, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and provision of infrastructure and social services. So, for achieving rural development and for responding to these global challenges their will be required trained professionals with a wide range of relevant expertises. They are needed to work in government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in the private sector. Such professionals are needed who can formulate appropriate policies and plans, design and implement development projects, disseminate appropriate technology and information to farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs, and manage businesses and the efficient delivery of services in rural areas. Apart from that you can see that most of the Indian belonging to the rural weaker sections are village based illiterate agricultural labourers and most of the Indian tribes are forest based illiterates. Therefore,the need of the hour is the occupational modernization of these weaker sections and tribes and this can be possible only through education and particularly education in vocational areas. There are well established Open Universities in India which can serve the purpose. Most of these universities have started offering professional programmes in the field of rural and agricultural development. Indira Gandhi National Open University offers various programme in rural development. Besides IGNOU, other open universities have also launched various programmes in rural development. Infact,YCMOU (Yaswantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University) has done a commendable job in reaching out to the rural tribal people of Maharashtra for their sustainable development. Programmes through distance mode like plumbing, lathe operating etc. have been launched. It has also successfully launched ten crop based programmes for the farmers in the state. These open universities have rightly adhered to the objectives of making quality higher education available to the deprived and disadvantaged segments especially in rural and remote areas, women, SC/ST and besides tailor made innovative programmes. The concept of 'Prayog Parivar' launched by the university way back has been a successful venture. This concept provides the farmers

a common platform with a common goal to discuss their problems, experiment and generate knowledge or record the locally available agriculture innovations based on their field experiences. IGNOU has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Institute of Rural Development to develop more rural development specific programmes in future. There are a few examples of how the universities in the ODL system can offer services in rural development.

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Define distance education.

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

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8.5 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

The concept of empowerment refers to the process of bringing about a transformation in all walks of life of every individual citizen of the country.

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

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

Article 16 reassures equality of opportunity for all citizens in public employment. Article 39 declares the state to direct its policy towards securing equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Similarly, Article 51 lays down the provision to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. So you can see that although the Constitution of India provides equality and justice yet in actual practice in India itself, women are the weakest segment of the disadvantaged groups. Females are not at par with their male counterparts and have remained deprived and underprivileged. Women at large experience multiple barriers in gaining access to employment, housing land, food and social security and education.The urban women are somehow able to manage their pace with the mainstream to some extent because of the availability of better facilities to them, in terms of education, employment etc; but the rural women are still at a considerable disadvantage in education and other sectors and the

reasons for their backwardness are more than one. The low rate of literacy among women is caused by the low enrolment and high drop out rate among the school going girls. The women in rural areas maintain an over alllow profile. Different barriers like unequal status of women in rural society, their confinement to household, early marriage, negative attitude of parents towards their female children among others are some of the factors responsible for the illiteracy of women in rural areas. We know that women constitute about 48.46% of the population and that about 70% (Census of India 2011) of women live in rural India. It is seen that women are mostly employed in the unorganized sectoror unpaid employments and their literacy is low.

The first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "To awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves" (quoted in Pillai, 1995; p. 62).

Women Education :

Education for girls is vital not only on the grounds of social justice but also because of the fact that it accelerates social transformation. As stated by Jawaharlal Nehru, by educating a woman we educate the whole family. Given that a woman has put the responsibility of the whole family on herself, an educated woman is better capable of taking care of health, nutrition and education of her children and more importantly can be an active agent in the social and economic development of the country .Let me tell you that economic success everywhere is based on educational success. Literacy is the basic building block of education. No society has ever liberate itself economically, politically or socially without a sound base of educated women. Education has a direct impact on women empowerment, as it creates in them an awareness about their rights, their capabilities and the choices and opportunities available to them. Education of girls has become a national goal. Considering education as an essential instrument of the nation building process in the Nehruvian era, the University Education Commission was established under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. It is known as the Radhakrisnan Commission and it submitted its report in 1949

with a full chapter on women's education. It is mentioned there that there could not be educated people without educated women. The First Five Year Plan put that the general purpose and objective of women's education could not be different from those of men's education. But the Mudaliar Commission of 1952-53 seemed to be less pre-occupied with gender differences. The National Committee on Women's Education, 1956 shifted its focus from higher education to school education.According to the recommendations of this committee a Council of Women's Education was set up. In 1964-66, Kothari Commission observed: "In the modern world, the role of women goes much beyond the home and the bringing up of children. She is now adopting a career of her own and sharing equally with men the responsibility for the development of society in all its aspects." In 1971 the Committee on the Status of Women in India was constituted by a resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. The report of this committee is considered an eye opener to the stark inequalities existing between men and women in India. The culmination of all these government efforts was the National Policy of Education, 1986. The Policy states that education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The National Education System will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions will be encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development. Major emphasis will be laid on women's participation in vocational technical and professional education at different levels.

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

Since already these are constitutional declarations, government policies, besides a number of commissions being set up to deal with the question of women empowerment the first decisive step to be undertaken is to enhance

their literacy level and uplift their entrepreneurial skill and the Open and Distance learning can be used as a viable alternative to the traditional mode in addressing the issue. The ODL system has already been put to use. For example IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them to determine and exercise their life options, and influence the direction of change through their own control over crucial material resources. Education - especially professional and technical education - is also likely to enhance women's economic independence by equipping them with the skills necessary to take up paid employment opportunities. At the national level, educating women has resulted in improved productivity, improved income and economic development, as well as in a better quality of life, leading to a notably healthier and better nourished population. Recently, the demand for skilled labour has risen significantly as a result of globalisation, changes in technology, and as a result of the re-organization of work. The process of skills development in the informal sector in developing countries is more important since formal training institutions do not have the capacity to train a large number of aspirants. Therefore, open and distance education has become an alternative tool for providing skills-based education and training. Open and Distance Learning otherwise referred to as Distance Education,is clearly a realistic alternative.

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

Through the ODL, education can be imparted to the class of women who are full time housewives, many of whom have never had access to formal education or had to give up school at early stages of their lives. Women in this group are not usually enthusiastic about formal education because their husbands had indicated that they are to sit at home and take

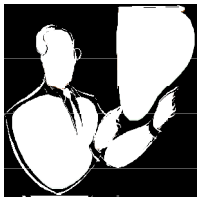
care of the home and the children. Such women are usually unable to leave their spouse and children to travel away to attend a conventional university system. The challenges posed by this social system is far reaching, in the sense that the woman cannot venture out of the home to a formal school or university system where she can pursue the much craved training, skills development and education. Many of them have to be content with seeing their dreams come alive in their children's lives and they unconsciously transfer their dreams to their children's lives. Women in this category will definitely be grateful for distance education, since it allows them to sit at home and study for a programme without affecting their family obligations or neglecting their children. It is certainly a means of fulfilling the life dreams of many women who have been saddled with the work of a full time house wife. The issue of women education is essential for rural development. Women are not well equipped to contribute their useful quota to the society because of illiteracy and lack of education.

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

So you can see that open and distance education is fast emerging as a dominant mode of education to meet the growing needs of aspiring learners in the fast changing world. This popularity of distance education is mainly attributed to its ability to accommodate a large number of aspirants through its flexible and cost effective structure. Empowerment of women has visible links with the educational attainment of a society. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and program of Action revised in 1992 placed

women's education in the priority list and stated that it would play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women.The objective of the National policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 is to bring about overall advancement, development and empowerment of women. With the 'learner centred' mode of education, ODL enables students to 'earn while they learn' the ultimate goal being to create a learning society. It may be mentioned that the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) included for the first time in the history of the planning in India a separate chapter on ' Women and Development '. Vocationalization has becomea keyword in the higher education scenario where attention is being increasingly drawn to better linkages between education and employment.The purpose of providing education to women is to enable them to think critically, identify their strengths and take conscious, informed decisions, empowering them to play a positive role on their own in the development of the nation. Empowerment of women through education implies the improvement of status in the family, community and society which helps reduce the gender gap and this empowerment is possible through open and distance learning.

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



LET US KNOW

To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by streng this meant brute strength,

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

— Mahatma Gandhi



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6 : What is empowerment?

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

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

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8.5.1 Courses for Women Empowerment and Rural Development through Distance Mode

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

IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them.They have developed courses such as M.A. in Woman and Gender Studies and P.G. Diploma in Women Studies.Courses like child care guidance, jewellery designing, pottery making, Montessori training, knitting, fashion designing, beautician certificate course, course in nutrition are some of the programmes that can be offered by universities in the ODL mode. These courses are meant for self employment. IGNOU also offers a number of post graduate programs in rural development. Other state open universities of India also offer similar types of courses. Infact, in the context of Assam, K.K.Handiqui State Open University is taking a leading role in offering vocational courses in rural development and women empowerment. Courses like Scientific Piggery Farming (CSPF), Commercial Goat Rearing (CCGR), Commercial Broiler Farming (CCBF), Commercial Duck Farming (CCLF),Commercial Layer Farming (CCLF), Mobile

Repairing, Maintenance and Repairing of Audio Video Equipments are offered. These are certain vocational programmes which can directly benefit the women and finally enhance women empowerment through self-employment and entrepreneurship development. These programmes include, inter alia, Fashion Designing, Beautician, Garment Manufacturing, Nursery Management, Food and Fruits Preservation etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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8.6 LET US SUM UP

- Rural development in general is used to refer to the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighbourhoods, countryside, and remote villages.
- Rural development actions mostly aim at the social and economic development of the areas. These programs are usually top-down from the local or regional authorities, regional development-agencies, NGOs, national governments or international development organizations.
- Distance education or learning refers to the teaching and learning where the learner is not regularly in contact with the instructor, but still with regular contact through the use of ICT and othe forms of communication.

- Most Indian rural weaker sections being village based illiterate agricultural labourers and most Indian tribes being forest based illiterates, the need of the hour is the occupational modernisation of these rural weaker sections and tribes and this can be possible only through distance education and education in vocational areas.
- The concept of empowerment refers to the process of bringing about a transformation in all walks of the life of every individual citizen of the country.
- IGNOU has introduced various programmes which aim to improve the quality of women's life by empowering them to determine and exercise their life options, and influence the direction of change through their own control over crucial material resources.
- Various courses are developed by open universities to empower women and develop the rural sector.



8.7 FURTHER READING

1) BhatnagarTinku Paul, (2011) : Women, Employment and Empowerment New Century Publications, New Delhi
2) Pillai, J.K. (1995) : Women and employment,: Gyan Publishing New Delhi
3) Sharma, R. (1996) : Empowering women through distance education. Indian Journal of Open Learning.
4) Trivedi Tanuja.(2009) : Women and Rural Development, JnanadaPrakashan, New Delhi



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

relate to the primary sector- the production of food stuff and raw-materials.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1 : Define the concept of empowerment.

Q 2 : What is the meaning of women empowerment?

Q 3 : What is distance education?

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

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

Q 1 : Write a short note on rural development.

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

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

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

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

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

Q 3 : Give your comment on the courses that are offered by various open

and distance institutions for women empowerment and rural development. What according to you could be a major thrust area of women empowerment and how can distance education address the issue?

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

UNIT 9 : ROLE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Concept of Teacher Education

9.4 Teacher Training through Distance Education

9.5 Distance Education and D.El.Ed Programme of NCTE

9.6 Distance Education and B.Ed Programme of NCTE

9.7 Let Us Sum Up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

9.10 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the concept of teacher education.
- know about teacher training through distance education.
- explain the D.El.Ed Programme of NCTE through distance mode.
- discuss the B.Ed Programme of NCTE through distance mode.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role for the progress of any nation of the World. Today's children are the future administrator and citizen. In the education sector, teachers play an important role. Teachers have an important role to play in making education relevant to the needs of the emerging modern society. Only enlightened, competent and emancipated teachers can meet the aspirations of society by providing quality education to learners. This will be possible, only if teachers are well trained through effective teacher education programmes. Now-a-days, the demand of

teacher training cannot be fulfilled by the formal teacher training institutions only. Because of this problem, teacher training is also provided through the distance mode of learning. This unit is all about the role of distance education in teacher training programme.

9.3 CONCEPT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teachers' proficiency and competence that would enable and empower them to meet the requirements of their profession and face the challenges therein.

In between 1906-1956, the programme of teachers' preparation was called teachers' training. It prepared the teachers as mechanics or technicians. It had narrower goals with its focus being only on skill training. The perspective of teacher education was therefore very narrow and its scope was limited. As W. H. Kilpatrick put it, "Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings."

Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory, and professional skills. This can be seen in terms of the following:

Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.

The following are some of the definitions of Teacher Education.

- According to Goods Dictionary of Education, "Teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively."
- The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has defined teacher education as – A programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level.
- In Encyclopaedia of Education, Walter S. Monoroe defined "teacher education as the total education experiences which contribute to the preparation of person but the term is completely employed to designate

the programme for courses and other experiences offered by an educational institute for the announced purposes of preparing persons for teaching and other educational service and for contribution to their growth in competency for such service. Such teacher education programmes are offered in teacher colleges, normal schools and colleges and universities."

In India, there are two types of teacher education programme namely (i) Pre-service teacher education programme, and (ii) In-service teacher education programme. Pre-service teacher education is provided to the prospective teachers of pre-primary, primary and secondary education. For providing teacher education, there are different organisations in our country, which are as the following:

- National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
- National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)
- Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL)
- State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT)
- State Institute of Education (SIE)
- Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE)
- District Institute of Education and Training (DIET)

In the year 1993 in India, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was formed to provide quality teacher education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1: Teacher Education = Teaching Skills +_____+ Professional skills. (fill in the gap)

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Q 2 : What is the full form of NCERT?

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Q 3: What is teacher education?

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9.4 TEACHER TRAINING THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

In the 21st century, teacher training has changed dramatically as today's teachers are expected to be equipped with the innovative approaches and latest skills to face the new age classrooms confidently. Teachers are considered the most important resource because they tend to influence the young minds and foster a holistic development of the young learners. With the technological advances, the physical boundaries of traditional teacher education classrooms have been blurred. Aspiring teachers are no longer confined to brick and mortar teacher training institutions, but their reach has extended far beyond to different paths of the world. Teacher training through distance education is making its presence felt, and is also gaining popularity as aspiring as well as professional teachers are opting for this mode of learning.

Teacher education programme through distance mode in Indian context is more than five decade old. The Education commission (1964-66) recommended opening supplementary channels for clearing the backlog

of untrained teacher through *Summer courses, Vacation courses, Part time courses and Correspondence courses.* During the sixties, another mode, i.e. *correspondence course* was introduced. The correspondence-cum-contact mode was considered suitable especially for the teachers of the secondary school stage. In order to institutionalise this mode of teacher training, in 1966, the Central Institute of Education, then a constituent of NCERT, started a B.Ed. programme through the correspondence-cum-contact mode. Though these five institutions, i.e. the Central Institute of Education and the four Regional Colleges of Education, now Regional Institute of Education have since given up the programme, their involvement along with their academic credibility were instrumental in making programmes of secondary school teacher education through the correspondence mode more widespread.

An expert committee appointed by the NCTE under the chairmanship of Prof. R. C. Das (1995) viewed that: "If part time face-to-face institutional programmes are equivalent to face-to-face full time institutional programmes in their total duration of instruction, programmes and academic staff support and other infrastructure as per National Council for Teacher Education norms, then the National Council for Teacher Education may consider their recognition after obtaining detailed information from these institutions." Here, these institutions are distance-learning institutions.

The institutions of correspondence courses, and now their improved forms such as Distance Education represent steps for making teacher education more responsive to field needs. However, recent trends towards developing Open and Distance Learning System represent efforts to explore more varied and effective modes for curriculum transaction of teacher education programme. The National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) now recognizes Open & Distance Learning as a viable mode of imparting teacher education programme.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Distance education is also known as .....

(fill in the gap) .....

Q 5: What is the full form of NCTE?

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9.5 DISTANCE EDUCATION AND D.EL.ED PROGRAMME OF NCTE

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) approved Elementary teacher education programme through Open and Distance system intended primarily for upgrading the professional competence of the in-service teachers in the elementary schools. It aims to prepare teachers for the elementary stage of education, i.e. classes I-VIII. The duration of the programme shall be of two academic sessions/years. However, the learners should be permitted to complete the programme within a maximum period of five years.

Regarding the curriculum, the syllabus of D.El.Ed offered through the face-to-face mode should be transformed into distance mode consisting of Blocks/Units as per credit hours of study. The self-learning materials developed by the institution should be approved by the Distance Education Council/Bureau.

Regarding the implementation of the D.El.Ed Programme, the following points are important:

- The university/institution should develop curriculum-based audio-visual resources on its own or adapt such resources from other institutions.

- The programme should be delivered in a blended mode by judiciously mixing the components of resource based on self-learning, face-to-face counselling and workshops, and technology-enabled interaction and learning.
- Both print and non-print self-learning materials should be prepared based on the principles of instructional design and the pedagogy of self learning.
- In a programme of two years' duration, the personal contact programme must be conducted at the Headquarters and/or study centres convenient to the learners.
- Academic counselling sessions should be spread over the entire duration of the programme, and be conducted on a regular basis.
- Workshops should be organised so that the learners shall acquire competencies and skill required by a teacher or teacher educator.
- The learners pursuing teacher education courses through distance education should be involved in activities, which a teacher is supposed to perform in the school.
- The learner enrolled in the D.El.Ed. Programme should go through a teaching practice in the designated schools, under the supervision of the teacher/ academic counsellor.
- The Headquarter staff should develop curriculum, self-learning materials, model lesson plans and audio-visual materials for use at the study centres.

Adequate number of learner support services should be made available in all headquarters and study centres. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation as well as term-end examinations should be used in the institution for evaluating the learners of teacher education programmes. Due weightage should be given on continuous and comprehensive evaluation including for participation and performance in the workshops. Assignment/project reports submitted by the learners should be evaluated by the tutors/counsellors in a given time frame and they should be returned to them along with

constructive comments and suggestions so that they can improve their performance. The primary function of the evaluation of the assignments/projects should be to provide timely feedback to the learners to sustain their motivation and enhance their ability to comprehend. The external evaluation should encompass questions of all the units of the syllabus and should be assess through objective type/short answer type/long answer type questions. The weightage for internal and external evaluation may be in the ratio of 30:70.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6 : Mention the duration of D.El.Ed. Programme of distance mode approved by NCTE.

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Q 7 : Write very briefly about evaluation system of D.El.Ed Programme.

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9.6 DISTANCE EDUCATION AND B.ED PROGRAMME OF NCTE

B.Ed is a professional programme that prepares the teachers for upper primary (classes VI-VIII), secondary (classes IX-X) as well as senior secondary (classes XI-XII) levels. In the distance mode, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) is a professional programme for in-service teachers. It is

a second degree of teacher education primarily intended for upgrading the professional competence of in-service teachers in the upper primary, secondary, and senior secondary levels who have entered the profession without formal secondary teacher training. The NCTE approved Bachelor of Education Programme through Open and Distance system for the purpose of preparing the in-service teachers for the secondary stage of education, in accordance with the notifications of NCTE with regard to minimum qualifications for recruitment as a teacher. The duration of the programme should be of two academic sessions/years. However, the students should be permitted to complete the programme within a maximum period of five years.

The curriculum of the B.Ed. offered through the face-to-face mode, hence the nomenclature of the programme should be same and will be referred to as B.Ed. The curriculum will be transacted to systematise and structure the past teaching experiences gathering while teaching, since the distance mode will cater to the in-service school teachers. The programme should use blended learning modality for the design, development and delivery of the programme. The programme should be transformed into distance mode consisting of Blocks/Units as per credit hours of the study. The self-learning materials developed by the institution should be approved by the Distance Education Council/Bureau.

The B.Ed programme of distance mode is aimed to prepare the teachers who are able to continuously assess and improve their professional practice as teachers. Regarding implementation of the B. Ed. Programme, the following points are important:

- The university/institution should develop curriculum-based audio-visual resources on its own or adapt such resources from other institutions.

- The programme should be delivered in a blended mode by judiciously mixing the components of resource based self-learning, face-to-face counselling and workshops, and technology-enabled interaction and learning.

- Both print and non-print self-learning materials should be prepared based on the principles of instructional design and the pedagogy of self learning.
- In a programme of two years' duration, the personal contact programme must be conducted at the Headquarters and/or study centres convenient to the learners. This programme should cover counselling, workshop, seminar presentations, report writing etc.
- Academic counselling sessions should be spread over the entire duration of the programme, and be conducted on a regular basis depending on the needs and convenience of the learners.
- Workshops should be organised so that the learners can acquire competencies and skills required by a teacher or teacher educator.
- The learners pursuing teacher education courses through distance education should be involved in activities, which a teacher supposed to perform in the school.
- The learner enrolled in the B.Ed. Programme should go through a teaching practice for three months in the schools under the supervision of the teacher/academic counsellor.
- The Headquarter staff should develop the curriculum, self-learning materials, model lesson plans and audio-visual materials for use at the study centres.
- The institutions offering B.Ed through distance mode, should maintain their website to enable the students to have access to all learning materials and resources, to interact with their peers, to facilitate faculty-students discussion on suitable social media or networking services.

Adequate number of learner support services should be available in all headquarters and study centres. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation as well as term-end examinations should be used in the institution for evaluating the learners of teacher education programmes. Due weightage should be given on continuous and comprehensive evaluation including for participation and performance in the workshops as allotted in the curriculum framework. Assignment/project reports submitted by the learners should

be evaluated by the tutors/counsellors in a given period, and returned to them along with constructive comments and suggestions so that they can improve their performance. The primary function of the evaluation of the assignments/projects should be to provide timely feedback to the learners to sustain their motivation and enhance their ability to comprehend. The external evaluation shall encompass questions of all the units of the syllabus and should be assessed through objective type/short answer type/long answer type questions. The weightage for internal and external evaluation may be in the ratio of 30:70.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8 : What is the aim of B.Ed programme through distance education approved by NCTE?

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9.7 LET US SUM UP

- Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills.
- Teacher education is the total educational experiences, which contribute to the preparation of a person but the term is completely employed to designate the programme for courses and other experiences offered by an educational institute for the announced purposes of preparing persons for teaching and other educational

service and for contribution to their growth in competency for such service.

- Teacher education programmes are offered in teacher colleges, normal schools, and colleges and universities.
- Teacher training distance education is making its presence felt and is gaining popularity as more and more aspiring as well as professional teachers are opting for this mode of learning. Teacher education programmes through the distance mode in the Indian context is more than four decade old.
- The Education commission (1964-66) recommended for opening supplementary channels for clearing the backlog of untrained teachers through Summer courses, Vacation courses, Part time courses, and Correspondence courses.
- The NCTE approved Elementary teacher education programme through Open and Distance Learning system which was intended primarily for upgrading the professional competence of the in-service teachers in the elementary schools. It aims to prepare the teachers for the elementary stage of education, i.e. classes I-VIII. The duration of the programme shall be of two academic sessions/years. However, the Teachers taking up the programme should be permitted to complete the programme within a maximum period of five years.
- B.Ed is a second degree of teacher education primarily intended for upgrading the professional competence of in-service teachers in the upper primary, secondary and senior secondary levels. This programme is for those who have entered the profession without formal secondary teacher training.
- The NCTE approved Bachelor of Education programme through Open and Distance system for the purpose of preparing in-service teachers for the secondary stage of education, in accordance with the notifications of NCTE with regard to minimum qualifications for recruitment as a teacher. The duration of the programme should be

of two academic sessions/years. However, students shall be permitted to complete the programme within a maximum period of five years.



9.8 FURTHER READING

1) Arora, G. L. (2002). Teachers and Their Teaching Delhi, Ravi Books.
2) Chaurasia, G. (2000). Teacher Education and Professional Organizations, Delhi, Authorspress.
3) National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) (1998). NCTE Document New Delhi, Published by Member Secretary, NCTE.



9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : Pedagogical theory

Ans to Q No 2 : National Council for Educational Research and Training.

Ans to Q No 3 : Teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively.

Ans to Q No 4 : Correspondence education.

Ans to Q No 5 : National Council of Teacher Education.

Ans to Q No 6 : Two years

Ans to Q No 7: Continuous and comprehensive evaluation as well as term-end examinations should be used in the institution for evaluating the learners of D.El.Ed programmes.

Ans to Q No 8 : The aim of the B. Ed programme through distance education approved by NCTE is to prepare the in-service teachers for the secondary stage of education, in accordance with the notifications of NCTE, with regard to minimum qualifications for recruitment as a teacher.



9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: Give the definition of teacher education.

Q 2: What is the full form of SCERT?

Q 3: What is the full form of DIET?

Q 4: In which year, was NCTE established?

Q 5: Mention the duration of the B.Ed. Programme through distance mode approved by NCTE.

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

Q 1: Explain the concept of teacher education.

Q 2: Describe briefly about teacher training through the distance mode.

Q 3: Write a note on the evaluation of the B.Ed programme approved by NCTE.

Q 4: Write a note on programme implementation of D.El.Ed programme approved by NCTE.

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

Q 1: Write an essay on teachers training through distance education.

Q 2: Discuss the D.El.Ed Programme of NCTE through distance education.

Q 3: Discuss the B.Ed Programme of NCTE through distance education.

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UNIT 10 : QUALITY ASSURANCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Leaning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Concept of Quality Education

10.3.1 Quality Assurance in Distance Education

10.3.2 Various Means of Quality Assurance in Distance Education

10.4 Let Us Sum Up

10.5 Further Reading

10.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.7 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

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

10.2 INTRODUCTION

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

Indian economy has been growing at a high average rate of 8 to 9 percent per annum during the last 7/8 years except in 2008, the year of

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

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

10.3 CONCEPT OF QUALITY EDUCATION

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What do you mean by quality? Why do you think that quality is

important in an educational institution?

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10.3.1 Quality Assurance in Distance Education

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

Keeping in view the objective of strengthening the knowledge economy, the Government of India during the Eleventh Five Year Plan targeted to establish 30 Central Universities (14 already established), 8 IITs (6 already established), 8 IIMs (4 already established), 10 National Institute of Technology (NIT) , 5 Institutes of Science and Research, 2 Schools of Architecture, 374 model degree colleges etc, besides about 1000 polytechnics to build up trained and skilled manpower as demanded by the economy. Recently, HRD Minister, Government of India, has announced to

establish 800 new universities in India.

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

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

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

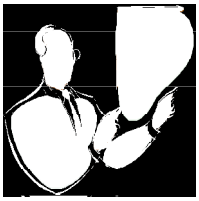
communication technology (ICT). ICT enabled linkages through broadband and satellite network in the ODL system bring out teaching-learning process to "3As" scenario - Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere - making "Education Beyond Barriers". The NKC in its Report categorically stated "Open and distance education (ODE), enabled and delivered through information and communication technology (ICT) holds the promise to address the questions of access and provide new, alternative forms of capacity building" (NKC, 2009, page 4). Considering the wide scope of the ODL system to provide flexible access to higher education - general, professional and vocational , the governments, both at Centre and the States, are giving due emphasis on horizontal and vertical expansion of quality education through open and distance mode since 1980s.. This has resulted in the establishment of 14 State Open Universities, one national Open University (IGNOU) and about 117 Directorates of Distance Education of the dual mode conventional Universities. In fact, ODL accounts for about 12% of the total enrolment in the segment of higher education, and thereby contributing substantially towards raising GER. Quality is the major concern in providing access to education to all and therefore besides the conventional education, the open and distance learning institutions should start the frontier from the very beginning to achieve the goal of quality education. Provision and maintenance of quality education at all stages - primary, secondary and higher - is the need of the hour. Highlighting the importance of quality, the National Knowledge Commission states "the biggest challenge faced in higher education, therefore, is the provision of quality higher education to the greatest number, at the lowest possible cost to the learner" (NKC, 2009, page 5). All the stakeholders of the ODL system of higher education - open universities, dual mode conventional universities, deemed universities and the private players should see that the quality of higher education is not compromised in the best interest of building a knowledge economy. But, unfortunately, there is a predominant

feeling among the stakeholders that some Universities/Institutions are compromising the quality of education provided through ODL mode for the obvious reason of maximizing profit ignoring the social responsibility of providing quality education. In fact, the additional resources generated by most of the dual mode universities through their Directorates of Distance Education are usually invested for the improvement of conventional teaching programmes and a very little is left for investment on distance education, thereby adversely affecting the quality of education through ODL mode. For quality assurance through distance mode, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended the constitution of an External Quality Assurance Cell to assess and evaluate the ODL institutions at regular interval. Distance Education Council (DEC) , now known as Distance Education Bureau (DEB) also decided to have a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in all the open universities of the country.

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

- Curriculum design and preparing the module for the learners in locally, regionally, nationally and internationally,

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



LET US KNOW

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

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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10.3.2 Various Means of Quality Assurance in Distance Education

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

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

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

them a better prospect of employment.

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

  All SLMs in print form should have standardised house-style using simple and unambiguous languages and the learners should feel the presence of a teacher in front of them while going through the SLMs. National Knowledge Commission recommended the creation of "Open Educational Resources" to make them available to all for capacity building in a knowledge society. DEC and IGNOU guide the ODL institutions in the preparation of standard SLMs with certain level of uniformity.

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

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

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

  Timely provision of SLM, regular counselling, library facilities including e-library, provision of ICT facilities like audio-visual SLM, radio and television programmes, teleconferencing facilities, on-line programme etc. are some important ingredients of LSS that need to be provided timely and effectively. The educational radio and television channels like Gyan Darshan, a fully digital 24 hour exclusive Educational TV channel, GyanVani, a unique Radio

Service of IGNOU, have played a prominent role in disseminating knowledge and information among the learners of the country. The recently established State Open University in Assam, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University has the distinction of providing the first Community radio programmes in the entire North East of India "Jnan Taranga", followed by "Radio Luit", which has so far been the second Community radio Station in the North East set up by Gauhati University under the Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL). KKHSOU has another educational programme "Ekalabya" which is transmitted through All India Radio (Guwahati and Dibrugarh Centres) initially twice in a week for providing educational information and for arranging discussion on some educational programmes.

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

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

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

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

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

➢ **Quick and timely delivery of learners support services, timely holding of counselling classes, timely holding of examination and declaration of results etc. hold the key**

for good governance and the credibility of the ODL system.

The open universities and institutions should provide and deliver the study materials and hold the counselling classes timely and effectively. Besides the websites that are developed by each university for their educational purpose, mobile phone alert can be used for transmitting the relevant information like date of examination, date of admission, declaration of examination results etc. to the learners and the functionaries of the study centres or any member of the public from time to time. Even some universities and institutions following the ODL system have live phone-in programme where the top officials of that universities and ODL institutions can deliver some interactive sessions and directly talk with the learners on various issues and clear the people's doubts regarding the curricula of the Open University or its academic programmes, and get the ways and means for solution of their queries.

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

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

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

promotion of the ODL system but also to provide quality education for all through that mode.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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10.4 LET US SUM UP

- The qualitative improvement of education and training is essential for human resource development in a country.
- For sustaining a high rate of growth of the economy, India needs to be transformed into a major knowledge economy having adequate and abundance of skilled .and trained manpower.
- The country has to build up skilled and trained manpower and it is possible through the expansion of quality higher education - both general, vocational and professional.
- Quality indicates the degree of excellence of particular things. Quality assurance is a development mechanism that is designed to maintain and enhance the institutional effectiveness as a whole.
- The present national GER in higher education in India is exceptionally

low when we look at the global scenario.

- The present scenario of higher education in the country is not very encouraging for achieving the goal of a knowledge economy which can be ensured by an abundance of skilled and trained manpower.
- This Herculean task of attaining the targeted GER can be made possible through an open, flexible and less expensive mode of education, i.e., the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system.
- ICT enabled linkages through broadband and satellite network in the ODL system can bring the teaching-learning process to the "3As" scenario - Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere - making "Education Beyond Barriers" in attainable goal.
- Quality is a major concern in providing access to education to all and, therefore, besides the conventional education, the open and distance learning institutions should strive from the very beginning to achieve the goal of providing quality education to the learners.
- Highlighting the importance of quality in education, the National Knowledge Commission states that "the biggest challenge faced in higher education, therefore, is the provision of quality higher education to the greatest number, at the lowest possible cost to the learner"
- For quality assurance through the distance mode, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended the constitution of an External Quality Assurance Cell to assess and evaluate the ODL institutions at regular interval.
- Distance Education Bureau (DEB) also decided to have a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in all open universities of the country.
- Curricula of ODL system should be well thought-out, need-based, employment oriented and learner friendly while ensuring the quality.
- Self learning materials (SLM) both in print and audio-visual forms are the heart and soul of ODL system and they should be of high quality

- Adequate and effective counselling sessions should be provided through face to face form as well as through audio-visual form by using information and communication technology
- Timely and adequate learner support services (LSS) should be provided for ensuring the success of ODL system.
- Quality of education in the ODL system can be immensely improved with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and in fact, ICT drawn ODL system only makes it possible to provide education with 3As - anyone, anytime and anywhere.
- Research should be conducted and new areas should be explored for improving the quality in ODL system.
- Quality and credibility in ODL to build up quality human resources depends on - SLMs - print and audio-visual; ICT based - radio, television, audio cassette, audio-video materials, tele-conferencing, computer based learning technology, on-line learning, web portal, internet-based learning, mobile and Learner Support Service, including Counselling and so on.



10.5 FURTHER READING

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

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

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

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



10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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

Ans to Q No 2 : The present society is considered a knowledge society where members should be acquainted with some need based skills that will help them to get better livelihood. Education is the only way through which knowledge and information can be disseminated among the learners and thus it helps in developing manpower in a society. To make higher education accessible for all is still a big challenge for the Government of our country. Open and distance learning is the most effective alternative way through which people can have access to education at their own doorstep.

Quality is a major concern while providing access to education to all and therefore in addition to the conventional system of education, the open and distance learning institutions should try from the very beginning to achieve the goal of quality education. For quality assurance through distance mode, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended the constitution of an External

Quality Assurance Cell to assess and evaluate the ODL institutions at regular interval. Distance Education Bureau(DEB) has also decided to have a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in all open universities of the country.

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

- Curricula of ODL system should be well thought-out, need-based, employment oriented and learner friendly for ensuring the quality.
- Self learning materials (SLM) both in print and audio-visual forms the core of the ODL system and they should be of high quality.
- Adequate and effective counselling sessions should be provided through face to face form as well as through audio-visual form by using information and communication technology.
- Timely and adequate learners support services (LSS) should be provided for success of ODL system.
- The quality of the ODL system can be greatly improved with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and ICT drawn ODL system only makes it possible to have an education with 3As - anyone, anytime and anywhere.
- Research should be conducted and new areas should be explored for improving the quality in ODL system.
- Quality and credibility in ODL to build up quality human resources depends on - SLMs - print and audio-visual; ICT based - radio, television, audio cassette, audio-video materials, tele-conferencing, computer based learning technology, on-line learning, web portal, internet-based learning, mobile and Learner Support Service, including Counselling and so on.



10.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1 : What do you mean quality?

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

Q 3 : What is the importance of distance education?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

** ** **

UNIT 11 : ASSESSMENT IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1. Learning Objectives

11.2. Introduction

11.3 Assessment and Evaluation

11.3.1 Meaning and definition of Assessment

11.3.2 Meaning and definition of Evaluation

11.3.3 Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

11.4 Assessment in Open and Distance Learning

11.5 Purposes of Assessment in Open and Distance Learning

11.6 Types of Assessment in ODL

11.6.1 Self-assessment, Continuous assessment, and Term-end examination

11.6.2 Marking and Grading

11.6.3 Other Forms of Assessments

11.7 Let Us Sum Up

11.8 Further Reading

11.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.10 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to-

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

11.2 INTRODUCTION

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

11.3 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

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

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

11.3.1 Meaning and Definition of Assessment

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

Assessment is defined as a systematic and methodical means of obtaining and reviewing information about someone or something to make improvement wherever necessary. The term assessment is interpreted in different ways; it may be educational, psychological, financial, taxation, human resource and so on. Educationally, it is the process of documenting knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of a specific group in a systematic way.

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

11.3.2 Meaning and Definition of Evaluation

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

Thus, evaluation may be defined as a systematic, methodical and objective process of judging someone or something / giving value to someone or something, with an aim of drawing conclusions

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

11.3.3 Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

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

- The process of gathering, reviewing and using data, for the purpose of improvement in the present performance of the students, teachers, administrators, curriculum, institution or any other stakeholders of education system is called assessment in Education. While, giving judgment, providing value on the basis of defined criteria and evidence collected through assessment process is called evaluation.
- The nature of Assessment is diagnostic as its aim is to identify the areas of improvement. While, the nature of evaluation is judgemental as its aim is to provide an overall grade.

- The assessment provides feedback on the present performance, ways to improve future performance. As against this, evaluation determines whether the already set standards/ norms are met or not.
- The purpose of assessment is formative, as it increases quality. As against this, the purpose of evaluation is summative as it is all about judging the quality of assessed information.
- Assessment is an activity; it is concerned with the process, while evaluation focuses on product or output.

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks :

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

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

Q 2: Give some examples of Assessment and Evaluation

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Q 3: List two differences between assessment and evaluation.

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ACTIVITY 11.1

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

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11.4 ASSESSMENT IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

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

Assessment and evaluation are an integral part of the teaching-learning process; it is vital in certification and acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes in any educational system, whether in a conventional face-to-face system, or an ODL system. Already you have understood that assessment is a part of the whole evaluation process. Assessment is the process of acquiring information about the learner's knowledge, learning, progress, achievement etc., while evaluation is the process of judging the worth/finding the value/

estimating the quality of the learners knowledge or achievement. Although, both the terminologies are having different connotations, we cannot separate their activities. Assessment and Evaluation work together for achieving institutional as well as curriculum objectives and together they act as a very important sub-system of ODL system. Here we will mainly discuss assessment.

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

11.5 PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

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

Due to flexible, open and innovative nature, the learners of ODL system are heterogeneous. Therefore, ODL institutions offer different types and different levels of programmes. The distance learners study on their own with supplied study materials (SLMs with audio and video programmes), face-to-face and distance (postal, e-mail, telephonic, on-line etc.) tutoring and counselling, different kinds of supports and so on. Moreover, the learner population is very large in ODL. Hence, the ODL institutions have to develop their own form of education system according to the target learners, available resources and media support etc. Thus, the teaching –learning process becomes very innovative, this revolves around the need of the learners and the teachers who have planned and designed the appropriate choice of media for effective learning. In this context, assessment in the ODL system has adopted a new form to provide feedback to its students in a better way; and at the same time to help the teachers to enhance their teaching and the administrators to run the institution efficiently and smoothly and so on. Thus, the purpose of assessment in ODL is also very innovative and it differs from institution to institution. Whatever may be the purposes, the primary purpose is to improve student's current learning and performance. Now, we will discuss the purposes of assessment in ODL in the following points.

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

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

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

- **Inform the counsellors/ tutors about the effectiveness of their teaching strategies :** Students performance helps a teacher to identify the strength and weakness of his/her teaching, and accordingly guide to what to modify and what to sustain.
- **Provide grades/ marks:** the purpose of assessment is to give grade or marks on the basis of students' performance :
- **Feedback on the System :** As a process, assessment gathers meaningful data to determine different ways to enhance student learning**.** Assessment is done also to achieve feedback on the overall system and its various sub-systems. It diagnoses and identifies students' learning needs, strengths and weaknesses associated with educational transactions of a particular institution. It helps the various stake holders of the institution to know the pros and cons of the institution. Thus, the purpose of assessment in ODL is to :
- Help Parents, families, guardians of the students to know about their children's learning progress, so they can play an active role in their children's learning.
- Help the administrators and management to prepare future planning, to identify the areas where they need improvements to support their teachers, course writers, editors and determine professional development needs.
- Help the administrators and management to arrange Learner Support Services according to learners need.
- Guide the University or Institution to assist their governance role, to take decisions regarding staffing and resourcing in HQs as well as study centres.
- Help the Ministry of Education, Statutory Educational Bodies to review existing policy, improve old policies, and implement new policies for over all development in ODL system of the Nation.
- Assist and guide Government organization to take decision regarding government funding and policy intervention to improve learning outcomes of the students.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4 : Fill in the blanks :

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

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

Q 5 : List two purposes of assessment in ODL.

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11.6 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT IN ODL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Continuous Assessment : In distance education, continuous assessment is done through assignments in most cases. A very few institutions also adopt MCQ examination as continuous evaluation. Normally, assignments carry 25-30 % weight in overall assessment. This is a two-way communication between the learner

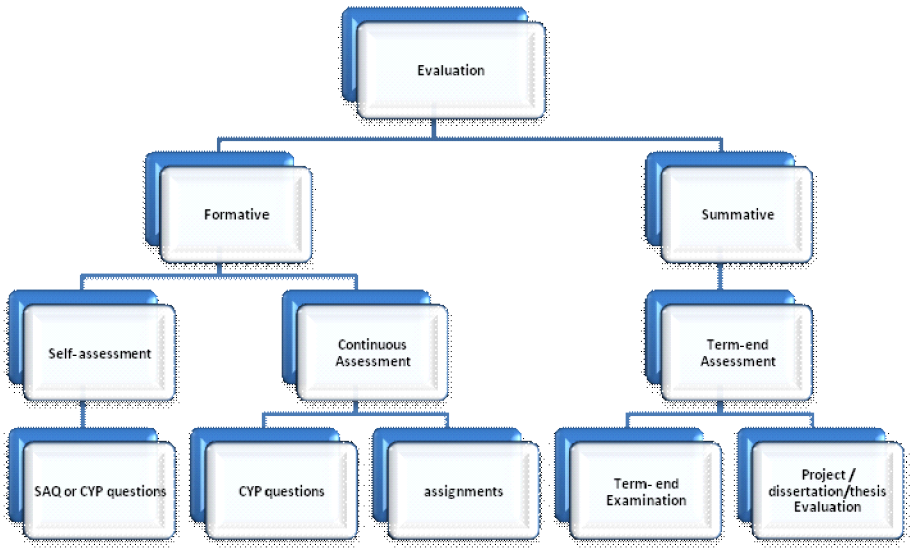
and the distance teaching institution or the tutor/teacher. Assignments also help the learner to decrease the sense of isolation as a distance learner. The assignment evaluator gives written feedbacks or comments on the assignment responses, these are very important as by these students are able to know about their positive and negative points and their overall academic progress. These comments are called "tutor comments" and they are divided into two categories based on their usage. One is marginal comments or specific comments; they are given in the margin of the assignment response. Another is global comments; they are given on a separate sheet to cover all the answers of the assignments. Moreover, marginal comments are divided into eight categories. They are

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

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

Term-End Examination : Term-End Examination is the final examination. This can be organised once or twice in a year depending on the institutional policy and the complexity of the course. In other words, we may say that in annual system it is organised once in a year and in semester system it is organised twice in a year. Mostly, this is a paper-pen based activity; however, in some

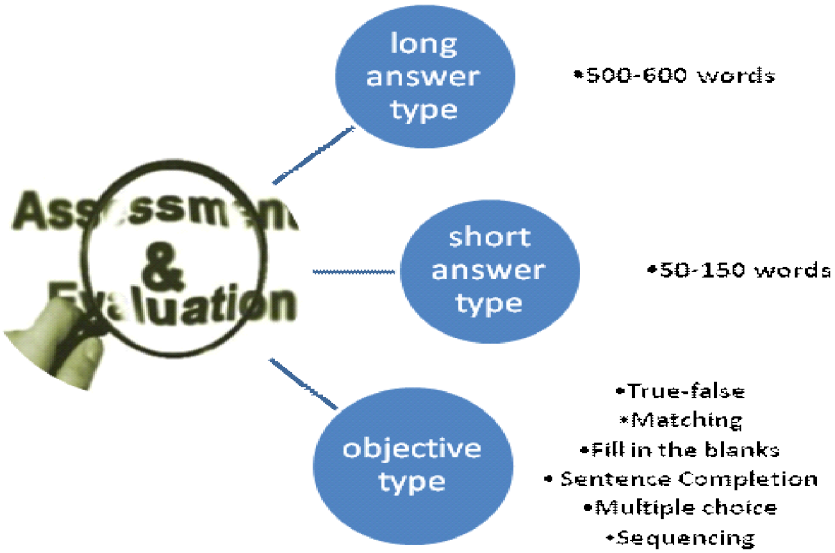
programmes practical and project are also used to assess the learner's performance. The term-end examination normally carries about 70-75% weight in overall assessment. Term –End examinations are an example of summative evaluation. After appearing in Term-end examination, and the getting pass mark, a student is promoted to next semester or year or he/she achieves a degree.



Assessment and Evaluation in ODL system

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

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



Different Types of Questions in ODL

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

11.6.2 Marking and Grading

While discussing assessment, we have discussed it with the examples- Sushruta secures 95% in Science test, Misiki achieves 'A' grade in Project work etc. Here, between the two students one is getting marks and another in getting grade. Thus, assessment is

normally done through quantifiable marking and grading. Both the practices are followed in ODL system. Marking system means assessment of a student or an answer-script on the basis of numbers. That means providing marks from 0 up-to the total marks of the question paper. We are familiar with the marking system that follows a0-100 scale. Grading is the process by which different levels of achievements of the students in a course are converted to some symbols by applying standardized measurements. Grades are generally assigned as some letters (A to F), as a range (for example 1 to 6), as some descriptive words (Excellent, very good, Satisfactory, Not satisfactory, Needs Improvement, poor etc.) or numerals (5, 4, 3, 2, and 1) and so on. However, the scale in the grading pattern could be five points, seven points or nine points.

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

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

Grading System in IGNOU



ACTIVITY 11.2

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

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11.6.3 Other Forms of Assessments

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

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

Here, we have discussed types of assessment practised in the ODL system in three different headings. However, all the different types of assessment can be again categorized in two types, ***On-line assessment*** and ***Off-line assessment***. *Online assessment or examination* is an innovation in the assessment system. It is also termed as e- assessment. It is conducting examination *online* to measure the knowledge, attitude of the participants on a given topic. With *online examination* students can perform the exam

online, in their own time and with their own device, regardless of where they live. They need a browser and good internet connection. Gradually, On-line Examination System has become popular among the students. Moreover, due its speed and accuracy, it has become the most fast growing examination system. It also requires less manpower in every step of assessment process; .i.e. from setting of question paper to providing grades to the learners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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Q 7: List three objective type questions.

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ACTIVITY 11.3

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

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11.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit, we have discussed about assessment and evaluation in ODL system.
- Assessment is an activity by which we can know the progress or rate of achievements of the students in terms of learning outcome.
- On the other hand, whenever we have to act as an evaluator, we judge the qualitative and/or quantitative data or scores achieved by test, measurement and assessment processes and assign 'value' or 'worth by giving judgement like excellent, good, fair or poor.
- As in conventional system, in ODL system also assessment plays a crucial role in quality assurance. Assessment in the ODL system has adopted a new form to provide feedback to its students in a better way and at the same time to help the teachers to enhance their teaching and the administrators to run the institution efficiently and smoothly.
- In distance education, both formative and summative evaluations are used with different kinds of questions.
- Assessments are divided into three categories, namely self-assessment, continuous assessment, and term-end examination.
- In distance education, continuous assessment is done through assignments in most cases. The written feedbacks or comments given by the assignment evaluators on the assignment responses, called "tutor comments". Tutor comments are divided into two categories based on their usage-marginal comments or specific comments, global comments.
- There are eight types of marginal comments; they are harmful comments, hollow comments, misleading comments, positive comments, negative comments, constructive comments, null comments and Personal comments.
- There are three types of questions by which assessment of learners' attainment of objectives could be achieved; they are -objective type,

short answer type (50-150 words) and long answer type/essay type (500-600 words).

- There are six major types of objective type questions that are generally used to assess learners' performance in ODL system. They are: True-false, Matching, Fill in the blanks, Completion of the sentence, multiple choice and Sequencing.
- The recent developments in ODL system also bring changes in its evaluation and assessment process. As a result, with increasing demand for e-learning, online learning, blended learning, MOOCs etc. among the students, e-assessment or online assessment also become an inevitable part of the evaluation and assessment process in ODL system.



11.8 FURTHER READING

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

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

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

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



11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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

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

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

Ans to Q No 4 : i. Certification

ii. Performance

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

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

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

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



11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1 : What is meant by Assessment and evaluation?

Q 2 : Differentiate between assessment and evaluation.

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

Q 4: Write short notes on

a. Formative and Summative evaluation.

b. Term-end examination.

c. Marking and grading system.

d. Objective type questions.

e. On-line assessment.

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

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

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

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

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

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UNIT 12 : INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 What is ICT?

- 12.3.1 Growth of ICTs
- 12.3.2 Application of ICTs

12.4 Use of ICTs in Distance Education

- 12.4.1 Advantages of ICTs
- 12.4.2 ICT-Based Learning: Different Evolving Areas
- 12.4.3 Institutes offering ICT-based Education

12.5 Challenges of ICTs in Educational Use

12.6 Adopting Strategies for Effectiveness of Distance education

12.7 Use of ICTs in the North East of India

12.8 Let Us Sum Up

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.11 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

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

12.2 INTRODUCTION

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

12.3 WHAT IS ICTs?

ICTs stand for Information and Communication Technologies and are commonly defined as a 'diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information.' These technologies include print media, computers, broadcasting technologies like radio and television, telephony, and the internet, teleconferencing, web-technology etc. In recent years, there has

been a worldwide interest in examining how computers, internet and web-technology can be used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education in both formal and non-formal settings. But, ICTs are more than just these technologies. For instance, till other day when we talk about the second generation of distance education, radio and television have been abundantly used in both open and distance learning. However, print still remains the cheapest and most accessible medium and the most dominant delivery mechanism in the education system of both developed and developing countries. In a developing country like India, the use of computers and the internet is yet to gain momentum in the remote areas due to limited infrastructure and the high costs of access. Hence, still there is a scope of discussing the usefulness of ICTs in diverse situations.

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : What is the meaning of ICTs?

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

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12.3.1 Growth of ICTs

The growth of communication technologies has a long history. You perhaps know that communication is fundamental to the human civilization. It is because, a society can function only when communication is made possible among its members. In ancient times, human beings communicated through writings on stone or wood and communication was limited only to a small area. But, along with the advancement of civilization, other means of communication were also tried and invented. For example, the invention of the printing press revolutionized the processes of communication to a larger group. However, it took a lot of time to transform our society from symbols, gestures, signals to printed forms of communication system. Today however, we have the most sophisticated processes of communication, in print and non-print forms which have enabled increased ability to share experiences and information with each other in a much productive manner. The

non-print communication technologies mainly include important media like audio, video, telecommunication and multimedia communication. Subsequently, more emphasis is given on the manufacture, storage, processing, editing and transmitting of information to be used by everyone. So, with the advancement of ICTs human beings have moved towards an information-based or knowledge-based society. Following are the different stages in the growth and development of information and communication technologies.

- **Audio Media :**

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

- **Audio-Visual Media**

Along with the radio there emerged television in the late 19th and early 20th century. Subsequently, audio visual technologies rapidly expanded all over the world. This technology that began with broadcast television mainly in the developed first world countries now embraces video cassettes, cable TV, computers, video texts, video disks etc. The reach of TV is also increasing day by day as both the public and the private providers are offering programmes

of all kinds according to the requirements of the target audience. It was on the basis of the effectiveness of the audio-visual media that it began to be used in a large scale for educational purpose.

- **Telecommunication :**

Telecommunication technologies began with the transmission of telegraphic signals over wires. With the invention of Grahame Bell's telephone set in 1876, telephony or long distance voice transmission became a popular word. Bell almost changed the way human beings communicate. The invention of fax machine further intensified the processes of exchanging communication. The latest avatar of telephone is the mobile phones. This mobile technology which started as a medium to transmit audio at a distance can now transmit full media like audio, video, picture, text etc. The latest invention of 2G and 3G technologies have changed the entire experience of mobile telephony and internet connectivity which you all must be well aware of.

- **Multimedia Communication :**

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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

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12.3.2 Application of ICTs

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

- **Access :**

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

processes.

Thanks to modern communication technologies, it has been possible to reach out to a large number of people effectively in no time. For example, with the help of transmission networks and satellite based communication systems people have accessed a large section of the population. After telephones, fax machines and mobile phones, and now computers have brought new technologies to access people. This becomes possible because a huge amount of information can be stored and exchanged with a stroke in the computer key board. However, the latest trends in teleconferencing which includes audio conferencing, video conferencing and computer conferencing,have made the application of ICTs much more productive and efficient. Subsequently, there emerged various other technologies to suit the requirements of the content being used for teaching.

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

➢ **Teaching :**

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

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

In India too, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

provides multi-channel, multiple media teaching-learning packages for instruction and self-learning. The different components used for teaching/learning include self-instructional print and audio-video materials, radio and television broadcasts, face-to-face counseling/tutoring, laboratory and hands-on experience, teleconferencing, video conferencing, interactive radio counseling, interactive multimedia CD-ROM and Internet - based learning, and the use of mobile phones for instant messaging. The university is developing interactive multimedia content and learner support through video-conferencing and web-based platforms by utilising both the Edu Sat and the Internet. Other than these, the Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC) in the IGNOU campus, is entrusted with the task of production of audio and video educational programmes. EMPC coordinates the educational radio and television channels like Gyan Darshan and Gyan Vani, for enhancing and supplementing the teaching-learning process. The example of IGNOU shows that the application of ICTs is really effective in enhancing the learners support services above the conventional means and methods of learning. (adapted from http:// www.digitallearning.in)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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

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12.4 ROLE OF ICTs IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

You must note that for the developing countries of the world, the potentials of ICTs have enabled more access and delivery of quality secondary as well as higher education. ICTs have offered the developing countries unprecedented opportunities to enhance educational systems, improve policy formulation and execution, and widen the range of opportunities for all especially the unreached. However, as I have already told you, the benefits of ICTs can be best seen through its use in Open and Distance Education. Open and Distance learning is defined by the Commonwealth of Learning as "a way of providing learning opportunities that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or both time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings; and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses." This means that both ICTs and the ODL mode of education should adopt an integrated approach to enhance a more meaningful teaching-learning process. In the following subsections you will read more about the role and use of ICTs in open and distance education.

12.4.1 Advantages of ICTs

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

A. Easy Access to Education

One of main features of ICTs is the ability to transcend time and

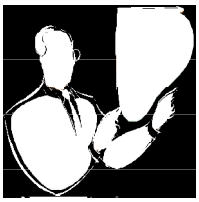
space. ICTs make room for asynchronous learning often characterized by a time lag between the delivery of instruction and its reception by the targeted learners. For example, Online Learning and E-Learning facilities provide course materials that may be accessed online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.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

B. Access to Remote Learning Resources:

Because of ICTs, both teachers and learners no longer have to rely solely on printed books and other such materials for their educational needs. With the Internet and the World Wide Web, a huge amount of information on almost every subject can be accessed from anywhere at anytime of the day, and by an unlimited number of people. This has gained tremendous popularity in the schools of both the developed and the developing countries. ICTs also have facilitated access to resource persons, mentors, experts, researchers, professionals, business leaders, and peers from all over the world.

C. Learner-Centered Learning Environment:

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



LET US KNOW

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

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

1) Audio conferencing: It involves the live exchange of voice messages over a telephone network.
2) Audio-graphic conferencing: It involves the exchange of text and still images such as graphs, diagrams or pictures along with voice messages.
3) Video conferencing: It allows the exchange not just of voice and graphics but also of moving images. Videoconferencing uses either a satellite link or television network.
4) Web-based conferencing: It involves the transmission of text, graphic, audio and visual media via the Internet. It requires the use of a computer with a browser and communication can be both synchronous and asynchronous.

12.4.2 ICT-Based Learning: Different Evolving Areas

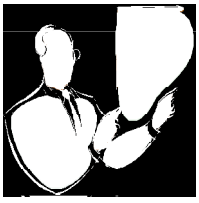
In today's context, there is no doubt about the fact that ICTs are a potentially powerful tools for extending educational opportunities to the marginalized groups. These groups include-ethnic minorities, girls and women, disable persons, elderly people who are traditionally excluded from formal education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

- **Active Learning:** Learners learn as they do and work on real-life problems, making learning less abstract and more relevant

to the learner's needs and real life situation. In this way ICT-enhanced learning promotes increased learner engagement. ICT-enhanced learning is also "just-in-time" learning in which learners can choose what to learn when they need to learn it.

- **Collaborative Learning:** ICT-supported learning encourages interaction, cooperation and collaboration among students, teachers and experts regardless of where they are. ICT-supported learning provides learners the opportunity to work with people from different cultures, thereby helping to enhance learners' communicative skills as well as their global awareness.
- **Creative Learning:** ICT-supported learning promotes the manipulation of existing information and the creation of real-world products rather than the re-production of received information.
- **Integrated Learning:** ICT-enhanced learning promotes a thematic, integrated approach to teaching and learning. This approach eliminates the artificial separation between the different disciplines and between theory and practice that characterizes the traditional classroom approach.
- **Evaluative Learning:** ICT-enhanced learning is directed towards students. Unlike the static, text or print-based educational technologies, ICT-enhanced learning recognizes that there are many different learning pathways and many different articulations of knowledge. ICTs allow learners to explore and evaluate their own learning rather than merely listen and remember.
- **E-learning/Online Learning/Web-based Learning:** Although most commonly associated with higher education and corporate training, e-learning, online learning and web-based learning encompass learning at all levels, both formal and non-formal. Such learning uses information networks-the Internet, an intranet (LAN) or extranet (WAN)-whether wholly or in part, for course delivery, interaction and facilitation.

- **Blended Learning:** Another term that is gaining currency is blended learning. This refers to the learning models that combine traditional classroom practice with e-learning solutions. For example, students in a traditional class can be assigned both print-based and online materials. There may be online mentoring sessions with their teacher through chat, and are subscribed to a class email list. Or a Web-based training course can be enhanced by periodic face-to-face instruction.
- **M-Learning :** The term M-Learning, or "mobile learning", primarily focuses on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices. One definition of mobile learning is-any sort of learning that takes place when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that takes place when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. M-Learning also means learning with portable technologies like MP3 players, notebooks and mobile phones. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner, interacting with portable technologies, and learning that reflects a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population. (Extracted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MLearning)



LET US KNOW

Community Radio is a type of service that offers radio broadcasting through community radio stations that serve geographic communities and communities of interest. Since Community Radio reflects the activities of the Community, the broadcasting jurisdiction is small usually covering a radius of 15 km.They broadcast relevant and popular content to a local/specific audience, which may often be

overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. Community radio stations are operated, owned, and driven by the communities they serve. Community radio is not-for profit system and provides a mechanism for facilitating individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own diverse stories, to share experiences, and in a media rich world to become active creators and contributors of media. Community radio has developed differently in different countries and thus the term has somewhat different meanings in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Even in India, more than 300 CR stations have been established. CR has also proved to be an important means of imparting education. We should know that the first community radio of the North East of India "Gnan Taranga" has been established under the auspices of KKH State Open University, Guwahati. This is followed by "Radio Luit" the second CR of the NE established by Gauhati University under the Institute of Distance and Open Learning.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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

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Q 9 : What is M-learning?

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

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12.4.3 Some Institutes Offering ICT Based Education

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

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

At the Philippines Open University, course materials are still predominantly print based but online tutorials are becoming a convenient alternative to face-to-face tutorials especially for students. Internet and Web-based initiatives have also been developed at the secondary education level. The Virtual High School is a result of efforts of a nationwide consortium of school districts in the United

States to promote the development and sharing of Web-based courses. In Canada, Open School offers a wide range of courses and resources to grades K-12 teachers and students that meet the requirements of the British

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

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

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

Japan's University of the Air was broadcasting 160 television and 160 radio courses in 2000. Each course consists of 15 to 45-minute lectures broadcast nationwide. Courses are aired over University-owned stations from 6 am to 12 noon. Students are also given supplemental print materials, face-to-face instruction, and online tutorials. Large broadcasting corporations that provide school broadcasts include the British Broadcasting Corporation Education Radio TV in the United Kingdom and the NHK Japanese Broadcasting Station.

South Korea has one of the most advanced ICT infrastructures in the world. The frequency of ICT use in South Korean society has changed the Korean higher educational system. South Korea

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

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

12.5 CHALLENGES OF ICT IN EDUCATIONAL USE

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

equity, cost and sustainability. Let us have a closer look at them.

- **Effectiveness :**

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

- **Cost :**

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

- **Equity :**

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

- **Sustainability :**

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

12.6 ADOPTING STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN ODL

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

The policy makers and stakeholders of education must, first of all, be clear about the outcomes of ICT based education. They should choose an appropriate technology but should also see the potentials of such technology. The potentials of each technology vary according to how it is used. ICTs like print, audio/video cassettes, radio and TV broadcasts, computers or the Internet may be used for presentation and demonstration. On the other

hand, the full potential of networked computers and internet as educational tools will remain unrealized if they are used merely for presentation or demonstration.

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

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

A rigorous analysis of the present state of the educational system is a must before the introduction of ICT. ICT-based interventions must take into account the current institutional practices and arrangements. Specifically, the barriers to ICT use need to be identified, including those related to curriculum and pedagogy, infrastructure, capacity-building, language and content, and financing. The specification of educational goals at different

levels as well as the different modalities of the use of ICTs that can best be employed in pursuit of these goals. This requires of the policymaker an understanding of the potentials of different ICTs when applied in different contexts for different purposes.

12.7 USE OF ICTS IN THE NORTH EAST OF INDIA

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

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

While dealing with the issue of quality assurance in Open and Distance education, one cannot but refer to what the National Knowledge Commission of India has stated: "The biggest challenge in higher education, therefore, is the provision of quality higher education to the greatest number, at the lowest possible cost to the learner" (NKC, 2009, page 5). But, it is also important to note that the National Knowledge Network (NKN) project also aims at establishing a strong and robust internal Indian network which will be capable of providing secure and reliable connectivity. Using NKN, all vibrant institutions of India with vision and passion will be able to transcend space and time limitations in accessing information and knowledge, and derive the associated benefits for themselves and for the society. If NKN becomes a reality, it would be considered a significant step towards ushering in a knowledge revolution in the country with connectivity to more than 1500 institutions from which the NE would be one of the most benefitted regions in India.



12.8 LET US SUM UP

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



12.9 FURTHER READING

1) Victoria L. Tinio: ICT in Education
2) Communication Technology for Distance Education (ES-318) of Staff Training and Research Institution of Distance Education, IGNOU
3) NKC Brochure in Website: http://www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/
4) NKN Brochure in Website: www.nkn.in



12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: ICTs stand for Information and Communication Technologies. ICTs refer to the various set of technological tools and resources that help communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information of various kinds. These tools mainly include print media, computers, broadcasting technologies like radio and television, telephony and the internet. The use of ICTs has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of education in both formal and non-formal settings.

Ans to Q No 2 : The Open University of the United Kingdom popularly known as UKOU, is the first open university in the world. It was established in 1969. Although they still rely heavily on print-based materials supplemented by radio, television, they have also utilized the resources of ICTs by introducing online programmes to facilitate effective learning.

Ans to Q No 3 : In that time, human beings communicated through writings on stone or wood and communication was limited only to a small area. They made extensive use of symbols, gestures, signals to communicate among themselves. Gradually, other means of communication were also tried and invented. For example, the invention of the printing press revolutionized the processes of communication to a larger group.

Ans to Q No 4 : The different stages of the growth of communication technologies can be seen through Audio Media, Audio-Visual Media, Telecommunication, Multimedia Communication.

Ans to Q No 5 : Access in educational use means to be able to reach out to a large number of students. The invention of telephones, fax machines and mobile phones, and now computers have revolutionized the world of communication. However, the latest trends in teleconferencing like audio conferencing, video conferencing and computer conferencing, have made access much more efficient. The idea of access has further undergone drastic change with the development of Internet and the World Wide Web.

Ans to Q No 6 : ICTs have changed the educational sector in three possible ways: a) ICTs have reduced the cost of education, (b) ICTs have enabled a large number of learners to enroll in need-based educational programmes, and (c) ICTs have reduced the time required for introducing newer programmes of studies by adopting new flexible means.

Ans to Q No 7 : Anytime, Anywhere and Anyhow, Access to Remote Learning Resources, and Learner-Centered Learning Environment

Ans to Q No 8 : Active Learning, Collaborative Learning, Creative Learning, Integrated Learning, Evaluative Learning, E-learning/Online Learning/ Web-based Learning, Blended Learning and M-Learning

Ans to Q No 9 : The term M-Learning, or "mobile learning", primarily focus on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices like MP3 players, notebooks and mobile phones. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner and learning that reflects a focus on how society and its institutions can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population.

Ans to Q No 10 : Monterrey Institute of Technology in Mexico, The African Virtual University, Philippines Open University, Universitas Terbuka in Indonesia, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, Japan's University of the Air, Korea Cyber University, YCMOU, Maharastra



12.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: What is the meaning of ICTs?

Q 2 : How have ICTs affected the processes of education?

Q 3 : What are the evolving areas in ICT based learning?

Q 4 : Why is ICT important in open and distance learning?

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

Q 1 : What are the different stages in the growth and development of information and communication technologies?

Q 2 : What is basic role of community radio in the society? Why is it used for the educational purposes? Explain.

Q 3 : Name the new concepts of learning that are increasingly being used in modern times? Explain.

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

Q 1 : Do you feel that ICTs are advantageous tools for modern day education? If yes, please explain with detail.

Q 2 : Make a brief review of the challenges that the higher education system might have faced while upgrading the traditional education to ICT based one.

Q 3 : Give a brief overview of the use of ICT in the North Eastern educational system.

Q 4 : Make a survey of the use of ICTs in the North East of India.

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UNIT 13 : OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs) AND ITS CHALLENGES IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Concept of OERs

13.3.1 Need of OERs in Education

13.3.2 Scope of OERs in Education

13.4 Challenges of OER in the context of India

13.5 Let Us Sum Up

13.6 Further Reading

13.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.8 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- define the term Open Educational Resources better known as OER
- explain the concept of OER as a new addition to modern education
- discuss the need and scope of OERs
- enlist the challenges of OERs in the context of India

13.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit familiarises you with the concept of Open Educational Resources or OER, as it has been so coined. OER can be roughly understood as any kind of teaching-learning and research materials in any medium to be used in the public domain under an Open License that permits their free use. Thus, free availability and reusability of OERs are

the key issues that can enable generations of learners to use them in both formal and non-formal mode of education. And, the digital revolution of the 21st century has made OER the buzzword in any serious educational institute of contemporary times. OERs have enabled educators to be more creative as they have to deal with wide range of experiences in terms of capacity and background of the learners whom they may not meet. One key difference between OER and any other educational resource is that OER have an open license, preferably a Creative Commons License, which allows adaptation and reuse without having to request the copyright holder. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Open Courseware (OCW) initiative, in which teachers placed their lecture notes online for free use, inaugurated the movement globally. Thus, by the end of this unit, you will not only be in a position to explain the concept of OER, but will also be able to discuss the need and scope of OER and the challenges of OER implementation in a country like India.

13. 3 CONCEPT OF OERS

"What is OER?" is perhaps the most important question for those who have not yet heard the term OER. Open educational resources (OER) are free and openly licensed educational materials that can be used for teaching, learning, research, and other purposes. But, before discussing the concept of OERs in detail, let us first have a look at some of the definitions of OERs that have been accepted worldwide to be the standard definition of the term.

- **The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation :**

"OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge."

- **Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development :**

"Digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students, and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning, and research. OER includes learning content, software tools to develop, use, and distribute content, and implementation resources such as open licences."

- **UNESCO :**

"Teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions."

- **The Cape Town Open Education Declaration :**

"[O]pen educational resources should be freely shared through open license which facilitate use, revision, translation, improvement and sharing by anyone. Resources should be published in formats that facilitate both use and editing, and that accommodate a diversity of technical platforms. Whenever possible, they should also be available in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities and people who do not yet have access to the Internet."

- **The Wikieducator OER Handbook :**

"The term Open Educational Resource(s) (OER) refers to educational resources (lesson plans, quizzes, syllabi, instructional modules, simulations, etc.) that are freely available for use, reuse, adaptation, and sharing."

- **OER Commons :**

"Open Educational Resources are teaching and learning materials that you may freely use and reuse, without charge. OER often have a Creative Commons or GNU license that state specifically how the material may be used, reused, adapted, and shared."

Nearly all the definitions provided above mention that OER is a kind of 'content' or 'product' which is free and freely available, is suitable not just for higher education but for all levels of education, and are released under

an open license. OER can be reused and repurposed to suit different needs and could be available in any medium- print, audio, video, digital. One key difference between OER and other educational resources is that OERs have an open license, which allows adaptation and reuse without having to request the copyright holder. The emergence of what is called 'global commons' powered by the collective efforts of some intelligent people around the world led to the coining of the term Open Education Resources or OERs at a UNESCO meeting in 2002.

Now, let us have a discussion on the term OER is some detail. The Report of the Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries, UNESCO, Paris, 1-3 July 2002 purposefully showcased, perhaps for the first time, the need to provide educational resources for college and university faculties to adapt in accordance with their curricular and pedagogical requirements. By referring to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology University (MITU) Open Course Ware Initiatives, the participants of the Forum praised MITU's support in producing materials for approximately two thousand courses freely available for use by faculties and students from all over the world. A Forum like this, not only paved the ways for more recent discussions of intellectual property issues, but also helped define the primary stakeholders for such initiatives. One of the major contributions of the Forum was the adoptions of various educational projects in the developing countries. Following this, several OER initiatives have been taken in many of such countries.

A decade later, the World Congress on Open Educational Resources, UNESCO, Paris, 20 to 22 June, 2012, in order to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the 2002 UNESCO Forum, that coined the term Open Educational Resources, urged for developing and adapting OER in different languages to suit different contexts, encouraging Open Licensing of educational materials produced with the help of public funds. Since then, along with the emergence of various higher educational institutions of different sorts, there can be seen a major move by such institutions towards the creation of open educational contents along with printed text books and

other reading materials. Besides MITU, other world-ranking universities like Stanford, Yale, University of Michigan, University of California, United Nations University have been offering courses on a wide variety of areas like Business, Energy, Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, science and technology, and have largely contributed internationally to improved teaching learning activities. Such initiatives have not only helped both the learners and the educators in general, but have also empowered the common masses who can use these resources and reuse the contents for knowledge up-gradation in a competitive world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is OER?

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Q 2: What is an Open License?

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Q 3: What is the basic difference between OER and other educational resource?

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Q 4: Which are the two most important OER conferences stated to have established the importance of OER in the whole world?

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Q 5: Which are some of the world ranking educational institutes that have widely promoted OER?

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13.3.1 Need of OERs in Education

You will note that when the term OER first emerged, the primary focus was on education or higher education so to say. But with the passage of time, since 2002, when the world witnessed greater global participation in primary and secondary education, the concept of OER came to be included as part of institutional policy implementation encompassing many more areas. Besides, the increasing use of Internet in the world has helped realise the fact that OER is no longer a difficult issue among institutions in the Higher Education sector. Other than the internet, linking access and re-use of OER with the increased availability of affordable mobile phones have been the other key development in the 21st century.

Still, the point here is, do we really need OERs when there is a plethora of resources of any kind available in an institution? The answer to this question is that we do need OERs as the movement has resulted in a multi-directional flow of knowledge. OER has provided for a global exchange of knowledge, as we learn from different developmental works being carried out in different parts of the world. Open licensing as an approach to foster the spread of

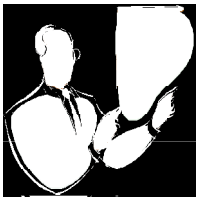
global public goods is another concern that has facilitated the spread of knowledge. In this context, Creative Commons has appeared to be the most significant licensing framework although licensing options can vary from country to country. OERs have two biggest advantages: One, they have the potential to cut costs of printed materials thus saving a whole lot of public money, the other is that OERs can increase access and improve the quality of education.

In the context of India, where the cost of education is increasing day by day, OER may be very useful for educating the poor people living in various adverse areas in which establishing formal educational institutes is a far cry due to geographical and socio-political barriers. For these people, the cost of enrolment into schools and colleges, and acquisition of texts books and other reading materials is much higher than the family's monthly income. Hence, OER development may be a timely solution for reaching out to these people and realizing the mottos like Zero Rejection Policy and Inclusive Education. Besides, these resources can be usefully taught through the Community Colleges regarding the establishment of which there is clear guidelines under the MHRD, Govt. of India. However, the important point at this juncture is how to ensure the production and availability of educational contents produced with the help of public funds, which in a way fulfils one of the important objectives of the OER revolution today which is also to facilitate inclusive education for the differently- abled children.

Why People feel the Need to share?

The reasons that individuals and institutions are feeling the need of producing and sharing OER can be divided into *three* basic reasons. They are—(a) Technological and economic, (b) Social and (c) Legal Reasons. The technological and economic reasons include improved, less costly and more user-friendly information technology infrastructure (such as broadband), hardware and software. Content is cheaper and easier to produce and costs can be further reduced

by sharing. New economic models are emerging around the distribution of free content. Legal reasons refers to new licensing schemes that facilitate free sharing and reuse of content. Social drivers include increased willingness to share.



LET US KNOW

The use, production and sharing of OER is never free from barriers. A technical barrier is lack of broadband availability. Lack of resources to invest in hardware and software for developing and sharing OER is an economic barrier. Barriers such as these are often mentioned as significant obstacles in the developing countries. Social barriers include lack of skills to use the technical innovations and cultural obstacles against sharing or using resources developed by other teachers or institutions.

There are *three* arguments for different Governments to support OER projects worldwide. These are :

- They expand the access to learning for everyone, mostly the non-traditional groups of students and thus widen the scope of this participation in higher education.
- They can be an efficient way of promoting lifelong learning for both the individual and the government.
- They can bridge the gap between non-formal, informal and formal learning.

However, despite all barriers, the following may be seen as the main motives of the rising involvement in OER projects.

- The altruism that sharing knowledge is in line with academic traditions and a very good thing to do.

- Educational institutions (particularly those publicly financed) should leverage taxpayers' money by allowing free sharing and reuse of resources.
- Quality of contents can be improved and the cost of content development can be reduced by sharing and reusing. Use of OER can be attractive to new students.
- There is a need to look for new cost recovery models, like an OER project, as institutions experience growing competition.
- Open sharing will speed up the development of new learning resources, stimulate internal improvement, innovation and reuse and help the institution to keep good records of materials and their internal and external use.

Whether institutions are engaged in OER projects or not, OER can be expected to affect curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. With thousands of (open courseware) courses from internationally reputed higher education institutions being available for free, teachers and educators will need to consider that students compare their curriculum with others. Since the teachers' role as supplier of reading lists and teaching materials is diminishing, OER is likely to accelerate changes in the traditional teaching role and the evolution of more independent learners. An increase in non-formal and informal learning can be expected to enhance the demand for assessment and recognition of competences gained outside formal learning settings.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: State the two major advantages of OER in the field of education.

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Q 7: What are the three important barriers in the use of OER?

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Q 8: State two reasons for the rising involvements in OER projects.

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13.3.2 Scope of OERs

As you know, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada and UNESCO, Paris have been working for several years now to promote the development and use of OER around the globe. The 2012 World OER Congress was organised jointly in Paris to mark the tenth anniversary of the term OER, with generous support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The Paris Declaration made 10 recommendations, out of which the following three are perhaps the most important:

- Foster awareness and use of OER
- Encourage the development and adaptation of OER in a variety of languages and cultural contexts
- Encourage the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds

These recommendations can be seen as important developments regarding the idea and use of OER as different Governments tend to have accepted the benefits of OERs and have tried to incorporate an OER policy into their education system.

In this context, we must discuss the role of Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has played in popularising the term OER and extending its benefits in a globally competitive educational environment. You will learn that COL maintains an online directory service for OER from the Commonwealth countries which is easily accessible from their website: **www.col.org**. Besides, they have identified free courses from different institutions belonging to the Commonwealth Countries that can be used by other stakeholders in areas like higher education, secondary schooling, teacher education, education for women, and skill development. All these OER courses and materials are developed so that without duplicating effort, participating countries can directly access quality materials that they can adopt and adapt as and when necessary. COL has become one of the major publishers of the latest research and toolkits on OER. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, USA also came forward to support this work that combines the professional development of teachers with the development of OER. Thus, COL has broadened the scope of OERs by resorting to the following *four* issues:

- Advocacy and awareness generation regarding the benefits and availability of OER.
- Policy development on OER at the national and institutional levels.
- Capacity building so that more governments, institutions and individuals are able to effectively harness the potential of OER.
- Promote research through its publications on OER and its Chairs programme.

Besides what is mentioned above as part of COL initiatives, many international activities have undertaken OERs, by creating them, reusing them in their own contexts, and even localising them, spreading knowledge like never before and benefitting millions of people worldwide. Some of those activities include the following:

- China Open Resources for Education (CORE) has translated MITU materials into Chinese.
- COL's Instructional Design template, an OER, has been translated and adapted by the Open University of China.
- Materials from COL's website have been translated into Ukrainian, German and other non-Commonwealth languages.
- COL has developed free collaborative content on English Language Teaching which has been used to train teachers in Kenya.

In a country like India, the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) project funded by the MHRD was an important initiative undertaken by 7 IITs, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in 1999. So far, it has been instrumental in promoting e-learning through online courses on Engineering and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences etc. Following this, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad created a number of Open Access learning materials on agricultural practices under Virtual Academy for the Semi-Arid Tropics (VASAT) to promote literacy on natural resources. Then, a premiere educational institution like IGNOU started the FlexiLearn project to promote personal learning by providing free access to its courses. Till this date, India has become a very large producer of OER in Asia along with other advanced countries like China, Korea and Japan. Today, many other universities and educational institutions in India have created OER. This means that OER is no longer a nascent phenomenon in India. It is important to note that such resources are not only being used in the Open and Distance mode of education, but the concept of open access is also being increasingly used in the face-to-face and formal mode of education. Many of such resources are also gaining tremendous popularity as YouTube lectures. You will note that many of these premier institutes mentioned above, in partnership with the Government of India, have made their engineering and technology

courses available as OER. These are being used in over hundreds of institutions, most of them in remote locations with very limited resources. But, the interesting point is that teachers and students from other educational institutes too are using the free IIT resources to improve the quality of their teaching and learning.

In the state of Assam, the decision taken by Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University to release its course materials and research activities under Open Licensing, has been seen by many as an important step towards the use and sharing of OER. KKHSOU is not only trying to identify the need of various stakeholders, but also making them producers of valuable e-contents. It has been producing important educational resources in the local languages to meet local requirements. Till now, as part of its OER policy, the university has adopted the CC-BY-NC-SA for all its resources. Besides, hundreds of educational videos are made available on YouTube which can be accessed through www.youtube.com/user/kkhsou. The experience of KKHSOU may be seen as a wake-up call for other premiere institutions of the state to develop their own policies of OER and Copyright, and contribute meaningfully to the whole mankind in general.

So, the scope of OER is immense internationally, nationally and globally in the context of the 2nd Decade of the 21st century. However, what incentives and other institutional mechanisms and processes need to be put in place to facilitate the growth and mainstreaming of OER in educational institutions is perhaps the biggest challenge of the time. The following initiatives need to be adopted for further extending the benefits of OERs:

- Developing an ICT policy within the institution
- Elaborating a policy on copyright
- Providing incentives for faculty members such as increments and recognition of OER towards promotions
- Developing a strategy for involving stakeholders from your perspective



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9 : Which are the two international organisations instrumental behind the spread of OER?

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Q 10 : What is the role played by COL in spreading the scope of OERs?

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Q 11 : Name some of the Indian initiatives to promote OER in the Indian contexts.

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13.4 CHALLENGES OF OER APPLICATION

In spite of the efforts made by the international and national OER communities for popularising and extending the benefits of OERs, there are certain major issues that need to be addressed for OER to realise its transformative potential. These are briefly discussed below:

- First, the digital divide across the world is still continuing. Unlike in case of the developed countries, in a developing country like India, we certainly start with a disadvantage—technological barriers.

However, the present debate on the use of OER has to focus not only on technology, but also on the stakeholders' engagement and the politics of power. Exclusivist politics needs to be abolished for the greater benefit of mankind.

- Secondly, one must also try to discuss in what ways OER can help address the issues of equity and inequality. Institutions and groups with better access to resources and infrastructure will make more use of the educational technology innovations such as free and open resources. So, they must ensure that even the low-income students have access to resources previously available only to students of advantageous background.
- Thirdly, against the fact that the opportunity gap between wealthy and poor has expanded like never before, lack of research may end up with the fact that every education technology initiative including OER which does not specifically target the needs of particular populations will benefit only the wealthy.
- Fourthly, many teachers and educators have felt that they did not have either the time or the capacity to locate, adapt, and re-purpose OER material relevant to their work. Lack of interest among the teachers themselves to explore the OER repositories, and unwillingness to learn have resulted in the damage of a vast reservoir of human resources.
- Fifthly, Learners too felt that OER should be fully open and materials should be accessible on alternative technologies such as mobile devices. While the management of the Institutions are only concerned about the challenges relating to intellectual property and copyright issues, lack of a proper understanding of copyright and open licensing has been another hindrance for OER development.
- Lastly, the incentives to be provided to teachers and educators seriously involved to participate in this OER movement has long been undermined. Because the fundamental duty of a teacher is to

improve the quality of education. But the irony is that when many of them have not heard of OER, how can one make them active participants in this movement?



13.5 LET US SUM UP

- From this unit, you have learnt that OER is used to mean any digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research.
- OER includes learning content, software tools, use and distribution of contents, and implementation of resources under an open licence. OER also refers to resources which can be adjusted, and which can provide benefits without restricting the possibilities for others to enjoy them.
- You have learnt that in the context of the knowledge era, sharing of educational resources has been one of the priority areas of the educational institutions. That is why, the need of OER, has been increasingly felt worldwide.
- Besides, the way OER has inaugurated a new era in education, it can be assumed that OER has immense scope internationally, nationally and locally in the days to come.
- The use and creation of OER face a lot of challenges. Some of the challenges are—digital divide across the world, issues of equity and inequality, lack of adequate research on the usefulness of OER, lack of interests and willingness among the educators to accept OER and so on.



13.6 FURTHER READING

1) Giving Knowledge for Free: The Emergence of Open Educational Resources. Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development, 2007.

2) https://wiki.creativecommons.org/wiki/What_is_OER%3F
3) www.col.org



13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: OER can be roughly understood as any kind of teaching learning and research materials in any medium to be used in the public domain under an Open License that permits their free use.

Ans to Q No 2 : An open license, preferably a Creative Commons License, usually allows adaptation and reuse of a resources in any format without having to request the copyright holder.

Ans to Q No 3 : The basic difference is that OERs have an open license, which allows adaptation and reuse without having to request the copyright holder.

Ans to Q No 4 : 1. Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries UNESCO, Paris, 1-3 July 2002. 2. World Congress on Open Educational Resources, UNESCO, Paris, 20 to 22 June, 2012.

Ans to Q No 5 : Massachusetts Institute of Technology University, and other Universities like Stanford, Yale, University of Michigan, University of California, United Nations University and so on.

Ans to Q No 6 : OERs have two biggest advantages: One, they have the potential to cut costs of printed materials thus saving a whole lot of public money; the other is that OERs can increase access and improve the quality of education.

Ans to Q No 7 : Technical barrier is the lack of broadband availability, Economic barrier is the lack of resources to invest in hardware and software for developing and sharing OER, and social barriers are the lack of skills to use the technical innovations and cultural obstacles against sharing or using resources developed by other teachers or institutions.

Ans to Q No 8 : One reason is that sharing knowledge is in line with academic traditions. The other reason is that educational institutions are using taxpayers' money by allowing free sharing and reuse of resources.

Ans to Q No 9 : Commonwealth of Learning, Canada and UNESCO, Paris have been working for several years now to promote the development and use of OER around the globe.

Ans to Q No 10 : COL maintains an online directory service for OER from the Commonwealth countries. Besides, they have identified free courses from different institutions belonging to the Commonwealth Countries in areas like—higher education, secondary schooling, teacher education and skills development.

Ans to Q No 11 : The NPTEL project funded by the MHRD, ICRISAT, Hyderabad created a number of Open Access learning materials on agricultural practices under VASAT, IGNOU's FlexiLearn project to promote personal learning etc.



13.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: What are the reasons behind the emergence of the OER movement in the 21st century?

Q 2: Write a note on the history of OER movement with particular reference to 2002 Paris Forum.

Q 3: Do we really need OER? Write a note on use of OER in the field of higher education of the 21st century.

Q 4: What is the scope of OER? Why are the people around the globe feeling the need to share?

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

Q 1: In what way, can a teacher or educator use OER himself or herself or help their students use OER for learning?

Q 2: Mention the benefits of an institution resorting to the production and sharing of OERs.

Q 3: Describe in detail the role played by Commonwealth of Learning in popularising the term OER.

Q 4: Many international activities have undertaken OERs. Discuss in detail.

Q 5: What is the current status of OER in a country like India? Describe.

Q 6: What are the major challenges of OER application in contemporary times? Discuss in detail.

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UNIT 14 : CHALLENGES IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION (ODE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Challenges in Open and Distance Education (ODE)

- 14.3.1 Challenges faced by the Learners
- 14.3.2 Challenges faced by the Teachers
- 14.3.3 Challenges faced by the University/Institutions

14.4 Overcoming the Challenges in ODE

14.5 Let Us Sum Up

14.6 Further Reading

14.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.8 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit, you will be able to

- identify the challenges in Open and Distance Education
- explain the challenges faced by the learners in Open and Distance Education
- discuss the problems faced by the teachers of Open and Distance Education
- elaborate the challenges in front of the Institution offering Open and Distance Education
- identify some of the possible solutions to the barriers and challenges

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Open and Distance Education (ODE) has been around for the last 30-35 years. It has been observed that higher education has taken a new

turn following several institutions conducting the teaching learning transactions in the Open and Distance mode. Moreover, in the most recent years, we have also seen the emergence of new mechanisms and tools to support open and distance learning following which many changes have occurred in the field of ODE. For example, the previous practice of distributing printed learning materials by post to the distance learners has become obsolete following the successful integration of ODE to new media, information and communication technologies. However, one should not forget about the fact that three parties are always involved in ODE, which are namely—distance learners or students, the teachers or faculty members, and the institutions or the universities offering distance learning. Although, ODE has experienced a revolutionary development in the 21st century in the entire globe, all the three parties mentioned have been facing lot of barriers and challenges hindering the effectiveness of ODE which has otherwise the potential for an explosive growth and acceptance. An attempt has been made in this unit to discuss the barriers and challenges faced by ODE in general especially in the context of a country like India.

14.3 CHALLENGES IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Open and Distance Education (ODE) has been an increasingly important aspect of higher education in today's world. It has succeeded in meeting the needs of an expanding range of learners who find education necessary for certain arenas of their life. Although ODE provides a convenient, flexible, and manageable alternative for the deprived learners in our society, it has never been free from barriers and challenges. Hence, every ODE institute must try to first understand and identify these challenges, and then devise solvable measures to these problems. For example, one of the most common problems in ODE is the 'absence' of the teacher, an issue having a deep pedagogic significance. However, in the following subsections, we shall try to discuss in some length, some of the most common barriers and challenges faced by ODE in general.

14.3.1 Challenges faced by the Learners

The following are the challenges faced by the learners of ODE.

- Perhaps the most important problem faced by the learners of ODE is the feeling of isolation and marginalisation. As 'face-to-face' contact is not considered a part of ODE, most learners often feel the absence of the 'real' person to talk to, and communicate his/her understanding and confusions. This is one of the major problems faced by the ODE system in general, although the various processes of guidance and counselling have undergone different positive changes in the recent years. Besides the feeling isolation, the challenges of bridging the 'gap' between the teacher and the learners within a new and technologically advanced learning environment have invited serious attention and discussions. Hence, issues like tutorials, contact and counselling sessions, or guidance of any sort have to be re-considered as part of the 'real' interaction between the teachers and learners in relation to the changing educational processes, which offer both opportunities and problems.

- There is no denying the fact that without the Learners Support Services (LSS), ODL cannot function. These services can very well address the academic and personal problems of the learners with the objectives of solving their problems and providing them regular feedback on their performance. As the obscene of regular and direct contact with the learners as they are placed at a distance, remains a common characteristic feature of the ODE in general, a strong Learners Support System needs to be ensured. Although Support Services are numerous, in matters relating to Counselling and Feedback, Up-to-date study Material, Media Support Services etc., the learners are facing different types of problems because of the 'distance'. These problems have added more to the isolation in

the distance learning process complicating the things further.

- Learning Materials in printed form can stimulate the knowledge base of the learners to a significant. However, the problem relating to the question of acceptability still lingers. Can such materials directly claim usefulness as a strong learner support service? Can they really be used as substitutes of the teachers as these materials are emphatically called 'the teacher in print'? Alternatively, do the learners need some external help other than the learning materials? In most cases, the experience shows that ones the learner is enrolled, no support service actually reaches that learner.
- Generally speaking, nearly all distance learners in the developing countries often face insecurities due to reasons like—common perception of the society against ODE, the perceived irrelevance of the studies they have undertaken, lack of adequate support from the employers, and above all, their feeling of isolation being a graduate or post graduate from a ODE institute. Such issues need to be taken seriously, without which these problems shall remain as problems.
- Many of the distance learners often find that design and content of the study materials do not meet their needs. This has been a deep problem for those learners who are first timer to the system. This adversely affects the students and poorly designed course materials may contribute to the attrition rates. However, one may argue that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has eased many of the difficulties of the learners. But the learners hailing from the most remote areas as well as difficult terrains don't usually have any idea regarding the use of ICT for learning purpose.
- Another common problem in ODE is the lack of student-to-student communication. Unlike in the conventional mode, where the students are taught in group environment and where students

can learn and share information with their peers, ODE, as an educational system, is not based on much peer-to-peer interaction. Without this type of a communication, distance education programmes usually turn out to be only the transfer of information, not learning in the true sense.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1 : What should be the role of ODE institutions in meeting the challenges?

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Q 2 : Do you think that the feeling of isolation is a big problem in an ODE institution?

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Q 3 : Make a list of the common problems of distance learners in the developing countries.

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Q 4 : What type of communication problems exist in ODE?

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14.3.2 Challenges faced by the Teachers

The following are the Barriers faced by the teachers and educators of ODE.

- Many teachers/educators/faculty members of ODE often face the problem of their service tenure, as many of the ODE institutions in the developing countries either do not have permanent teaching staff or have only a few permanent staff. The unacceptable terms and conditions of appointment, especially in the field of ODE in a country like India, has made many of the prospective teachers confused before joining an ODL institute. This means that ODE institutions have failed to absorb serious and competent people as teachers in this system of education.

- As the Self Learning Materials (SML), both in print and electronic format, are the backbone of any ODE system, lot of serious efforts usually go into the design and preparation of distance learning material. This tremendously increases the workload on the part of the teachers who are also the course writers, editors, and instructional designers. Besides, the teachers and educators in ODE need to perform several clerical jobs, which eat into their own reading time thereby affecting their knowledge base significantly. Thus, the nature of work on the part of a distance teacher is more of a manager than of a teacher.

- Another challenge that needs to be seriously discussed is the presence of learners belonging to different age groups. The fact is that the learning ability among the learners of different age groups can never be similar. When a large majority of the distance learners are adults and beyond the age of 40 years, the teachers/educators may find it quite challenging to teach them by changing their teaching style. And, this is not an easy

task. Only properly trained and experienced learners can only do that and this type of teachers are very hard to get at this stage of ODE.

- Due to the paucity of sufficient human resource, many ODE institutions are dependent on the teachers of the conventional mode of education in the capacity of course writers, editors, counsellors, evaluators and so on. However, the fact is that many of them who are teaching or associated with the conventional system, might not like the idea of distance learning or might not want to be associated with the ODE system. So long as the teachers from the regular mode colleges and universities feel there is a burden associated the distance education program currently in place, there will be little support from their side toward distance education opportunities. This has harmed the system like anything.

- Challenges related to the use of ICT is yet another problem for the teachers of ODE. To make use of the modern education technology, it is of paramount importance that modern cyber parlour or video conferencing should be established leading to the use of computers. Thus, a new mindset with creative environment is essentially imperative. However, are the existing teachers and educators in ODE well-versed with the use of modern technologies of communications, is perhaps the biggest question when a country like India is experiencing a quantum leap in introducing OERs (Open Educational Resources) and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) for the benefit of the distance learners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5 : ICT has enabled the distance learners to learn better. But ICTs sometimes also pose some problems? Do you agree?

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Q 6 : How is the general attitude of the teachers and faculty members regarding ODE in general?

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Q 7 : Why is it said that the ODE system has failed in attracting competent teachers?

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14.3.3 Challenges faced by the ODE Institutions

Many of the ODE institutions including the open universities in a country like India are trying to take cognizance of the challenges faced by the learners. But, many of these institutions themselves are facing lot of challenges. The following are some of them.

- In several of the ODE institutions of the present times, academic programmes are run based on the tried and tasted methods only. However, there has been an increase in alternative work

arrangements with flexitime and work-at-home arrangements on the part of the learners. Therefore, the ODE institutions may devise programmes that promote greater individual responsibility as well as increasing learner autonomy. Besides, as the social patterns too are changing, learners should be encouraged to balance academic their involvements with their commitments to work. Therefore, the ODE institutions of the present times must change their educational patterns to cater to the needs of the newly emergent learners in the 21st century context. But, many of the Open Universities are not seen to have adopted any measures to tackle such problems so far.

- In matters relating to the use of technologically-aided education for the greater benefits of the learners, the ODE institutions need to formulate a clear ICT policy in the absence of which the implantation process always becomes a problem. Besides, there cannot be an adequate learning environment without a proper institutional policy. In the absence of a policy, the last person on the queue may be missed out. This has been one of the biggest problems in the field of ODE.
- Integration of Technology into teaching learning transactions needs adequate investment and funds. In addition, in many of the private ODE institutions, the learners are forced to incur the cost of technology. Learners might decide not to join the course of that Institution and the problem continues. Besides, technology changes everything, not merely add something new. New technologies make war against old ones. Therefore, while planning to introduce new technology, the ODE institute must try to ensure for how long that particular technology is going to last and benefit the learners.
- The common belief is that distance courses are inferior to traditional courses. This reduces the motivation of teachers and students to a significant extent. This is one of the biggest

challenges faced by the ODE institutions in India. To prove this belief wrong, the ODE institutions or universities, with serious and concerted efforts, need to ensure the quality in content and delivery of distance learning courses, so that they are never inferior to any of the regular on-campus courses. Similarly, the ODE institutions must try out some measures to incentivise their employees as a means of increasing output, which may in turn attract competent persons to join this system. However, there is a lack of good will among the administrators and policy makers of ODE.

- Assessing student performance is yet another big problem on the part of the ODE institution. How to do assessments of the performance and the learning outcome of the learners, once they pass of that institute? So far, very few ODE institutes have taken cognizance of that matter, as the success rate in the Indian higher education is determined not by a proposed learning outcome, but by a significant increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), and the ODE institutions in a developing country like India are judged only in terms of their contributions to GER, not in terms of anything else.
- Two most common challenges faced by the distance education institutions have been the significant dropout rate and the downfall in pass percentage. The reason behind these problems may be the fact that both the private and government sectors are not considering the degrees issued by an ODE institution valid or at par with those issued by the conventional institutions, although the University Grants Commission has clear notifications regarding the equivalence of the degrees. Moreover, the increasing dropout rate are mostly due to students' support system not reaching the learners on time. Similarly, and total absence of face-to-face interaction, may also reduce the student enrolments to a significant extent. The ODE institutions, including

the Open Universities may come up with solutions to such problems.

- Due to a large number of students getting enrolled in the ODE system every year, evaluation of these learners has been a major challenge. Although measures are available to meet the challenges related to evaluation, conducting term-end examination has always been a problem for nearly all ODL institutions. Moreover, the use of large scale unfair means to pass the examination has become a social menace that has maligned the image of an ODE institute offering programmes through the distance mode.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: Why do you think that the educational institutes must change their educational patterns in the context of the 21st century?

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Q 9: What are the most common challenges in front of the ODE institutes?

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ACTIVITY 14.1

Identify the problems that as a distance learner you are facing while pursuing education through ODL mode.

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14.4 OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES IN ODE

In the above subsections, we have tried to discuss some of the challenges faced by the learners and teachers of ODE as well as the Institutions themselves. However, along with problems, there are solutions as well. Therefore, the challenges in ODE, should not remain as problems, and due measures need to be undertaken to overcome all types of barriers. The following may be seen as some of the possible solutions to the challenges mentioned above.

- With the increasing need to introduce technology into the teaching learning transaction to suit modern day requirements, the learners from different remote and difficult terrains shall require training in the use of the tools. However, similar is the case with the teachers, educators, and the instructors, working at different capacities. They too shall require focussed training on ICT tools in order to make effective use of the technologies involved.
- The ODE providers need to ensure that distance education programme are developed and implemented after going through a market research on the possible takers of the programmes. Besides, there should be a standard mechanism for course evaluation and

program accreditation. New programmes as well as their delivery mechanism need to be considered carefully, before implementing them in a different cultural environment of the 21st century.

- Utmost care needs to be taken while imparting education with the help of technology. It has been observed that focus is given more on introducing new technological facilities (as everyday new educational technologies are emerging) than on the content to be provided. So that the teaching contents don't get lost due to technology, emphasis must be given on instructional design rather than on new technology.
- Another solution to many of the common problems in ODE is that the educators and faculty members employed in various ODE institutes across the country should be involved in the whole process of open and distance learning. Before joining an ODE institution, they should first try to learn the philosophy of ODE. They may take up the programme called Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education (PGDDE) conducted by STRIDE, IGNOU.
- Many of the existing ICT tools, whether in the Internet or otherwise, often face severe limitations in addressing the needs of the learners due to their inability to cope with the instructions in languages other than the mother tongue. When technology-based learning is introduced, one needs to recognise this fact. If mobile-based distance learning can be ensured, technical barriers shall become a non-issue. Mobile based learning products can help to resolve many challenges faced by ODE institutions of the present times.
- The open universities and the directorate of distance education currently functioning in India must remember and understand the fact that course content of each programme is just one part of the education provided to the learners. Therefore, the ODE providers must ensure all institutional support starting from pre and post counselling facilities, academic counselling, library support to other administrative assistance like on campus placements and so on.

- Another most significant development in maintaining the standard of open and distance education may be the focus on establishing more and regional centre. ODE institutions seeking to offer their educational programmes beyond their location may suffer the lack of the need to address the needs of students in specific areas. Therefore, regional centres, which can act as the mirror of the mother institute located at a distance, can cater to the local and specific needs of the learners. This may also reduce the problem of remaining isolated in a global learning environment.
- Finally, periodical assessment and accreditation of the ODE institutions by higher external authorities may help in dictating important pathways to the institutions in a globally competitive educational environment. Commonwealth of Learning, Canada offers such a Review exercise called COL-RIM exercise (Commonwealth of Learning Review and Improvement Model) which may help an ODE institutes to identify the faultiness and then take follow up activities for the betterment of the institution. Similarly, NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) of UGC also conducts review and assessment of the enlisted educational institutions by UGC, including the Open Universities. Such exercises shall surely help in meeting many of the challenges faced by the ODE institutions.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10 : How according to you, can we meet the challenges of ICT use?

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Q 11 : Do you think that periodical review and assessment of ODE institutes necessary?

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14.5 LET US SUM UP

- From this unit, you must have understood that historically ODE in general has been facing various challenges that have also affected the reception of distance learning as inferior to the face-to-face mode.
- Some of the reasons have been the difficulty in catering to the individual learning styles of the learners, inability to control the pace and progress of the course, and so on.
- However, the biggest challenge has always been the so-called 'distance' resulting in a serious communication gap. Various undertakings of research and discussions have established the whole system of ODE as an evolving process. Relating itself to such a background, can the issue of 'human contact' really help in overcoming the hurdles of distance education?
- Although ODE institutions often claim that by introducing various modes of student-friendly ICT support services they can offer an alternative education system, we are not sure whether it has succeeded in providing an alternative mode of education in the context of the 21st century due to the many challenges the system is still facing today.



14.6 FURTHER READING

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14.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1 : They must first understand and identify the challenges, and then devise solvable measures to the challenges. For example, one of the most common problems in ODE is the physical 'absence' of the teacher.

Ans to Q No 2 : Yes. As 'face-to-face' contact is not considered a part of ODE, most learners often feel the absence of the 'real' person to talk to, and communicate his/her understanding and confusions.

Ans to Q. No. 3 : The general perception of the society against ODE, the perceived irrelevance of the studies they have undertaken, lack of satisfactory support from the employers, the feeling of isolation being a graduate or post graduate from a ODE institute.

Ans to Q. No. 4 : Communication problems between the teacher and the learner, between two distance learners, between the institution and the learners etc.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : Yes. Very often it is seen that the existing teachers and educators in ODE are not well-versed with the use of modern technologies of communications.

Ans to Q No 6 : The general attitude is that they don't usually like the idea of distance learning. Sometimes, they are reluctant to extend their professional and academic help to the ODE institutions, or they might not want to be associated with the ODE system at all.

Ans to Q No 7 : Because, many of the teachers and faculty members in the ODE institutes often face the problem of service tenure. Many

of the institutions either do not have permanent teaching staff or have only a few permanent staff. The unacceptable terms and conditions of appointment often fail to attract good teachers into the system.

Ans to Q No 8: Increase in alternative work arrangements with flexitime and work-at-home arrangements on the part of the learners. ODE institutions of advanced countries have been promoting greater individual responsibility and learner autonomy.

Ans to Q No 9: The challenges faced by the distance education institutions have been—the increase in the dropout rate, the downfall in pass percentage, the problem of evaluation of a substantially large number of learners.

Ans to Q No 10: Focussed training on ICT tools in order to make effective use of the technologies involved. Teaching contents should not get lost due to technology, emphasis must be given on instructional design rather than on new technology. The limitations of internet in addressing the needs of the learners to be discussed in detail.

Ans to Q No 11: Yes. Periodical assessment and accreditation of the ODE institutions by higher external authorities may help in dictating important pathways to the institutions in a globally competitive educational environment.



14.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: What is meant by the term ODE?

Q 2: Which are the three parties always involved in Open and Distance Education?

Q 3 : Make a list of some the common challenges and problems in an ODE institution.

Q 4 : In what ways, do you feel, the problem of isolation or marginalisation on the part of the ODE learners can be solved or minimised?

Q 5 : What is the need of periodical assessment of the ODE institutions? Name some of the organisations which conduct review and assessment of the educational in general.

B. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 150-300 words)

Q 1: Discuss the challenges faced by the ODE institutions in general.

Q 2: Enumerate the problems faced by the learners perusing their education from the open universities in a country like India.

Q 3: What are the challenges faced by the teachers of the ODE institutions? In what ways, do you feel these challenges can be met? Discuss in detail.

Q 4: Do you think that the ODE institutions themselves are facing various challenges? Discuss in detail.

Q 5: What are some of the important measures to be taken while meeting the challenges face by ODE? Discuss.

Q 6: Do you think that in ODE, there has always been a problem of communication between students and teachers, and between two peers? Discuss

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