UNIT 10: COURSES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ODL MODE

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Community Development through Distance Education

10.4 Various Courses for Community Development in the ODL Mode

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

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10.9 Possible Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

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

10.2 INTRODUCTION

A community or society is a place or unit where a group of people lives in the same place or possess the same characteristics in terms of norms, values, attitudes, religion, identity etc. In fact, people living in a particular geographical area form a community following some common principles of life. They maintain mutual understanding among the members of the place or unit, which ensures their peaceful living by engaging themselves in different personal and social activities. Therefore, the

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



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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is a community?

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10.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

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

The significance of distance education in the development of the Nation can be understood from the fact that today non-formal mode of education or open learning are encouraged at all levels of education. These programme are envisaged for providing a network of learning opportunities

to those who cannot or do not avail the facilities of the formal system for one reason or the other. They would also provide opportunities for recurrent and life-long education and constitute a major means of promoting greater equity.

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

It is also stated that the communities are at the 'grassroots' of a country, and they help in the progress and development of the society. Therefore, there is an urgent need to convert the general population to a knowledge-driven or knowledge-enabled population. In this context, the higher educational institutions are the think tanks for making the knowledge-enabled population in the communities by introducing various need-based courses that would eventually help them to have a standard of livelihood.

The ODL system is the most viable option mobilising the people to cope with the present need and making them trained to be productive and efficient citizens of the communities or the societies. Through launching various programmes, the open universities and other ODL institutions can build up the confidence among the people to develop a sense of critical mindset as well as a sense of realising the importance of environment and the changing situation of the present day world. Besides, different forms of awareness programmes on different issues such as population explosion, environmental challenges, entrepreneurial opportunities, understanding human rights etc. can be organised at the level of the community for making the people conscious about the burning issues affecting the lives of the people in the community.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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10.4: VARIOUS COURSES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The practitioners of community development have over many years developed a range of skills and approaches for working within the local communities and with the disadvantaged people in particular. These include less formal educational methods, community organizational activities and group-work skills. Since, 1960s and 70s, through the various anti-poverty programmes in both the developed and developing countries, the community development practitioners have been influenced by structural analysis of the causes of disadvantage and poverty i.e. inequalities in the distribution of wealth, income, land etc., lack of political power and the inability of the

people's power to effect social change. Thus, the influence of such educators as Paulo Friere, the Brazillian educator, famously rejected the banking system of education policy in his seminal book Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Because, the banking system of education allows only a few people to receive education in society. Freire wanted to provide pedagogy of education to all sections of people in a liberal way because he felt that the pedagogy of the oppressed and marginalised can only boost up the knowledge economy, and subsequently, all people in a society can contribute economically and socially in an equitable manner.

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

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

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

Dr. B R Ambedkar Open University—the first Open University in India was started in 1982. By 2018, there are one national and fourteen state open universities functioning in the country. The courses on offer by these distance education centers are also varied in nature. It is true that many replicable courses parallel to the conventional higher education

system are on demand, and they are also on offer in the Open universities. These courses are mainly for those who are school dropouts, neo literates, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, housewives, women and other deprived or marginal groups.

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

- Education and Child Guidance
  - Education and Child Guidance courses
  - Early Childhood Education courses
  - Pre and Primary Teacher Education courses
  - Guidance courses
- Community Development
  - Food and Nutrition courses
  - Human Rights courses
  - Consumer Awareness courses
  - Rural Development courses
  - Women Empowerment courses
  - HIV and Family Education courses
  - Computer Literacy courses
  - Youth Development Programme courses
- Environment
  - Conservation of Forest courses
  - Repairing of Radio and Tape Recorder courses
  - Fitter courses
  - Domestic Wiremen courses
  - Mechanic- Automobile courses
  - Plumber courses
  - Lathe Operator courses

- Mason courses
- Multi-skill Vocational Programme courses
- Industrial Painting Technician courses
- Gardeners Training courses
- Computer Assembling courses
- Certificate in Security Services courses
- Agriculture/ Horticulture based Photography courses
- Bee Keeping courses
- Mushroom Cultivation courses
- Fish Farming courses
- Poultry Farming courses and others

Such classification of courses are usually done based on the type and target group of the courses. The courses listed above are mainly intended for the masses associated with the grass root level having varying eligibility criteria. There are a myriad of job titles for community development workers, and their employers include public authorities and voluntary or non-governmental organizations, funded by the state and by independent grant making bodies. Since 1970s, the prefix word 'community' has also been adopted by several other occupations from the police and health workers to planners and architects, who have been influenced by community development approaches. Unfortunately, in spite of the efforts undertaken to make education, particularly vocational, technical, professional and or entrepreneurship courses, available at the door step of all, the majority of the beneficiaries have not benefitted much or they are not availing these opportunities. This calls for the development of a comprehensive policy of distance education that would addressed for individual and social development.



ACTIVITY 10.1

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

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10.5 PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFERED THROUGH ODL PROGRAMME

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

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

- Inadequate infrastructure facilities
- Adverse climatic conditions
- Mountainous landscape
- Border clashes and ethnic tension
- Sustainability of the motivational level of the learners
- Poor postal service leading to the delay in the delivery of stumaterials

- Lack of knowledge of the availability of courses which a learner can choose from
- Practice of early marriages in the villages and followed by early mother hood
- Absence of proper learning environment
- And, most importantly, the inadequate supply of knowledgeable tutors

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

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



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

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

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10.6 LET US SUM UP

- A community is a place or unit where people live in the same place or have common characteristics in terms of norms, values, attitude, religion, identity etc.
- People living in a particular geographical area form a community following some common principles of life a mutual understanding among the members of the place or unit.
- Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect changes in their own communities. These skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda.
- Community developers must understand how to work with individuals as well as how to affect the positions of the communities within the context of larger social institutions. Since the 1970s, the word “community” has also been adopted by several other occupations from the police and health workers to planners and architects, who work with the more disadvantaged groups and communities.
- The need to overhaul the education system of today may also be region specific and need-based. Today’s educated youths are unemployed

due to insufficient skills in the present day work market. Therefore, Open and Distance Education has to play a very proactive role not only to increase GER but also to offer quality skill based education to help the young masses become employable or entrepreneurs.

- Open and Distance Learning has the flexibilities to serve the aspirations of learners anywhere, anytime and at any place. Thus, ODL can connect the nation in terms of education and mobility of learners to acquire their desired knowledge.

10.7 FURTHER READING

1) Tahir Mumtaz et al. "Community Development through Open Learning and Distance Education", Secondary Education Journal, Vol.-I, Issue-I, Pp. 1-14
2) Govt. of India, (1987): University System and Extension as the third Dimension- Report of the Review Committee appointed by the UGC, New Delhi
3) IGNOU (1995): Certificate in Guidance- Programme Guide, IGNOU, Delhi

10.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q N. 1: A community is a group of people, who live in a geographical area and have interaction among each other for the purpose of making a living. It is an exclusive term and is frequently used to encompass any and every effort towards the advancement of a community.

Answer to Q N. 2: Open and Distance Education represents the approaches that focus on open access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and space and offering the learners flexible learning opportunities.

Answer to Q N. 3: The use of ICT can make distance education more effective, as the universities can make their contents available to millions

of learners at a little or virtually no cost. For example, the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) provides different innovative ways that would provide new opportunities for learning through distance education. Distance education based on ICTs will remove the limits and barriers and offer the possibility of widening the participation in education.

Answer to Q N. 4: Some of the pressing hurdles obstructing the success of distance education are inadequate infrastructure, sustainability of the motivational level of the learners, delay in postal service leading to the delay in the delivery of study materials, lack of knowledge regarding the availability of the courses which a learner can choose from, practice of early marriages in the villages followed by early mother hood, absence of proper learning environment, absence of knowledgeable tutor among many others.



10.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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