Optimizing Open and Distance Learning in Higher Education Institutions

Umesh Chandra Pandey (/affiliate/umesh-chandra-pandey/321027/) (Indira Gandhi National Open University, India) and Verlaxmi Indrakanti (/affiliate/verlaxmi-indrakanti/319959/) (Anand Vihar College for Women, India)

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Umesh Chandra Pandey
Indira Gandhi National Open University, India

Verlaxmi Indrakanti
Anand Vihar College for Women, India

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Preface

There has been ever increasing realization that education can be viable instrument to address the perennial developmental challenges across the globe. With such strong realization emerging across the globe, Open an dDistance Learning (ODL) systems are gradually finding place in the educational policies of all the countries particularly in developing countries where resources are scarce and change is immediately needed. The Paris Message aptly puts the need of Open and Distance Learning in following words:

The need to increase enrolment will be particularly great in the South. Online, Open and Flexible education represents a core range of strategies within a variety of contexts, utilising media and information and communication technologies (ICT), to contribute to meeting this growing demand, while ensuring equity, access, and quality learning outcomes. (UNESCO, 2015)

Emergence of ODL system is a major philosophical departure from age old system of F2F classroom education. Learner centeredness makes it paradigmatically a new system. It has been a major professional challenge for these systems to device systems and processes to effectively respond to the learning behaviors of diverse target groups, it aims to serve. Issues are much more challenging in developing countries where we find sharp socio-economic, linguistic, cultural and ethnic variations. ODL systems have to develop customized solutions to realize its objectives. It is now widely believed that, Innovations and Flexibility would be the hall mark for success of such systems.

Luckily we are living in a time of human history where technological advancements in Information and Communication technologies have given extraordinary capabilities to communicate over large geographical areas and create innovative and flexible learning environments. This book was planned with the following objectives in mind:

1. To highlight how Higher Education Institutions across the world have been trying to customize ODL systems to enhance their reach, improve quality of delivery and to make the education more affordable.
2. To create a platform for sharing of innovative experiences and encourage their replication.
3. To document good practices and learning experiences in different countries.

In Chapter 1, titled "Examining E-Learning Programs in Turkish Higher Education System," Cenay Babaoglu and M Kemal Oktem have given a holistic examination of e-learning and its management with specific aim to evaluate e-learning efforts in Turkey. The study also looks in to the strengths and weaknesses of e-learning and proposes a model to classify e-learning studies.

In Chapter 2, titled "Higher Education in Developing Countries: Emerging Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities," Amir Manzoor examines the issues and challenges which developing countries are facing and how opportunities through Open and Distance Learning are important for economic prosperity and participation in global knowledge economy.

In Chapter 3, titled "Open and Distance Learning for Sustainable Development in Bangladesh," Monira Jahan, Md. Arif-Uz-Zaman, A. N. M. Tofail Hossain and Shamima Akhter have described the way through which Bangladesh Open University has been able to contribute for national development and evaluated its role in sustainable development.

In Chapter 4, titled "Enhancing Learning Opportunities Through Development of Open and Distance Education in Africa," Suresh Kumar Pande has described the socio economic conditions which have necessitated the growth of Open and Distance Learning institutions in Africa

In Chapter 5, titled "Indian Higher Education: Happenings, Hurdles, and an ODL Case Study," Nikhila Deep Bhagwat and Hemant Rajguru have presented an overview of Indian Higher Education system and enlists the merits and limitations of Open and Distance Learning system. They have also given a comparative view of educational status of other Asian Countries. The chapter further discusses the reforms and restructuring announced by the Government of India and presents the success story of a state open university which is known of its innovative practices in agriculture education.

In Chapter 6, titled "The Sustainable Development of Persons With Disabilities in Developing Countries Through Open and Distance Education," Sanjay Kant Prasad gives an international overview and specific perspective of developing countries for sustainable development of persons with disabilities. The author further examines the feasibility of Open and Distance Learning systems to provide opportunity to

maximum number of persons with disabilities irrespective of their physical, sensory and psychological diversity, to make them a part of mainstream society.

In Chapter 7, titled "The ODL Systems for Sustainable Growth in Brazil: UAB System (2006-2016)," Maria Renata da Cruz Duran, Bruna Carolina Marino Rodrigues and Celso José da Costa have given an extensive review of Higher Education scenario of Brazil. They have further examined the growth of Open and Distance Learning systems.

In Chapter 8, titled "Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning," Amir Manzoor has raised the issues of quality of education being delivered by Open and Distance Learning Institutions. Author has specially presented a comparative case analysis of two large open and distance learning universities in Pakistan and made recommendations for Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning in the context of developing countries.

In Chapter 9, titled "Private Universities' Participation in Open and Distance Learning for Enhanced Access to Higher Education Among Underserved in India," Akhilesh Kumar Pandey and Dr Syed Mohammad Haider Rizvi have described the overview of Higher Education in India and the specific role which Private Universities can play. The role of Open and Distance Learning systems have been highlighted.

In Chapter 10, titled "Skill Training Process in Medicine Through Distance Mode," Tapan Kumar Jena has given an account of the pedagogic steps for the skill trailing in medicine through distance mode. He has explained how distance mode provides a flexible and effective alternate model to residential mode of medical education.

In Chapter 11, titled "Role of Open and Distance Learning in Agriculture Education in India," Mohinder Kumar Salooja and Vijayakumar P have described the possibilities for Agriculture Education through Open and Distance Learning. Authors have further argued that the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) can be an effective and cost effective tool to reach out to large and diverse target groups. Authors have further recommended that there need to be a synergy between different agencies like conventional educational institutions, industry, government agencies etc.

In Chapter 12, titled "Technology Adoption in Online Tutorial," Djoko Rahardjo and Arifah Bintarti, have examined the issues in technology adoption particularly in the context of Indonesia. The authors argue that their studies to probe technology adoption by the students can help to explore customized solutions in Open and Distance Learning systems.

In Chapter 13, titled "Integration of Web 2 Technologies for ODL," Rajshree Satish Vaishnav has described the inevitability of technological integration in delivery strategies of Educational Institutions. Research findings presented by her can be useful for policy-makers, administrators and educators to implement different platforms of online learning for school/ higher education and teacher preparation.

In Chapter 14, titled "Integrating Digital Learning Management System (LMS) Into Institutional Policies on Open Education in India for the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," M. Rajesh, Sindhu P. Nair, and Jalaja Kumari have argued that limitations imposed by time, place and other barriers in the countries like India can be effectively met only by the infusion of new technology into open education systems. They have specially pointed towards possibilities in the rising trends of internet penetration which has potential to start massive technology driven growth in high quality education. The authors visualize it a potential mean to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Chapter 15, titled "Emerging Trends in Skill-Based Education With MLearning and ERP," Manoj Shantikumar Killedar and Chetana Hemant Kamlaskar have highlighted the issue of employable skill which has emerged as a priority for Government of India. Authors emphasise that there is a need to develop link between education, skills and aptitude. They have further described the scheme of innovative 'Learn and Earn' approach being followed in their organization.

In Chapter 16, titled "Involving Diverse Stakeholders for Sustainable Development: Some Learning Experiences From Across Poland," Jan Dobrowolski, Justyna Kobylarczyk, Aleksandra L. Wagner, and Robert Mazur have described unique approach of education and devising solutions for sustainable development in Poland. The authors argue that involving diverse stakeholders is important for addressing the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Chapter 17, titled "Open and Distance Learning in India: A Practitioner's Perspective," Anshu Mathur and Arbind K. Jha have examined the various issues which come across the way of Distance Education Practitioners in India. They have made recommendations to optimize the practice of ODL to suit Indian context.

The chapters presented in this book represent various possibilities to enhance the reach of education through Open and Distance Learning systems, the constraints faced by such systems and the way ahead for realising the mandate of these systems. It is hoped that the readers of the book will get benefitted by these important learning experiences. We hope to get the valuable feedback from the readers.

Umesh Chandra Pandey
Verlaxmi Indrakanti

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Chapter 15
Emerging Trends in Skill-Based Education With MLearning and ERP

Manoj Shantikumar Killedar
Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India

Chetana Hemant Kamlaskar
Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India

ABSTRACT

Today there is a gap between marketable skills of the majority of workforce and the expectations of their roles. Many undergraduates have difficulties when moving from education to employment as there is no convergence between acquired education and required skill sets. Indian Government has recently introduced one of the national policies such as NSQF for developing link between education, skills and aptitude. YCMOU intends to impart skill education using the 'Learn and Earn' approach. This chapter present all implementation details of technologically driven changes to impart 'Industrial and Business skills' effectively. A diploma programme offers flexible teaching-learning environments aiming to offer adequate online and offline tools for delivery of information, interaction and collaboration. It also offers 'On-Job Training (OJT)' to provide an opportunity for the learners to work in real environment. A mandatory OJT is aiming for grooming of appropriate skills. A novel feature of this diploma programme is the use of self and peer assessment processes which encourages learning.

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