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Need To Improve the Education Quality Of Open And Distance Learning Dr. Siddharam. S. Hangaragi,

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Abstract:

The importance of Open Distance Learning (ODL) could be gauged from the fact that as much as 15% of tertiary learners are getting their higher education through the distance mode through Open Universities and Dual mode Universities. ODL has enormous potential to reach the unreached learners who discontinued formal education on account of economic or social compulsions and millions of young adults who simply unable to secure admission in the colleges and universities due to high percentage cut off. The ODL mode of higher education is always seen as inferior to conventional campus based learning. Such a public perception could be changed by the Open and Dual mode Universities through appropriate steps to improve the quality of delivery, innovative digital and blended learning etc. ODL institutions are catalyst for change as they are pioneer in introducing technologies in higher education. In spite of all the potentials of distance learning, there are many critical issues which are yet to be resolved. Quality, cost effectiveness, assessment, lack of motivation, dropout rate etc. are some important challenges in this field.

Key Words: Education Quality, Open and Distance Learning, Eradicate the challenges Improve the literacy rate, Reduce the corruption.

Introduction:

India is the largest democracy with remarkable diversity among its population of 1.21 billion (2011 census) which makes up about 17% of the world's population. Almost 70% of Indian population is in rural. The adult literacy rate stands at about 60% and this is significantly lower in women and minorities. Education in India comprises of government, government aided and private institutions of which nearly 40% are government. With the annual population growth rate of 1.5%, there is tremendous pressure on the education system to provide quality education at affordable price and improve the literacy rate. For this reason, in India started the open and distance learning mode before 1885 for improve the literacy rate.

At present in India education is a very costly commodity. In the present scenario lots of youngsters who pass out of 10 th Standard, PUC, Diploma or any graduation would knock on the employer's doors for seize the opportunity for better lifestyle and also finance for continue the higher studies. At present in job market

plenty of new opportunities like BPO, finance, banking, health care support services, call centers attract a lot of youngsters without having higher education. However, after sometime, being stagnant at that stage only for desire new opportunities for higher learning, there is always a craving for higher education. At that time, however, they had to earn while learn. At this stage distance education will be of great help and especially qualifying for higher education in Technology, Management, Hospitality and other allied programmers'. It is known that there are not many institutions/schools, which cater to this class. Hardly, we find very few technical, management and Hospitality institutions, leading to UG and PG programmes at that stage. Distance education will be a boon for those employees who want to qualify higher level at a reasonable cost.

The concept of open and distance learning suggests an educational approach designed to reach learners in their homes, offices, shops, any types of workplace, etc., provides learning resources for them to qualify without attending formal classes in

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person, or create opportunities for lifelong learning, no matter where or when they want to study. In recent days more opportunities ar e available in the job market for those having university level degree and it continue to increase as a result of population growth and the necessity for continuing education in order to upgrade or learn new skills. This means that the majority of learners in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is generally adults who have other commitments or responsibilities. They form a highly disparate and heterogeneous group with varying cognitive processes, existing stock of knowledge, skills, values, prior experiences, age and worldly responsibilities. This in effect, is a new situation reflecting a change in learner profile.

The Open-Distance-Learning (ODL) system is perhaps the only system that has been planned in such a way that it is able to cater to all those who desire to seek Higher Education in spite of the fact that they are in a disadvantageous position due to social, economic and such other reasons. Also to cater to the increasing demand for Higher Education, flexibilities in terms of age, qualification, location, time, etc., have been introduced to the maximum extent.

Study Area:

The open and distance education system is a crucial vehicle in the sustained development of a knowledge society. However, as India prepares to face the knowledge challenges of the 21st century, higher education presents a rather dismal picture. According to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, India, only about 10% of the population (138 crores projected population of 2020-21) in the relevant agegroup is enrolled in higher education, and a mere 5% graduate with degrees in 1990-91. Interestingly, the contribution of ODL to gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education has risen to 22% in 2020-21. With the rapid growth of the service, knowledge and associated sectors in the economy, it is imperative that the populace is equipped to contribute to and benefit from these developments. This requires a radical overhaul of the higher education system,

with regard to access, enrollment and most importantly, quality. Failure to address this need and foster more inclusive growth will adversely affect India's future economic prospects and the welfare of its citizens. We believe that this crisis in higher education gives us the necessary impetus for radical change.

Objectives:

- To study the special features of open distance learning education.
- To study the challenges of distance learning education.
- To analyze the Merits and demerits of open and distance education.

Hypotheses:

- Generally, distance education is free from dress code, heavy time table, compulsory attendance and sports-cultural activities.
- For employees, physical handicaps, household women, and additional category people distance education is much needed.

Methodology:

The methodology is highly needed to analyze the research work by using qualitative and quantitative methods in the study. In this paper simple percentile method have been used for data analysis. Based on the secondary data (published sources, literatures and updated information's on the topic e-sources also sighted) this work has been carried out.

Discussion:

Comparing face-to-face learning with ODL learning brings forth significant deficiencies in the ODL mode such as lack of human connect, absence of opportunities of collaborative learning, teacher supervision and the most glaring being lack of opportunities for hands-on learning in complex subjects such as science and mathematics. Besides, amid the rush of hosting online classes the best teaching practices such a addressing learners Multiples Intelligences (MI), VARK Learning Styles and providing a differentiated learning experience have been relegated to the backburner. So how does the head of a school address the challenges of quality learning in online mode

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and is it possible to harness technology to provide a rich, immersive and holistic learning experience to the students.

Challenges of Open and Distance Learning:

- Quality: Need to maintaining standard of education in more than one lack higher education institutions nationwide, offering training programs to teachers, and keeping good balance with education system worldwide is a big challenge. Education institutions vary in size and resources and are forced compromise in the all round development opportunities they must provide to students.
- Access: Having infrastructural constraints and social issues, it becomes harder to make education accessible to all segments of the society (women, minorities, poor).
- Cost: The cost of education is very high even for the people and places where it is accessible. e.g. the competitive pressure on students and parents forces them to opt for private tuitions and trainings to supplement the school education.
- Social and Cultural: The ethnic diversity in India poses challenges to implement consistent education nationwide. There are more than 300 languages spoken in the country and makes it difficult to offer education tailored to specific social segment. Educating women in some societies is a big issue. Children of poor families are forced to work and miss out the learning opportunities. Illiterate adults have very limited opportunities to get educated at later age in their lives.
- to eradicate the language and communication problem through regional diversity.
- to implement dress code, uniforms and cultural obstacle.
- to update the syllabus and question paper pattern as per NEP-2020.
- to control the unknown corruptive Kingpin people mass entry.
- to build educational environment quality.
 Merits of Open and Distance Learning:

It makes education open to many people irrespective of age, sex, religion, location, time and qualification, thereby providing access to education for all.

- It provides opportunities for employees to combine education and work.
- It provides affordable, cost effective and flexible educational opportunities to many.
- · It is a veritable instrument of lifelong education.
- It provides opportunities for dropouts of the formal school system who are still interested in learning to continue their education.
- It increases access to education for women irrespective of cultural and religious background.
- It reduces inequalities in educational services.
- It provides speedy and efficient training for target groups.
- It provides technology for learning and research.

Demerits of Open and Distance Learning:

Although the advantages of ODL are numerous, it also has some demerits.

- The probability of deceit and fake candidates can take benefits like Nigerian system (corruption).
- Poor communication net-work, where the internet is malfunctioning, the speed of the progress of ODL can be retarded.
- Many feasible Possibilities are to be make business of certificate racketeering in a country where deceit and corruption are the order of the day.
- There may be prospect of transmitting error to all parts of the country or in the world, if the preparations of the fundamental documents are not well documented.

Conclusion:

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) in its Report to the Nation (2009 p. 90-92) had proposed radical changes in the system of ODL to achieve expansion, inclusion and excellence in higher education. NKC observed that more than one-fifth of the students enrolled in higher

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education were in the ODL stream and opined that ODL should spread beyond brick and mortar world. ODL should not be seen as a mode of educational delivery, but an integrated discipline engaged in the creation of knowledge. Distance education is much easier than formal education. Now a day especially in examinations pattern in open and distance educations system committing some remarkable blunder mistakes like mass coping through new technology for getting higher ranks to grab royal jobs (many cases what we are observing from news and Medias). For this reason, maximum percentage of people offering open and distance learning mode in India rather than formal education system. For overcome all the challenges of ODL education planners and policy making institutions have to take cognizance of the demographic trends and enrolment patters based on data collected through the All India Higher Education Survey. Every State in the country has some peculiarities as far as the GER is concerned. If the policy makers do not take adequate attention to such aspects while making policy formulations, India cannot dream to be a knowledge economy and may lose the opportunity of reaping the demographic dividend in higher education. This may impact the economy of the county in the long run.

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