
Inclusive Growth, A Gateway of Sustainable Development of Higher Education Through Open and Distance Learning in India

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ABSTRACT: Education play important role for crucial development of society as well as young generation, because it build and developed a person's beliefs, ideologies, values and take a substantial role to inclusive growth of any country. Inclusive education refer to empowering of every children with skills and knowledge's, given equal opportunity of every children to access education equally. At the present context open and distance learning open horizontal windows of education for increasing learner participations and educational opportunities for many compatible learners who are deprived of to access classroom education due to financial, sociocultural and geographical barriers. Open and distance learning education system focuses on open access to education and learners free from the constrains of time and place and also get the opportunities of flexible learning. Nowadays educational policy of India has been emphasize to integrations of many ICT tools (audio-visual media- radio, television broadcast, video compact disc, video text, computer etc) and e-learning platform(SWAYAM,DIKSHA). For improvement of inclusive growth through open and distance learning for the quality of education and its aims to providing support and facilitated quality, access and equity for learning process in distance learning through interactive activities, by the inclusive growth through open and distance learning advocating peer to peer collaboration and also impact a great sense of autonomy and responsible learning. By the using of ICT integrated tools in education curriculum evaluation can be diversified and building intellectual capability of learners as well as inclusive growth of higher education system. Higher education is the backbone of any knowledge society. Availability, accessibility, acceptability of learning recourses of higher education level can be lead sustainable inclusive growth of education system and also give the opportunity of education for all students at same platform. National Educational Technology Forum(NETF) is a important scheme of Nation Education Policy(NEP)-2020 which will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning ,assessment ,planning ,administration and so on both school and higher education. Open and distance learning one of the most rapidly growing field of education nowadays, because of its major contribution in enhancing the Gross Enrollment Ratio(GER) in higher education and also have a sustainable impact on all education systems specially higher education.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive growth, Inclusive education, Open and distance learning, ICT tools, E-learning, Higher education, NETF, NEP, Sustainable impact, Gross Enrollment Ratio.

INTRODUCTION

The meaning of open and distances learning is increasing learner participations and educational opportunities for many compatible learners who are deprived of to access classroom education due to financial, socio-cultural and geographical barriers. Open and distance learning education system focuses on open access to education and learners free from the constrains of time and place and also get the opportunities of flexible learning.

UNESCO, define that open and distance learning systems are designed to offer opportunities for part-time study, for learning at a distance and for innovations in the curriculum. They are intended to allow access to wider section of adult population, to enable students to compensate for lost opportunities in the past or to acquire new skills and qualifications for the future.

The open and distance learning systems also known as distance education systems has involved as on the effective modes of education. It is one of most important education system where student get education to mail or any other electronic mediums without going to any institutions and without direct contact with the teacher. According to *David Butts*, distance education is the type of education in which students have the opportunity to maintain their autonomy and educate themselves through reading according to their wishes and time-opportunity due to flexibility of the teaching method. This system of education also enhancing the quality , equity and inclusive development in education. The new education policy 2022,1986 also emphasized the role of the open and distance learning in the process of democratization of education in the country and also emphasize to integrations of many ICT tools (audio-visual media- radio, television broadcast, video compact disc, video text, computer etc) and e-learning platform

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(SWAYAM, DIKSHA). National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) is an important scheme of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 which will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration and so on both school and higher education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the relationship between education and inclusive growth through open and distance learning.
2. To find out the barriers of ODL mode learning and discuss the conquer those barriers.
3. To study the present scenarios and future status of ODL mode learning in India.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

For this study, explorative research methodology has been used, and analysis has been done on the basis of data extracted from the secondary sources of information like abstract, journal, website, government reports, IGNOU, research paper.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

DEVELOPMENT PHASES OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING:

Many important factors are related for growth and developing various pages of open and distance learning. Many models also are related with development phases of open and distance learning among them, James Taylor model is significant. He has identified 5 phases of development of open and distance learning. Taylor's generations of open and distance learning model are given below.

James Taylor model of open and distance education- conceptual framework

Models of Open and Distance Education and Associated Delivery Technologies and also current innovation of ICT tools in education sector.

First Generation- The Correspondence model	❖ Print
Second Generation- The Multi-media Model	❖ Print ❖ Audiotape ❖ Videotape ❖ Computer-based learning (e.g. CML/CAL/IMM) ❖ Interactive video (disk and tape)
Third Generation- The Tele learning Model	❖ Audio teleconferencing ❖ Videoconferencing ❖ Audio graphic Communication ❖ Broadcast TV/Radio and Audio teleconferencing
Fourth Generation- The Flexible Learning Model	❖ Interactive multimedia (IMM) online ❖ Internet-based access to WWW resources ❖ Computer mediated communication
Fifth Generation- The Intelligent Flexible Learning Model	❖ Interactive multimedia (IMM) online ❖ Internet-based access to WWW resources ❖ Computer mediated communication, using automated response systems ❖ Campus portal access to institutional processes and resources

Source: Taylor, James.C. (1998), Flexible Delivery: The Globalisation of Lifelong Learning, IJOL, Vol.7, No.1, p.56 & www.icdc.org.

According to Perration, 'Open learning' as an "Organized educational activity, based on the use of teaching materials, in which constraints on study are minimized either in terms of access or of time and place, methods of study or any combination of these." (Perration, 1997).

In India, the first Open University started in Andhra Pradesh in 1982. Now it is renamed as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. In 1985 The Indira Gandhi National Open University was established as a central university by an Act of Parliament to achieve some objectives such as providing access to high quality of education irrespective of age, cast, gender, region and also promoting, developing distance education in India. Now in India total 15 Open University are exists.

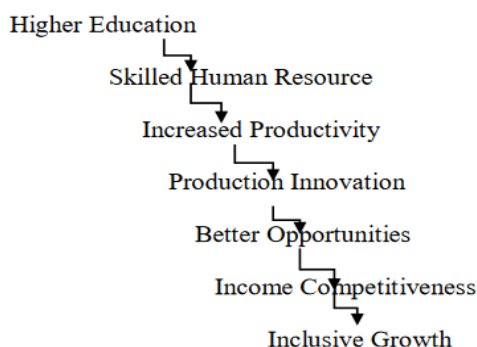
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Serial No.	Name of the University	Year of establishment	Location
1	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University	1982	Andhra Pradesh
2	Indira Gandhi National Open University	1985	New Delhi
3	Kota Open University	1987	Rajasthan
4	Nalanda Open University	1987	Bihar
5	Yashwantrao Chawan Maharashtra Open University	1989	Maharashtra
6	Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University	1992	Madhya Pradesh
7	Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University	1994	Gujarat
8	Tamil Nadu Open University	2002	Tamil Nadu
9	Karnataka State Open University	1996	Karnataka
10	Netaji Subhas Open University	1997	West Bengal
11	Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University	1999	Uttar Pradesh
12	Pt. Sundarlal Sharma Open University	2005	Chhattisgarh
13	Uttaranchal State Open University	2006	Uttaranchal
14	Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University	2005	Assam
15	Odisha State Open University	2006	Odisha

EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Education play important role for crucial development of society as well as young generation, because it build and developed a person's beliefs, ideologies, values and take a substantial role to inclusive growth of any country. Higher education is a very powerful agent of social changes, it also occupies a momentous positions in education systems and also improve the human resources of a developing country, like as India. Inclusive growth refers to standards of living as well as ensures sustained, impartial and reasonable distributions of the benefits of growth. Inclusive education refer to empowering of every children with skills and knowledge's, given equal opportunity of every children to access education equally. Achieving a growth process in which people in different walk in life....feel that they too benefit significantly from the process (*Ahluwalia, 2007*).

Recently remarkable development of education in India present inclusive grows in higher education as well as economic development of country. Development of education also impact on employment opportunities and social inclusion that supports productivity and innovation. Education gives the ability to think with reason and lead a respectable life in society. Governments of India also focus inclusive growth approach during the 11th five years plan. Investing capitals in education sector play of key role for social development program which support inclusive growth, social cohesion and also build up human capital (knowledge, skill and standards of living of people). Professor Amartya Sen had emphasis on education as importance parameters for inclusive growth and development of socio-economic condition of country, "Education is the most critical elements in empowering people with skill and knowledge and giving them access to productive employment in the future". So we can say inclusive growth not only a factor but also a new economic reform strategy which development of every sections of the society without any discrimination and disparity.



Relation with Inclusive Growth & Higher Education

SOME IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING AND ITS REASON DEVELOPING IN INDIA

1. Making education less expensive.
2. Encouraging lifelong learning.

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3. Increasing knowledge use of ICT or e-learning tools in education.
4. Opportunities for increasing educational qualification of learners and teachers.
5. Job opportunities.
6. Knowledge about global digital world.
7. Learners autonomy
8. No age and qualification restriction.

BARRIERS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN INDIA

Indian higher education system has evolved over time to time. The touch of modernity has come in the current education system. The government takes initiative to spread education among all strata of people. Open and distance education system is one of them. Those students, who are out of the formal education, can also receiving education without going to formal institution. Although this education system has spread rapidly in India. But currently it is facing some problems.

1. ICT infrastructure lack region of India

In India most of the villages are facing this problem. Teachers and learners are facing unique ICT based problems (*Jena, 2020*). Maximum number students of this region are living in rural area. Such as Gosoba block of South 24pgs district in West Bengal is a example of ICT infrastructure lack region of India, here ICT facility more or less absence in everywhere. As a result, wide disparity of proper digital tools, poor internet connections etc are hampering their learning opportunities and they suffering from serious trouble, they cannot attend the online class regularly.

2. Language barrier

Language problem is one of the problems of open and distance education. Most institutes provide study materials in English which is a problem for Bengali medium students.

3. Lack of Study Material

Though many distance education programs provide books and study material to students, but in some courses may not adequately provide the right material for students. This is a challenge facing distance education.

4. Poor Knowledge on Digital System

Many teachers and learner are facing the problem of inadequate proper knowledge of technology through digital systems. As a result, open and distance education is being disrupted. So the students' interest is waning. Because they are deprived of right knowledge.

5. Inadequate Technical facilities

Presently India is considered as a developing country. The infrastructure of an online education system has not properly developed. The unstable network connection is the major challenge of online study (*Mishra et al, 2020*). Special in rural remote area internet speed not given properly. As a result lots of technical problems are being face by both students and learner during online classes. So they can demotivate towards open and distance learning.

6. Poor Economic Condition

During the lockdown, many parents and students who had to pay for their own education cost, because they have lost their jobs. As a result, we can see that the participation rate of students in open and distance education decreases during this period. This economic hardship of the family is having a huge impact on the education of their children. Which hamper the progress of open and distance learning.

7. Destructions of learner concentration

Most of the cases in open and distance learning we see that, teachers may not able to completely hold the student's attention due to several reasons like bad connectivity, limitations of online classes etc. So, Students may not be attentive in a distance learning class as a regular in-person class. The attitude, they start the class with in the beginning, it diminishes towards the end.

8. Lack of Instant Feedback

It is one of most important challenges for open and distance learning because student didn't get instant feedback from teachers like as formal classroom. So, the interaction between teachers and students in online education is minimal or sometimes absolutely absent. So they have been demotivated towards studies which can lead them towards low academic standards.

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9. Absence of Peers group

Education can be success by the cooperative and collaborative learning. Learners also achieve the academic goals. But in the field of open and distance learning, there are no friends or peers around learners. They feeling isolated, get demotivated, depressed work negatively. That is the one of most challenging barriers of this education system.

SUGGESTION FOR CONQUER OF THIS BARRIER OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

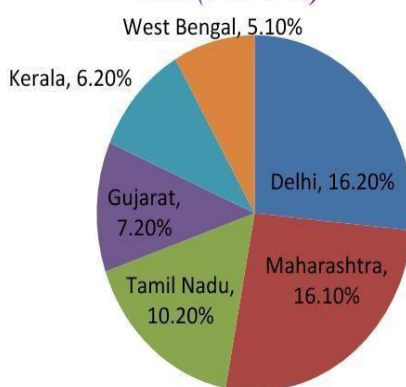
1. Guardians need to know about the concept of open and distance learning and it relevance of present educational system.
2. School buildings, classroom, libraries, toilets and drinking water facility etc are the most important aspect of the school infrastructure. So a good in first infrastructure with adequate space makes its desirable and well place for students to study and make it favorable environment for learners. Infrastructure facilities have been positively impact attendance and performance of learners. They get motivated to come to school as result the drop-out rates are much lower, which include the positive inclusive growth of open and distance learning and also higher education
3. Teacher should be proper digital knowledge they can access educational software (Moodle, Kultura, Open Simulator etc) properly. It will helpful for the development of open and distance learning systems in higher education.
4. Teacher as well as students needs to know how to use modern technology to accelerate the learning process. Modern distance education is usually online-based; students have more control over both when and where they study. In this regard, teacher should educate learners about the use of modern education technology as a result open and distance learning systems improve properly.
5. Nowadays, open and distance education systems are equivalent importance to formal institutional education systems students and parents need to be informed about this.
6. Open and distance learning provided skill development opportunities of learners who are detach from formal education system. It offer various vocational skill programs courses and also build up effective time management skills, effective and appropriate communication skills. It also help student both technical and non-cognitive (self) skills development. These skills when combined boost a learner's confidence and mold to become better colleague, employees and leaders.

PRESENT SCENARIOS AND FUTURE STATUS OF ODL MODE LEARNING IN INDIA

The World Economic Forum showed that after the United States, India has the largest number of online course enrollments with more than 2,00,000 students. The main purpose of education is to achieve upward mobility. Online courses certification programs have been able to provide inexpensive education to the masses and also save time, energy and money. Electronic-learning through certified online courses provides a wide range of courses that caters to the core interests of the student. Today(2022) there are around 15 Open Universities in India. Emergence of open universities in Indian context is a historical necessity created by the need for liberalization of higher education through cost effective and efficient strategies.

The number of students registered for open and distance learning courses has also increased 14 lakh in 2020-2021 to 20.3 lakh in 2021-2022. The majority of learner enrollment from Delhi (16.2%) Maharashtra (16.1%),Tamil Nadu(10.2%), Gujarat (7.2%), Kerala(6.2%) and West Bengal(5.1%).According to UGC as on Oct,17,2022, 66HEI(higher education institutions) are recognized to offer 371 programmes ,which include 136 undergraduate courses and 235 post graduate courses in online mode.

Majority of Learner Enrollment Percentage in ODL Platfrom from Different States(2021-2022)



Source: Ministry of Education Data (2021-2022)

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The New Education Policy 2020 has focus on increasing online education quails with equity in everywhere in India. Universities and institutions like NITs and IGNOU will be conducting pilot research studies for maximizing the benefits of digital learning in India. Online tools and platforms like MOOC(Massive Open Online Courses), DIKSHA(Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) and SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds) will be upgraded with new insight to training content, in-class resources, assessment aids, profiles, etc. that will allow seamless interaction. It also focuses on creation of public digital and interoperable infrastructure that can be utilized by multiple platforms. Recently we see that there is a increasing innovation of ICT integrated tool for use of various aspect of Open and Distance Learning such as learner preparation for readiness, learner management, instructional design, curriculum construction, e-library management as well as learner evolution.

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
No. of Institutions recognized to offer programmes through distance mode	157	130	114	118	104

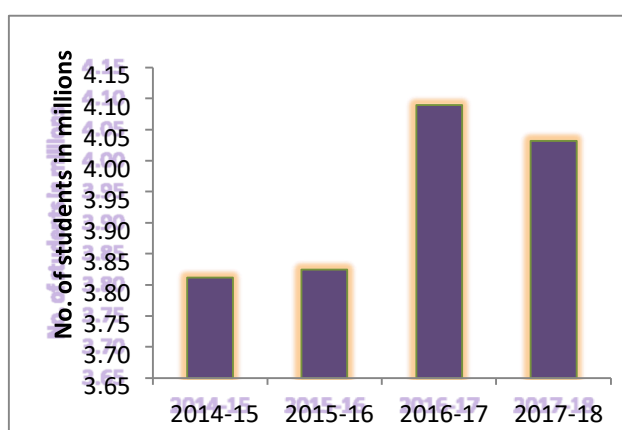
No. of Institutions recognized to offer programmes through distance mode in India (2014-19)



Source: As per UGC Annual Report (2018-19)

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
No. of students enrolled in Distance mode education	3811723	3824901	4089781	4031594

No. of students enrolled in Distance mode education in India (2014-2018)



Source: As per UGC Annual Report (2018-19)

UNESCO document entitled 'Open Learning' describes open learning as follows: "Such systems are designed to offer opportunities for part-time study, for learning at a distance and for innovations in the curriculum. They are intended to allow access to wider section of adult population, to enable students to compensate for lost opportunities in the past or to acquire new skills and qualifications for the future. Open and Distance learning one of rapidly growing sector in Indian higher education system. The day is not so far when India's education system will be conducted through Open and Distance Learning. The pedagogical approach of education has been shifted to virtual education in all levels of education sector. For example we can say, in COVID-19 period whole

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education system was lead ODL method. Through Open and Distance Learning education, students can participate various vocational and skill development courses that open a path to their future career.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

After the analysis and study from the objectives the researcher gets some important findings those are described below –

- i At the present context open and distance learning open horizontal windows of education for increasing learner participations and educational opportunities for many compatible learners who are deprived of to access classroom education due to financial, socio-cultural and geographical barriers.
- ii Inclusive education refer to empowering of every children with skills and knowledge's, given equal opportunity of every children to access education equally.
- iii Education is the most critical elements in empowering people with skill and knowledge and giving them access to productive employment in the future.
- iv The New Education Police 2020 has focus on increasing online education quails with equity in everywhere in India.
- v Many ICT integrated tools like as MOOC, DIKSHA, SWAYAM etc. are used in ODL mode.
- vi The pedagogical approach of education has been shifted to virtual education in all levels of education sector.
- vii Open and distance learning provided skill development opportunities of learners who are detach from formal education system. It offer various vocational skill programs courses and also build up effective time management skills, effective and appropriate communication skills.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of study to explore “INCLUSIVE GROWTH, A GATEWAY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN INDIA”. In the modern age, access to information is the key to professional success. In the digital age, learning is open to all. E-learning is a blessing to people who face obstacles in getting a traditional college education. Online learning has revolutionized the knowledge economy on a global scale. The role of online technology in providing the education is vital and with its flexible nature the online educational technology has gained popularity. The online education is now more accessible to the less privileged groups in comparison to the centralized classroom education system. Mobile phone, computer applications and technology based programs have emerged as an alternative platform to regular classroom teaching during lockdown. As a result both teacher and learners have benefited. Provide funds to the marginalized and poor students, digital insecurity, high technology cost, lack of ICT infrastructure poor knowledge on digital system of learners etc. are the most challenges in ODL mode learning in India. The Govt. and teacher working for Open and Distance Education should have social concern and develop courses, programmes; teacher should be always active to generate the new ideas for developing ODL mode learning. Distance education can be more effective if tutors were able to have one-to-one classes with students. According to UNESCO (2002) Distance Education has the potential to generate new patterns of teaching and learning and there is evidence that it can lead to innovation in mainstream education, and may even have effects beyond the realm of education itself.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal development. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators; however, learners can also educate themselves. Open and distance learning has become an established part of the educational world, with trends pointing to ongoing growth. It is a modern way of learning, allowing the students to study within their own space and time without being physically present in the institution. It allows all age groups of people to enroll their higher education, which also lead the positive effect of inclusive growth of Indian higher education. The trend of education not a steady state process, it is undergoing radical changes from time to time in its historical evolution. It is generally assume that open and distance learning is a paradigm shift from face to face education with the uses of modern and ICT integrated tools in the field of open and distance learning education. According to Peters (1999), paradigm shift in education world means that certain models are patterns no longer exist as they have been substituted by new models or patterns which significantly differ from the old ones. UNESCO take initiative for international corporation for spreading open and distance learning concept all over in the world special backward reason where children could not be enlightened by the light of institutional education. The Government of India has declared 20102020 as the “Decade of Innovations” for inclusive growth. Further, the UN Millennium Development Goals emphasize on education for Sustainable Development. In the light of this, efforts towards innovation in the ODL system should be step-up to facilitate sustainable development through quality education

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