

Open Learning and Developmental Intervention: Role of Stake Holders.

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1. Introduction:

Open learning is a revolutionary product of modern age. It is both online and offline learning. An online learning supports students for autonomous or self-learning. Autonomous learning is synonymous to self-regulated, self-initiated, self-determined, self-controlled, learner controlled instruction or individualised learning. Karl Rogers, the humanistic psychologist and educator was of the view that when children will be educated in this way, when they are motivated to “learn how to learn” by themselves they will be prepared to be autonomous and self regulated throughout their lives. According to the constructivists, “learning is the construction and continued change of cognitive structures in the individual person and not the result of the transportations of knowledge from one person to the other persons”. Autonomous learning has been a relevant objective of educational theorist and practitioners for about a hundred years. Some of them are John Dewey and his project method (self- learning), Frederic Burke, Clinton Morrison, Maria Montessori (Didactic apparatus-pedagogical material), Malcolm S. Knowles and his concept of self-directed learning, etc. Restrictions and barriers of formal system of education have bypassed the depressed, socio-economically disadvantaged and the PWD (Persons With Disability) population. Therefore, there is a need and relevance of open and distance learning in India. It can play a crucial role in bridging the gap between urban-rural, men-women, and privileged-under privileged population groups.

Operational Definitions: According to Oxford Learner’s Dictionary “Developmental intervention” refers to “A process of adopting or developing measures in connection with intervention, to prevent from a deteriorating condition or from collapsing a system or to improve the existing system.”

According to “Webster’s Encyclopaedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language” “Stake holder refers to a person or group that has an investment, share or interest in something as a business or industry.” Here, stakeholder refers to different Govt. and Non-govt. organizations,

agencies, and committees, responsible members working inside or outside the system of Open and Distance Learning.

2. Challenges Confronting Growth of Education:

Burning issues of education are illiteracy, low gross enrollment ratio, students' drop-out, low quality education, equity issues, higher cost of education, urban-rural divide, universal access for working adults, housewives, learners from disadvantaged group and those living in remote areas, use of ICT or new communication tool-internet.

- Illiteracy poses a great threat to the NE region. There is also regional mismatch in literacy rate. The North-east region has literacy rate of 65.8% as against the all India average of 65.02%, (Census Report, 2001). As per the census data (2001), the states such as Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland marched ahead of the country's average; Assam kept the pace of national average. Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh could manage to reduce the gap with the country's average.
- Dropout problem in India at primary and secondary level is major problem. In India the drop-out rate between KG to class 12th Standard is 90%-93%. Two decades ago, the number of out of school children according to UN statistics was 130 million, which declined to 59 million today. The cropping up problems for the Indian sub-continent may be recognised as poverty, malnourishment, unemployment, bankruptcy, and terrorism. The poverty rate is 37% and 70% labour force is illiterate or below primary level. In India the self employed population is 60%.
- Low GER of higher education is another challenging task for the stakeholders. In India presently GER is around 24%. This cannot be compared favourably with the world average (31%) and the average of the developed nations (58%). Even when it is compared with China, though about ten years ago, the GER in higher education is lower by about 10%. There is even wide variation in the GER across the states. The Government of India has targeted 30% GER by 2020. As per the data available on AISHE portal (2015-16) during the year 2015-16, there had been 36.20 lakh (provisional) enrollment in open and distance education programmes which constituted 11.28% of the total enrollment in higher education institutions.
- The problem of inclusive education has to be addressed properly.

The country has practically been divided into urban and rural. There is huge gap between the urban and rural population in terms of literacy and gross enrollment ratio. The gross enrollment ratio in urban area is four times higher than rural areas. The given enrolment ratio is much lower for economically weaker section, compared to general population in the country.

- The issues of quality, equity and universal access to education should be addressed in a realistic and comprehensive way. The falling standard of education primary and secondary stage, is a serious concern for academicians, policy makers and the Government and the nation as a whole. The policy of the government implemented at the elementary stage is perhaps, defective as no proper evaluation system is followed up to Eighth Standard and quality of students is not assessed. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has stated that the provision of relevant and quality education to all citizens can be provided preferably at their door steps by ODL system through its flexible, cost-effective and learner-friendly modes using information and communication technology (ICT). Open learning gives indirect instruction which has the potential to fulfil the enormous responsibility to universalize and democratize education and to check the falling standard at reasonable level, making the maximum use of media and technology.
- The open and distance learning system will work as a catalyst in equalizing the opportunities of education and by bringing education to the doorsteps of the learners, and will help in reaching the unreached. But it will depend on how successfully and pragmatically the quality issues are dealt with and how effectively the information and communication technology, innovative pedagogical designs are used in the area of ODL system. The ODL mode has become a viable and practical alternative to the institutionalised formal education. A large number of youth and adults now aspire for “learning while working” or “working while learning.”

3. Developmental Intervention-Pedagogical Approach:

In spite of having many challenges, the ODL system could contribute positively to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of higher education in India. But there is a remote possibility of attaining herculean task of attaining the target of 30% by 2020 through the conventional mode and to address the burning issues scientifically by

using innovative and specific pedagogical models (designs); use of ICT along with the adaption of other learner friendly measures may act as viable alternatives to improve the ODL system. Some expected measures has been discussed as follows;

Use of Traditional Instructional Designs: The guiding concept and pedagogical principles of traditional instructional designs have been used to enhance the quality of traditional learning. But they are still valid and will remain so in the near future. They have a close affinity to independent learning. The traditional instructional designs are:

- learning by exploration,
- learning by discovery,
- learning by activity,
- learning by doing,
- individualised learning,
- resource-based learning,
- learning by increased communication,
- learning by increased collaboration,
- learning by knowledge management,
- situated learning; learning communities,
- tutor guided learning

Use of Innovative and Specific Pedagogical Model: Autonomous learning is already a major innovation. Autonomous learning can best be encouraged for the online learners. There are two learning spaces- the real learning space and the virtual learning space. In conventional education all students (aspirants) are in the same space, a real place (classroom) where learning takes place in face to face situation whereas autonomous learning (or ODL) takes place in virtual space through web-based-internet and telecommunication system. The virtual learning spaces are essentially separate from one another. But in the conventional mode of education all students (aspirants) are in the same space (classroom). One has to use and exploit the wealth of opportunities for innovation when changing from real to virtual learning spaces. There is a need to develop the specific model and strategy for virtual learning spaces. They will have to be developed, tested, adopted and implemented. In order to demonstrate that autonomous learning digitised environments can and

must be implemented in ways that differ considerably from learning in real spaces. Here, seven models need to be mentioned here that may be relevant in this context. The specific pedagogical models are:

The ten virtual spaces are: The instruction spaces for presentation of instructional content, documentation spaces for documenting, chopping files, portfolios, information spaces for remembering, communication spaces for discussion with students, tutors, collaboration spaces for cooperation with classmates, exploration spaces for searching for relevant information, multimedia spaces for presenting and representing, hypertext spaces for independent learning, simulation spaces for working with dynamic models of reality and spaces in virtual reality for three dimensional spaces and landscapes.

The self-regulated learning process: This is concerned with real learning space (place) and the problem is how it could be arranged in virtual learning spaces. The individual has to perform cognitive activities through self-regulated way. In this learning process free-floating information is adapted and integrated into a certain historical situation that is defined by time and space; socially and culturally to find a new anthropological location on this transformation. This type of knowledge is an ideal preparation to generate informed knowledge as routine in the future knowledge society and deal with it in a previously unknown form.

Learning by knowledge management: Knowledge management is particularly important for on-line learning. Knowledge is managed pedagogically. It will help people to receive the flood of information provided by the internet. Distance students and learners who had to organise the learning process for themselves and had to monitor and check their own learning may to orient themselves through knowledge management. (Reinmann-Rothmeirer, 2002).

Knowledge building Communities: Group learning in virtual learning spaces can be planned, initiated, controlled and evaluated by the autonomous participants themselves. The benefits of such communication and collaboration among virtual groups are obvious which have been stated below:

- The learners have access to a broader information base;
- They are stimulated by other group members;
- They have chance, and are compelled to express their ideas, thoughts

and knowledge orally;

- They are obliged to communicate clearly and comprehensively;
- They learn from other group members;
- They enjoy the feeling of solving problems together;
- They are additionally motivated.

Distributed knowledge based learning: Problem solving is an acknowledged traditional goal of instructional design. It is a process of recognition of an obstacle or difficulty and of devising and testing possible solutions. This method is attractive as its high thinking levels can result in new learning

Distributed learning by design: “Learning by Design approach” is used for transformation of pedagogical approach. It is pedagogically attractive as it activates the students, encourages reflection, communication and collaboration and can become a considerable source of motivation when this particular kind of learning by doing is successful. It requires the formulation of questions and assessment of possible solutions. The design artefact must be repeatedly compared with the original. Different level of abstraction must be distinguished.

Learning by virtual seminar: A virtual seminar is a special form of community learning. It is different from real seminar in the sense that the pedagogical structure is rearranged in the virtual seminar (learning space). Here the individual part is much stronger as each participant remains an autonomous learner for long time and is able to study all contributions of all active participants. Teachers’ role changes considerably as they expect not to teach the autonomous learners but to moderate the seminar (Salmon, 2001).

4. Technology: Using ICT:

The ICT has revolutionized the access to education in general and Open and Distance Education in particular. The use of ICT may improve both the quality and quantity in respective areas of the ODL. However the use and effectiveness of technology will depend on the pedagogic principles that guide the users and also on the quality of information or content transmitted to students through ICT. Interactivity of ICT as strategy is the top priority of delivering the ODL programme because of the fastness and the range of methods of transmitting and transacting the content with variety of learners with different learning needs and

preferences. Technology, more precisely ICT, is the influential and powerful factor for economic growth. Acquisition of information, turning that information into knowledge and application of that knowledge is of basic need. But as to the question: How to learn application of technology? the answer have been given in three phases-

- a. Phase one: Learning from technology:** Here different media are used as carriers to deliver information from which we learn, for example, reading a text book, listening to radio and watching a television programme. However, most of the time learning from technology is passive and hence least effective.
- b. Phase two: Learning in technology:** Here technology is integrated rather than the use of a single media. Thus, learners learn in a technological environment through multiple media. It is very friendly for distance learning and teleconference based teaching-learning environment that enables a virtual classroom situation. Web-based or online learning also falls under this category. Collaborative and co-operative learning through the use of email and chat facilities are available on the internet. This is an improved and more effective learning. It is in demand by the instructional designers and course developers.
- c. Phase three: Learning with technology:** It is a creative technology to allow learners to learn by working with technology; instead of watching video programme or interacting with a multimedia, the learners are engaged in preparing the video or developing the multimedia. The computer and the internet provide this opportunity to learn with technology.

In India 'learning from technology', had been predominant. India adopted technology for teaching and learning on a large scale when satellite technology was used (1975) for the first time in education. SITE proved highly useful to take quality education to schools in remote part of the country and use of television in education became a regular practice that has influenced the setting up of the IGNOU. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) conducted an evaluation of the programme with the assistance of its own SITE (Social Research Co-ordination Committee). The findings revealed that (i) about 30% of Indian people who had no previous contact with mass media were reached by SITE. (ii) Illiterates, particularly, females, gained more than the literates who lived in the area of overall modernity.

Using Multi-media: It is a technology driven system and guided by superior expertise. Reporting on web-based and on-line education (2001) Killeder said, “Open and Distance Education System of India (ODES) cannot ignore the internet. Quality and efficiency of academic and administrative services of ODES will be significantly better, when compared to its present status. With rapid growth of the internet, more and more students will come to ODES and will expect the University to make use of ‘their’ new communication tool, i.e. internet. ODES of India soon will repeatedly plan and execute the introduction of the internet and gear up to face the challenge of the new millennium.”

Arrival of the new technology certainly seems to have stimulated a resurgence of interest in diversifying methods of knowledge delivery. Web-based course is an example which is available in many universities. The concept of smart schools and smart classroom are springing all over the world. Similarly virtual learning, online learning and other forms of educational delivery are becoming part of the educational jargon of the new century. The content, is undoubtedly important but technology is the most important component of multimedia-based learning.

For a country like India, it becomes a challenging task to develop interactive multimedia learning material. It has at least four discrete phases in the design and development of interactive multimedia materials, namely, 1. Concept development phase 2. Demonstration and validation phase 3. Design and development phase 4. Production and delivery phase.

IGNOU adopts multimedia and multi-methods for transaction of its courses. It uses Television and Radio as supplementary media and a ‘learning from technology’ mode in educational delivery. Gyan Darshan—TV Channel, Gyan Vani Radio Channel, Interactive Radio Counselling, Teleconferencing, and Web conferencing facilities are some of the worth mentioning interventions for imparting education through multimedia to its learners in remote areas. The multimedia channel will go a long way in supporting isolated distance learners. It has developed a large range of recorded audio-visual cassettes to support its various distance education courses. ‘EDUSAT’-the Education Satellite was launched by the ISRO during 2004. The main purpose of this network (with extensive reach and connectivity) was to provide access to education to all people at primary level in remote areas with a large target group including training of teachers. This enhances the quality of education. It enriched existing curriculum and pedagogy at different levels by

applying technologies available, through the EDUSAT including virtual classroom, video on demand, etc.

Using Digital Library: Internet and World Wide Web provide the impetus for 'digital library' which comprises digital collections, services and infrastructure to support life-long learning, research, scholarly communication as well as preservation of recorded knowledge.

There will be third generation learners in future who will be fully convergent with online digital system. There are three types of learners:

- Digital natives,
- Digital immigrants
- Digital illiterates.

The challenge before ODL is how to deal with these three groups of learners with varying digital literacy. A digital library is widely available through free access on internet. Digital libraries have the potential to store much information within little physical space to contain it. It is cost effective than that of a traditional library. It has no physical boundary as the user need not go to the library as long as an internet connection is available. Learning from home, office or other place, is convenient to the users.

Many authors have cooperated by contributing their books to the digital library and making them available free of charge to anyone. It also procures online publication. It provides a wide range of internet based services i.e., audio and video conferencing and such others. Multimedia and online and offline services also comes under digital library. The online resources are web browsing, e- mail, e- journal, e-book, multi media, etc. The offline resources are audio-visual aids, CD-ROM etc.

Through Teleconferencing: Teleconferencing allows Instructional Television (ITV) with one-way video and two-way audio communication by using telephone lines. This interactive talkback technology for distance education has been in use since 1991. It is a set of interactive telecommunication technologies which allow two or more locations to interact. This service is cost effective as it allows students and teachers across the world to see, hear and speak with each other at the same time. The main thrust was to add an interactive dimension reducing the limitations of one-way mode inherent in broadcasting.

Through Interactive Videoconferencing: This is a tool as well as a system that can be integrated into the distance education programmes with minimal adaptation to the curriculum and course. It is designed to support two-way video and audio communication between multiple locations.

Popularising the Concept of Country wide Class room: The students and learners all over the country including remote areas are connected through telephone lines to interact under teleconferencing system. Planning and preparation of learning materials, use of technical media, conducting occasional seminars and two way communications are the essentials of distance and open learning. Though there is no interpersonal communication in distance education. Yet, a certain amount of periodic personal face to face contact is also available through programmes in the study centres where elucidatory lectures and practical experiences (counselling and mentoring classes) are provided. Here communication takes place by the use of technological media. Communication is a key factor to be addressed to see the extent to which the educational technology is used in teaching learning process. The developed nations are much ahead than the developing countries in delivering the services both in terms of content and context. The use of technological inputs, man power needs and availability of infrastructural facilities plays significant role in open and distance learning.

5. Intervention: Role and Responsibility of Stakeholders:

Firstly, it is the Legislative body that has the mandate to initiate policies and programmes at the centre and also in the state level. The IGNOU as National University has come into existence after its bill has been passed by both the Houses of the parliament. Likely, many State governments have established Open Universities at their own states. Besides, the judiciary is to settle all types of disputes through the Court judgement or verdict.

Secondly, it is the Executives who implement policies and programmes of the Government. The government also created many other agencies from time to time like Distance Education Council of India (now Distance Education Bureau, DEB), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), the Chancellor or Vice-chancellor, the Registrars, the Controllers, the Deans, heads of the departments, the professors and other officials associated with the organization. The MHRD through an administrative order has taken away from IGNOU the responsibility of

coordination and maintenance of standards in ODL and an alternative arrangement has been made through UGC to regulate ODL. It is now more than a year there is no coordinating body to address the problems of ODL and initiate action to redress the grievances of lakhs of learners.

Thirdly, the judiciary is to settle all types of dispute through the Court judgement or verdict. Making education accessible to all is one thing; making quality education accessible is quite another thing. Quality ODL may complement the exercise of social justice in education sector which is undertaken more than half a century ago. The Govt. of India issued a Gazette notification No. 44. On 1st March, 1995 which states all the qualifications awarded through Distance education by the Universities ... stand automatically recognized for the purpose of employment to post and services under central Govt., provided it has been approved by Distance Education Council, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi,... University Grants Commission (UGC) through a circular issued on May, 2004 mentioned that the Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees awarded by open universities are to be treated equivalent to the corresponding awards of the Universities in the country.

However, two court judgements by judiciary, first one by the Supreme Court and the second one by the Calcutta High Court, relating to the degrees awarded by two different Universities have put a major question mark on the credibility of ODL in India. The Supreme Court of India in a verdict (2009) against a civil appeal No. 4173 of 2008 in the case of Annamalai University (Supra) which stated that a degree obtained after attending regular classes would stand a higher footing than that got through distance education, in courses offered through Open University system. Similar type of judgement (24th Dec 2014) delivered by Calcutta High Court upholds the validity of earlier Supreme Court judgement on a petition relating to the research degree given by an Open University. The social stigma about ODL must be removed and academic credibility should further be built to achieve social justice.

The Central Government:

The scope of improvement is very much there in ODL system. Corrective measures at the policy making level is to be taken immediately to address the crisis of credibility of the ODL as raised by the judgements of the Supreme Court and Calcutta High Court. The Central Govt. has to initiate corrective measures before the crisis affect thousands of learners. The court must address the issue by adopting proper control

and monitoring of ODL system and enhancing capabilities of ODL system to support and sustain continuous upgradation of the system to meet the challenges of tough competitions. Time has come to consider ODL as simply another mode to impart education just like face to face mode of education without compromising on quality in terms of content, delivery of knowledge and evaluation mechanism.

In 1985, Indira Gandhi National Open University was set up in Delhi. IGNOU has its jurisdiction all over India. The University has extended its outreach beyond the barriers of the country by offering ODL programmes in twenty-three countries worldwide. But quite early in 1962 the Directorate of correspondence course, opened in the Delhi University started this programme. Charles, W was of the view that “A wide range of teaching–learning activities previously identified by such varied terms as correspondence study, home study, open education, radio-television teachings, institutionalised instructions, etc are now included under distance education.” (P 283)

IGNOU Regional Centres: Throughout the country the Regional centres are working efficiently to educate millions of needy people through ODL mode of learning.

National Institute of Open Schooling: Open and Distance learning is imparted through National Institute of Open School; an autonomous organization was set up in New Delhi in 1989 by MHRD, Government of India. It claims to be the largest open school in the world with 1072 cumulative enrollment of approximately over fifty thousand learners.

Ministry of Labour and Employment: Government of India under this Ministry developed two important frameworks: (i) National Vocational Educational Qualification Framework and (ii) National policy on Skills Development 2009 (NSPD). The Government of India set up National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to provide funding, facilitation and advocacy by means of 21 Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). The National Mission for Skill Development was launched along with the Skill Development, policy in 2015.

The State Governments: Each state government should establish one Open University and one Open School in each state to increase the GER at tertiary as well as primary and secondary level. Addressing the issues at state or at different regional levels can decentralize higher education and at the same time it can facilitate equal access of higher

education to every needy segments of population. It can be a result oriented step not only to bridge the gap of huge difference of GER between India and other developing and developed nations but also will help in building an information and knowledge based society.

Open Universities: Presently there are fourteen open universities functioning in India. All open universities must have co-ordination and co-operation for each other's development. They must have a common association of their own to share their common problems and to develop mechanism of their own. Currently many Open Universities are working for rehabilitative management in the area of disability (differently able) under the guidance of Rehabilitation Council of India; Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University and Netaji Subhas Open University (West Bengal) offered Certificate, Diploma, Degree, and Post-graduate level courses in different areas of disability. Recently an agreement 'MOU' has been signed between the authority of KKHSOU and the RCI on 19th of May, 2017. Accordingly the university will start B.Ed. course in special education with specialization in three major areas of disability i.e. Mental retardation, Hearing impaired and the visually impaired. The selected institutions for offering the courses are composite regional centre at Bhangagarh, city centre of KKHSOU at Guwahati and Shishu Sarothi at Birubari. As per the provision of MOU article a study centre for children with special need will be started as early as possible.

The Non-state Actors: What can non-state actors and NGOs do for development of Open and Distance learning? The non-state actors are NGOs, faith based organizations, private schools (for profit), private non-profit, community schools and philanthropic schools. The non-profit and philanthropic organizations, can play a vital role for alternative education specially for the development of open and distance learning as it has done over the past few decades for children with disabilities as a part of the mission Education For All. For example,

- Thakur Hari Prashad Institute for Research and Rehabilitation for mentally handicapped.
- SWEEKAAR (Rehabilitation Institute for Handicapped) of Andhra Pradesh has given unforgettable services for the cause of disabilities in India. There is a need of awareness to popularize the ODL system and increase the sensitivity towards education of underprivileged and deprived sections.

- Pratham is one of the largest non-governmental organizations working to provide education to the underprivileged children of India. It has reached millions of children living both in urban and rural areas through a range of interventions. Pratham is working in close collaboration with the municipal corporations in several cities such as in Mumbai and Delhi.

6. Few Suggestions to Improve the Existing ODL System:

Need of independent regulation for National policy on ODL:

So far as quality is concerned, the Distance Education Bureau (DEB) a new autonomous body created by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2012, should look into the matter of promotion, coordination and maintenance of standard in the ODL system.

Policy collaboration and partnership in operation mechanism:

Keeping pace with global development there is a need of policy of collaboration, cooperation, sharing and partnership in all operation mechanisms of the ODL system. Various sectors including the use of their expertise have to be involved in this process of policy and programme implementation; in addition to public sector (Government), the private and corporate sectors like companies and industrialists and the non-state actors like NGOs must be taken into consideration, for addressing the issues of open and distance learning.

Improving Infrastructural Facilities: Some Open Universities do not have good academic and infrastructural facilities including their respective study centres. The government should carefully see the problems both in academic and physical infrastructure. But the concerned University should also mobilise its own resources. Planning and preparation of learning materials, use of technical media, conducting occasional seminars are the essential aspects of distance and open learning.

Maintenance of Quality: To maintain a comparable quality in open and distance learning system proper planning, preparation, publication and supplying the teaching-learning material in a time bound phase should be made as per the need and demand of the learner.

Need based courses: In the area of teachers training programme initiative has been taken by Burkina Faso, Chile, China, India, Mongolia, South Africa, and Nigeria to upgrade skills to improve quality in public education system. Student friendly courses, like technical, vocational, professional and other need based courses should be introduced.

Quick and smooth Delivery mechanism: Cost-effective and efficient delivery mechanism may strengthen the system of open and distance learning.

Role of non-profit making NGO: Effort should be made to identify technically competent NGOs and enable them to assume a large role by functioning with Government agencies in a significant manner. The University or state government may ask support from non-state actors (non-profit makers) for participatory development and support services to assist the administration in implementing its programmes that significantly address the access issues of marginalised children

Technical and vocational education programme: The ODL system has to respond immediately and effectively to the growing demand of the working adults. It may include experimental work and hands on training as an integral element that may ensure by contributing to employability, productivity and human development.

Assessment and accreditation of ODL institution: The institutions working throughout the country need to be assessed by the autonomous body duly constituted by government both in state and in central level. To what extent the educational technology is used in teaching learning process has to be assessed for further development. The developed nations are much ahead than the developing countries in delivering the services both in terms of content and context. The use of technological inputs, man power needs and availability of infrastructural facilities plays a significant role in open and distance learning.

Develop a mechanism to Certify Prior Learning: For mainstreaming diversified learners in to higher education, there is a need to develop mechanism to certify prior learning. One mechanism of modular approach has already been going on known as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). This is important in order to assess and certify those with necessary skills and competencies.

Organising Community radio programme: Community radio stations serve the community needs of a small geographical area such as group villages. It has programming content that reflects the educational, developmental and cultural needs of the specific community it serves. In the age of globalization, community radio helps to preserve local culture and vocations. This approach was used in India and Ghana (school based programmes to support agriculture, health, and employment related project), in Sudan (health - care), in Mongolia (rural women)

in Botswana (to raise new policy on cattle), Gambia and Nigeria to give concept on the ODL system.

Guidance and counselling services: Information should be provided on employment opportunities, procedure of admission, and medium of instruction, examination and evaluation system.

Need to give Recognised Degrees and Certificate of Open universities: The MHRD should assure people about the importance of open learning and open universities should be guided, assessed and monitored from time to time to maintain its good reputation. Otherwise, the Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Research Degrees awarded by the Open University would not be valued by the society.

Equal Weightage to ODL Degree: The post graduate and Research degree should be considered equally for the jobs and promotions. Regarding jobs and promotions, some mechanisms and parameters should be developed.

Equal Facilities on Scholarship and Buss pass: All students who are studying under open universities must extend same facilities as other university provides, especially on scholarships and bus pass.

Modifications and Relaxations: Some modifications and relaxations on entry rules for admissions, re-registration, assignment submission, counselling, ODL should be adopted as and when required for the interest of student community.

Time bound submission and evaluation of home assignment: Handling home assignment, timely submission of assignments, incorporation of assignment marks, are some of the serious problems of open universities.

More financial support from Government: The Indian Government introduced technical and vocational scheme of education through Ministry of Labour and Employment to provide funding, facilitation and advocacy by means of 21 Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). The National Mission launched the Skill Development policy in 2015. The Govt. may implement the skill development programmes through ODL institutions throughout the country and more financial support may be given to these institutions.

7. Conclusion:

Open and distance learning is non-conventional and an innovative idea which is easily accessible to disadvantaged, economically weak, and people living in remote areas and geographically backward locations through ICT and multimedia. It is cost effective system to have knowledge and skills for life. The system has many challenges on its way. To make it pro-people it should be more pedagogical, technological cum ICT oriented, technical and vocational. Open Universities need to launch new programmes and also modify the existing curricula to make it more productive and technical so that it can generate employment opportunities. The significant point is that the ODL system of advanced nation is technologically driven with a good quality product. On the contrary the Indian ODL system is continuously struggling for quality product in the world market and lack expertise and material support of the West. The system needs changes and modifications to meet the demands of market. The ODL will further reduce the disparities at regional, sectoral and social level. It will also reduce the gap between urban and rural divide and will provide equal opportunity of education to all aspirants.

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