

THE OPEN LEARNING SYSTEM: AN OVERVIEW TO PROMOTE HIGHER EDUCATION FROM CLASS TO MASS

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Pandey*

ABSTRACT

The Open Learning or Distance education system is a teaching learning process where teachers and learners are not assembled in a prior settled place called schools and colleges. There is proper distance between teachers and learners. They never interact like traditional teaching learning process. In this concept the teaching learning process involves self learning material (S.L.M.) and technical media. In a generic term Distance education is a synonym of open distance learning system. In modern terms we use open distance learning system instead of distance education. In this process teachers and students do not meet as they do. Actually distance education is a process of democratizing teaching and learning of knowledge, which was often kept secret in the traditional/classroom teaching – learning process.

Keywords: *Self Learning Material, Multimedia, Democratizing.*

Introduction

Open Learning /Distance education is a teaching learning process through the use of self learning material (S.L.M.) and technical media. In a generic term Distance education is a synonym of open distance learning system. In modern terms we use open distance learning system instead of distance education. In this process teachers and students do not meet as they do in the traditional/classroom teaching –learning process. Distance teaching and distance learning both have different meaning. Distance teaching refers to institution's role while distance learning refers to learner's role in the process. For this process we use three terms synonymously. Distance in the terms of education means that the student/learner and teacher/educator are separated and never meet face to face. In this process two-way communication takes place between learners and teachers. The two-way communication takes place by the means of modern communication media, Television and internet. Radio, film and computer are powerful educational instruments of modern era.

Actually distance education is a process of democratizing teaching and learning of knowledge, which was often kept secret. At present many countries are using the method of open distance learning system to upgrade knowledge. The term distance education is at least 150 year old. The latest systematized steps in this direction have been taken place by the United Kingdom by opening an open university. The main theme of this process was to enable workers to raise their qualification and skill by acquiring a higher education while working in a workshop. Now-a-days educational thinkers of many countries consider distance education as means for equalizing educational opportunities to those who are not in the position to get formal education because of their social, economic or individual reasons. The term distance education gained formal recognition in 1982 when International Council of Correspondence Education changed its name to the International Council for Distance Education. We have started functioning in this field since 1977. At present there are thirteen state open universities set up by the respective state Grants. These universities cater to people who are unable to pursue regular

* Associate Professor Commerce, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Government P.G. College, Naini, Prayag Raj, U.P., India.

courses due to various reasons. These universities are also instrumental in shaping the career growth of learners who are already employed. Some of them are Dr B.R. Ambedkar open university Hyderabad, Vardhaman Mahaveer open university kota Rajasthan, Nalanda open university Patana Bihar, Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University Allahabad U.P., Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra open university etc. Earlier distance education was known as correspondence education, because it was exclusively associated with the printed self learning material. But at present various non-print media are supplement the written study material. That's why it is now called distance education. In general, the term distance education covers the various forms of the study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture theaters or on the same premises, but which is not beneficial from the point of view of planning guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization. In the process of distance education, it is assumed that learners are aware regarding out learning. An important characteristic of this process is the separation of teacher and students and also influence of an educational organization.

There are a lot of learning opportunities for learners in open learning system. The use of electronic / technical media is the basic feature of the opening learning system. In this system the provision of two way communication has been provided to both teacher and learner without the presence of group learning. Open learning system promotes the industrialization and globalization of the education system and process. It also encourage the privatization of learning. Open learning system is different from conventional teaching/learning system. Conventional education facilitates face to face contacts between teacher and student with opportunities for direct interaction. Distance education facilitate Indirect communication through media with little or no direct Interaction. The traditional method is suitable for transmitting norms and attitudes e.g. fathers to son, society to person while, Distance education is suitable for transmitting knowledge up to unlimited extant. There is compulsory attendance and class room in the focus of teaching activities in conventional teaching, while there is no need of attendance and class room facilities in open learning. For such a system the learner requires high level of motivation and self discipline. Conventional system of teaching is a social process in association with other with definite schedule and curriculum and teaching but Distance Education system is mostly a solitary process, self-paced at any time. Distance system is capital intensive while conventional system of teaching is labour intensive. In conventional method of teaching Decentralized costs rise with increasing numbers of learners while open learning system promotes centralized costs which fall with the increase of learners. In conventional method generally teacher-taught ratio is low while in open learning system teacher-taught ratio is generally high.

Scope of Open Learning System

- Open learning system is for those who leave the school, but are qualified for traditional schooling.
- Adults who desire to acquire university level qualification but cannot apply for entry to the conventional universities because of lack of educational qualification required for entry and other individual family reasons.
- Professional and manpower groups which require vocational training professional updating and increasing knowledge levels but cannot be released from their employment to attend a campus based institution or training college. Actually distance learning system was founded for the broad purpose of expanding and enlarging the higher educational opportunities for adults with jobs, and others who are deprived and have no opportunities of conventional teaching system, due to certain individual reasons.

Naturally distance learning institutions are called by different name such as institution without walls, television/computer institution, universities of air, correspondence universities etc. The word "Open" in open universities reflects openness, openness with regard to student's openness with regard to place of study, openness with regard to course and openness with regard to completion of studies. Open learning system's education process is not class room based but home based, and students can study at their own place. It offers scope for independent choice of courses and application of effort and its course are flexible. Its teaching method utilizes all the possible communication and information technologies so that student may get ultra learning of knowledge.

Generally we use multimedia instructional system as print, broad cost, non broad cost, audio-visuals, practical work and inter personal communication, in open learning system. Open learning system is multidimensional system for modern global village. It has logic that every individual is born free and the man who will read and learn will get the knowledge. Learner is his own decision maker in open learning

system. In India non-formal education/distance education is being used as an instrumental of national educational policy because without educational democratization we cannot get the goal of social democracy. The Universities based on (O.D.L.) open distance learning system provide access to higher education for large segments of population and, in particular, disadvantaged groups such as those living in remote and rural areas including working people, homemakers and other adults who wish to upgrade or acquire knowledge through studies.

In short we can say that open learning system is future of our teaching -learning process, because India like developing and undeveloped countries have no infrastructure to meet the challenges of higher education in 21st century because of their population growth due to shortage of resources to improve the density of higher education . So it must be promoted by the government to educate our future generation .

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