

Open and Distance Learning in India: With Reference to Dehradun District of Uttarakhand

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Abstract

Education is at the crossroad. It plays an important role in the overall development of the human beings, and is considered as a catalyst of social change. Open and distance learning (ODL) plays an important role in providing quality education to the learners who are unable to be a part of the formal system of education for some reasons or the other. Open and distance learning is becoming a source of education for the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society. Regardless of caste, creed and religion, it provides uniform education to different sections of the society. The purpose of this research paper titled, Open and distance learning in India: With reference to Dehradun District of Uttarakhand is to assess the attitude and satisfaction level of the learners towards open and distance learning.

Keywords: Education, Open and Distance learning, NIOS, Open Schooling

Introduction

Education is at the cross road. Open and distance learning (ODL) has emerged as an alternative education to reach to the marginalized and disadvantaged and to combat with the problem of illiteracy. The open and distance learning is the need of the hour, especially at the secondary and senior secondary school level for those who have no access to normal schooling but want to continue their education to compete in the changing world. It gives easy access to education to various segments of society, particularly to the individuals who are living in inaccessible territories.

It also serves as a source of education for the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society. It aims to advance and disseminate education through various programmes for the benefit of the learners and caters to the needs of the different sections of the people. Open schooling, in reality aims at drawing out the best in individuals. ODL helps and encourages learners to continue education through distance mode for those who due to some reasons or other are not able to continue education in the past.

Need and Significance of the study

Open and distance learning provides a platform to the individuals who need to continue and upgrade their education and also skill development. In the hilly region of Uttarakhand, the ODL mode is very effective and important to reach to the people residing in the tough geographical terrains and to the marginalized sections of the society. The open schooling is playing an important role in the hilly regions, as most of the children left or dropped out from school, especially girl students in the rural areas, due to various reasons such as the long distance of the school from home or poor economic conditions of the family. The open schooling with its learner-friendly characteristics like flexibility of place as per the learners need, SLM, ICT support, PCP and students support services helps to resolve the problems of the learners. The following are some of the studied conducted earlier which will support the present research study.

Mythili (2017), in her study, assessed the satisfaction and performance of the academic counselors in an online training program. To study the relation between the level of satisfaction and improvement in performances, four sub-groups were identified on the basis of the level of improvement of performances shown after the training. The findings of the study show that the sub-group with

lowest improvement in scores displayed the lowest satisfaction rate, whereas the sub-group with the highest improvement in scores showed the highest level of satisfaction.

Bordoloi (2018), in her study, found that ODL raised an elective path for making education accessible and for providing scope for skill-based education at minimum cost and engaging the energetic grown-up population of a nation like India.

Duggal (2016), in his study, tried to find out the reasons of learners dropout in nonprofessional undergraduate degree program of the IGNOU. The findings of the study show that the major reason of their dropout was ignorance about the system of IGNOU. It is reflected that the dropped-out students could have been retained by orienting them about the flexibility and facilities provided to them in terms of re-registration, maximum duration, readmission, change of regional center, change of study center, change of courses, facility of repeatedly appearing in examination, so on and so forth, and also by giving them guidance, on a constant basis, to enable them to plan their studies effectively and complete their programmes successfully.

Husni, in his study, explored the contribution of student support in increasing student persistence by employing mixed methods approach. The study utilized 13 consecutive informative plans by gathering the quantitative information from 14 looking over 153 students. The study shows that student support had a 15 significant role in imparting student steadiness. The study also suggested the 16 improvement of student support at the level of effective, cognitive, and systemic 17 in order to enhance learner's persistence.

Deepak Paliwal (2019) in his study, concludes that ODL has emerged as an effective tool to educate the learners, particularly residing in the far-flung areas and who are not able to have access to education due to tough geographical conditions, social and cultural taboos and economic backwardness

The above study of the review of literature put forth a clear frame that as far as the open schooling in hilly areas is concerned, no study on the above topic has been done. Therefore, considering the above factors the researcher felt the need of conducting the present study to know the role and importance of the open schooling and the view of the learners towards it in the Dehradun District of Uttarakhand state.

Objectives of study

The following are the objective of the study:

- Assessment of learners views towards open and distance learning; and
- Evaluation of the role of open and distance learning in providing quality education to the learners.

Methodology

For the present research study the researcher has used analytical and explorative research methodology. The data has been collected from primary and secondary sources and analysis has been done accordingly. The questionnaires contained 13 items to be answered by the respondents. In addition to intensive field work, secondary data were collected from the sources like records, manuscripts, survey reports and many other related studies and their findings for the present study.

Sample of the study

32 NIOS centers located in the Dehradun District of the Uttarakhand constitute the sample for the present research study. A total of 300 students enrolled in these centers were selected for collecting the data for the present research study studying in class 10 and 12 respectively. The data comprised both male and female students.

Conclusion

Open and distance learning is assuming an essential role in granting school advanced education through distance mode. It provides opportunities to those who left the study in between and did not have access to learning. Through its different traditional, professional and functional courses, open and distance learning is a boon to the deprived learners through distance mode. The need of the hour is to promote distance learning so that the drop outs and the individuals who are unable to carry on their study through main stream of education can get a chance of learning through distance mode of education and become the part of the scholarly society. Recent years has witnessed a tremendous increase in the enrollment number in ODL institutions. Further, there is a need to keep a check on the private universities or institutions offering the distance program without any recognition from the concern authority. The distance education system provides opportunities not only to younger students but also to those from the older age groups. The spirit and positive side of the ODL is to provide opportunity to everyone, regardless of age, caste and sex. With the help of above finding it can be safe concluded that ODL has emerged as an effective tool to educate the deprived learners, particularly residing in the far-flung areas and who have not access to education due to tough geographical conditions, social and cultural taboos and economic backwardness of the Dehradun district of Uttarakhand State.

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