QUALITY ASSURANCE & DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM: Problems & Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system has been correctly identified as a panacea for the myriad of problems in the educational systems throughout the world. The pressing socio-economic compulsions, new multi-media teaching- learning system and globalization of education have paved the way for the growth of distance education at the national as well as international level. Education is a fundamental pillar of democracy for sustainable development and socio-economic justice. The rationale of distance education is to ensure equal opportunities of education to disadvantaged sections of the society who, because of financial, geographical or time constraints, are not in a position to upgrade their education, knowledge and skills. Education being a dynamic process, the need of the hour is to use it in a positive direction with the changing demands of the society and thereby improve the living standards of the people.

Keeping this in view, the purpose of this paper is to focus on the issues like: democratization of education through open and distance learning system, higher education and distance education system, and development of strategies for the autonomy of Distance Educations institutions (DEIs)working under conventional university set up. The objectives of distance education make it clear that this system was expected to play a key role in democratization of higher education in a country. However, one of the major problems in our country has been that distance education has to operate within the framework of a conventional university under hostile circumstances. The transition from conventional system to hi-tech model of open learning is still not digested by the advocates of the formal system within the conventional universities. The transition, therefore, will have to be slow until the administration and the academicians gradually start appreciating the ODL system and prepare itself for a change from conventional to non-conventional or open system. In order to shoulder social responsibilities the DEI's will have to respond not only to regional educational needs but also globally rooted challenges.

Keywords: BOU, Quality, equivalency, ICT, ODL, Flexibility.