

## Foreword

Dear Readers of IJONTE,

This is the second issue of this new International Journal on New Trends in Education, and I am very pleased to write this Foreword to Issue 2.

This Journal is especially important to provide the most up-to-date information on emerging trends. We need these trends so we can better plan our own research and policies for organising distance education. Other journals showcase research that derives from many years research gathering data on describing some well known aspect like student-to-student interactions using ICT. But this Journal is very different. The establishment of UKOU in 1969 is considered to be the first step towards having Open and Distance Education system acknowledged catering to the needs of those who are not able to go to formal educational institutions. In the Asian Region some universities began offering correspondence courses (like Delhi University in 1962 through its Delhi School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education). Establishment of Ramkhabaeng University in Thailand in 1971 declared the commitment of governments to provide education through ODE mode in Asian region. Currently nearly all the Asian countries have open universities by way of their 'openness' and 'flexibility'. Advances in technology, good expansion of telecommunication networks, globalization, entry of private sector, industrialization and according increased importance to education etc are some of the factors contributing to this rapid growth and development of ODE system in Asia. However we need to learn about trends in other parts of the world such as South America where I am currently working, and also we need more information on trends developing in the former countries of the USSR, and of course those countries of southern Europe and Asia, and Africa that publish little or no reports.

We hope that this new Journal on trends will not only focus on higher education, but consider all forms from open primary to open high schools and lifelong learning. Not only the open education at higher level, to meet the goals of Universalisation of Primary Education, Open Schooling has also been taken quite seriously. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), India; Sri Lanka Open School; Turkish Open Education High School; South Korea's Air and Correspondence High School, Open School of Bangladesh, and Open Junior Secondary School of Indonesia etc are testimony to the commitment in this direction. This growth has been fuelled by ICTs. Some of the Asian countries are leader in the use of ICT like Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea etc. Not only E-Learning, M-Learning is also being implemented. The cultures and tradition in Asia pose some challenges for such ODE models. The curriculum framing or adoption/implementation of ICT, quality assurance, staff development or learner support, etc all require different treatment. There is a greater need of collaboration and partnership among different open universities of the Asia. It may be in the form of developing and delivering an educational programme. There have been some experiments in establishment of e-universities, some surviving, others failed. We need to learn about these trends.

These trends, globalization, new job opportunities, new educational avenues have all resulted in higher mobility in researchers and in the workforce. These are producing new insights, new challenges, and new trends. Workplace learning and corporate learning has to be tuned to suit knowledge economy of the region. So we hope more Articles can be prepared for these trends in workforce mobility.

I give my wholehearted support to this new Journal, and closely follow the reports that are published. One thing we must each remember in this fast changing evolving world is that we are not too old to learn – indeed we must not cease learning (and of course publishing what we learn as new trends – for others to learn too).



Ramesh C. Sharma

Ramesh C. SHARMA has a Ph.D. in educational technology and is currently working as regional director in Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). He has also been a teacher trainer and has taught educational technology, educational research and statistics, educational measurement and evaluation, special education, and psychodynamics of mental health courses for the B.Ed. and M.Ed. programmes. He has conducted many training programmes for in- and pre-service teachers on the use of computers, Internet and multimedia in teaching and instruction. He established an ICT Centre in the teachers college in which he was formally employed. He is a member of many committees on implementing educational technology at IGNOU. His areas of specialization include ICT applications, computer networking, on-line learning, student support services in open and distance learning, and teacher education. He is Co-Editor of the Asian Journal of Distance Education, is or has been on the editorial advisory board of Distance Education, International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, and Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education. He has co-authored a book on distance education research and recently one of his co-edited books, Interactive Multimedia in Education and Training, has been published by Idea Group Inc., U.S.A. He is also an Advisory Board Member and author for the Encyclopedia of Distance Learning.

Prof. Dr. Ramesh C Sharma  
Director (Distance Education)  
Institute of Distance and Continuing Education,  
University of Guyana,  
Flat 5, Queen's College Compound,  
Camp Road, Georgetown, Guyana (South America)  
Email: [rcsharma@ignou.ac.in](mailto:rcsharma@ignou.ac.in)