

Distance Education in Technological Age

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The advancements in information and communication technologies have brought significant changes in the way the open and distance learning are provided to the learners. The impact of such changes is quite visible in both developed and developing countries. Switching over to online mode, joining hands with private initiatives and making a presence in foreign waters, are some of the hallmarks of the open and distance education (ODE) institutions in developing countries. The compilation of twenty six essays on themes as applicable to ODE has resulted in the book, "Distance Education in Technological Age". These essays follow a progressive style of narration, starting from describing conceptual framework of distance education, how the distance education was emerged on the global scene and in India, and then goes on to discuss emergence of online distance education and research aspects in ODE.

The initial four chapters provide a detailed account of historical development and growth of distance education in India and State Open University and National Open University Model in India. Student support services are pivot to any distance education and much of its success depends on how well the support services are provided. These are discussed from national and international perspective. The issues of collaborative learning, learning on demand, life long learning, learning-unlearning and re-learning model and strategic alliances have also given due space by the authors. An assortment of technologies like communication technology, domestic technology, information technology, mass media and entertainment technology, media technology and educational technology give an idea of how these technologies are being adopted in the open universities. The study provides details on how the multi-media systems like radio, audio cassettes, telephone, video cassettes, video discs, education television and computer based education etc can be successfully adopted. There are factors like socio-political, economic, human and administrative, and economic, which manipulate the application of information communication technology in education in developing countries. The authors in their chapters on satellite communication and virtual university explain the advancements.

The book also gives details of how the library services could be arranged for the distance learners in developing countries. Skills in distance teaching are crucial to the successful counseling and teaching as the learners have varied characteristics. These skills contribute to the effective distance teaching in traditional as well as online distance education settings. A major portion of the book has been dedicated to the e-learning and virtual university initiatives. Cases from YashwantRao Chawan Maharashtra Open University, a project C-MODE which deals with offering education through virtual academy and application of non-broadcasting and broadcasting media technologies to distance education can be found in these chapters.

Research in and research on distance education is very significant. Quality and Quantity of research in distance education has been a source of prime concern of educators. The readers can find here an overview of review and critiques of researches in the field of open and distance learning in the Indian context and what are various changing paradigms of research in distance education. The authors strongly suggest undertaking researches on pedagogy, educational media and management of distance education.

The book contains useful information for the beginners in basic distance education and those who are interested in knowing what happened and what is happening in developing countries.

Biodata and Adresses of Reviewer

Ramesh Chandra Sharma holds a PhD in Education in the area of Educational Technology and has been working as Regional Director in Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) since 1996. Before joining IGNOU, Dr Sharma was a member at a Senior Faculty in a Teacher Training College for nearly ten years and taught Educational Technology, Educational Research and Statistics, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Psychodynamics of Mental Health Courses for the B.Ed. and M.Ed. Programmes. He has conducted many training programmes for the in- and pre-service teachers on the use of Multimedia in teaching and instruction, and established a Centre of ICT in the College he was working. He is a member of many committees on implementation of technology in the Open University. His areas of specialization include ICT applications, computer networking, online learning, student support services in open and distance learning, and teacher education. Currently, he's on the Editorial Advisory Board of "Distance Education" published by Carfax Publishing, an imprint of the international academic publishing house, the Taylor & Francis Group, UK for 2002-2003; "International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning", online journal published by Athabasca University, Canada, www.irrodl.org, and "Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education" published by Anadolu University, Turkey (<http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr>). He has recently joined the editorial team for Journal of IT Education, <http://jite.org>. He was also on the Editorial Advisory Board of "Indian Journal of Open Learning" published by IGNOU, and worked as an Associate Editor for "Staff and Educational Development International" ISSN 0971-9008 and "Global e-Journal of Open and Flexible Learning". He has co-authored one book on distance education research and is currently co-editing a book on Interactive Multimedia in Education and Training to be published by IDEA group, USA.

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