

Role of Open University for the Growth of Higher Education in India: An Analysis

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Abstract:

The Open Universities are established with the purpose of promoting higher education to reach the unreached through the Open and Distance Learning System in which there is no age barrier, academic background and geographical boundaries. The Open and Distance Learning through Open University is an alternative way of getting education for those who are unable to achieve regular mood education. To give opportunities to the deprived sections to achieve higher education, many Open Universities are established in India in view of improving the percentage of higher education. So, the attempt of this paper has been made to find out the role of Open Universities for the growth of higher education in India.

Key Words: academic background, higher education, open and distance learning, open university, regular mood.

INTRODUCTION:

Education is the backbone of human society. In general concept education is an act or experience which develops the mind, character and physical ability of an individual. In present times, the establishment of Open University is a notable process for improving higher education through Open and Distance Learning through which some sections of society like housewives, service holders and business men have benefited from getting knowledge in various fields. The importance of Open University is gradually improving amongst the sections of peoples who are debarred from formal institutional education. The education system becomes a new form through the Open University by corresponding traditional and modern education in India. The teaching and learning process of education become easier through Open University in India. The print media, audio visual, multimedia etc. are the key tools of Open Universities for teaching and learning of open and distance education in India as well as the North-East region through which the learners are advised and directed about the curriculums of universities.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of this study have been mentioned as follows-

- To examine the background of Open University of India.
- To highlight the role of Open University for the growth of higher education in India.
- To find out the opportunities of higher education to the learners through open and distance education in India.

METHODOLOGY:

This paper is an attempt to make a study on the role, opportunities and significance of Open University for the growth of higher education in India. The paper is prepared through historical methods based on only Secondary Data collected from reliable books, journals, websites etc.

ANALYSIS:

Many Open Universities are established for improving higher education in India. The first Open University was established in 1982 at Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh named “**Andhra Pradesh Open University**” enacted by the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh (APOU Act, 1982) as State Open University. The same university was renamed as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) on 7th December in 1991 by the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh (APOU Act, 1992) with its motto “**Education at your Doorstep**”. Dr. BRAOU follows a multi-media teaching-learning approach which broadly comprises self-learning print material, supported by audio, video lessons and regular broadcast lessons through All India Radio.

The success and acceptance of the distance education among the masses can be well established from the fact that the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) - One of the biggest Open University was established in 1985, (accordingly IGNOU Act, 1985) by the Parliament of India in the name of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. IGNOU offers 338 programmes of study through over 3,500 courses. It has established a network of 43 Regional Centre, 6 Sub-Regional Centre and 1400 Study Centre all over the country to provide easy access, effective support and services to the learners.

In Assam, Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University (KKHSOU) was established under the provision of the KKHSOU, Act’ 2005 enacted by the Govt. of Assam & published in the Assam Gazette (extraordinary) on 29/9/05 and has been recognized by the former Distance Education Council, New Delhi (now DEB, UGC) vide letter No. DEC/Misc/07/5957 dated 03/10/07. The University Grants Commission, vide its letter No. F.9-13/2008(CPP-I) dated 18th March, 2009 also empowered the University to award degrees under Section 22 of UGC Act, 1956. The headquarter of the University is located at Patgaon Rani, Guwahati. The University started functioning with the joining of Prof. Srinath Baruah, former Professor of Economics, Gauhati University, as the Vice-Chancellor of this University. There are more than 120 study centres at various places across the state (Assam) to facilitate the students. The centres provide counselling to students along with the printed study materials.

The Global Open University (TGOU) is also a leading open university of North East India. It was established by the Govt. of Nagaland enacted with the TGOU Act, 2006. The courses of this university are meant to solve the problems of unemployment in North East India. In Arunachal Pradesh, Venkateshwar Open University (VOU) was established through Arunachal Pradesh State Legislature Act, LAW/LEGN-10/2012, and Arunachal Pradesh (Act No. 10 of 2012). VOU provides mentored educational experience to the learners at Doctoral, Post Graduate and Graduate levels to improve social changes in the communities across the globe.

Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) is a popular open university in Eastern India. It was established by the Government of West Bengal Act (XIX) of 1997 and recognized by UGC under section-2(f) of the UGC Act. NSOU courses include several vocational, professional and online courses in addition to its existing courses which are M.Phil. & Ph.D. levels.

The Open Universities are established with the purpose of promoting higher education to reach the unreached through the Open and Distance Learning System in which there is no age barrier, academic background and geographical boundaries. The main aim and objective of the Open Universities is to develop and provide easily accessible modes of quality higher education and training with the use of the latest educational inputs and technology. The Open Universities hold the promise of providing equal opportunities for higher education and bringing into its fold the deprived and denied sections along with the fresh learners. The courses of open universities are very useful to improve the quality of individuals, institutions and society. In addition to post graduate and research levels, open universities include technical

education, distance education, mass communication etc in its curriculum. The universities fulfill the demand of degree, diploma and certificate courses of open and distance learners.

Open universities are very necessary to extend higher education in modern society. Due to some restrictions in formal education, so many people are deprived of education. Many people of the society are deprived from getting education due to poverty, unbearable family conditions, illiteracy of guardians, lack of communication, early marriage, conservative attitude etc. Besides, due to deplorable economic conditions, some are engaged in various works for which they cannot reach their goal in the field of education. Education is necessary to such people but they cannot get education in formal educational institutions. So, open university as well as open and distance learning is much necessary to fill up the demands of such persons.

In the present, the boundary of education is extended in large part for the success of science and technology. In all directions of society, knowledge is explored for which traditional education gradually becomes unnecessary for the growth of new inventions. For adjustment with new inventions as well as modern education, the Open University is very necessary to improve higher education.

The Open University has played a very important role to extend and improve the higher education in India as well as the North-East. Since 1986, in education policy of India, importance has been extended on informal education e.g. open and distance education by establishing open universities in India. Open universities are established to execute the advantages of higher education in nook and corner of India. Some open universities provide financial assistance to the centres (institution) of distance education for increasing its importance.

There are two types of Open University established in India to a larger extent of higher education. The first one is National Open University and another one is State Open University. In almost all the states of India, both types of Open University are established for the benefit of the learners. The distance education gradually becomes stronger for the establishment of Open Universities. The safety and colour of higher education have been changed due to the establishment of Open University in India. The Open University is established with an open concept. It is different from the Directorate of Distance Education.

CONCLUSION:

As well as the establishment of Open University in India, growth and importance of higher education increased on a large scale. The Open Universities become the leading institution for the growth and extension of open and distance education in India as well as North East. The curriculums of the Open University not only help the learners of this university, but through this university, the learners of other general universities have also been benefited. The Open Universities have conveyed the opportunities of higher education to all of India as well as the North East for higher educated people to gradually increase in India.

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