

Innovations in Distance Education and Role of National Centre for Innovations in Distance Education (Ncide)

Abstract

The success of distance learning programs is highly dependent on the organizational environment in which they are implemented. This paper discusses how one large organization implemented and evolved a global distance learning program. The primary focus of this paper is the role of national centre for innovations in distance education and use of this distance learning program. The lessons learned are generalizable and can be transferred to other organizations with appropriate attention to organizational context and environment

Keywords : ODL, Innovations, NCIDE , psychological factors, social factors, technological education, technology innovation, technology integration.

Introduction

particularly among academics and employers. It is a fact that, in India today there are more than 25 lakh students enrolled in various programmes of ODL institutions. Simply by success rate of these students one should not draw any conclusion about the ODL system. The real merit of ODL learning lies in opening the windows of knowledge and skills to those who could not catch the flight of traditional mode of education.

Background of ODL

Open and Distance Learning (ODL has many unique features. The most distinctive feature is huge student population in ODL institutions. Besides the well-known mega universities, quite a few distance teaching universities in the have been established more recently and provided tertiary level education to those seeking continuing education opportunities. Another distinctive feature of ODL is the concentrated efforts of governments with the establishment of dedicated single-mode ODL institutions..

In the past ten years or so there has been a noticeable surge in the export and the import of educational services. Distance education including e-learning is one of the many manifestations of the current trend, and it has been steadily gaining ground.

All these features have contributed to the development of ODL and shaped current ODL systems.

Role of Innovation in Education and Development

Innovation is defined as “the process of making changes to something established by introducing something new.” It applies to “...radical or incremental changes to products, processes or services.” Over the years there have been many changes in the way education is designed and delivered in parts of the world.

Introduction & Establishment of NCIDE

The National Centre for Innovations in Distance Education (NCIDE) was established in December 2005. It is a facility for promoting, supporting, re-engineering and disseminating innovations in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The NCIDE is a ground for nurturing bright and inquisitive minds whose ideas and explorations are expected to develop the ODL system to suit the needs of Generation next. The Centre's goal is to develop a culture of continued search for new and innovative solutions to offer seamless education for all, achieve cost efficiency in its operations and provide borderless access to quality education and training.

The NCIDE has been successfully developing several cost effective, ICT-based, innovative learning and support solutions for the IGNOU learners. The Centre continuously explores the areas of innovations and takes up research studies in the broad areas of quality indicators, quality assurance mechanisms and benchmarking.

The NCIDE is also actively involved in documentation and dissemination of various innovations in the ODL system to facilitate easy reference by the stakeholders. The centre is also involved in encouraging

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creativity and innovation in the ODL system as well as in the capacity building of teachers and learners. The basic objectives of NCIDE include:

1. Providing intellectual, financial and technological support to stakeholders for the growth and development of the ODL system.
2. Encouraging innovations in Distance Education (DE) through collaborations within the University and other institutions in India and abroad for re-engineering and sustaining the open and distance learning.
3. Promoting and developing innovative learning solutions through emerging technologies and working as resource centre for prototype development of innovative solutions.
4. Conducting research studies for exploring the areas of innovation in the ODL system and to suggest workable solutions, thus, providing research based framework and guidelines for standardization and total quality management of all facets of ODL.
5. Documentation and dissemination of the innovations and best practices in Distance Education.
6. Capacity building of the ODL functionaries for innovations in DE and creating an environment for innovations.
7. Developing a network of innovative individuals, institutions and industry dedicated to R&D in the ODL system.
8. Development of innovative programmes, guidelines, mechanism and modalities for convergence of different systems of education for seamless access.

Source

Center for Educational Research and Innovation.

Major steps taken by NCIDE for Innovative and Good Practices in ODL

ODL practices are changing. New fields of study have been emerged, policies have been revised, a quality culture has emerged, student services has improved, new ICT-based delivery modes explored, and a variety of collaborative relationships have developed. Few of them are:

Bilingual Digital Question Bank

Comprehensive bilingual question banks including marking schemes have been developed. Question paper designs, blueprints and the sample papers have also been generated for courses. Question bank is being used for instant generation of question papers for On-Demand Exam. It can also be used for generation of question papers for Term End Examinations.

Prototype Online Examination System

In order to make the examination system more flexible and learner friendly and aiming at "instant testing-instant result", NCIDE has developed a prototype system of online examination and evaluation. The Online exam scheme will help in spontaneous generation of question paper online, immediate Evaluation online and, immediate transfer of student data, their results and their records to the Students Evaluation Division. Besides better quality of question paper with 100% objectivity, immediate Evaluation and result declaration are some of the

features of this scheme.

IGNOU's e-Resource of Experts

In order to develop a dynamic database of the experts, NCIDE has developed a web based solution named as "e-Resource of Experts". The e-Resource of Experts will be useful for identifying the best available expertise in the country for different academic activities of IGNOU such as course writer, editor, translator, question paper setter, moderator, and evaluators. The e-Resource of Experts has three modules namely Data Entry Module, Data Access Module and Administrators Module. The Data Entry Module is open for all. Any academic expert, from any part of the world can submit his/her profile online. The database can be accessed by the faculty and staff of IGNOU through Data Access Module.

Source: <http://eresourceofexperts.ignou.ac.in/>

Automated TMA Generation and Assignment Banking System

NCIDE has taken up a pilot project to develop an Automated TMA Generation and Assignment Banking System for the University. It has a provision of developing an online database of the assignment items in various courses and gives a facility for instant generation of course wise Assignment tests by the faculty.

"Did You Know?" Posters and A/V

NCIDE prepares and disseminates Posters and A/V Programmes titled "Did You Know?" These include interesting topics, which have lot of bearing on our real life situations but generally go unnoticed. Since April 2011, more than two hundred posters have been prepared and displayed. The facts are converted into 300 audio programmes in English titled "Did You Know?" and 300 in Hindi titled "Kya Aap Jaantey Hain?". These are being broadcast through Gyan Vani. About 30 Video programmes have been developed, which are being telecast through Gyan Darshan.

Popular talk Series on Innovations in Distance Education

NCIDE organizes a series of popular talk on innovations and developments in open and distance education through teleconference via satellite on every last Wednesday of a calendar month. The basic purpose of the popular talk series is to facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas and experiences in the field of distance education and to foster the spirit of innovation among the faculty and students.

Gold Medal for Innovations in ODL

One of the objectives of NCIDE is to encourage, recognise and promote innovations in distance education. Keeping this in view, the IGNOU has introduced a 'Gold Medal' for innovations in distance education. The purpose of the award is to recognize & promote innovations in ODL system as envisaged by the NCIDE, which has been on a mission to seek creative solutions to promote effectiveness, quality and reach of the ODL system. Entries are invited from different institutions including IGNOU faculty, State Open Universities and other ODL agencies.

Providing Room for Innovations Made by Students

The Centre encourages innovations done by distance learners, in particular the students of IGNOU across the country. It takes necessary steps to identify and recognize innovations made by the students and provide support to them as per their requirement. The Centre is in the process of creating an online platform for uploading their innovations.

Source

Center for Educational Research and Innovation.

Conclusion

In general, ODL is playing an increasingly significant role in national higher education system and becoming an important policy choice. Moreover, ODL is slowly gaining ground in transnational education market and beginning to offer more flexible and interactive learning experiences through advanced ICT. Moreover, several ODL institutions have updated existing curriculum to meet the emerging needs of new ODL learners.

The point I would like to make is that those who have the determination and skill can succeed wherever they are but ODL system provides a platform to acquire knowledge and competencies which otherwise they would have been deprived of. Onus is on us who are involved in the ODL system to be creative and innovative in our approach

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