



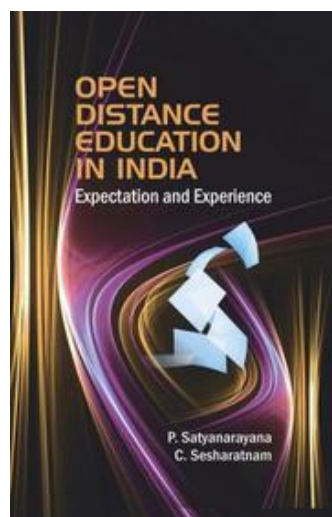
## Open Distance Education in India: Expectation and Experience

Book Review by  
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### ABOUT THE BOOK :

Title	Open Distance Education in India : Expectation and Experience
Authors	P. Satyanarayana and C. Sesharatnam
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Open and Distance Learning System emerged as a quality alternative for providing and expanding educational opportunities to the learners in the developed and developing countries. In a country like India it has emerged as a major educational force to reckon with. ODL System in India is very versatile and spread along the length and breadth of India. It is promoted by the Federal Government and also by the provincial governments.

India has very vibrant ODL System offering wide variety of academic programmes and targeting cross section of public who are not only employed and working but also youth who are very keen to upgrade their domain knowledge, skills and aim for upward movement in their profession and social life. It emerged as a great democratizing force by expanding higher educational opportunities to the large section people who didn't have access to higher education and in rural and remote areas, from disadvantaged sections and women.

It is to be noted that more than four million students are enrolled in different ODL Programmes covering 22% of total higher education enrollment in India. Around 27 provincial governments are offering ODL Programmes through 210 Open Distance Institutions located in the conventional Universities in addition to one Central Open University (IGNOU) and 16 State Open Universities in India. It is in this background the book entitled "Open Distance Education in India: Expectations and Experience" by P. Satyanarayana and C. Sesharatnam, assumes much significance and a timely contribution by them. Both authors have rich and long experience in ODL System in India and are worked very closely with Prof. G. Ram Reddy, who is considered as the doyen and father of ODL System in India.

The book has 24 chapters and 3 appendices in addition to reference and index with 214 pages in all. Considering the topics and chapters covered in the book, it can be said as very useful handbook and a textbook who want to know the different facets of ODL System in India. The book covered almost all the major topics like origin, objectives, organization, courses and programmes, student enrollment, dropout, instructional system, use of technology, student support, staff development, Open Universities in India, weaknesses and deficiencies of ODL System, regulation of standards, need for national ODL Policy, need for reforming ODL System etc are well covered and dealt with in the book.

The book under review provided objective statements of major institutions and organizational structure, use of media, instructional design followed by them. The book covers evolution of ODL in India has captured the developments from the early days of Independence to the latest and provides detailed background of recommendations' by various committees and commissions.

The authors provided student enrollment details in SOUs and IGNOU, social base profile of distance learners in the ODL System and reasons for dropouts and pull and push factors influencing the learners. The book also provides a bird's eye view different academic courses/programmes offered by many ODL Institutions.

The authors advocated for the need to have a national policy on ODL in India and felt that though the ODL System is more than a half century old with large network of OUs and DEIs with large number of students, but there is no clearly laid down national policy on ODL. Establishment of Distance Education Council in 1991 is a major policy initiative to standardize and regulate the ODL in India, but as it is located in IGNOU, the ODL Institutions looked at the development with suspicion and felt why IGNOU should have a dual role of coordinating and maintaining standards in India and some felt that there is a need for a separate national body exclusively for ODL System outside IGNOU. While responding to the demands, Distance Education Council of India was visualized but it could not materialize and subsequently DEC was shifted to UGC which has initiated some of the policy measures to regulate and maintain the standards and issued comprehensive regulation in 2017.

The authors strongly advocated for reforming the ODL system and felt that there is a need for an autonomous regulatory body for maintaining the standards and quality in OUs and DEIs in India as Pus are not applying for accreditation to the NAAC as of now.

## RAO

The proposed regulator should act as a “facilitator” and function like a typical “regulator” and encourage self-regulatory mechanisms within the OUs and DEIs to weed out bad and indifferent practices and promote excellence and quality in the ODL System.

It also gives complete list of OUs and DEIs in different provincial governments located in the conventional universities. It contains detailed references for further reading. It is a very good sources book of different facets of ODL System in India. It is a very good addition to the available literature of ODL System and the authors need to be commended for their efforts.

Dr. S. Raja Rao is working in the area of delivery of academic programmes and administration of distance support services for about twenty seven years in different IGNOU Regional Centres in India. He was awarded University Medal and Citation for his research work entitled “**The Social Basis of Distance Education: Strategies for Inclusive Growth**”, published in “*Asian Journal of Distance Education*”, ( [www.asianjde.org](http://www.asianjde.org) ), 2008 Vol. 6, No. 2. pp. 58-65. (Adjudged as Best Research Paper at IGNOU 20th Convocation held on 28th February 2009). He has published research articles in many national and international refereed journals and attended conferences. He currently holds the post of Regional Director, at IGNOU Regional Centre, Visakhapatnam – 530 017, Andhra Pradesh, India.

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