

Chapter 4.10

Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development of Open and Distance Learning Programs in India: Marketing Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development of a country largely depends on education, which is one of the most important dimensions of development. Open and distance learning (ODL) means working towards achieving sustainability in human development by providing educational opportunities to people all across the country. Many significant measures have been initiated by the government in the direction of taking the education to the people of all segments of society.

The ODL institutions need to have a competitive strategy so as to provide quality education at an affordable cost. This makes India a special case of investigation, wherein a network of over 10 open universities and 104 institutes of open and distance education (IODE) are providing access and equity to education. Challenge and competition in the education sector have presented a new situation where institutions are now viewed as conglomerates and educational programs as educational products. To ascertain sustainable and quality oriented education in open and distance learning mode, the present chapter attempts to make an analysis of IGNOU, the premier national open university of India by Academic Program Life Cycle (APLC) and SWOC, and to suggest strategies for improving the continuance and survival of academic programs and quality assurance in support services.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important dimensions responsible for inducing sustainable development in a country. It is in fact the tool which not only enables the people to earn their livelihood but also makes them aware of their surroundings thus helping them to lead a more meaningful and healthy life. India with its population of more than one billion has been continuously making efforts to provide the people with adequate opportunities for attaining education and gaining expertise in various disciplines so that they can contribute in the overall development of the nation. Many significant measures have been initiated by the government in the direction of taking the education to the people of all segments of the society.

A result of these efforts has been growth in the number of literates in the country. Since independence, there has been a phenomenal growth in the literacy rate moving from merely 18.33% in 1951 to 64.84% in 2001. This has led to growth in the number of students at all levels including at higher education level. In the last 20 years, development in infrastructure of education and its related fields has also positively impacted on

students who are more and more opting for higher education. So the number of educational institutions setup catering to all spheres of society has been rapidly increasing with this rise in number of students enrolled. As is evident from Table 1, the enrollment in these institutions of both the modes i.e. conventional and distance education has been increasing continuously, 2003 being the exception for Distance Education Institutions (DEIs). The table also demonstrates that this growth rate in the number of students is more in distance education mode as compared to conventional mode. As seen here, it is 6.16% for conventional mode universities whereas it is 11.74% for distance mode institutions in 2003. If we further analyze the percentage share of enrollment of Distance Education Institutions then we find that in 1999, total enrollment in Distance Education mode was 13.29% of enrollment in conventional mode and it increased to 15.48% in 2003. The above analysis clearly indicates the growing acceptance and reliability of distance education mode in India towards providing education which is affordable and convenient for the learner.

Table 1.

Year	BPP	CIC	CFN	CIG	CTE	CTPM	BA	BCA	BCOM	BED	BLS	BSC	BTS	MFF	NCA	MLS	MEG	MTM	PGDDE	PGDHE	PGJMC	PGJRD	PGDMCH	DECE	DNHE
1987														3424					1104						
1988	9474													5224					1092						
1989	16920		2548				9534							6530					1140						
1990	13149		2122				11642							6639					1229						
1991	11217		2919				10246				1872			7617					825						
1992	7664		5655				10262		3632		1461	1210		7350					484	862		2998			
1993	11872		5957	1081			9889		2274		1473	1465		8368					485	938		2370			
1994	9772		3376	801			10440		3625		1280	1917		10597					445	396		1733			1227
1995	8881		2865	782			9379		3342		1246	2100		12812					444	506		1525		189	998
1996	7461	7381	2432	628			9816	2661	4018		1249	2358	1280	17610		746			516	494	1257	1777		348	977
1997	12657	20507	1391	511	328		12922	12265	4144		1222	2045	1882	37899	329	693			339	329	1254	1436		359	963
1998	10392	23462	757	367	437		12813	14709	4236		1205	2727	1515	16422	4435	477			321	379	1040	1427	559	500	984
1999	10793	26405	722	518	553		13048	16633	3925		1578	2348	1058	15777	8540	453			516	561	1220	2343	616	738	1077
2000	10049	28960	530	507	669		12638	18492	3497	2208	2243	2334	1954	12007	16678	605		856	530	421	1031	2183	666	626	1079
2001	17456	51281	879	860	842	30	24037	30906	5622	2955	3613	3970	2559	11169	20245	902	5076	976	606	523	1631	2827	633	1061	1661
2002	16771	27263	859	1071	1070	1357	24339	26539	5419	3331	3000	4396	2609	7359	19965	766	4629	1185	471	474	1604	2707	626	1149	1598
2003	17168	13558	912	1180	1172	1274	29710	15215	6095	5912	3774	5235	2725	11615	15267	967	7948	1311	454	531	2204	3580	656	2014	1972
2004	25930	13153	1162	3018	3527	2963	23961	9021	4757	6865	3701	4678	2811	16710	8233	932	7388	1237	422	417	2115	2765	554	2318	1768
2005	23189	10571	1083	6022	3159	5170	33358	11718	6637	8739	3500	6029	3692	15464	6247	873	7729	1470	331	345	1758	2918	438	2326	1870

Source: IGNOU, (1999-2005). *IGNOU Vice-Chancellor's reports 1999-2005*. New Delhi: Author (from 2000 onwards)
 Reddy Lakshmi, M.V. (2002). Students' pass rates: A case study of Indira Gandhi National Open University programmes. *Indian Journal of Open Learning*, 11(1), 117-121. (for enrollment up to 1999)

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