


# Chapter 2

## Include the Excluded via the Lens of the Open Distance E- Learning Programme

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter revealed the on-going challenges faced by marginalized individuals at achieving education. Concerned about the state exclusion faced are individuals or communities systematically marginalised from formal education systems, the chapter noted the impact of governmental agencies at ensuring education for all learners, but also points out that potential deficiencies in the existing praxis in open and distance e-learning (ODEL). In view of the foretated, this intellectual piece leveraged on the principles of the constructivism theory to strategically present how ODeL can be used to bridge educational gaps faced by marginalized groups in the 21st century.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is globally recognised in the 21st century as a fundamental human right that should be provided for all and sundry. It has become means of accessibility to novel ideas and practice in 21st century. Education is also used as a key driver of social and economic development. Despite the widespread of the good benefits of education, millions remain excluded from educational opportunities due to structural barriers such as poverty, geography, disability, and gender inequality (UNESCO, 2020). The excluded are individuals or communities systematically marginalised from formal education systems. They are people living in rural or remote areas with limited infrastructure, persons with disabilities, women and girls in patriarchal or conservative societies, economically disadvantaged individuals, refugees, internally displaced persons, migrants, adult learners and working professionals and ethnic and linguistic minorities. Their exclusion from quality education is incongruous to the initiative of Education For All which was grounded in the belief that access to education is not merely a privilege, but a human right. The Education For All policy framework aimed to eliminate economic, cultural, social, and political barriers that prevent millions from gaining even the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. It sought to build education systems that are inclusive, equitable, and centered on lifelong learning.

According to Adigun (2021), inclusive education has proven to extol the virtues of equal opportunity for all students without any iota of discrimination in relation to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions, which may ordinarily prevent a challenging circumstance to enabling them to fully participate in learning environments. He further stressed that inclusive education promotes cohesion and supports the education of all learners, regardless of disabilities, through the provision of adequate pedagogical strategies, supportive learning facilities, and well-trained instructors. In the light of this, the inclusion of the excluded among the beneficiaries of quality education in 21st century is *sine qua non* and their diversity calls for flexible, scalable, and context-sensitive educational solutions (Ally & Tsinakos, 2014).

Hence, Open Distance E-Learning will be used in this chapter as lens to achieve it. Open Distance E-Learning has emerged in the 21st century as a transformative approach to bring quality education to the door-step of the excluded that are traditionally marginalized. It is a fusion of open learning principles such as flexibility, accessibility, and learner autonomy with the technological frameworks of distance and e-learning. Open Distance E-Learning enables learners to access education without attending physical classrooms, allowing them to study at their own pace and in diverse contexts (Anderson & Dron, 2011). Bozkurt et al (2015) asserted that the rise of internet-based platforms, mobile learning, and learning management systems

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