

# **OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION IN DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY AND KKHSOU**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Open and distance education is now becoming more and more popular in our society. It is a stress-free process of acquiring knowledge with more freedom and opportunity of access. Therefore learner registration in distance education system is increasing year by year in India. KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University are two leading higher educational institutions in Assam. There are enough study centres of both Dibrugarh University and KKHSOU for providing higher education through open and distance mode.

The objective of this paper is to analyse about development and problems of distance education in Assam. Here also try to give some suggestions for the better run of different ODL programmes in Assam with special reference to Dibrugarh University and KKHSOU. For this study here adopted descriptive survey method.

Key Word: ODL, DODL and KKHSOU.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Education is a very important aspect in human life, which is a process of gaining experiences and these experiences bring changes in human behaviour. It is anything by which the individual personality is prepared and developed to undertake any sort of task and adjust with the varying environments in order to fulfill basic necessities and objectives of an individual life.

Education has three types i.e. Formal, Informal and Non-formal. Formal education is given in educational institutions which is based on certain aims and objectives.

Informal education covers all types of experiences which are collected from different environments or situations.

Non-formal education is based on education for all. It has flexible curriculum, self-discipline and self-awareness programmed. Important agencies of non-formal education are-

- i. Open education,
- ii. Correspondence courses,
- iii. Distance education
- iv. Television,
- v. Radio - Broadcasts,
- vi. Programmed lessons/Instructions,
- vii. Seminar/Workshop, and
- viii. Language laboratory, etc.

## **OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)**

Distance education is a teaching/learning process in which students are physically separated from the teachers. Formal education is usually offered in the regular classes of schools, colleges and universities where students and teachers meet at fixed timings. It is not a single way to imparting experience effectively without forcing the learner and the teacher to meet at fixed hours in the classroom. The alternate way of imparting experience is known as distance teaching-learning process. This is an effective method used to bridge the distance in teaching/learning process or relation between student and teacher which is popularly named as Distance Education. Generally modern communication media and printed study materials are used to bridge this distance.

Moore (1991) defined *Distance Education as a learning system where the teaching behaviours are separate from learning behaviours. In this, the learner works alone or in the group, guided by study materials. These students do have an opportunity to communicate with a tutor with the aid of one or two more media – such as correspondence, telephone, TV, Radio etc. Teaching role is shared and different study situations are possible for the learner.*

Open learning is a term used to define courses flexibly educational designed to meet the individual necessities. It has been taken to imply open access for student regardless of their previous qualifications or age in the field of non-formal education.

Mckenzie, et al (1975) *“Such systems are designed to offer opportunities for part-time study, for learning at a distance and for innovations in the curriculum. They are intended to allow access to wider section of adult*

*population, to enable skills and qualifications for the future. Open learning systems aim to redress social and educational inequality and to offer opportunities not provided by conventional colleges or universities”.*

Open education is a philosophy based on education for all where distance education is a method of this process. Distance education is characterized by the physical separation of teachers from the students and the use of printed instructional materials and electronic media like radio, television etc. with limited face-to-face contact sessions. On the other hand, open education is concerned with the learning system wherein the constraints on study are minimized either in terms of access, or of time and place, pace, methods of study or any combination of these.

The concept of open and distance education can be used simultaneously and recent it has been established as an effective and innovative alternative system of formal education. This system can fulfill the educational needs of different categories of society, school, dropouts, house wife, employed people who want to learn while earning some livelihood, people from rural areas and all these were denied access and opportunity for formal education due to geographical distances, socio-economic and cultural barriers.

In the context of education for all, Sharma (1997) remarked that the ODL could be seen as an alternative and viable mode to cater to the educational needs of individuals who because of one or the other reason could not continue their education in the formal setup of education. The ODL is a new paradigm with some elements of shift such as:

- From classroom to anywhere.
- From teacher centric to learner centric.
- From teacher as an instructor to teacher as a facilitator.
- From oral instructions to technology aided instructions.
- From fixed time to anytime learning.
- From you learn what we offer to we offer what you want to learn.
- From education as one time activity to education as lifelong activity.

Open and distance education is now becoming more and more popular in our society. Development of technology also gave the new direction to education and multimedia gave a new concept of Distance Education.

Open education started in our country in 1982, when the first Open University was set up in Andhra Pradesh. In 1985, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established with a Parliamentary Act. This was to strengthen distance education in the country. IGNOU is serving as a significant landmark in the development of open education in our country.

IGNOU was playing a dual role as an apex body in the country through Distance Education Council (DEC). It was established in 2012 replacing Distance Education Council (DEC), an organization that was responsible for promotion, coordination, and maintenance of standards of Open Distance Learning in the country.

## **TWO LEADING ODL INSTITUTION IN ASSAM**

### **The Directorate of Open and Distance Learning (DODL):**

Dibrugarh University, the easternmost university of India was set up in 1965 under the provisions of the Dibrugarh University Act 1965 enacted by the Assam Legislative Assembly. The University is situated at Rajabeta at a distance of about five kilometers to the south of premier town of Dibrugarh in the eastern part of Assam as well as India. The territorial jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University covers nine districts of Upper Assam viz. Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivsagar, Charideo, Majuli, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur.

The Directorate of Open and Distance Learning (DODL), Dibrugarh University was established in the year 2001. Due to limited number of seats in post-graduate and under-graduate classes, a large number of students fail to enroll themselves as students of the University. The main objectives of this directorate to provide educational facilities to all those youth who are either employed or self-employed and who are unable to prosecute higher education due to economic or other reasons. The Directorate started its mission with post graduate programmes in Assamese, Commerce, Economics, Mathematics, Political Science, Education and Sociology. Post-graduate diploma courses in Marketing Management and Statistics were added to this list in 2005. PG Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication have been introduced from the academic sessions 2007-2008 and MA in English Programme have been introduced from the academic session 2008-09. Moreover, Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor in Computer Application (BCA) and Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Application (PGDCA) have been launched from the academic session 2010-11. In 2011-2012 the Directorate introduced Bachelor of Arts (B.A) programme in annual system through distance mode.

### **Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University (KKHSOU):**

Assam is one of the North-East States of India located in South of the Himalayas. In Assam Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University (KKHSOU) was established by the Assam legislative Act 2005 and had officially functioning since the year 2007. This university was set up with aim of providing higher education opportunities to a large segment of population and also to promote open education system in Assam. The motto of the university is 'Education beyond Barriers' of age, academic background and geographical boundaries. This university has been recognized of different programmes approved by the Distance Education Council, New Delhi. Vide letter no DEC/Misei/07/5957, Dated Oct.03, 2007 and University Grant Commission, New Delhi Vide letter No F.9-13/2008(CPP-1), Dated March 18, 2009. In addition to that, the Govt. of Assam has recognized all degree, diploma and certificate courses of the university Vide letter No AHE/228/2007/330 dated May 08, 2009.

**METHODOLOGY:**

There are total nine districts i.e. Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivsagar, Charaideo, Jorhat, Majuli, Golaghat, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur district of Assam which are come under territorial jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University. DODL of Dibrugarh University has established 98 study centers in nine districts. Among them 83 study center are provide under graduate and 69 study center are provide Post-graduate courses. On the other hand there are 300 study centers of KKHSOU where provide under graduate and post graduate courses. Among them 88 study centers which are come under territorial jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University. For the present study select only those study centers which are permitted to different provincialize colleges of 9 districts and counted only those study center where run both under graduate and post graduate courses. Total 18 colleges in nine districts DODL of Dibrugarh University and KKHSOU where permitted to impart both under-graduate and post-graduate course. These 18 study centers are select for the present study.

**Table 1.1: SELECTED STUDY CENTRES FOR STUDY**

DISTRICT	STUDY CENTRE	DODL	KKHSOU
CHARAIDEO	MORAN COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
DHEMAJI	JONAI GIRLS COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
DIBRUGARH	NAMRUP COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	DULIAJAN COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	DHSK COMMERCE COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
GOLAGHAT	D.R. COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	GOLAGHAT COMMERCE COLLEGE	PG & UG	UG & PG
	DKD COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
JORHAT	CINAMORA COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
LAKHIMPUR	LTK COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
MAJULI	MAJULI COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
SIBSAGAR	AMGURI COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	JHANJI HEMNATH SARMA COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	GARGAON COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
TINSUKIA	DOOMDOOMA COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	DIGBOI COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	MGHERITA COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG
	TINSUKIA COMMERCE COLLEGE	UG & PG	UG & PG

**INCREASED OF ODL ENROLMENT IN KKHSOU & DODL**

Open and distance education system is regarded to be indispensable part of the higher education system. In order to meet the new challenge demand for education open and distance learning can be seen significance approach. It is an easy of acquiring knowledge with more freedom and opportunity of access. It is cheap and cost effective alternative to obtain a degree. Moreover it makes an effort to expand the capacity for education in new and multi-disciplinary subjects. In DODL and KKHSOU total enrolment from 2015-16 to 2018-19 are

**Table 1.2: ENROLLMENT IN KKHSOU (Post-Graduate level)**

Year	Total	Source
2015-16	3758	Horizon, Autumn-Winter(2015) Presentation, Vol-X, No-1, January 2016
2016-17	3131	Horizon, Autumn-Winter(2016) Presentation, Vol-XI, No-1, January 2017
2017-18	4359	Horizon, Autumn-Winter(2017) Presentation, Vol-XII, No-1, January 2018
2018-19	1235	Annual report of KKHSOU

**Table 1.3: ENROLLMENT IN DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY (Post-Graduate level)**

Year	Total	Source
2015-16	7549	Official documents
2016-17	7552	Official documents
2017-18	7586	Official documents
2018-19	2875	Official documents

**Table 1.4: ENROLLMENT IN KKHSOU (Graduate level)**

Year	Total	Source
2015-16	15834	Horizon, Autumn-Winter(2015) Presentation, Vol-X, No-1, January 2016

2016-17	19467	Horizon, Autumn-Winter(2016) Presentation, Vol-XI, No-1, January 2017
2017-18	21843	Horizon, Autumn-Winter(2017) Presentation, Vol-XII, No-1, January 2018
2018-19	8542	Annual report of KKHSOU

**Table 1.5: ENROLLMENT IN DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY (Graduate level)**

Year	Total	Source
2015-16	6865	Official documents
2016-17	7170	Official documents
2017-18	7131	Official documents
2018-19	3091	Official documents

**Table 1.6: STUDY CENTERS DODL AND KKHSOU**

	Total Study Centers
DODL	98
KKHSOU	300

From the above table it is clear that student enrollment is gradually increased non-professional under graduate and post graduate courses in distance mode both the universities up to 2017-18. But due to new role and regulation of DDE numbers of ODL learners are decrease in the session 2018-19.

KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University established so many study centers and these centers are called learner support centers to provide all sorts of help to students in collaboration with the Universities.

**Table 1.7: STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN SELECTED STUDY CENTRES (total in last five years)**

STUDY CENTRE	DODL		KKHSOU	
	PG	UG	PG	UG
JONAI GIRLS COLLEGE	224	202	93	130
DULIAJAN COLLEGE	391	592	45	155
DHSK COMMERCE COLLEGE	228	309	49	27
D.R. COLLEGE	435	134	397	532
GOLAGHAT COMMERCE COLLEGE	200	115	42	208
DOOMDOOMA COLLEGE	235	627	55	184

**PROBLEMS OF ODL IN ASSAM:**

The open and distance learning system has brought an academic revolution among the students of new generation in higher education sector. It observed that there has been a tremendous rise in the enrollment in open and distance learning. For providing better education and student support service, KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University has been permitted to different colleges in their jurisdiction for established study center. But both the university and different study center has been facing quite a number of problems in conducting the course smoothly. Among those problems, some of them can be enumerated as the following way:

1. Lack of campaign and awareness regarding the KKHSOU and DODL is one of the major problems for which most of the rural people heard or know nothing about the open distance learning system.
2. Irregularity of the counselor impact upon the study centers. Sometime, it is observed that counselor cannot attend the class due to unavoidable circumstances where there are no alternative counselors to attend the same.
3. No inspection is done regularly by respective authority in study centers. Inspection is done before opening the center or introduce new course in the study center.
4. Lack of careful planning and implementation of the programme of action is also enumerated as the problems of study centers.
5. A big Communication gaps is found in most of the study centers among the principal, coordinator and authority of university.
6. Distance education center feels the inferiority to distance communications as compare to face to face communication. In a traditional class room, instructor and student can afford to take a more individual approach to quality can always ensure that students performance task by themselves. In contrast, such communication is limited in distance learning environment.
7. It is true that everything is not counted in money. One gets mental satisfaction working in distance education setup. It may not be acquired with the attractive salary in conventional system of education. Yet there fixed remuneration for the coordinator from the side of parent institution to work vigorously specially on Sunday. Because,

he or she has to play different role at the study center. He/she is a manager, supervisor, organizer, coordinator and if possible of a teacher counselor.

8. In few study centers are appointed office staff but they may not undertake effective support services and may not undertake extra services for attracting students and increase enrollment since they get only lump-sum additional incentive for their performance.

9. One of the major problems of study center is the disappearance of learners after getting admission and reappearance before the examination time.

10. There no any separate library facility is found in the study centers. The distance learners with permission of the college principal can use the central library. But most of the time classes are held on Sunday when it is a holiday to college library.

11. Subject like education is very important to provide practical knowledge. But the scope for practical knowledge is negligible in some study centers.

12. A good deal of success of open and distance learning depends on the regular receipt of thoughtfully prepare lesson and honestly done assignment by the students. Generally universities are provides single assignment paper in an academic year/semester for which students were not taken of a serious manner.

13. Study centers are facing serious setback due to its infrastructure facilities. The college provides only a simple room for the center where difficult in conducting various activities. In few study centers have not found any separate class room facilities for the learners.

14. One of the major problems of the study centers is lack of regular teacher/councilor. Sometime coordinator cannot able to manage the classes in the specific day.

15. No rigidity is there regarding the duration of completion of course of study in open and distance learning.

16. Personal contact programmes are organized in a slipshod manner in some study centers.

17. There no proper student's feedback system is introduced in both KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University.

18. Problem of financial autonomy is arising in some respective study centers.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

Considering the magnitude of expansion of open and distance education system, the establishment of study centre has become inevitable and equally important need to provide better support services to learners. For achieving these, it becomes important to strengthen the study centre in terms of physical, administrative and academic resources. For making the open and distance learning system a more fruitful one in Assam, following suggestions may be forwarded:

1. KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University have been established a network of study centers of a composite nature.

2. For effective and better management of study center it is recommended that headquarter center should be established in every district to monitor the functions of the centers.

3. The study center should have well-equipped libraries, laboratories, lecture halls etc. as far as possible.

4. The personal contract programmes are to be organized properly in every study centers and university try to monitoring it.

5. KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University try to providing multifarious subjects of general courses, job-oriented vocational and professional courses for the interested learners and if it is possible give greater attention to rural vocational courses.

6. University and Coordinator of the study centers are give importance on assignment system and evaluation of students' assignments with tutors' comments.

7. Study centers give importance for providing individualizes guidance and instruction to the learners.

8. If it is possible both the University provide financial assistance on action research or minor research project in difference open and distance education related areas for the better improvement of ODL system.

9. Organized at list one teleconferencing programme in an academic year/semester in every subject for the direct relation between university and learners.

10. Give financial help to develop library and book-bank in different study centers.

11. For the learners, seminars and workshops should be organized in course related topic in the study center and introduce continuous evaluation system.

12. Appoint at list one fulltime teacher in every department for the uplift of the programme.

13. The study center should be located in such a way that it covers geographically in all areas including rural and remote areas.

14. More than one study center should not be established in the same area. Because it may lead to conflict among the centers and may decrease the enrolment ratio.

15. The university should not give permission to run the same course at the study centers in the same area.

16. University take care for the opening new study centers. They should be select only those institutions where no any open and distance learning study centers of other universities.

**CONCLUSION:**

Assam is economically poor state where majority of the family cannot able to provide sufficient learning facilities to their child for acquiring higher education. There also found that rate of dropout is gradually increased in formal higher education system. So in open and distance education system learner can be increase day by day. KKHSOU and DODL of Dibrugarh University is a vital organization to meet the demand growing higher levels of learners and developing the human resource for the future society.

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