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**Dear intWOJDE Readers,**

**Welcome to the Volume 3 Number: 4 of intWOJDE;**

In this issue, 6 articles of 8 authors from 5 different countries around the world have been published. These published articles are arrived to the intWOJDE from India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and USA.

The 1<sup>st</sup> article is arrived from India, written by Suja Stanley GEORGE from Subharti Medical College, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, on "Study Habits and Demographic Characteristics of Women Distance Learners: A Comparative Study". This article explores significant difference on demographic characteristics (course, marital, employment, locality, and age) and study habits of women distance learners. This study was conducted in five cities of Uttar Pradesh viz. Gautam Budh Nagar, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Modinagar, and Meerut and data were collected 220 women distance learners from two Universities viz. IGNOU and SVSU following stratified sampling method. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference observed in overall study habits of demographic characteristics namely course, employment, marital and age wise. Significant difference was observed in overall study habits of locality ie. rural and urban women distance learners. The urban women distance learners were found to have better study habits than rural women distance learners.

It is recommended that the distance learning universities must pay special thrust for rural women distance learners by providing more support through personal contact programmes. Proper Academic and personal counseling help the women distance learners to developing proper and healthy study habits and it helps to develop in them a sense of security and development of self confidence.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> article titled as "The Influence of Women on Distance Education", written by Gail D. CARUTH, Texas A&M University-Commerce, USA. The impact of distance education on women has been significant. Distance education has been a viable means for helping women reach their educational ambitions. Over the last 40 years distance education has increased the ease of access and control over study time. With geographical and time barriers removed, women in particular were able to add the role of student to their list of responsibilities. Women have defeated educational barriers through educational opportunities presented by distance education. Distance education has had a positive effect on women, the majority of distance education students, but how have women influenced distance education? The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to examine the research more closely to determine if the majority of distance education students are influencing the distance education phenomenon. This look into the influence of women on distance education is important to higher education because informed knowledge of the influence will provide deeper insight into distance education. Findings suggested that women have influenced distance education by being significant user and supporters of distance education, by being a rich resource for distance education efforts to improve course content and delivery in order to maintain the continued growth of this instructional method, and by being instrumental in the development of networking opportunities.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> article is join study from Nigeria, on "Capacity Development Through Open And Distance Learning: A Case Study of National Open University of Nigeria's Environmental Science and Resource Management Programme", written by Cecilia MEDUPIN School of Science and Technology, National Open University of Nigeria. This study revealed how environmental education was communicated to a variety of people through Open and Distance Learning (ODL through the programme environmental science and resource management offered at the degree level at the School of Science and Technology of the National Open University of Nigeria. This opportunity provided learners with the ability to

continue their education build capacity and brought about social justice, with the aim of contributing to social awareness and create opportunities in social life. Questionnaires were administered on 150 learners who registered with the university across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

The aim of the study was to determine the accessibility and relevance of the programme to registered learners from various six geo-political locations using also their demographic characteristics. The results of the study indicated various benefits, including: the positive perceptions of open and distance learning by the respondents which resulted from their improved access to education; the availability of course materials, the open system of admission where students can register at any time of the year; at their convenience; the flexibility of study, the ability to develop skills and capacity and the potential of open learning to provide new employment opportunities, enhance career prospects and work place promotion were some of the benefits indicated by the respondents in their questionnaires. Through open learning, environmental awareness and accessibility to homes and communities is increased. This would consequently encourage the management of natural resources for the future by the promotion of technological advancement in environmental management, sound data collection and analysis. Thus, communication of environmental data would further improve the chances of mitigating future environmental challenges and encourage exchange of solutions between nations.

The 4th article is from Saudi Arabia. Written on "Extent of Appropriateness of The Outcomes of Graduate Studies In King Saud University For The Needs Of Saudi Private Sector" by Dr. NAWAL H. ALJAAD, from King Saud University. The Problem of unemployment of the graduates of the university is unique in the sense that it is related to a segment of society who carries high qualifications that do not qualify them to participate in society's development and leading the operations for change and development. The same took place in the Kingdom that expanded university education for many social and political reasons, without considering the extent of appropriateness of these outcomes with the labor market. While dealing with the weak matching, this study has tried to explain the extent of appropriateness of the outcomes of graduate studies in King Saud University for the needs of Saudi private sector, know the causes of this weak matching and present supportive solutions. This study followed the descriptive method and used a restricted end questionnaire made of 13 items as tool of study. The study sample is made of 45 female students from the graduates of graduate studies in King Saud University of Riyadh and these students are all unemployed. This study has reached a number of findings that point towards weak matching between the outcomes of graduate studies in Kind Saud University and the needs of the Saudi private sector.

The 5<sup>th</sup> article is written on "Attitude Of B. Ed. Students' Towards ODL Institutions In Tamil Nadu Open University", written by Assistant Professor, Dr. A. S. Arul LAWRENCE and Assistant Professor, Dr. C. BARATHI from School of Education, Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai, INDIA. The present study aims to probe the attitude of B. Ed. students' towards ODL institutions in Tamil Nadu Open University. Survey method was employed in the present study. A sample of 293 B. Ed. students studying in Tamil Nadu Open University was selected by simple random technique.

The data was collected by Students' Attitude and Perceptions Rating of Open and Distance Learning Institutions Inventory (SAPRODLII) developed by Ojo, D. O., & Olankulehin, F. K. (2006). SPSS-17 Package was used for analysis of the collected data. The Percentile analysis, mean, standard deviation, level, t-test, ANOVA and chi-square were employed as statistical techniques to analyze the data.

And the last article of this issue's is arrived from Malaysia. Globally, indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique world views and associated knowledge

systems for millennia. Despite advancement and development a country has achieved, the indigenous people are always found to be left behind from the mainstream of development facing educational and economic issues. Written on "Developing Lifelong Learning Skills for Entrepreneurial Competences among the Indigenous Kensiu Community in Malaysia" by Anne A. CHRISTOPHER, PhD and Hisham DZAKIRIA, PhD from Universiti Utara Malaysia. This paper presents findings from a research project conducted by Enactus (Entrepreneurs in Action) Universiti Utara Malaysia to support lifelong learning, and as an enabler to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among selected indigenous community in Malaysia. Known for its successful programs, *Enactus*, a non-profit global organization mobilizes university students to create community empowerment projects. This project essentially aims to improve the standard of living of disadvantaged communities in Malaysia. This indigenous community known as the *Kensiu* in the rural villages of Lubuk Legong in Baling was targeted for the project as they faced a lot of problems and challenges ranging from economic problems, hygiene problems and social problems to lack of knowledge. The project was carried out to help develop the lower level skills of the Kensiu community with a focus on educating them on how to carry out their own business. Findings shows with adequate exposure, skills, and integrated efforts from all stakeholders, indigenous people can become great learning communities with much potential for economic and educational success.

Dear intWOJDE readers to receive further information and to send your suggests and recommendations and remarks, or to submit articles for consideration, please contact int.WOJDE Secretariat at the below address or e-mail to us at [intwojde@gmail.com](mailto:intwojde@gmail.com)

Hope to stay in touch and wishing to meet in our next Issue on 1st of July 2014.  
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Cordially,  
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## **STUDY HABITS AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN DISTANCE LEARNERS: A Comparative Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article explores significant difference on demographic characteristics (course, marital, employment, locality, and age) and study habits of women distance learners. This study was conducted in five cities of Uttar Pradesh viz. Gautam Budh Nagar, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Modinagar, and Meerut and data were collected 220 women distance learners from two Universities viz. IGNOU and SVSU following stratified sampling method. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference observed in overall study habits of demographic characteristics namely course, employment, marital and age wise. Significant difference was observed in overall study habits of locality ie. rural and urban women distance learners. The urban women distance learners were found to have better study habits than rural women distance learners.

It is recommended that the distance learning universities must pay special thrust for rural women distance learners by providing more support through personal contact programmes. Proper Academic and personal counseling help the women distance learners to developing proper and healthy study habits and it helps to develop in them a sense of security and development of self confidence.

**Keywords:** Study habits, women distance learners, demographic characteristics

### **INTRODUCTION**

Study habit is a tendency of a student to learn in a systematic and efficient way, when opportunity is given. It is defined as the devotion of time and attention to acquire information or knowledge especially from books or in other words it's the pursuit of academic knowledge by a detailed investigation of a subject or situation (Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus of English Language, 2003).

According to Crow and Crow (1992), 'the effective habits of study include plan/place, a definite time table and taking brief of well organized notes'. Study habits refer to whether students study at the same time each day, whether they shut off radio, television while reading and whether they paraphrase and write down what they have read during the practical instructions. Chastain & Thurbor (1989) describe different types of effective studying techniques. One popular study technique is called the SQ4R method. The "S" and "Q" stand for "Survey" and "Question", and the "4R" stands for "Read", "Recite", "Relate" and "Review". In this study, study habits of the individual cover mainly the reading habits, learning techniques, time schedule, memory, Physical conditions and examinations, evaluation etc as assessed by the study habit inventory developed by Palsane and Sharma

The success of the distance education institutes lies in their ability to extend educational opportunities to all, including the unreached, disadvantaged, underprivileged and the community as a whole, thereby, contributing to the manpower development and growth. Distance learners are heterogeneous background in terms of age, experience, socio-

cultural, educational and occupational backgrounds and they have different methods of learning. They may be employed, unemployed, retired, single, married, house wives, physically disabled having varied social and financial problems. Their learning activity being part time, it takes place in leisure hours, in the evenings, and on holidays; they are irregular in their studies (Sharma, 2008). In distance education adult is able to return to education when he/she feels the needs. Education is therefore changing from institution centered activity to a student centered one. As distance education is learner centered, the Educational Planners, Policy Makers, Distance educators, should be fully aware of the background characteristics of the learners, their needs, attitude towards distance education, interest, motivation expectation, study habits, problem of the learners who are studying in the Open University System (Biswas 1999).

The rural, urban and gender disparities must be kept in mind by policy makers in planning and implementing the higher education system (UGC, 2003). This study is very important because there may be wide range of learning style of heterogeneous background variables of women distance learners.

The distance learner in India, particularly the woman distance learners is no privileged student for devoting her time to study and career interest only; she is surrounded by multiple of academic and non academic concerns (Ramakrishna, 1995). Gaps in educational back ground of women also create problems in study habits. The lack of learning skills is one of the major causes for dropout and failure (Villi, 1999). Maternal responsibilities, family and home chores, and the inadequacy of many homes as the major study base for the home-bound woman are among the barriers that the female distant learner contends with (Effe, 1991), however educating women can help woman's employment potential and an increase in employment potential will promote higher income level and improved their standard of living (Kamla, 1995).

In designing an effective Learner Support System, the Institution should be familiar with the students' home and community environments, community's attitudes to education, availability of peers that can render academic assistance and a lot more other related issues (Nyondo 2003). There exists little difference in outcomes when one considers level of satisfaction it also reports that students are more satisfied with asynchronous distance learning (Computer conference and voice mailing) and students perform better when the structure of instruction matches their preferred learning style (Moore 2007, pp 153).

In this study the investigator tries to find out any significant difference in mean scores in the study habits between the demographic characteristics based on course, locality, marital status, employment status and age wise of woman distance learners.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies conducted by researchers in distance education shows that Open University students keep a time schedule for learning (Raja and Rao ,1993). Srivastava et. al (2007) observed that most of the distance learners do not read the relevant study materials before attending counseling sessions and suggested that an induction programme should therefore be made compulsory for all entrants. Goamthi (1982) revealed that there existed a significant relationship between the achievement of M.A, and M.Com distance learners and work on study materials, textbook studies; participation in seminars and contact programmes; radio broadcast programmes, study centre activities and effective role of instructors. Morgan's (1993) work exclusively deals with two approaches of learning i.e. Surface and deep. The approaches are context specific and directly relate to the quality of learning outcomes. Students with surface approach to their learning are concerned with the intention of completing the learning task requirements, students with deep approach to learning are more concerned with the intention to understand the

deeper meaning embedded in the learning tasks and their relationship with their task. Macdonald and Scott (1997) found that undergraduate students find it difficult to read academic texts and this affect their success. Koymen's (1992) study concluded that there are no important differences in terms of learning and study strategies of the students in conventional system compared to an open learning system.

Ahsan (2005) study habits of distance learners reveals Students who do not have competent reading skills and study habits may face problems in the DE system. Distance learners may have to countenance an unfamiliar situation in the events of their lack of pre-joining awareness about the DE system. Villi (1999) emphasized that the learning habits of the distance learners, having such great educational importance deserved careful investigation. Studies reviewed regarding study habits reveal clear picture that study habit is a significant factor of predicting academic performance and there was significant relationship between study habits and academic performance (Ige, 2009; Kumar, 1998, Sahu.S, 2013). Good study habits, learning strategies helped distance learners to successfully complete their studies (Guo, 2012; Nair S, 2012; Richardson J, 2010; Srivastava et. al, 2007). Distance learners study habits include "Recalling silently", "reading when they get time" and studied late at night before the examination (Villi, 1999). Non formal education students were significantly better in study habits than Formal education students (Naeemulla et. al 2011). The study of Asseffa (2006) reveals that environmental variables affect the study habits of distance learners.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken following survey research in the four cities of Uttar Pradesh viz. Gautam Budh Nagar, Ghaziabad, Modinagar, and Meerut. The population selected was the distance learners of graduate and post graduate of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and Swami Vivekanand Subharti University (SVSU).

Using stratified sampling, data were collected from graduate and post graduate women distance learners from IGNOU, and SVSU study centers, thus arriving a total sample of 220. To assess study habits Palsane and Sharma (1989) was used. The scale has 45 items which is broken up into 8 areas such as budgeting time, physical condition, reading ability, note taking, learning motivation, memory, taking examination and health. There are 34 positive items and 11 negative items.

The positive items have a response choice, given as always or mostly, sometimes or never which carries the scores as 2, 1 & 0. Whereas the negative items has a response choice, given as similar to the positive items but the scoring is done as 0, 1, & 2. The total score is the summation of all the positive and negative items score. The minimum score obtained can be 0 and the maximum can be 90. The reliability coefficient is found to be .88 by test retest method with an interval of 4 weeks. The inventory, besides having high face validity, has high validity coefficients with external criterion (similar type of study habits inventories) and the highest value being 0.83. The items of the inventory belong to the eight areas.

## OBJECTIVES

- To study significant difference in the study habits of woman distance learners by course wise (graduate and post graduate)
- To study significant difference in the study habits of woman distance learners by marital status wise (married and unmarried)
- To study significant difference in the study habits of woman distance learners by employment wise (employed and unemployed)
- To study significant difference in the study habits of woman distance learners by locality wise (urban and rural)
- To study significant difference in the study habits woman distance learners by age wise (Above 25 and below 25)

## RESULTS

**Table: 1**  
**Comparison On Study Habits Of Graduate**  
**And Post Graduate Women Distance Learners**

| Areas of study habits | Course    | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | T-test | Significant |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| budget                | graduate  | 123 | 7.76  | 1.44           | 0.13            | 0.180  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 7.79  | 1.62           | 0.16            |        |             |
| Physical condition    | graduate  | 123 | 8.12  | 1.39           | 0.13            | 0.274  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 8.18  | 1.46           | 0.15            |        |             |
| Reading ability       | graduate  | 123 | 10.77 | 2.04           | 0.18            | 0.942  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 10.52 | 1.98           | 0.20            |        |             |
| Note taking           | graduate  | 123 | 4.58  | 1.31           | 0.12            | 0.509  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 4.67  | 1.37           | 0.14            |        |             |
| Learning motivation   | graduate  | 123 | 9.70  | 1.62           | 0.15            | 3.257* | S           |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 8.93  | 1.83           | 0.19            |        |             |
| memory                | graduate  | 123 | 5.14  | 1.17           | 0.11            | 0.252  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 5.09  | 1.44           | 0.15            |        |             |
| Taking examination    | graduate  | 123 | 13.77 | 2.35           | 0.21            | 1.134  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 14.14 | 2.47           | 0.25            |        |             |
| health                | graduate  | 123 | 4.11  | 1.07           | 0.10            | 0.880  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 3.97  | 1.31           | 0.13            |        |             |
| Over all study habits | graduate  | 123 | 63.95 | 7.68           | 0.69            | 0.573  | NS          |
|                       | post grad | 97  | 63.29 | 9.13           | 0.93            |        |             |

\*\* indicates significant at 0.01 level

\* indicates significant at 0.05 level

The result of Table: 1 that graduate and post graduate woman distance learners do not differ significantly on over all study habits and its seven six areas.

Out of eight sub areas of study habits, significant difference is exist in one area i.e. learning motivation. The result leads to that the graduate distance learners have higher learning motivation than post graduate distance learners.

**Table: 2**  
**Comparison on Study Habits of Married and Unmarried Women Distance Learners**

| Areas of study habits | Marital Status | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | T-test | Significant |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| budget                | married        | 107 | 7.68  | 1.55           | 0.15            | 0.857  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 7.86  | 1.49           | 0.14            |        |             |
| Physical condition    | married        | 107 | 8.03  | 1.42           | 0.14            | 1.195  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 8.26  | 1.42           | 0.13            |        |             |
| Reading ability       | married        | 107 | 10.81 | 2.15           | 0.21            | 1.099  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 10.51 | 1.88           | 0.18            |        |             |
| Note taking           | married        | 107 | 4.71  | 1.29           | 0.12            | 0.998  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 4.53  | 1.38           | 0.13            |        |             |
| Learning motivation   | married        | 107 | 9.51  | 1.72           | 0.17            | 1.274  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 9.21  | 1.79           | 0.17            |        |             |
| memory                | married        | 107 | 5.16  | 1.35           | 0.13            | 0.453  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 5.08  | 1.24           | 0.12            |        |             |
| Taking examination    | married        | 107 | 13.79 | 2.51           | 0.24            | 0.850  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 14.07 | 2.31           | 0.22            |        |             |
| health                | married        | 107 | 4.06  | 1.27           | 0.12            | 0.074  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 4.04  | 1.10           | 0.10            |        |             |
| Over all study habits | married        | 107 | 63.76 | 8.89           | 0.86            | 0.169  | NS          |
|                       | unmarried      | 113 | 63.57 | 7.82           | 0.74            |        |             |

The result of Table: 2 reveal that married and unmarried woman distance learners do not differ significantly on over all study habits and its eight areas.

**Table: 3**  
**Comparison On Study Habits Of Employed and Unemployed Women Distance Learners**

| Areas of study habits | Marital Status | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | T-test | Significant |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| budget                | employed       | 133 | 7.66  | 1.63           | 0.14            | 1.401  | NS          |
|                       | unemployed     | 87  | 7.94  | 1.32           | 0.14            |        |             |
| Physical condition    | employed       | 133 | 8.21  | 1.44           | 0.12            | 0.847  | NS          |
|                       | unemployed     | 87  | 8.05  | 1.39           | 0.15            |        |             |
| Reading ability       | employed       | 133 | 10.67 | 2.09           | 0.18            | 0.093  | NS          |
|                       | unemployed     | 87  | 10.64 | 1.91           | 0.20            |        |             |
| Note taking           | employed       | 133 | 4.69  | 1.32           | 0.11            | 1.003  | NS          |
|                       | unemployed     | 87  | 4.51  | 1.36           | 0.15            |        |             |
| Learning motivation   | employed       | 133 | 9.44  | 1.76           | 0.15            | 0.803  | NS          |
|                       | unemployed     | 87  | 9.24  | 1.76           | 0.19            |        |             |
| memory                | employed       | 133 | 5.03  | 1.25           | 0.11            | 1.236  | NS          |
|                       | unemployed     | 87  | 5.25  | 1.34           | 0.14            |        |             |

**Table: 3 (Continued)**

|                       |            |     |       |      |      |       |    |
|-----------------------|------------|-----|-------|------|------|-------|----|
| Taking examination    | employed   | 133 | 13.89 | 2.53 | 0.22 | 0.326 | NS |
|                       | unemployed | 87  | 14.00 | 2.22 | 0.24 |       |    |
| health                | employed   | 133 | 4.11  | 1.18 | 0.10 | 0.974 | NS |
|                       | unemployed | 87  | 3.95  | 1.18 | 0.13 |       |    |
| Over all study habits | employed   | 133 | 63.71 | 8.43 | 0.73 | 0.105 | NS |
|                       | unemployed | 87  | 63.59 | 8.25 | 0.88 |       |    |

The result of Table.3 reveal that employed and unemployed woman distance learners do not differ significantly on over all study habits and its eight areas.

**Table: 4**  
**Comparisons On Study Habits of Rural And Urban Women Distance Learners**

| Areas of study habits | Marital Status | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | T-test | Significant |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| budget                | rural          | 82  | 7.79  | 1.58           | 0.18            | 0.147  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 7.76  | 1.49           | 0.13            |        |             |
| Physical condition    | rural          | 82  | 7.90  | 1.45           | 0.16            | 1.945  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 8.29  | 1.38           | 0.12            |        |             |
| Reading ability       | rural          | 82  | 10.43 | 2.04           | 0.23            | 1.312  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 10.80 | 1.99           | 0.17            |        |             |
| Note taking           | rural          | 82  | 4.51  | 1.33           | 0.15            | 0.910  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 4.68  | 1.34           | 0.11            |        |             |
| Learning motivation   | rural          | 82  | 9.20  | 1.78           | 0.20            | 1.061  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 9.46  | 1.74           | 0.15            |        |             |
| memory                | rural          | 82  | 4.95  | 1.24           | 0.14            | 1.507  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 5.22  | 1.32           | 0.11            |        |             |
| Taking examination    | rural          | 82  | 13.44 | 2.17           | 0.24            | 2.476* | S           |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 14.23 | 2.49           | 0.21            |        |             |
| health                | rural          | 82  | 3.90  | 1.18           | 0.13            | 1.429  | NS          |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 4.14  | 1.18           | 0.10            |        |             |
| Over all study habits | rural          | 82  | 62.12 | 8.26           | 0.91            | 2.126* | S           |
|                       | urban          | 138 | 64.57 | 8.28           | 0.70            |        |             |

The result of Table: 4 reveal that rural and urban woman distance learners differ significantly on over all study habits and its one area. The urban distance learners were significantly good study habits than the rural women distance learners.

Similarly the urban women distance learners were significantly higher in the area of taking examination.

That means the urban women distance learners give more importance to taking examination than rural women distance learners.

Out of eight areas, the mean favor of urban women distances learners on seven areas. In

other words it may be said that the urban women distance learners study habits is better than rural woman distance learners in all the areas except budgeting.

**Table: 5**  
**Comparison on Study Habits of Women Distance Learners By Age Wise**  
**(Above And Below 25)**

| Areas of study habits | Age wise | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Std. ErrorMean | t-value | Significant |
|-----------------------|----------|-----|-------|----------------|----------------|---------|-------------|
| budget                | Above 25 | 131 | 7.81  | 1.50           | 0.13           | .427    | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 7.72  | 1.56           | 0.17           |         |             |
| Physical Condition    | Above 25 | 131 | 8.21  | 1.40           | 0.12           | .859    | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 8.04  | 1.45           | 0.15           |         |             |
| Reading ability       | Above 25 | 131 | 10.79 | 2.09           | 0.18           | 1.158   | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 10.47 | 1.90           | 0.20           |         |             |
| Note taking           | Above 25 | 131 | 4.80  | 1.27           | 0.11           | 2.458   | S           |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 4.35  | 1.39           | 0.15           |         |             |
| Learning motivation   | Above 25 | 131 | 9.62  | 1.65           | 0.14           | 2.632   | S           |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 8.98  | 1.85           | 0.20           |         |             |
| memory                | Above 25 | 131 | 5.18  | 1.34           | 0.12           | .923    | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 5.02  | 1.22           | 0.13           |         |             |
| Taking examination    | Above 25 | 131 | 13.98 | 2.43           | 0.21           | .363    | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 13.87 | 2.38           | 0.25           |         |             |
| health                | Above 25 | 131 | 4.12  | 1.21           | 0.11           | 1.110   | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 3.94  | 1.14           | 0.12           |         |             |
| Overall Study habits  | Above 25 | 131 | 64.52 | 8.58           | 0.75           | 1.899   | NS          |
|                       | Below 25 | 89  | 62.39 | 7.85           | 0.83           |         |             |

The result of Table: 5 reveal that above 25 and below 25 woman distance learners do not differ significantly on over all study habits and its six areas. Out of eight areas significant difference were observed in note taking and learning motivation.

The age of above 25 women distance learners were significantly higher in the areas of note taking and learning motivation. This may be because the matured women distance learners are more motivated and interested in note taking than their counterparts rural woman learners.

#### DISCUSSION

This study reveals that no significance difference was observed in overall study habits and demographic characteristics namely course wise, marital status, employment status, age wise. Contrary the finding observed by (Kumar, 1999) that there was significant difference in study habits of distance learners by marital status, academic stream and employment status of first degree distance learners.

This study supported the age wise of first degree distance learners that there was no

significant difference of study habits in age wise (kumar, 1999). The reason for all these groups equally maintain study habits may be because distance learners are mostly self directed learners and they know how to maintain time schedule to adjust the study periods and other activities.

They may have good vocabulary, speed of reading, comprehension, and independent selection of appropriate material for reading and prepare for examination for achieving good results. The study of Nair P.S (2012) reveals that the skill to do self-learning, better time management and ability to multi-task were the main value-additions stated by successful distance learner. It has been found that significant difference was observed in overall study habits by locality wise. The urban women distance learners have better study habits than rural woman distance learners. By comparing eight areas of study habits and demographic characteristics it has been found that, significant difference was observed in the study habits areas by course wise, locality wise and age wise. Course wise significant difference was observed in the area of learning motivation. The graduate woman distance learners are higher in learning motivation than post graduate distance learners.

The reason may be at post graduate level the courses are difficult than graduate level and post graduates may face difficulties in meeting the challenges posed by new system of learning and teaching due to lack of interaction with the peer group and teachers and the student lose their motivation as most post graduates may be professionals and they have multiple responsibilities like taking care of house, job and study. Locality wise significant difference was observed in the study habit area of taking examination. The urban woman distance learners know better taking examination style than rural women distance learners. Age wise significant difference observed in the areas of study habits namely note taking and learning motivation.

The above 25 years of age women distance learners report a better note taking style and learning motivation than below 25 woman distance learners. The factor of age provides experience and maturity to their study habits may be the reason for the above age 25 women distance learner have better in note taking and learning motivation.

## CONCLUSION

The research out come shows that the one of demographic characteristics ie. locality significantly differ in their overall study habits. Remaining four demographic characteristics namely, course, marital status, employment and age wise did not differ significantly in over all study habits. It has been found that the urban woman distance learners have better study habits than rural woman distance learners. Hence distance learning universities must pay special thrust for rural women distance learners by providing more support through personal contact programmes and there is need to inculcate systematic and proper study habits to rural woman distance learners by conducting study skill development program. It can help to rural woman students to improve their study habits.

## RECOMMENDATION

- The women distance learners are heterogeneous group they (especially rural women distance learners) join the professional courses without lack of idea about distance learning and self learning habits. To improve distance learners study habits and reading technique, the educational planners should add study skills and SQ3R technique in the module of programs or provide guidance, on use of learning materials, on techniques.

- To enhance and maintain learner's interest, learning motivation, and reduce feeling of isolation in the study, the educational planners should emphasize more implementation of modern technology in distance learning, properly designing of student support services like interaction with the teacher and peer group, good academic counseling and feed back from tutors.
- For rural woman distance learners the distance learning may be new learning situations, hence they should try to understand their own strength and weakness so that they can improve their study habits
- Quality of learning out come from the student approach to learning, the rural women distance learners should follow a deep level approach ie. 'Making connections', 'drawing conclusions', 'getting a clear impression' and getting the point.
- Their study problems must be dealt on individuals basis by telephone, email etc. Academic counselor can help in difficulties faced by students through out their courses. The Academic counselor should be having qualities like warmth, acceptance, genuineness and empathy, to hear the problems patiently and solve the problems of women distance learners
- Proper Academic and personal counseling help the women distance learners to developing proper and healthy study habits and it helps to develop in them a sense of security and development of self confidence.
- With good study habits the women distance learners can spend less time for studying and learn more in given period of time. To inculcate healthy study habits, time to time counseling of students should be done encouraging for them, motivating them for better learning so that it brings about a change in the society towards education of women learners.

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## THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

The impact of distance education on women has been significant. Distance education has been a viable means for helping women reach their educational ambitions. Over the last 40 years distance education has increased the ease of access and control over study time. With geographical and time barriers removed, women in particular were able to add the role of student to their list of responsibilities. Women have defeated educational barriers through educational opportunities presented by distance education. Distance education has had a positive effect on women, the majority of distance education students, but how have women influenced distance education?

The purpose of this qualitative, case study was to examine the research more closely to determine if the majority of distance education students are influencing the distance education phenomenon. This look into the influence of women on distance education is important to higher education because informed knowledge of the influence will provide deeper insight into distance education.

Findings suggested that women have influenced distance education by being significant user and supporters of distance education, by being a rich resource for distance education efforts to improve course content and delivery in order to maintain the continued growth of this instructional method, and by being instrumental in the development of networking opportunities.

**Keywords:** Women, female students, distance education, and online education.

### INTRODUCTION

The impact of distance education on women has been significant. Distance education has been a viable means for helping women in reaching their educational ambitions. The landscape of distance education presents many paths for observing first-hand how online learning can ameliorate geographic and time challenges in the pursuit of an education. While distance education is impacted by such things as society, governmental policy, economy and technology, it provides educational and career promise for women (Azaiza, 2011).

Education in general opens doors, enhances career opportunities, and facilitates feelings of self-esteem and self-reliance (Azaiza, 2011). The educational landscape has specifically allowed women to meet head-on issues relating to the stereotypical roles of women, to act in response to these issues, and to transform their stereotypical positions in society to a role with a more contemporary purpose empowering women.

*Women Empowerment*, introduced in 1985 at the international women conference in Nairobi, has become a global topic (Krishna, 2013). Education has empowered women. Education is crucial for women who aspire to "take their rightful place in society" (Azaiza, 2011, p. 2). The result of educational achievements globally is the end product of the invention of distance education maintained Azaiza (2011). Women have defeated

educational barriers through educational opportunities presented by distance education. Distance education has consequently had a positive effect on women's sense of self-worth and independence.

Distance education has become a vital resource for continuous learning. It was recognized as a solution for many to bypass location and time barriers that precluded decisions for many to enroll in postsecondary education classes. It was thought that by providing educational options that enabled women and men to easily attend class and study without interfering with work and family obligations college and university enrollments would increase (Cragg, Andrusyszyn, & Fraser, 2005).

During the last 40 years distance education has increased the ease of access and control over study time. With geographical and time barriers removed women in particular were able to add the role of student to their list of responsibilities. Distance education improved the ease of access and control over time to study and minimized today's stress to meet professional obligations and encourage lifelong learning (Cragg, Andrusyszyn, & Fraser, 2005). The "distance open learning system" (Azaiza, 200, p. 2) is not a choice for some women for hope and new opportunity, it is the only option. Distance education has had a positive effect on women (Azaiza, 2011). With the majority of distance education students being mature females (Azaiza, 2011; Kwapong, 2007; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.; Weatherly, 2011) the question then seems to follow, what influence have women had on distance education, if any? The purpose of this study was to examine the research more closely to determine if the majority of distance education students are influencing the distance education phenomenon. This look into the influence of women on distance education is important to higher education because informed knowledge of the influence will provide deeper insight into distance education. The researcher asked the following two exploratory questions: What happened during the evolution of distance education? What themes emerged over time? Perhaps some definitions are in order before proceeding further. Distance education is defined as "various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization" (as cited in Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006, p. 568). Online education is defined as "instruction through a connection to a computer system at a venue distant from the learner's personal computer" (p. 568). This definition suggests that online education is a method of distance education with benefits for students, instructors, and institutions through educational outreach, increased incomes, and refreshed scholarly attraction in teaching through technology.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

When the stereotypical roles of women are viewed as limited to the obligations of being housewives and mothers, many women find difficulty in establishing harmony between their previous obligations (work, home, and society) with the addition of educational responsibilities.

In other words, taking time away from their families is a challenge for potential students who are wives and mothers (Azaiza, 2011). This is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of distance education students are mature females (Azaiza, 2011; Kwapong, 2007; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.; Weatherly, 2011). It is not uncommon for women to be unable to attend formal schools (Azaiza, 2011). Distance education has had a positive effect on women, the majority of distance education students, but how have women influenced distance education?

By examining the influence of women on distance education, designers of distance education opportunities can take a more informed look at the challenges women have as

distance education students. Course designers can better serve this segment of the population by further assisting them with minimizing potential barriers to earning an education thereby allowing them to accomplish their educational ambitions with stress-free ease.

## METHOD

This was a qualitative study utilizing a case study method. Case study is a suitable method of inquiry for this research study because it attempts to examine one area of concern (what is the influence on distance education) through one case (women) or bounded system (Creswell, 2007). The bounded system of women was selected because the majority of distance education students are mature females (Azaiza, 2011; Kwapong, 2007; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.; Weatherly, 2011).

### Research Design

This study was a single instrumental case study, by a review of the literature, designed to emphasize a detailed contextual analysis of the influence of women on distance education (Creswell, 2007). This examination of the research of the influence of women on distance education was also designed to take the reader into the setting of the early years of distance education with a clarity not provided in a more reportorial account (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

### Data Collection and Analysis

In order to gain a clear understanding of the context of the influence of women on the phenomenon of distance education, the goal of the research was to focus on details that might not otherwise be detected or considered. The forms of data collection are regularly interrelated in qualitative research so that researchers comparing the relationship of the techniques to a tree with branches extending from its trunk. In a sense the researcher climbs into the tree to gain a better perspective of the lived experiences (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992).

"Case studies rely on historical and document analysis . . . for data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p.267). This study was limited to the written material available. These data were examined in the research. The information for this study was derived from: peer-reviewed journals, non-peer reviewed journals, books, and online sources. The academic databases used were from the online library of Texas A&M University-Commerce and included, but were not limited to, Academic Search Premier, EBSCO, Education Research Complete, Eric, ProQuest, and Sage Publications. The key descriptive terms used for this research were women, female students, distance education, and online education.

Data analysis included a holistic analysis of the entire case study to identify themes that emerged during the collection process. Naturalistic generalizations were developed from the emerging themes as a result of analyzing the data. These generalizations are implications or suggestions for higher education to apply to a population of cases (Creswell, 2007).

## FINDINGS

Distance education has modified who obtains an education, how education might be experienced, who carries out the education, and what the application of education is. An early example of distance education was the Society to Encourage Studies at Home founded by Anna Eliot Ticknor who was the daughter of George Ticknor, a well-known Boston academic and Harvard professor. In 1873 Ticknor established her Society in Boston to offer women a liberal education with a purpose to encourage women to devote time each day for continuous learning.

Ticknor's Society was one of the first correspondence study programs, a distant, tailored method of instruction carried out through the United States mail system. Potential students received information about the program upon request. Once accepted into the Society, female students decided to enroll in English, history, science, French, German, or art. Ticknor engaged affluent, intellectual colleagues to volunteer as teachers who mailed syllabi to the students who then prepared their assignments and submitted "memory notes" (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006, p. 573) to their respective teachers for review. The programs were paced according to the needs of the students, which was a plus for women with household responsibilities and therefore limited time to study. However, distance education was not only altruistic it was furthering respective institutions' pledge toward the education of society.

It is difficult to determine the influence of Ticknor's Society to Encourage Studies at Home. What is known is that the Society enrolled more than seven thousand women even though the Society was not widely publicized. Individual statements, furthermore, indicated how lives were impacted by distance education. Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, an intimate colleague of Ticknor, for example, referred to the Society as the "silent university" (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006, p. 573). She candidly applauded the Society for its intention to modernize women's lives without changing or negatively impacting their responsibilities in the home (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).

Ticknor's Society could have effortlessly taught home economics and only offer women an education parallel to their responsibilities in the home. Instead, the Society offered women an education in a variety of topics which included ancient and medieval history, zoology, geology and mineralogy, mathematics and astronomy, and German and English literature. The Society to Encourage Studies at Home provided women an opportunity to earn a liberal education beyond the boundaries of the influential universities for women in opposition to society's ideals of the role of women (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).

Distance education in general has been affected by questions of the quality of education. It is also well accepted that distance education can provide educational opportunities for potentially untapped students. Ticknor's Society specifically demonstrated that quality education can prevail in spite of any perceived restrictions.

In other words, correspondence courses can have a positive effect in the lives of students. As technology alone does not assure a quality education, a quality education is not inevitably harmed by the restrictions of technology. The history of distance education illustrates that questions come to light regarding the value of education when differences occur between face-to-face and distance education faculty. These questions can be expected to occur when distance education faculty efforts get in the way of the more established role of the professorate (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).

Women's involvement in the workplace, in general, has increased significantly over the past 40 years. As a result, the role of women has greatly expanded. Balancing roles requires significant time, energy, and tradeoffs, ultimately leading to role conflict. However, multiple roles can result in a number of benefits to the physical and psychological well-being of women, as well as negative effects. Balancing work and family is similar to juggling balls of various colors and sizes. Frequently one is unsure how many are in the air, what color or size they are, or which to grasp next. Moreover, any responsibility (marital, occupational, or parental) can become a basis for support or stress. Family and social support, for example, tend to generate high levels of life fulfillment and spousal support is important for managing multiple responsibilities (Cragg, Andruszyn, & Fraser, 2005).

Research regarding support for female students in distance education courses is minimal and out of date. What research there is indicates that even when there is support from family and friends to pursue educational interests, balancing the many responsibilities from home, work, and school still necessitates considerable energy and organization. Because distance education students generally study in the home, family and friends can become great sources of support or huge barriers for continued learning (Cragg, Andrusyszyn, & Fraser, 2005).

According to Cragg, Andrusyszyn, and Fraser (2005), women's lives were transformed by distance education. The lives of those close to students changed to becoming more accustomed to the additional responsibilities assumed by the students. Support from spouses, family, friends, and employers were necessary for student success. However, study time frequently became the students' primary responsibility.

Women felt physical and emotional conflict as students with attempts to harmonize time and energy for multiple responsibilities. Distance education courses appeared invisible to others and therefore difficult to explain. However the benefits of learning and opportunities for attaining professional goals, as a direct result of taking distance education classes, assisted female students with overcoming or handling challenges along the way.

The researchers claimed that images of a woman with a number of responsibilities in enrolled distance education courses frequently produced feelings of stress and guilt. They even experienced the loss of relationships. However, women's contentment with life increased because of their improved sense of worth and professional acknowledgement due to their distance education accomplishments.

Female students enrolled in distance education classes communicated that they wanted better contact with and access to instructors, more opportunities for collaboration with fellow students, greater technological orientation and support, access to quality technology, and available information about courses, clearly outlined course requirements, and distance education programs. Cragg, Andrusyszyn, and Fraser (2005) maintained that distance educators must take into account the needs of students when designing courses with large numbers of women. Sufficient communication is an important aspect for effective distance education courses. Providing sufficient communication to female students will promote success, claimed the researchers.

Marie Forleo, for example, established a multimillion-dollar online tutorial small-business with her Rich Happy & Hot (L.K., 2012, p. 42) program of online tutorials and programs. Forleo's New York City-based business focuses on women to assist them with creating financial and lifestyle independence by establishing their own businesses. Forleo realized she had problems with an eight-week, marketing and online entrepreneurship course. Even though the course received excellent evaluations from female students, she felt that too many asked for refunds. "I wasn't happy" Forleo stated. "Though 20 percent is about normal in the industry, nothing about what we do should be normal" (as cited in L.K., 2012, p. 42). After researching the problem by asking the students to provide her with feedback on the courses, Forleo learned that her female students did not "want to be talked to as if they're not being listened to" (as cited in L. K., 2012, p. 42). Female students need individualized communication throughout the course.

Weatherly (2011) claimed that online female students can be an indispensable source for investigating online learning. These students could be a rich resource for continued development in the area of distance education for the benefit for potential distance education students. Women are realistic students, maintained Weatherly, and might not consider answering questions in writing. As such, qualitative, open-ended interview

questions work best to assist higher education in improving course preparation, student engagement, and designing classes that are student-centered with active learning opportunities.

College and university personal in the position of making decisions regarding distance education must first recognize and respond to online students to “gain momentum in a new age of information” (Weatherly, 2011, p. 10). In addition to paying attention to online students, these decision makers can begin to modify distance educational programs with the needs of these students in mind. Without this attention on these students their educational achievements are threatened. Consequently, as college and university personnel listen to these students and additional research is conducted in this area, distance education is likely to be improved as a result of this effort and the impact of distance education on this segment of the population. For example, by listening to these students, administrators will be able to anticipate the needs of these learners and be prepared for the adult female students’ circumstances that potentially threaten their educational endeavors.

Collins-Brown and Weatherly (2011) introduced the Collaborative Online Resource Environment for Women (Core4Women). This collaboration is a new group of women who are searching for information and women who have experience with online education who can provide information regarding online education.

According to Collins-Brown and Weatherly, Core4Women.org was launched by women who appreciated the benefits of earning an education online.

These same women were female students in a doctoral research project who had been interviewed about their online experiences and who tirelessly inquired about possible opportunities or avenues for uniting together with others experiencing similar challenges with online education.

Information about the tireless inquires were later shared at the International Forum for Women in eLearning Conference in 2007. Weatherly, founder of Core4Women received tremendous support to design a website for women to share online education experiences. Over 30 women studying online participated with the preparation of a proposal that was submitted to the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA). The executive council of the United States Distance Learning Association commended the initiative on August 31, 2008. Subsequently, the executive council recommended that a free collaborative online website for women be designed to assist women with online educational experiences (Collins-Brown & Weatherly, 2011).

Core4Women is an organization of women and men volunteers who have given time so that women are able to collaborate with one another on their online experiences. As a result of this effort Core4Women submitted an application for 501(c) (3) nonprofit status to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 2010. Once IRS approval is given, Core4Women will be able to apply for grants and provide tax deductible donation status to donors. Core4Women will then be able to award scholarships and to conduct a self-study with the goal of continually enhancing services to women searching for online educational information (Collins-Brown & Weatherly, 2011).

Nix (2011) introduced the International Forum for Women in E-Learning (IFWE) foundation that was established by Darcy Hardy in 2003. IFWE is a women’s conference that is related to the United States Distance Learning Association. The conference was designed to celebrate the progress women have made with distance education and to offer these women a network for collaborating on distance education experiences. The IFWE inspires changes in teaching practices, challenges research concentrations, creates

opportunities, and inspires advancement in distance education. "Thanks to the Internet, the concept of community no longer has geographical limitations" stated Nix. A benefit for many involved in distance education is that there is a significant bond and yearly gatherings are even more eventful because of this bond.

McKnight-Tutein and Thackaberry (2011) suggested that women and men learn differently. The researchers also suggested that hybrid courses are learning environments that support learning in a manner that women can excel.

McKnight-Tutein and Thackaberry introduced four approaches for hybrid learning environments for consideration with an overall objective to enhance online learning settings and assignments that maintain women's educational success in higher education as well as provide men with engaging educational opportunities. The end goal is enhanced academic success for both men and women.

Franklin (2011) recommended tools and technology as educational solutions to assist female students pursuing their online education. With the ongoing distance education changes, achieving feelings of harmony between one's professional and personal life can become challenging.

Online instructors, do not have typical working hours, however, it is possible to meet students' needs without detracting from the needs of instructors' families and friends.

Utilizing Web 2.0 tools assist instructors with working smarter and achieving a sense of balance in relation to their personal responsibilities.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

What has been the impact of women on distance education? The theme of communication continued to emerge throughout data collection and analysis.

- Students of Ticknor's society communicated about how lives were impacted by distance education (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).
- Elizabeth Cary Agassiz openly communicated the positive effect distance education had on women (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).
- Family and social support as well as spousal support are forms of communication that are needed for student success (Cragg, Andrusyszyn, & Fraser, 2005).
- Communicating to others the responsibilities of being a student of distance education courses can be difficult to explain (Cragg, Andrusyszyn, & Fraser, 2005).
- Female distance education students reported that they wanted better communication (Cragg, Andrusyszyn, & Fraser, 2005).
- Forleo discovered that her female students needed individualized communication (L. K., 2012).
- As college and university personnel listen to students, distance education is likely to be improved and administrators will be able to anticipate the needs of students for effective course preparation (Weatherly, 2011).
- Collaborative Online Resource Environment for Women (Core4Women) was started by women for the purpose of student collaborations (Collins-Brown & Weatherly, 2011).
- The International Forum for Women in E-Learning (IFWE) foundation that was established for student collaboration (Nix, 2011).

- **Scholarly communication on activities to improve distance education will likely enhance academic success for both men and women (Franklin, 2011; McKnight-Tutein & Thackaberry, 2011).**

**The broader theme of communication can be divided into smaller categories of communication:**

- **the positive impact of distance education on women,**
- **the need for communicated support**
- **the need for significant and individualized communication with instructors,**
- **the need for communicating with designers of distance education courses regarding course development for enhanced academic success, and**
- **the need for communicating experiences with colleagues**

**In summary, findings suggested that women have influenced distance education by being significant users and supporters of distance education, by being a rich resource for distance education efforts to improve course content and delivery in order to maintain the continued growth of this instructional method for the benefit of future students, and by being instrumental in the development of networking opportunities.**

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**The implications from this study are two-fold. As designers become more informed by listening to distance education students they will be able to anticipate and plan for the needs of these students.**

**Also, administration will be better prepared to address circumstances that could potentially threaten educational endeavors.**

**Consequently, as distance education courses become less challenging for these students, student enrollments will continue to increase.**

**The higher college and university enrollments are the greater the likelihood of future college success, which benefits all.**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is recommended that this study be replicated to determine if the same results are realized. It is also recommend that longitudinal studies be conducted to determine if there is a trend.**

**Future studies can be conducted to discover if these same results occur or if the results are impacted by future circumstances.**

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## **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: A Case Study of National Open University of Nigeria's Environmental Science And Resource Management Programme**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study revealed how environmental education was communicated to a variety of people through Open and Distance Learning (ODL through the programme environmental science and resource management offered at the degree level at the School of Science and Technology of the National Open University of Nigeria. This opportunity provided learners with the ability to continue their education build capacity and brought about social justice, with the aim of contributing to social awareness and create opportunities in social life. Questionnaires were administered on 150 learners who registered with the university across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

The aim of the study was to determine the accessibility and relevance of the programme to registered learners from various six geo-political locations using also their demographic characteristics. The results of the study indicated various benefits, including: the positive perceptions of open and distance learning by the respondents which resulted from their improved access to education; the availability of course materials, the open system of admission where students can register at any time of the year; at their convenience; the flexibility of study, the ability to develop skills and capacity and the potential of open learning to provide new employment opportunities, enhance career prospects and work place promotion were some of the benefits indicated by the respondents in their questionnaires. Through open learning, environmental awareness and accessibility to homes and communities is increased.

This would consequently encourage the management of natural resources for the future by the promotion of technological advancement in environmental management, sound data collection and analysis.

Thus, communication of environmental data would further improve the chances of mitigating future environmental challenges and encourage exchange of solutions between nations.

**Keywords:** Open and Distance Learning, environmental education, environmental application.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Open and Distant Learning (ODL) a non contiguous form of study, affords a learner the flexibility of study, independent of time and space (Jegede, Barry & Fisher 1995). It is a force which contributes to social and economic development and has therefore become an indispensable part of the mainstream of educational development in both developed and developing countries (Moore 2002).

This growth is especially stimulated by increasing interest in the internet and multimedia which has enabled learning to be realised among various groups including the disadvantaged, rural communities, illiterate populations and among student/learners

who can combine work and education. It also provides easier options for employers who can boost professional development of their employees through skills' development, increase work productivity and flexibility especially for training times. In view of these characteristics, ODL has the potential to promote higher education by bringing down the barriers that discourage socio-economic growth such as cultural, social, perceptual and economic hindrances and capable of providing skills as that of the conventional mode. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has been a successful enterprise with an objective to address the educational needs of masses in the country. In view of the challenges of environmental degradation from human activities which are affecting the farmlands, women and children, localities, families, businesses etc, it has been shown that a greater environmental awareness is required to help people understand these changes so as to foster transformations that may occur in terms of policy institution, enforcement, management, resource use and attitudinal changes. The programme Environmental Science and Resource Management therefore comes at a period where more awareness and application is needed for the management of these problems and for future sustainability.

This paper addresses the benefits of this course to the current students enrolled with the university, their current employment state, and how the course could be applied in future. Furthermore, the course has been studied through the questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of the program to students from six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Most of the respondents have found the program useful for their current careers, others have seen it as an opportunity to learn more about the environment given the current changes and so broaden their scope on applications. A few of the learners have seen the course as an avenue to further their studies in a chosen area.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER**

To determine the accessibility and relevance of the programme to registered learners from various six geo-political locations in Nigeria. To determine if this course contributes to capacity building in the management and sustainability of natural resources at workplaces

### **ODL AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Developing countries including Nigeria have large social, religious and cultural diversity, significant gaps in socio-economic standards of people and absence of equity in accessing quality education at a lower cost. Increased access, flexibility and the combination of work and education is what students/learners would understand as capacity building in open and distance learning. Thus, a well formulated ODL policy and efficient delivery system can serve as an effective instrument in promoting capacity by reaching target groups with limited access to conventional education and training. It would also ensure that these ODL institutions are connected with information resources that promote new changes to education and create opportunities for lifelong learning.

The potential of Open and Distance learning (ODL) for sustainable learning and development provides the following advantages:

- **Access to education-Dfes (2002) defines "access" as a means of bypassing barriers to learning. Accessibility allows learners who would otherwise be denied educational opportunities to gain right to use courses and this has important implication for ODL policy (Campbell & Storo 1996). Equitable access to information would promotes capacity building and the sharing of knowledge (Moore, 2002) especially in a multidisciplinary area such as Environmental Science and Resource Management which would reflect regional, social and**

economic needs. It follows also that the access to learning materials materials; teaching, support services, academic and administrative systems, helps to alleviate capacity constraints for economics, human resources and rural development (Jegade, 2010).

- **Equitable opportunities:** Confidence is been developed in the ODL as new approach in both developing and developed countries to resolving the problems of equity, access and quality. For example, the UNESCO (2001a) report states that distance education in the nine high population countries including Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan, focus on expanding and developing teacher education and non-formal education for health and other related areas. Also, in some parts of Europe (Central and Eastern), distance education is seen as an important means of supporting transformation towards democracy and a market-oriented society. Thus strategic alliances are being formed between educational institutions and the private sectors. The existence of a wide range of programs in the ODL will enable individuals to enrol in the programs that are relevant to their context and situations and adapt if necessary to their various conditions. While ODL aims to provide equitable opportunities to learners, it also needs to meet the challenges to overcome barriers to higher education and create opportunities for participation in the knowledge development cycle. In developing countries, economic constraint is one of the major factors that affect access to education. ODL can breach this gap where poor students or those who are disadvantaged or are delayed due to early pregnancies can benefit equitably from high educational programmes without extra financial burden on households. This way, ODL will break economic barriers by providing education for students of lower social economic status, bring about the development of skills, and provide opportunities for building capacity that will facilitate upward social mobility.
- **Equality and integrity:** ODL promotes social inclusion and participation because learners from diverse social and educational backgrounds including girls, women, gypsies, those with disability and learning difficulties, the aged can receive similar education and qualification with the same integrity as those earned through the conventional mode. It brings about the development of equal rights and opportunities and the promotion of effective equality between men and women
- In tandem with the above characteristics of capacity building vis-a-vis the role of ODL, this the National Open University of Nigeria has introduced a programme which would help sustain development and at the same time, cater for the deprivation caused by environmental degradation in every area of Nigeria. NOUN as indicated above, introduced a programme at undergraduate i.e. Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science and Resource Management with the intent of introducing a postgraduate diploma in Climate Change Adaptation in the coming year. This is an attempt to justify ODL's role in resolving the problem of equity, access to education and at the same time building capacity within the environment sector.

### **The Programme BSc. Environmental Science and Resource Management**

The BSc. Environmental Science and Resource Management is designed to equip the students with the basic skills necessary to work in a professional capacity in areas where environmental management and sustainability of natural resources are required. It is a science-based understanding of our environment which integrates social, economic and the legal aspects to it.

This comprehension is vital to ensure that human needs are met, in a sustainable way, so that everyone will have access to clean water, clean air, and the earth resources required for agriculture and industrial activity.

Since Nigeria is beset with problems from climate change, pollution, gas flaring and conflicts in the Niger Delta, waste management issues and resource control, this course comes at a time where more awareness needed to be created for the future professionals who will work in various organisations, which could include the government as regulators, town planners, policy makers, corporate organisations, industries or in research to bring about the needed changes that will transform the mindset and activities of people. Although this course not only trains the learners in the skills, it also opens up the minds of the learners to apply the course to their own day to day work.

These impacts will consequently and hopefully, lead to positive change in attitudes and trigger strong contributions to decision making especially as it concerns environmental protection.

The B.Sc. Environmental Science and Resource Management also aims to give the student a broad knowledge of the environment in terms of the concept, economics, and the applications of such knowledge for professional, academic and personal use.

In addition, it sets out to produce good scientists with an awareness of environmental problems and solutions and who can communicate with others.

The Environmental Science and Resource Management Unit include subjects such as: the Nigerian Environment (*which introduces the learner to the basic concepts of the environment, outlines essential features and characteristics of the Nigerian environment, discusses common environmental problems in Nigeria and recommends strategies for ameliorating some environmental problems*); Introduction to Environmental Science; Environmental Resource Management; Geographical aspects; Social aspects such as Community Participation; Introduction to Conflict and Peace Resolution; Pollution, Laws and Policies, Environmental Politics among other courses.

The study of Community Participation in Environmental Management is basically concerned with the involvement of individuals, groups and communities in the affairs of managing the environment where they live in and how these communities can make congruent decisions that will positively affect their environment.

Since commencement in 2003, the programme is offered in the main cities of Nigeria. The study centres are established at more than 36 states of the Federation in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria- i.e. the North East, North West, North Central South East, South West, and South regions of the country.

In addition to these centres, special centres have been created such as in the military barracks and in the prisons.

The BSc. Environmental Science and Resource Management programme is spread over four semesters and with a total credit of 120. Student enrolment has increased over the years.

Course materials and course guides are prepared written by peer collaborators and made available for learners, online or via hardcopies.

Students have access to the materials as well as their facilitators and are released to the public domain by the institution. However, the courses are open to modification by the various course facilitators who might wish to tailor the contents to their local surroundings. Case studies are also provided for the learners in courses such as the environmental impact assessment and Environment protection agencies.

This way, learners can readily identify with issues that border on their own environment and could apply such knowledge.

### **METHODOLOGY**

150 samples consisting of students of Environmental Science and Resource Management were randomly selected from the six geo-political zones in Nigeria i.e. the North West (Borno); North East (Jigawa and Kano) North Central (Lokoja and Minna), South East (Abia State and Enugu), South West (Ekiti and Lagos) and South South Regions (Akwa Ibom and Port Harcourt).

The instrument used was the questionnaire and these were distributed to the students through the Centre Managers and their staff. Of the selected regions and the questionnaires distributed, 117 answered questionnaires were received.

### **Sample locations**



**Figure 1:**  
Map of Nigeria showing sample locations, adapted from Google images for blank map with Nigerian States  
**Figure 2:** Map of Africa, insert Nigeria, adapted from visual cultures on Google images

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Demographic Characteristics

A demographic profile of age, gender, marital and employment status were collected through a questionnaire.

Of these results, 53 of the respondents were males while 64 were females selected from the 6 geo-political zones in Nigeria as tabulated in Tables 1 and 2 below:

**Table: 1**  
**Distribution of questionnaire within six geo-political regions in Nigeria To whom Administered**

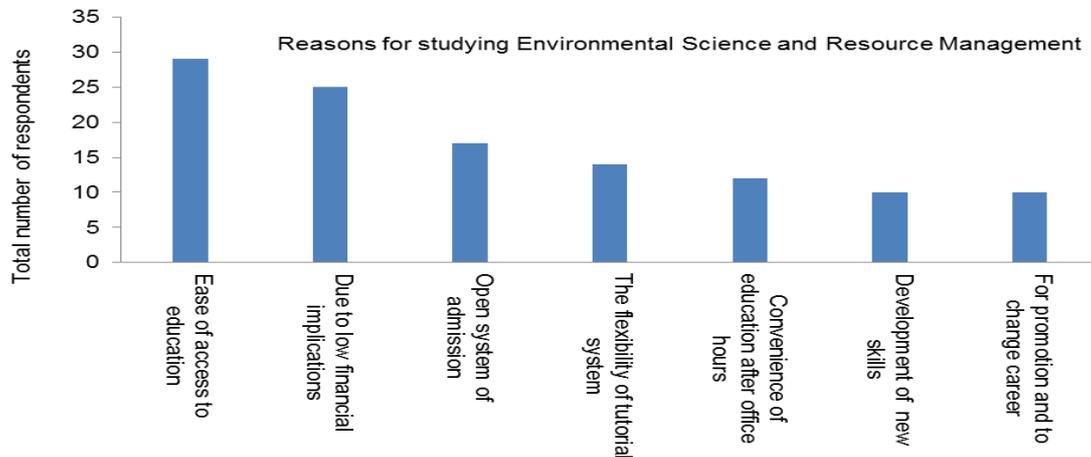
|                            | Number                  | Males | Females | Percentage (%) Males | Percentage (%) Female |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>North Central</b>       |                         |       |         |                      |                       |
| Lokoja                     | 10 (5males, 5 females)  | 8     | 11      | 15.09                | 17.19                 |
| Minna                      | 9 (3 males, 6 females)  |       |         |                      |                       |
| <b>North East</b>          |                         |       |         |                      |                       |
| Jigawa                     | 10 (10 females)         | 7     | 13      | 13.21                | 20.31                 |
| Kano                       | 10 (7 males, 3 females) |       |         |                      |                       |
| <b>North West</b>          |                         |       |         |                      |                       |
| Kastina                    | 10 (5 males, 5 females) | 9     | 11      | 16.98                | 17.19                 |
| Damaturu                   | 10 (4 males, 6 females) |       |         |                      |                       |
| <b>South East</b>          |                         |       |         |                      |                       |
| Umuahia                    | 20(10males,10 females)  | 10    | 10      | 18.87                | 15.63                 |
| <b>South West</b>          |                         |       |         |                      |                       |
| Ekiti                      | 10 (6 males, 4 females) | 11    | 9       | 20.75                | 14.06                 |
| Lagos (Ikeja Study Centre) | 10 (5 males, 5 females) |       |         |                      |                       |
| <b>South South</b>         |                         |       |         |                      |                       |
| Port Harcourt              | 10 (5 males 5 females)  | 8     | 10      | 15.09                | 15.63                 |
| Akwa Ibom                  | 8 ( 3 males, 5 females) |       |         |                      |                       |
| Total Samples              |                         | 53    | 64      | 100                  | 100                   |
|                            | 117                     |       |         |                      |                       |

Table: 1 shows the distribution of the questionnaire among male and female respondents within six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The results indicate that more women were registered and are interested in this programme compared to their male counterparts.

### Data Analysis

Questionnaires used to collect data from the study samples on the role of ODL on the environmental science and resource management course considering the equity, access and its other social benefits to the citizens and the environment were analysed for the purpose of confirming the perception, opinion and adequacy of ODL system of education

in building capacity in higher education. The responses under each section of questionnaire were analysed on the basis of modal results and the responses having the maximum frequency were arranged in descending order. The following findings were recorded as follows:



**Figure: 3**  
 Reasons provided by respondents for for registering for the ESM programme at NOUN

Figure: 3 shows the main reasons why some of the respondents registered for the ESM programme at NOUN. The graph shows there are a decreasing number of respondents as the reasons drifted to application/need of the course. Majority of the respondents had registered because of the ease of access and the low cost of education.

**Table: 2**  
 Assessment of course curriculum and delivery

| Course Contents of ESM             | %  | Grade        |
|------------------------------------|----|--------------|
| Relevance of assignments           | 73 | Very good    |
| Course outline and syllabus        | 65 | Good         |
| Course Materials and their subject | 57 | satisfactory |
| Availability of Course materials   | 52 | satisfactory |
| <b>Delivery</b>                    |    |              |
| Study Centre environment           | 65 | good         |
| Relevance of course to job         | 62 | good         |
| Facilitators' knowledge of courses | 69 | good         |
| Study guidelines                   | 58 | satisfactory |
| <b>Assesment</b>                   |    |              |
| Assignment Marking                 | 65 | good         |
| Field work                         | 47 | fair         |
| Examination and Evaluation         | 68 | good         |

Table: 2 lists the how the learners rated the course curriculum and delivery. The results show that the course was relevant while the field work was rated as fair with 47%.

Availability of course materials, study guidelines and the study materials were was rated as satisfactory.

**Table: 3**  
**Employment status of students studying**  
**BSc. Environmental Science and Resource Management**

| Occupation                      | Number of respondents | %    |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------|
| Teaching                        | 20                    | 11.3 |
| Public Offices                  | 15                    | 8.47 |
| Corporate/Private Organisations | 12                    | 6.78 |
| Self employed                   | 13                    | 7.34 |
| Total employed                  | 60                    | 33.9 |
| Unemployed                      | 57                    | 32.2 |
| Total Number                    | 177                   |      |

Table: 3 shows the employment status of some of learners who completed the questionnaires. About half of the learners in the ESM programme were employed while the others were unemployed.

**Table: 4**  
**Age range of respondents**

| Age ( years ) | Number of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <25           | 47                    | 40%            |
| 25-35         | 50                    | 43%            |
| 35-45         | 17                    | 14.5%          |
| >45           | 3                     | 2.5%           |

Table: 4 show the age group of respondents. While 43% of the group was within the age group of 25-35 years, it was noted that there were people who were above the age of 45 years (2.5%).

## **DISCUSSION**

Developing capacity in all spheres of life including social and economic development can be built if there is access to information. Such access through ODL can reach the unreached and promote growth and development in any community/nation. Various authors have made clear that if education through ODL is open, flexible and accessible, willing learners can develop skills that will take them to the next levels in the society. As such, the results of this analysis indicated that while 34% of the learners where unemployed, they were still able to access the degree programme.

It goes to show that irrespective of their age groups and employment status, there was no limit to education and opportunities. Also, following the age range of learners from less than 25 years to more than 45 years, Bourlova's (2005) study showed that adult students were seeking educational opportunities that were more appropriate for their circumstances so that they can reconcile their work life with family obligations.

In Nigeria, when ODL is compared with the conventional mode of learning, it has been noted to provide educational equity as primary access of an individual. NOUN provides education to Nigerian learners directly through her own unique admission system and not through the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board (JAMB). In Nigeria, JAMB is a unified method of tertiary examinations by which potential students would have to sit for and pass before they are given a choice of study in their selected higher institutions. It was designed to test higher cognitive objectives such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Badmus and Odor 1996), which could be to a disadvantage for certain, groups of people. Thus, in support of the open admission in NOUN, Campbell and Storo (1996) have stated that it enables students to register at any time of the year, thus creating opportunities and building capacity for more people

The number of female respondents who studied Environmental Science and Resource management outnumbered the males. Through this, we agree with the study of Abdelmuhdi et.al, (2010) that when education contributes to the development of women, it has far-reaching and positive consequences for the societies in which they live. Also, the World Bank study (2007) shows that women in the continent of Asia use distance learning to improve their income and to create jobs through which they can help their families and educate their children and in addition to developing their skills, strengthen their self-confidence and learning new things. From the response, this study confirms that ODL is creating access to women, allowing equity between men and women unlike before as in the cases cited above.

The opportunity of Environmental Science and Resource Management in ODL has further broadened the minds of existing workers who work in corporate organisations to have a chance of upward or horizontal mobility, improve their lot and allow for a change of career. This is in line with the assertion of Cano et. al, 2010 who observed that ODL's mode of education guarantees equal opportunities, educational inclusion and the avoidance of discrimination and acts as a compensating element for personal, cultural, economic and social justice, with special attention to those that are disabled. The challenge of this course is that of course material availability. Although most of the course materials have been provided online and in print form for students' use, there is still the challenge of accessibility especially where various internet service providers are slow, or not connecting when they are needed, challenge of electricity. And, learners that are based in the rural areas might find this method discouraging. But, to resolve this problem, the university is improving the I.T service provided at the universities' study centres.

Respondents have rated the course content of Environmental Science and Resource Management delivery and assessment as either good or satisfactory. However, field work had been rated as fair. The study of Vassala (2006) on this area has shown that the possibility of field study as an educational technique in ODL is still a challenge and being developed. For a course such as this, difficulties might exist in terms of time consumed in the preparation and implementation of the field work among diverse learners in various locations/regions. However, NOUN is currently working with tutors at the various study centres to explore field studies which are peculiar to the geographic locations of the learners.

It is hoped that field study will make the education process more active, enable the learners to understand their local environment, develop more skills and competencies and also encourage team work (Vassala, 2006).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Following the analysis and discussions in this paper, I can conclude that capacity building in environmental management through the course offered at NOUN-Environmental Science and Resource Management is an important area especially in the sustenance of natural and human resources for the present and the future. Through an integrated course such as this and offered through the ODL, skills in environmental monitoring, regulation, management, impact assessment, resource control among could be learnt which will help to protect local environments where learners reside. Through the flexibility of the tutorial and teaching system of ODL adopted by NOUN, the convenience of teaching time and low charges of the course has continued to attract a lot of students and most of the students look forward to a better future in life. In spite of all these however, more work needs to be done in terms of bringing to light the intended purpose of understanding the nature of the environment from the basics especially to people who are not inclined to the science subjects, but who are eager to receive education. Furthermore, as more and more people adopt ODL as a means of achieving higher environmental education, it is believed that the literacy base of the country will advance and the skilled capacity will be boosted. This will consequently bring about increase in equity and equality in terms of employment levels and boost socio-economic development in the country and beyond.

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## **EXTENT OF APPROPRIATENESS OF THE OUTCOMES OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN KING SAUD UNIVERSITY FOR THE NEEDS OF SAUDI PRIVATE SECTOR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Problem of unemployment of the graduates of the university is unique in the sense that it is related to a segment of society who carries high qualifications that do not qualify them to participate in society's development and leading the operations for change and development. The same took place in the Kingdom that expanded university education for many social and political reasons, without considering the extent of appropriateness of these outcomes with the labor market. While dealing with the weak matching, this study has tried to explain the extent of appropriateness of the outcomes of graduate studies in King Saud University for the needs of Saudi private sector, know the causes of this weak matching and present supportive solutions. This study followed the descriptive method and used a restricted end questionnaire made of 13 items as tool of study. The study sample is made of 45 female students from the graduates of graduate studies in King Saud University of Riyadh and these students are all unemployed. This study has reached a number of findings that point towards weak matching between the outcomes of graduate studies in Kind Saud University and the needs of the Saudi private sector. The main causes of this weakness are as under:

- Increase in the number of graduates from the universities against limited job vacancies in the public sector.
- Competition of foreign labor with the university graduates in the private sector.
- Increase in population year after year with the same old infrastructure standing as it was, effecting the unemployment situation through limited fields.
- Lack of interaction between the university on one side and the labor market from the other side in forwarding job applications to labor market.
- Private sector's lack of interest in employing the natives because of high expenses as compared to the foreign labor.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Unemployment is an international and common problem that is not specific to a certain country or nation as it exists in various categories in most countries, if not all countries of the world. Hence, the topic of employing or putting to work all human resources will remain a goal and objective followed by all countries. The reaction of the countries towards unemployment varies starting from ignoring fully or not treating it as a social problem to efforts through which the countries show much concern in form of studies and analysis to pinpoint the causes and factors that lead to it, for the sake of specifying and suggesting the best means to stop it and deal with it.

The problem of unemployment and employing the Saudi labor force represents one of the most important issues that have social, economic and political reflections in the Kingdom. Al-Otaibi (2007) thinks that the problem of lack of Appropriateness of the outcomes of

Graduate studies for the needs of Saudi labor market, is actually from the most important interpretations for the crisis of unemployment especially with the changes and conversions that took place in the last years in the economic fields and Saudi labor market which made this matching a focal issue. Similarly, the importance of studying this problem becomes clear from the fact that the unemployment is the most dangerous thing that is facing the social and economical stability in the Kingdom, so it is gaining special importance in the present time and it will gain a great vigorous importance in future if not dealt with in a proper way. This importance springs up from various reasons, mainly:

- That the local private sector is still reluctant in employing the national cadre with a plea the specialties of the graduating student do not match the needs of the labor market, hence the preparation of the qualified national cadre must be based on the specific needs of the labor market and the required specialties, and this is what gives vigorous importance to the issue of matching.
- That the private sector is still hoping to employ the local human resources provided they possess some additional qualifications like foreign languages and ability of operate computer and its usages. Hence it is necessary to prepare an educational plan serving these requirements and providing the specialties needed by the labor market, and it should be given priority.
- The public sector institutions are overwhelmed with the theoretical specialties campaign while the jobs that require scientific specialties are filled non-Saudi cadres, hence the matching between the needs of public sector institutions and the outcomes of the graduate studies accomplishes the employment of national cadre in these institutions, and this is a big challenge for the institutions of graduate studies.

## QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study tries to answer the following main question:

What is the extent of appropriateness of the outcomes of graduate studies for the needs of Saudi Private Labor Market. This will be done through answering the following questions:

- What are the graduate studies programs offered by King Saud University?
- What is the concept of appropriateness of the outcomes of graduate studies for the needs of Saudi Private Labor market?
- What are the reasons that are leading to lack of matching the graduate studies outcomes with the private Saudi labor sector?
- What are the solutions that may help in matching between the education outcomes and the private Saudi labor sector?
- What are the sectors that may accommodate the outcomes of the graduate studies programs of the universities?
- What jobs are taken by the bearers of higher degrees in the private sector?

## GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAMS OFFERED BY KING SAUD UNIVERSITY

The Deanship of Graduate Studies is considered the focal point for the concern of the authorities in the university by offering all kinds of support for its development keeping in mind its important in improving the level of scientific research and preparing properly the specialists in all kinds of knowledge, until it reached the supervisory level as the number of programs has reached by end of second semester of 1431/1432 A.H. to 209 programs for Masters and 82 programs for doctorate (website of the Deanship of Graduate Studies).

The concept of graduate studies is not a contemporary concept as some people think. In the year 387 B.C, Plato established the first and the oldest academy of the world in Athens and offered in it a program for graduate studies and gave it the name of 'Dialectic' that means graduate studies, where those students who passed first two levels of education could attend. This level started from the age of thirty and ended at the age of fifty. Plato describes the 'Dialectic' as the height of sciences and their crown, and there is no other science that deserves a place higher than this as man may reach the height of logical world through 'Dialectic', when he stops begging any of his senses and reaches, through logic alone, the essence of everything, without stopping in his struggle, until he reaches through reason alone the essence of goodness (Zakariyya, 1985, p. 453). We see Plato's concern and his strictness on the graduate studies as the philosophers (scholars of dialectic) alone are only ones in whose hands the control of authority may get stable. Moreover, used to select his teachers from the scholars of dialectic and here we may see how much importance Plato gave to teacher preparation. This academy continued for centuries until it was shut down by Emperor Justinian in the year 529 who ousted its philosophers also. They fled to Persia and were welcomed by Khusrow Nowsherwan. From here the Greek philosophy moved to the east and from this same route ended up in Arabia (al-Ahwani, 1991, P. 14).

### **Concept of the Appropriateness The Graduate Studies For the Private Saudi Labor Sector**

The graduate studies are considered among the educational institutions that represent the height of teaching and educational system and plays a great role in strengthening the society with qualifications and skills that have the ability of adjustment, flexibility and building a qualified work force that can adjust with the new technology and participate in the intelligence revolution which is the moving force behind the change (Habib, 2007).

The purpose is to harmonize the graduate studies with the requirements of changing labor market in a way that may strengthen the mission of this education, increase its ability to face the continuous change in this market, predict this change before its occurrence, facilitate the suitable training for its requirements, create awareness in the business sectors and its institutions about the fact that the prosperity of man and the society is centered in his economical activity and not merely in material earning (al-Zahrani, 1423, P. 21).

### **Causes Leading to Lack of Matching the Outcomes of Graduate Studies with the Private Saudi Business Sector**

Unemployment as an economic and social phenomenon has generally many reasons but what concerns us here is to mention the factors directly connected with the graduate studies. Among these factors are:

- **Admission policy:** the Deanship of Graduate Studies accepts a good number of university graduates without looking into labor market's need as compared to their specialties and the extant of importance these specialties have for the labor market. In this way the problem of unemployment become crucial, hence the need to connecting the university with labor market
- **General trend of following the usual way of education** "the classic and academic" and avoiding the technical education, where it is seen that the number of students going to academic education and colleges of humanity, like the colleges of education, Arts, Economics and political science, is

increasing. We may connect this with a characteristic of the characteristics of functional theory which is the inheriting of the roles and disparity in the given values of various jobs in the society, hence some roles and professions are looked at as if they are more important than others or perhaps require more skills or deep experience in training or they are more dangerous or require more commitment. But it is possible to confirm that these roles and whatever they require regarding accurate jobs may be employed by more qualified and capable individuals as the societies start giving values and material and moral rewards for these jobs that will make them more valuable than others and make their occupiers enjoy more privileges than others, those who are working to pass on these jobs to the next generations coming after them, inside their family and society circle.

- This inheritance for a specific type of jobs does not carry with it the material and moral values only that are set by the society for these jobs, rather it transfers with it the values that are connected with the jobs, life style, trends and the factors that push to continue their reward from the society with same privileges.
- Which is against the policy that Bad policy of planning and central programming "placement" in distributing of the number of students, as it is done against their qualifications and desires of many of them which leads to failure, delay in studies or graduation of weak qualifications or non-qualified and not interested in work. Hence a new kind of unemployment comes to form is called "putting the right person at the right place".
- The director of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Heckman (1997) confirms that during the past years the number of degree holders and graduates who do not have capabilities and skills have increased and that there is a dire need for the institutions of graduate studies to work on providing the required skills for the labor market. Heckman also emphasizes that the study undertaken by University of Colorado and University of North Carolina specified the most required skills for the labor market of the United States of America as the study done by university of Colorado explained that the most important qualities or skill required by the business men in the new graduates are: practical skills, ability to work in a group or team, being sensitive to the code of ethics, having leadership qualities, ability to solve problems and written communication. While the study done by university of North Carolina explained that the most important skills required in the university graduates should represent in: ability to deal with customers, ability to deal with various means of communication, codes of ethics, analytical ability and critical thinking. Similarly, both studies explained that the least required skills were the skills in the foreign languages.
- The study undertaken by Imel (1999) explained the importance of providing basic skills to the job seekers. It mentioned that the United States administration in the time of President Clinton in 1994, emphasized upon the importance of the role of applied colleges to impart to the American youth the necessary skills required by the labor market, which was translated by the administration through its legislation of the law known shortly as STWOA (School to Work Opportunity Acts), aiming to help in rehabilitation of the youth and train them in necessary skills to get good and high salary jobs or help them in completing their higher academic education.
- Refusal of the graduates to work in professions and jobs they think are not suitable for them and are lower than their standard.

- **Lack of interaction between the university at one side and the labor market with its both sectors on the other side by presenting job applications for the graduates to labor market.**
- **The results of a study by the ministry of Canadian graduate studies Colussis, 2001 in (Mclaughlin, 2001) , conducted a study on small and medium institutions in the private and public sectors, concluded that the cooperation between the educational and training institutions and the labor market, and the continuous improvement of syllabi and programs to match the quick change in the labor and economic market generally, is very important .**
- **Weak and limited specialties for girls that do not suit the labor market.**
- **Competition of foreign labor with the university graduates in the private sector.**
- **It has been mentioned in the second Arab report about the employment and unemployment in the Arab countries that the number of foreign workers has increased in the private sector jobs as the number reached 2,080,663 in the year 1999 at the percentage of 77.3% from the total number of the workers in the private sector. This number kept on increasing and controlling the job vacancies in the private sector until it reached 4738823 workers in the year 2005 at the percentage of 88.4% from the total number of the workers in the private sector.**
- **Majority of the companies in the private sector put some kind of requirements that have some difficulty, like years of experience, so most the new graduates suffer from this problem and it lets the advertised jobs in the market limited between those who are already working, giving them the chance to move from a certain job category to a better category. This does not leave a sufficient gap for the new graduates.**

**The study conducted by Al-Zahrani, (1423 AH) concluded that there are many reasons that lead to the matching of Saudi graduate studies to the needs of the national development from the work force and their economic, social and security reflections.**

**The most important results of that study were:**

- **Non-availability of data about the needs of labor market regarding the specialties and skills to act as a guide in the admission policies and distribution of students in the various specialties.**
- **Lack of ability of the graduate studies institutions to achieve the matching of skills, abilities and expertise of the graduates with the requirements of private sector in the workers and technicians.**
- **That the Saudi graduate studies institutions did not give any indications that they know the requirements of economic globalization and the educational challenges resulting from it.**
- **The study results show that the increasing demand on Saudi labor market needs of human resource, centers around the medical and specialties, engineering specialties, technical and professional specialties, industrial specialties, management, accountancy, specialties in financial, administrative, business, hotel and travel services, and specialties in computer and IT.**

**Solutions helping the matching between the studies outcomes and the Saudi labor market:**

- **Concern of the governments to work on the economic and social development plans and provide real employment chances for every able and interesting person.**
- **Directing the employment of foreign labor by limiting them in specific professions.**
- **Revision of the salient features of education and training policies in a way that may enable them to respond to the needs of market.**
- **Taking advantage of the direct foreign investments by creating productive chances of employment.**
- **Activation of human resources information systems in the process of strategic planning for human resource specially and planning for employment generally.**

The study conducted by Lin (Lin, 1997) emphasizes on this. It aimed at limiting the level of employing human resources information systems in the process of strategic planning for human resources specially and planning for the organization's works generally in the Taiwan business organizations, as it also studied the aspect related to employing computer and its techniques in improving human resources information systems. The following were the most important results of that study: a great concern in using human resource information systems for the strategic planning of human resources. Estimation of more than 50% jobs of human resource management included in an integrated system for human resource management. Great concern of human resource managers in using human resource information systems in delivering the task of training, in addition of other jobs.

Similarly, the study of Al-Otaibi (2007), aimed at analysis and diagnosis of the problem of lack of matching of graduate studies outcomes with the needs of Saudi labor market and in the same frame the paper aims at knowing the requirements of business sector from the graduate studies institutions. The study reached several conclusions that may help in controlling this problem. The most important conclusions are:

- **Need of concentrating on matching the graduate studies outcomes with the requirements of labor market and taking care of the scientific specialties and specialties in English language and computer.**
- **Need of paying attention on specific quality of the students by graduating cadres with appropriate abilities and skills.**
- **Need of revising the present syllabi in the universities in collaboration with private sector while working on the educational plans.**
- **Involvement of private sector in the studies conducted for the sake of knowing the labor market requirements.**
- **That the educational institutions should transfer the modern trends prevailing in the work field inside their campuses so that the private sector may not be forced to change, update and renew the skills of the graduates.**

### **Sectors That May Absorb the Outcomes of Graduate Studies Programs in the Universities**

The private sector in general and the businessmen in particular have major and important role in operating and providing suitable and appropriate job opportunities for the qualified human resources.

It is obvious that the private sector is expected to absorb most of the growing human force and employ it in a best way to avoid problems and issues that appear as result of unemployment and instability of law and order situation that threatens their investments

and economic interests. Hence, when companies and big institutions will come forward and adopt the policies and programs that include the youth and give them suitable jobs, they will have their active and prominent role in development and operation.

### **Jobs Occupied By the Higher Degree Holders in the Private Sector**

Jobs occupied by the higher degree holders in the private sector in the year 2010 AD.

| Educational Qualification | Saudis |         | Non – Saudis |         |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|--------------|---------|
|                           | Males  | Females | Males        | Females |
| High Diploma              | 321    | 14      | 1786         | 306     |
| Masters                   | 3081   | 262     | 39270        | 3725    |
| Fellowship                | 34     | 6       | 338          | 32      |
| Ph.D.                     | 692    | 57      | 6047         | 1175    |

### **OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY**

Many studies and researches conclude that the reason for unemployment in the Kingdom is the weak matching between the outcomes of graduate studies and the needs of national development.

Similarly, the statistics of the Ministry of Labor indicate that the percentage of unemployment does not exceed 5% among those who have reached the work age and the real number of applicants seeking job has reached 154,600 in all regions of the Kingdom and their names have been recorded by 46 committees that has been given this task.

But there is some other independent estimation that indicate that the real number is four times greater than the previous number and the unemployment in Saudi Arabia is more than 20% among the Saudis who have reached the work age (High Commission for the Development of Arriyadh, 2007).

Hence, the objective of this study is to realize the extent of appropriateness of the outcomes of graduate studies for the needs of Saudi private labor market.

### **Study Procedures**

- **Study Methodology:** Descriptive method
- **Study Group:** Group of Graduate Studies female students of King Saud University.
- **Study Sample:** 45 female students from the graduates of graduate studies at King Saud University who are jobless. The sample covered the Riyadh region, (a potential, random and simple sample).
- **Study Tools:** a questionnaire for all information has been designed and distributed among the appropriate group.
- **Reliability of Study Tool:** the calculation of reliability of the study tool coefficient will be done statistically through calculation of Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire.
- **Statistical Analysis:** the percentage is used which are: the repetitions.

## STUDY RESULTS AND ITS ANALYSIS

The results of field application and analysis of study results are presented in the light of ideological framework and previous studies.

The results of this study concluded in paragraph number 1 say that 64.4 think that there is no relationship between private sector institutions and Saudi universities and colleges to understand the labor market needs, which is high percentage.

This is in agreement with Mclaughlin' study (2001), that sees the need of cooperation between educational and training institutes and the labor market. While a low percentage sees opposite of that, as 11.1% do not agree with us and 24.4% see that sometimes.

| Statements  | I agree    |      | Sometimes  |      | I do not agree |      |
|---|------------|------|------------|------|----------------|------|
|   | Repetition | %    | Repetition | %    | Repetition     | %    |
| 1. There is no relationship between private sector institutions and Saudi universities and colleges to understand the labor market needs.   | 29         | 64.4 | 11         | 24.4 | 5              | 11.1 |
| 2. The university is not concerned with quality assurance of the students while graduating capable and appropriately skilled cadre for labor market                                       | 22         | 48.9 | 10         | 22.2 | 13             | 28.9 |
| 3. The university does not transfer the new trends in work field to its departments which consequently force the private sector to modify, polish and renew the skills of graduates       | 19         | 42.2 | 17         | 37.8 | 9              | 20   |
| 4. Increasing number of university graduates against limited jobs in the public sector  | 43         | 95.5 | 1          | 2.2  | 1              | 2.2  |
| 5. Annual increase in population with same infrastructure as it was, a situation that has its effects over unemployment through limited availability of fields.                           | 37         | 82.2 | 6          | 13.3 | 2              | 4.4  |
| 6. Increasing number of graduates from theoretical departments against small number of graduates from applied dept.   | 22         | 48.9 | 12         | 26.7 | 11             | 24.4 |
| 7. Lack of communication between the university at one side and labor market with its both sectors on the other side, by sending job applications for graduates to the labor market       | 33         | 73.3 | 5          | 11.1 | 7              | 15.5 |
| 8. Graduates refusal to work in the private sector because of low wages   | 25         | 55.5 | 14         | 31.3 | 6              | 13.3 |
| 9. Competition of foreign labor with university graduates in private sector   | 39         | 86.7 | 4          | 8.9  | 2              | 4.4  |
| 10. Lack of interest shown by the private sector in employing Saudi nationals because of the high cost as compared to foreign labor   | 32         | 71.1 | 6          | 13.3 | 7              | 15.5 |
| 11. Fear of graduates from non-abiding of private sector to fulfill the legal obligations in favor of the worker during and after the end of service period as compared to public sector. | 27         | 60   | 12         | 26.7 | 6              | 13.3 |
| 12. Lack of acceptance from some graduates to work in far flung areas.  | 21         | 46.7 | 13         | 28.9 | 11             | 24.4 |

|   |    |    |    |      |   |      |
|---|----|----|----|------|---|------|
| 13. Social customs and traditions that limit the fields of work for woman to few fields like education for example. | 27 | 60 | 11 | 24.4 | 7 | 15.5 |
|---|----|----|----|------|---|------|

The results of this study concluded in paragraph number 2 say that 48.9% do not see the concern of the university with quality assurance of the students while graduating capable and appropriately skilled cadre for labor market, which is in agreement with Al-Otaibi's study (2007), that emphasized on the need of having concern with quality assurance of the students through graduating capable and appropriately skilled cadre. While 28.9% do not agree on that and 22.2% see that sometimes.

The results of this study concluded in paragraph number 3 say that 42.2% see that the university does not transfer the new trends in work field to its departments which consequently force the private sector to modify, polish and renew the skills of graduates, which is in agreement with Al-Otaibi's study (2007) that emphasizes that the educational institutions should transfer the new trends in the work field to their departments so that the private sector is not forced to modify the graduate skills. 20% don not agree on that while 37.8% see that sometimes.

The results of this study explained in paragraph number 4 say that 95.5% see that one of the reasons of unemployment is increasing number of university graduates against limited jobs in the public sector, which is a high percentage, at a time when only 2.2% see that sometimes and 2.2% do not agree on that.

The results of this study concluded in paragraph number 5 say that 82.2% see that the annual increase in population with same infrastructure as it was is a situation that has its effects over unemployment through limited availability of fields, and this is a high percentage, while 13.3% see that sometimes and 4.4% do not agree on that.

The results of this study explained in paragraph number 6 say that 48.9% see that one of the reasons of non-appropriateness of the outcomes with Saudi labor market go back to the increasing number of graduates from theoretical departments against small number of graduates from applied departments, 26.7% see that sometimes while 24.4% do not see that.

The results of this study explained in paragraph number 7 emphasize that 73.3% of the total sample agree that lack of communication between the university at one side and labor market with its both sectors on the other side, by sending job applications for the graduates to the labor market, while 11.1% see that sometimes and 15.5% do not agree.

Hence there is a relationship between educational planning and job opportunities. The more it is planned, more job opportunities are created. So it is a must to establish communication between the university and both private and public sectors.

Similarly, the results of this study explained in paragraph number 8 that 55.5% see that the graduates refusal to work in the private sector because of low wages, while 31.1.% see that sometimes and 13.3% do not agree on that.

The results of this study explained in paragraph number 9 conclude that 86.7% of the total sample agree on competition of foreign labor with university graduates in private sector, which is a high percentage, while 8.9% see that there is competition sometimes and 4.4% do not agree with that which is a very low percentage.

The results of this study explained in paragraph number 10 indicate that 71.1% see that lack of interest shown by the private sector in employing Saudi nationals because of the

high cost as compared to foreign labor, which is a high percentage, while 15.5% see the opposite and 13.3% see that sometimes. Hence there is an inverse relationship between the cost of labor paid by the private sector to Saudis and the job opportunities.

The results of this study explained in paragraph number 11 emphasize that 60% see the fear of graduates from non-abiding of private sector to fulfill the legal obligations in favor of the worker during and after the end of service period as compared to public sector, while 26.7% see that happening sometimes and 13.3% do not agree on this. Similarly, the results of this study in paragraph number 12 explain that 46.7% see lack of acceptance from some graduates to work in far flung areas, and 24.4% oppose them, while 28.9% see that it happens sometimes.

The results of this study in paragraph number 13 explain that 60% see the social customs and traditions that limit the fields of work for woman to few fields like education, which is a high percentage, while 15.5% see opposite of it and 24.4% see that it happens sometimes.

### **SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The current study that had aimed to know the extent of appropriateness of the outcomes of graduate studies in King Saud University for the needs of Saudi private sector, has reached to the conclusion that this appropriateness is weak and the main reasons for the weakness of this appropriateness are the following:

- Increasing number of university graduates against limited jobs in the public sector.
- Competition of foreign labor with university graduates in private sector.
- Annual increase in population with same infrastructure as it was, a situation that has its effects over unemployment through limited availability of fields.
- Lack of communication between the university at one side and labor market with its both sectors on the other side, by sending job applications for graduates to the labor market.
- Lack of interest shown by the private sector in employing Saudi nationals because of the high cost as compared to foreign labor.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It recommends involving the private sector in the studies, application and planning.
- It recommends strengthening the relationship between institutions of the private sector and the Saudi universities and colleges.
- It recommends the local private sector to employ the qualified national cadre and communicate with the universities in knowing special needs of labor market.
- It recommends activating human resource information systems in the procedure of strategic planning for human resource especially and planning for the sake of employing generally, for the sake of simplification for both private and public sectors, to reach out to the qualified outcomes.
- It recommends guiding the process of using foreign labor through confining them in limited professions.
- It recommends the private sector to keenly encourage the national cadre to join it, besides abiding the legal commitments for the worker during and after service period.

- It recommends the responsible governments to work on economic and social plans and provide real job opportunities for ever capable and willing person.

## SUGGESTIONS

- We suggest carrying out a study about the future demand of graduate studies programs in Saudi universities in the light of future development needs.
- We suggest to carry out a similar study to compare the capabilities of graduate studies programs students in theoretical and practical specialties.
- We suggest carrying out a comparative study between the capabilities of graduate studies programs students in the Kingdom and other countries in specific specialties to develop the outcomes and make them in conformity with requirements of labor market.

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**APPENDIX**  
**The Questionnaire**

|  | I agree | Sometimes | I do not agree |
|--|---------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Statements</b>  |         |           |                |
| <b>1. There is no relationship between private sector institutions and Saudi universities and colleges to understand the labor market needs.</b>   |         |           |                |
| <b>2. The university is not concerned with quality assurance of the students while graduating capable and appropriately skilled cadre for labor market.</b>                                      |         |           |                |
| <b>3. The university does not transfer the new trends in work field to its departments which consequently force the private sector to modify, polish and renew the skills of graduates.</b>      |         |           |                |
| <b>4. Increasing number of university graduates against limited jobs in the public sector.</b>   |         |           |                |
| <b>5. Annual increase in population with same infrastructure as it was, a situation that has its effects over unemployment through limited availability of fields.</b>                           |         |           |                |
| <b>6. Increasing number of graduates from theoretical departments against small number of graduates from applied departments.</b>  |         |           |                |
| <b>7. Lack of communication between the university at one side and labor market with its both sectors on the other side, by sending job applications for graduates to the labor market.</b>      |         |           |                |
| <b>8. Graduates refusal to work in the private sector because of low wages.</b>  |         |           |                |
| <b>9. Competition of foreign labor with university graduates in private sector.</b>  |         |           |                |
| <b>10. Lack of interest shown by the private sector in employing Saudi nationals because of the high cost as compared to foreign labor.</b>  |         |           |                |
| <b>11. Fear of graduates from non-abiding of private sector to fulfill the legal obligations in favor of the worker during and after the end of service period as compared to public sector.</b> |         |           |                |
| <b>12. Lack of acceptance from some graduates to work in far flung areas.</b>  |         |           |                |
| <b>13. Social customs and traditions that limit the fields of work for woman to few fields like education for example.</b>   |         |           |                |

## ATTITUDE OF B.Ed. STUDENTS' TOWARDS ODL INSTITUTIONS IN TAMIL NADU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aims to probe the attitude of B.Ed. students' towards ODL institutions in Tamil Nadu Open University. Survey method was employed in the present study. A sample of 293 B.Ed. students studying in Tamil Nadu Open University was selected by simple random technique. The data was collected by Students' Attitude and Perceptions Rating of Open and Distance Learning Institutions Inventory (SAPRODLII) developed by Ojo, D. O., & Olankulehin, F. K. (2006). SPSS-17 Package was used for analysis of the collected data. The Percentile analysis, mean, standard deviation, level, t-test, ANOVA and chi-square were employed as statistical techniques to analyse the data. The findings show that

- The attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL institutions in TNOU is neutral,
- there is no significant difference in the attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL institutions in TNOU in terms of
  - gender,
  - locality and
  - teaching experience,
- English medium students are having favourable attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU than Tamil medium students,
- Language subject students are having favourable attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU than arts and science subject students, and
- There is significant association between age of the B.Ed. students and their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**Keywords:** Attitude of B.Ed. students, ODL institutions, TNOU, Tamil Nadu Open University.

### INTRODUCTION

India has the second largest educational system in the world after China (Cheney et al., 2006, p.1). Although the Indian education system is the world's largest, the country also has the maximum number of illiterates (Mujumdar, n.d., p. 1). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education, which was 11% in 2005-06, almost got doubled to 19.4% in the year 2010-11. The GER for women in Higher Education increased from 9.4 to 17.9% during the same period (Singh, M., 2013). The GER in higher education in Tamil Nadu currently stands at 19%, a 1% point increase from the 11<sup>th</sup> plan period. The GER of marginalized sections of society in the context of social and gender is even less than 6% (Pokhriyal, n.d., p.1).

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in the higher education sector contributes to about 24% of the total enrolment. The aim of Tamil Nadu government is to make it as 21% by 2017 and 25% by 2025 (Thyagarajan, n.d., p.4). The Indian Government has ambitious plans of increasing this to 40%. India has only one central Open University, namely, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Each State also has a State Open University setup by the local State Government. In spite of this and due to the need of educating huge population of the masses, many private, un-aided distance education providers have mushroomed in all corners of India (Mujumdar, n.d., p.1).

### TAMIL NADU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) was established to benefit those who have been deprived of and/or denied the access to higher education especially destitute, physically challenged, working men and women, economically weaker sections of the society, and those who discontinued education for various reasons, etc. In the main, it aims to reach the hitherto unreached.

Tamil Nadu Open University offers 2 years B.Ed. programme through distance mode since 2004. A total of 500 students were admitted through 5 programme study centres (PSCs) by English medium since 2004. After 2006, the university has admitted an addition of 500 students through Tamil Medium. So, now totally 1000 students are pursuing their B.Ed. programme through 10 PSCs. In TNOU, the B.Ed. programme mainly concentrates to improve the quality of teaching competency and inculcate the innovative teaching strategies for the already employed/ working teachers in the schools of Tamil Nadu. The main feature of the B.Ed. programme is to help the teachers to study while working in various schools of Tamil Nadu without affecting their teaching career.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Tamil Nadu Open University is the first university to conduct B.Ed. programme through distance education in the state since 2004. Till today, roughly 9,000 students have completed their 2 years B.Ed. degree programme through distance mode. All are teachers working in schools of Tamil Nadu and among them 95% of them are working in government and government aided schools. Tomorrow's nation depends upon the type of citizens trained and educated today in the temples of learning. Humayun Kabir said, "Teachers are literally the arbiters of a nation's destiny" (Kochhar, S. K., 1971, p.153).

The role of primary and secondary school teachers are very important. They are like potters moulding the habits and behaviour of a child according to needs and aspirations of the society. It needs no description that the teachers are the pivot of any educational system of the younger students. On them rests the failure or the success of the system. If the teachers are well educated and are intellectually alive and take keen interest in their job, success will be ensured. But if on the other hand, they lack training in education and if they cannot give their heart to their profession, the system is destined to fail.

Taking this in mind, the investigator aims to study the attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL Institutions in Tamil Nadu Open University.

### OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

#### Attitude

Attitude is a tendency to show favour or disfavour for ODL institutions in TNOU. It is the amount or degree of positive or negative feelings towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**B.Ed. Students**

The students studying their B.Ed. degree programme through distance mode in Tamil Nadu Open University after completion of their UG/PG degree.

**ODL Institutions**

Open and Distance Learning Institutions approved by the Tamil Nadu Open University as Programme Study Centres in Tamil Nadu.

**Tamil Nadu Open University**

Tamil Nadu Open University is the 10<sup>th</sup> Open University in India established by the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu State Government Act 27 of 2002 in Chennai.

**METHODOLOGY**

In the present study survey method was employed. A sample of 293 B.Ed. students studying in Tamil Nadu Open University was selected by simple random technique.

The data was collected by Students' Attitude and Perceptions Rating of Open and Distance Learning Institutions Inventory (SAPRODLII) developed by Ojo, D. O., & Olankulehin, F. K. (2006). SPSS-17 Package was used for analysis of the collected data.

The Percentile analysis, mean, standard deviation, level, t-test, ANOVA and chi-square were employed as statistical techniques to analyse the data.

**OBJECTIVE**

- To find out the level of attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL institutions in TNOU.
- To find out if there is any significant difference in the attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL institutions in TNOU in terms of background variables:
  - gender,
  - locality,
  - medium of study,
  - major subject,
  - teaching experience and
  - age.

**NULL HYPOTHESES**

1. There is no significant difference between male and female B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.
3. There is no significant difference between Tamil and English medium B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.
4. There is no significant difference among arts, science and language subject B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.
5. There is no significant difference among below 10 years, 11 to 20 years and above 21 years experience having B.Ed. Students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.
6. There is no significant association between age of the B.Ed. students and their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

**Table: 1**  
**Level of B.Ed. Students' attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU**

| Negative |       | Neutral |       | Positive |       |
|----------|-------|---------|-------|----------|-------|
| N        | %     | N       | %     | N        | %     |
| 67       | 22.9% | 175     | 59.7% | 51       | 17.4% |

It is inferred from the above table that the attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL institutions in TNOU is neutral.

## FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

**H<sub>0</sub> 1:** There is no significant difference between male and female B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**Table: 2**  
**Difference between Male and Female B.Ed. Students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU**

| Gender | N   | Mean  | SD    | Calculated 't' Value | Remark at 5% level |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Male   | 92  | 40.32 | 5.045 | 1.38                 | NS                 |
| Female | 201 | 41.23 | 5.310 |                      |                    |

*At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96*

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference between male and female B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**H<sub>0</sub> 2:** There is no significant difference between rural and urban B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**Table: 3**  
**Difference between Rural and Urban B.Ed. Students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU**

| Locality | N   | Mean  | SD    | Calculated 't' Value | Remark at 5% level |
|----------|-----|-------|-------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Rural    | 172 | 41.10 | 5.154 | 0.63                 | NS                 |
| Urban    | 121 | 40.71 | 5.366 |                      |                    |

*At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96*

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference between rural and urban B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**H<sub>0</sub> 3:** There is no significant difference between Tamil and English medium B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

| Medium of Study | N   | Mean  | SD    | Calculated 't' Value | Remark at 5% level |
|-----------------|-----|-------|-------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Tamil           | 183 | 40.42 | 5.190 | 2.21                 | S                  |
| English         | 110 | 41.81 | 5.223 |                      |                    |

*At 5% level of significance the table value of 't' is 1.96*

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between Tamil and English medium B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU. English medium students (M=41.81) are having favourable attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU than Tamil medium students (M=40.42).

This may be due to the fact that English medium students easily get enormous learning materials from internet and books.

At the same time, the Tamil medium students do not get enough learning materials for their further references.

*H<sub>0</sub> 4:* There is no significant difference among arts, science and language subject B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**Table: 5**  
**Difference among Arts, Science and Language Subject B.Ed. Students**  
**in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU**

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | Calculated 'F' Value | Remark at 5% level |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Between             | 83.861         | 2   | 41.931      | 3.535                | S                  |
| Within              | 7924.152       | 290 | 27.325      |                      |                    |

*At 5% level of significance, for (2, 290) df the table value of 'F' is 3.03*

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference among arts, science and language subject B.Ed. students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU. Language subject students (M=41.21) are having favourable attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU than arts students (M=40.30) and science students (M=39.60). This may be due to the fact that the B.Ed. students in ODL do not have enough time to spend with the instructional resources such as laboratory, library, etc. So that arts and science students may have unfavourable attitude towards ODL institutions.

*H<sub>0</sub> 5:* There is no significant difference among below 10 years, 11 to 20 years and above 21 years experience having B.Ed. Students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**Table: 6**  
**Difference among below 10 years, 11 to 20 years and above 21 years experience having**  
**B.Ed. Students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU**

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | Calculated 'F' Value | Remark at 5% level |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Between             | 46.598         | 2   | 23.299      | 0.849                | NS                 |
| Within              | 7961.416       | 290 | 27.453      |                      |                    |

*At 5% level of significance, for (2,290) df the table value of 'F' is 3.03*

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference among below 10 years, 11 to 20 years and above 21 years experience having B.Ed. Students in their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**H<sub>0</sub> 6:** There is no significant association between age of the B.Ed. students and their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU.

**Table: 7**  
**Significant association between age of the B.Ed. students and their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU**

| Age            | Positive |      | Neutral |       | Negative |      | df | Calculated $\chi^2$ Value | Remark at 5% level |
|----------------|----------|------|---------|-------|----------|------|----|---------------------------|--------------------|
|                | O        | E    | O       | E     | O        | E    |    |                           |                    |
| Below 35 years | 10       | 13.9 | 35      | 36.4  | 16       | 10.6 | 4  | 9.75                      | S                  |
| 36 to 45 years | 42       | 40.6 | 106     | 106.9 | 31       | 31.2 |    |                           |                    |
| Above 46 years | 15       | 12.1 | 34      | 31.7  | 4        | 9.1  |    |                           |                    |

*At 5% level of significance, for 4 df the table value of  $\chi^2$  is 9.488*

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant association between age of the B.Ed. students and their attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU. 36 to 45 years old students (M=41.16) are having favourable attitude towards ODL institutions in TNOU than below 35 years old students (M=41.07) and above 46 years old students (M=40.06).

This may be due to the fact that those who above 46 years are unable to pick up the modern technologies and innovative strategies followed in the ODL institutions and those who below 35 years are very familiar with these technologies and they feel monotonous.

### CONCLUSION

From the above study, it is clearly recognized that the attitude of B.Ed. students towards ODL institutions in TNOU is neutral. So, the authorities of Tamil Nadu Open University and faculties of School of Education in TNOU have to take necessary planning and action in order to improve the attitude of B.Ed. students.

Tamil medium students should be given additional learning materials for further references and to strengthen their knowledge. ODL institutions of TNOU should give laboratory based methods of teaching and learning such as demonstration, computer assisted instruction, etc.

Furthermore, all ODL institutions should give priority to Learner Centred Methods like brainstorming, role playing, discussion, buzz group, study assignment method, seminar and programmed instruction method. The ODL institutions should not halt at the teaching of the B.Ed. students more than that they should mould the students' life forever. So, they should train them for all-round development activities such as providing computer knowledge, value education, stress coping management, time management, emotional intelligence, etc.

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## DEVELOPING LIFELONG LEARNING SKILLS FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES AMONG THE INDIGENOUS KENSIU COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

Globally, indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique world views and associated knowledge systems for millennia. Despite advancement and development a country has achieved, the indigenous people are always found to be left behind from the mainstream of development facing educational and economic issues. This paper presents findings from a research project conducted by Enactus (Entrepreneurs in Action) Universiti Utara Malaysia to support lifelong learning, and as an enabler to inculcate entrepreneurial skills among selected indigenous community in Malaysia. Known for its successful programs, *Enactus*, a non-profit global organization mobilizes university students to create community empowerment projects. This project essentially aims to improve the standard of living of disadvantaged communities in Malaysia. This indigenous community known as the *Kensiu* in the rural villages of Lubuk Legong in Baling was targeted for the project as they faced a lot of problems and challenges ranging from economic problems, hygiene problems and social problems to lack of knowledge. The project was carried out to help develop the lower level skills of the Kensiu community with a focus on educating them on how to carry out their own business. Findings shows with adequate exposure, skills, and integrated efforts from all stakeholders, indigenous people can become great learning communities with much potential for economic and educational success.

**Keywords:** Lifelong learning; Indigenous Communities; Entrepreneur; Entrepreneurial.

### INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic nation with a population of 28.5 million which constitutes three main ethnic groups, the Malay and indigenous people, the Chinese, and the Indians. Since independence in 1957, Malaysia has seen a transformation from a poor, developing country into a middle-income nation. Despite facing external challenges, the Malaysian economy has seen a measured growth (Hatta & Ali, 2013). No matter how developed a country can be, the indigenous people are always found to be left behind from the mainstream of development facing educational and economic issues. The Department of Orang Asli Development (2012) in Malaysia is on hand to address these issues. The department outlines 6 thrusts with the aim of raising the standard of living of the indigenous people in the country. The 6 thrusts are:

- Developing Human Capital
- Generating Economic Activities and Integrating Viable, Competitive and Resilient Industries
- Expanding Access to Infrastructure
- Improving the Quality of Life of the Orang Asli
- Researching, Gathering, Conserving and Highlighting the Traditional Knowledge and Heritage of the Orang Asli
- Strengthening the Service Delivery and Governance Systems

## BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Since Malaysia gained independence in 1957, the government has introduced various programmes to improve the quality of life, particularly in education, of the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia (Mohd Noor, 2012). In Lubuk Legong, Baling, a rural town on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, there resides the only surviving Semang Negrito tribe in the world, the Kensiu community. They reside at an Orang Asli settlement area, a village which consists of Malay-style wooden houses with thatched roofs, built for them by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs, a school and a community hall.

“They belong to the Negrito sub-group of Orang Asli (also known as the Semang) which comprises of over three (i.e. 3.2) per cent of the total Orang Asli population. The Negritos are the smallest sub-group of Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia. They are the oldest to have been in the Peninsular Malaysia” (Abdul Ghani, Che Lah & Zulkifli, 2011, p. 59). Among their activities are extracting forest products such as fruits, rattan and wood to be sold to the nearby villages. Among the Orang Asli subgroups, they are often considered economically backward (Abdul Ghani et. al., 2011). Statistics from the Department of Orang Asli Development (2012) show that 80% of this endangered Kensiu community consisting of about 225 people have an income of less than 450 Malaysian Ringgit per month. This figure is below the poverty line figure for Peninsular Malaysia, which is 760 Malaysian Ringgit.

Enactus (Entrepreneurs in Action) have carried out thousands of voluntary projects worldwide. Known for its successful programs, Enactus, a non-profit global organization mobilizes university students to create community empowerment projects. Enactus Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) have also carried out many projects and one of these is HOME, which stands for Hope, Opportunity, Motivation and Entrepreneurship. The agricultural project carried out by the university undergraduates, essentially aims to improve the standard of living of disadvantaged communities in Malaysia. This indigenous Orang Asli community in the rural villages of Lubuk Legong in Baling were targeted for the project as they faced a lot of problems and challenges ranging from economic problems, hygiene problems and social problems to lack of knowledge. The project was carried out to help develop the lower level skills of this indigenous community with a focus on educating them on how to carry out their own business.

## VISION AND GOALS

It is important to note that the Enactus projects are in line with the university’s Enactus philosophy that emphasizes sustainability aspects with regard to agricultural produce and practices. The vision of this project is to educate the Kensiu community in the field of competitive and successful entrepreneurship in their social and economic lives. The project has several goals:

- to reduce poverty of the Kensiu community
- to reduce the dependency on government assistance
- to improve the lives of the Kensiu women in Ulu Legong
- to help the Kensiu women to learn about household management
- to introduce the Kensiu community to the activities of entrepreneurship
- to provide knowledge about entrepreneurship to the Kensiu people

## DEFINITIONS

“Flexible Learning is a set of educational philosophies and systems, concerned with providing learners with increased choice, convenience, and personalisation to suit the

learner. In particular, flexible learning provides learners with choices about where, when, and how learning occurs. Sometimes also referred to as personalized learning. Flexible learning is a term often used in New Zealand and Australia" (Shurville, O'Grady & Mayall, 2008).

"Non-formal learning refers to learning in structured programs for developing skills and knowledge required by workplaces, communities and individuals. These do not lead to nationally or internationally accredited formal qualifications" (Misko, 2008, p.10). Non-formal education "consists of a wide variety of activities and programmes which include development initiatives to address the plight of poor communities. It is directly linked to the development process which is regarded as an educational process

Kotze (2012, p.4). Non-formal education is also associated with "relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups, concern with specific categories of persons, and flexibility in organization and methods" (Smith, 2009, p.1).

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

This long-term project has been carried out in 4 different phases. The Hope, Opportunity, Motivation and Entrepreneurship (HOME) project began with Phase I and subsequently moved on to Phase II, Phase III and the recently completed Phase IV which aimed at increasing the number of individuals or families who were involved in the project. In the course of helping this community, the participants of the project, who are also undergraduates of the university, at the same time, also conducted research about the problems and lifestyles of this indigenous community.

Phase I was conducted in 2009 which was aimed at helping the Kensiu community in terms of providing information, guidance and skills in entrepreneurship. In this phase, the objective was to get as much information as possible about this indigenous community. The project proceeded with Phase II in 2010. This phase was divided into 2 sub-projects, namely the Inducement Educational Module (IEM) and the Youth Empowerment Entrepreneur Module (YEM).

Phase III of the project was aimed at giving hope, creating opportunities and motivating the Kensiu community through entrepreneurship. The project emphasized all aspects of the community's economic and social life. Two sub-projects for this phase were introduced, namely, the Women Empowerment Module (WEM) and the Research Team. Through these 2 sub-projects, the development of the Kensiu women was focused on. The Women Empowerment Module (WEM) aimed to help the women equip themselves with domestic skills such as sewing, household management and family health. The Research Team, on the other hand, aimed to conduct research in more detail about the problems faced by this community.

Phase IV was aimed at giving maximum effect to the Kensiu community on several aspects such as economic, social, sustainability and entrepreneurship. Hence, a sub-project called the Business Operation Team (BOT) was introduced. This team aimed to deliver knowledge of entrepreneurship and also to act as an advisor to Kensiu's entrepreneurs. It also carries out short-term businesses at the university aimed at generating additional income for the project.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The Youth Empowerment Entrepreneur Module (YEM) has produced entrepreneurs from among this indigenous community. One of the entrepreneurial activities they have been involved in is the chicken rearing business. Training in chicken rearing was given to them.

As a result, the business generated profits and family income increased. They are now able to place orders for the supplies themselves independently. A more successful business venture the community have got involved in is the 'kabu-kabu' pillow business or cotton pillow business where the women make cotton pillows from raw materials supplied to them and sell them to interested parties. The university's Enactus committee assisted them not only with the sales of the pillows but also 3 more essential elements, namely, supply, demand and business management skills. In securing the supply, the Enactus committee linked the Kensiu people with a cotton supplier for the raw material needed for the stuffing. The committee also helped them with the paperwork in applying for 2 sewing machines from the Department of Orang Asli Development. With these sewing machines, they are able to increase the production rate up to 150%, which is from 4 units to 10 units of pillows per day.

The Kensiu people were also guided in creating market demand for their product. The basic principles of marketing -the 4Ps, Price, Product, Promotion, and Placement were adopted into the cotton pillow business. For pricing, they were advised to use the penetration pricing strategy to enter the market. This strategy helps to establish demand for the pillows in a short period of time. For product, the Kensiu women were encouraged to expand the product design to create market attention. For promotion, the committee suggested a product brochure to better introduce their products to the retailers. For place, the committee utilized the geographical advantage of the Baling Hot Springs by converting an available vacant lot in the village into a shop lot. This shop is used as a platform for the sale of cotton. The Kensiu women themselves man the shop, supervised by the village leader.

This gives the assurance of sustainability which is in line with the philosophy of Enactus Universiti Utara Malaysia. Instilling business management skills in the Kensiu community was also one of the efforts of the Enactus committee. To ensure the survival of the business, the committee helped them develop an organizational chart which identified their role in the business.

They were also equipped with simple book keeping skills to record their transactions. The business cycle is complete when the supply and demand are satisfied and appropriate business management skills are applied. "Training in specific skills is more effective when trainees have strong literacy, numeracy..." (King & Palmer, 2007, p. 28). The project is an initial step towards empowering them with non-formal literacy and numeracy skills particularly those who were not attending school.

The Women Empowerment Module (WEM) have helped develop the lives of the Kensiu women by helping them to equip themselves with the non-formal skills that have helped them become independent and to manage their household financially. The Inducement Educational Module (IEM) consisted of small flexible projects such as Eco-Me and Handicraft programs that have helped preserve the environment. The handicraft programs used waste materials for reuse and added the value of reused items for daily use.

Absenteeism at school has been a common occurrence among the children. Through the Inducement Education Module (IEM), the Hope, Opportunity, Motivation and Entrepreneurship (HOME) project has managed to increase the attendance of the Kensiu

children in kindergarten and elementary school. The project has also increased the level of interest of the Kensiu children towards learning. The children have also become more motivated and more aware of hygiene after going through a few segments of the project such as School is Fun and Be Clean.

Similarly, during the course of the project, the Enactus committee ensured that flexible learning was of utmost importance in order to enable this indigenous community to adjust to new methods and realities. Initially, very few of them were willing to participate in something that was new to them. They were hesitant and skeptical that participation in the project would be a waste of their time and energy even though they did not have to go out of their comfort zone. However, as time went by, more of them decided to join in after seeing the tangible output of their fellow villagers and after being coaxed by them. They also realized that the project was flexible enough for them to be able to partake of the activities at their own pace as they too had family commitments, especially the women. The acquisition and development of these skills is also dependent on, among others, the presence of a supportive environment without which poverty reduction cannot be achieved (King & Palmer, 2007). It is vital to maintain the level of commitment, not only of the indigenous community but also the committee in ensuring the progress of the skills development and education of the Kensiu people. "Rural people 'vote with their feet' and may simply decide not to participate in follow-up education and training sessions if the perceived quality and relevance of the service delivered are low" (Acker & Gasperini, 2009, p. 31).

A total of 32 students participated in the Hope, Opportunity, Motivation and Entrepreneurship (HOME) project. Both the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported the project by means of funding and supplying raw materials respectively. Such collaboration is significant and needs to be strengthened in order to achieve the long-term goals of any project, particularly poverty reduction. It is pertinent that the partnerships are based on shared visions (Sena, 2013). Enactus Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) has maintained its available projects as it is concerned about the sustainability aspects. For instance, the chicken breeding business is a continuous program which has expanded to involve more families. Each project has many programs that have been carried out with the hope that the programs will continue and grow. This is to ensure the project gives a positive impact to the target audience. The project also targets to increase the number of people who benefit from it.

In other words, through flexible learning, the Enactus committee has created job opportunities through entrepreneurship. It has developed entrepreneurs as role models for the whole community.

It has managed to transfer entrepreneurial and business management skills to the women. It has also increased their self-esteem by helping them become income providers to their families and finally, it has increased the communities' group earnings up from 67% from RM 1,800 to RM 3000 per month. Therefore the project has empowered this indigenous community to be self-reliant and has improved their living standards by enabling them to acquire practical and relevant skills by way of flexible learning and non-formal skills development.

On the other hand, the Enactus committee comprising of undergraduates admit they have gained from the project which has developed their soft skills such as leadership, teamwork and organization which would be of great benefit to them in the future. They have also become more confident and their communicative skills have also improved.

"In pursuit of effective and relevant community development, educators, students and practitioners in the development field must be continuously engaged in a process where

both the teaching process and learning experience address the realities and challenges of poor communities to make community-based development a reality through a process of participation and empowerment. It is within this context that non-formal education plays an important role in addition to formal education to enhance the skills and knowledge of community development workers to equip them to lead poor communities to empowerment and decision makers of their own destiny" (Kotze, 2012, p. 3)

## CONCLUSION

The Hope, Opportunity, Motivation and Entrepreneurship (HOME) project committee has been united in tackling the problems of this indigenous Orang Asli community who have faced social discrimination, poverty and infertile land. It is hoped that when the Kensiu community become successful entrepreneurs, a chain reaction of positive changes will take place. As the acronym HOME stands for, the project reinstates hope, creates opportunities, motivates towards success and empowers the indigenous people with entrepreneurship. In other words, it has disseminated the seeds of empowerment, by way of non-formal skills development, towards transformation to a better quality of life for this indigenous Orang Asli community.

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