

TUOVI LEPPÄNEN • SEIJA KOSKELA & MARKO SUSIMETSÄ EDS.

# Achievements and Challenges

of open and distance  
learning development  
in Nepal

Achievements and Challenges of  
Open and Distance Learning  
Development in Nepal

PUBLICATIONS OF JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES 279

TUOVI LEPPÄNEN, SEIJA KOSKELA & MARKO SUSIMETSÄ (EDS.)

# Achievements and Challenges of Open and Distance Learning Development in Nepal



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland

**HAMK**  
HÄMEEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU  
HÄME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

**jamk.fi**

Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu

PUBLICATIONS OF JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES -SERIES

© 2020

Authors & JAMK University of Applied Sciences

Tuovi Leppänen, Seija Koskela & Marko Susimetsä (Eds.)

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF OPEN AND  
DISTANCE LEARNING DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

Cover Photo • Tuovi Leppänen  
Outlook • JAMK / Pekka Salminen  
Layout and printing • Punamusta Oy • 2020

ISBN 978-951-830-563-0 (Printed)

ISBN 978-951-830-560-9 (PDF)

ISSN-L 1456-2332

DISTRIBUTION

JAMK University of Applied Sciences Library

P.O. Box 207, FI-40101 Jyväskylä

Rajakatu 35, FI-40200 Jyväskylä

Tel. +358 040 552 6541

Email: [julkaisut@jamk.fi](mailto:julkaisut@jamk.fi)

[www.jamk.fi/publications](http://www.jamk.fi/publications)

# CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	6
Seija Koskela, Tuovi Leppänen & Marko Susimetsä	
1 BACKGROUND OF THE TPP-NEPAL PROJECT .....	7
Shyam Krishna Maharjan	
2 DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME IN TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY, NEPAL: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES .....	11
Rajani Rajbhandary & Mohan Paudel	
3 INITIATIVES AND IMPACT OF UNIVERSITIES' COLLABORATION FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL .....	22
Rajeshwer P. Yadav	
4 OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES: REVIEW OF ODL PROGRAMME IN SIRAHA CAMPUS .....	30
Sanjaya Adhikari	
5 ODL DEVELOPMENT IN GORKHA CAMPUS: A GLIMPSE .....	41
Bhim Bahadur Bhandari	
6 EQUITY IN EDUCATION.....	51
Bishnu Prasad Ghimire	
7 OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: AN ALTERNATIVE MODE OF DELIVERY IN THE NEPALESE EDUCATION SYSTEM.....	56
Yubraj Joshi	
8 CHANGING ROLE OF A TEACHER IN DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGY .....	65
SUMMARY .....	71
AUTHORS.....	74

# ABSTRACT

Tuovi Leppänen, Seija Koskela & Marko Susimetsä (Eds.)  
Achievements and Challenges of Open and  
Distance Learning Development in Nepal  
(Publications of JAMK University of Applied Sciences, 279)

The Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP-Nepal Project), running from 2017 to 2020, was carried out by Finnish universities of applied sciences in Jyväskylä (JAMK) and Hämeenlinna (HAMK) in cooperation with Tribhuvan University (TU), Nepal.

The goal of the project was to improve the online and distance education programmes at Tribhuvan University and its campuses around the country by developing the teachers' ICT skills, pedagogical knowledge and guidance skills in distance education, as well as by developing the ICT environments of the campuses.

This publication provides insights into the work conducted at TU over the course of the project, as seen through the eyes of the professors, lecturers and coordinators working at the campuses. The first article, "Development of Open and Distance Learning Programme in Tribhuvan University, Nepal: Achievements and Challenges", provides an overview of the development of open and distance learning programmes at TU. The second article, "Initiatives and Impact of Universities' Collaboration for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Development in Nepal" focusses on the development of new collaborative work culture between the TU campuses in tackling the challenges of ODL development.

The following five articles provide perspectives from a selection of the participating campuses: Siraha, Gorkha, Surkhet, Butwal and Dadeldhura. These offer a representative selection of narratives describing the development process – its challenges and successes – in campuses that are located in culturally and economically disparate regions.

Keywords: Open and distance learning, teacher education, pedagogical development, guidance and counseling, development cooperation

# 1 BACKGROUND OF THE TPP-NEPAL PROJECT

Seija Koskela, Tuovi Leppänen & Marko Susimetsä

The *Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education* (TPP-Nepal Project) was set up as a continuation for an earlier HEI-ICI project, the *Training of Trainers for the Teacher Qualification Upgrading Programme in Nepal* (ToT Nepal) carried out in 2012–2015 by Finnish universities of applied sciences in Jyväskylä (JAMK) and Hämeenlinna (HAMK) in cooperation with Tribhuvan University, Nepal. This earlier project ended in 2015 and it aimed to increase the competence of the teachers at the Tribhuvan University – Faculty of Education (TU-FoE) in order to support them in carrying out a Teacher Qualification Upgrading Program for 13,000 working teachers across Nepal. The goals of the ToT-Nepal project were three-pronged and focused on the development of 1) adult pedagogy, 2) open and distance learning (ODL) structures and self-learning materials, and 3) evaluative and developing approach to generate a contextually relevant and demand-driven study model.

The TPP-Nepal Project, running from 2017 to 2020, was set up to meet the development needs still faced at the Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu Valley as well as in seven regional campuses of the university. These development needs include the development of teachers' ICT skills, understanding of pedagogy and guidance in distance education, as well as development of campuses' ICT environments.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TPP-NEPAL PROJECT

The TPP-Nepal project focused on delivering practical development support at regional campuses. This included pedagogical training in distance education and in modern approach to student-centred education, as well as understanding of the role of guidance and counselling in students' study process and overall learning performance. The specific outcome statement was: "TU-FoE has achieved a capacity to independently deliver and develop Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as a mean of increasing access to and quality of teacher education throughout the country".

Because of the different needs at each campus, the practical training and support programme was carried out with the help of regional visits by the trainers from JAMK and HAMK. However, the general outline and goal of the training were the same everywhere.



Teacher trainers co-creating aims for ODL development at Tribhuvan university during the kick-off seminar. (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

During the process, the campus staff was trained and supported in organising their own in-campus training sessions to their teachers. At most campuses this training focussed more on basic ICT skills and use of the Moodle learning platform, while on some the teachers already possessed these basic skills and the training could focus more on ODL pedagogy and guidance.

## PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH IN THE TRAINING

The training and support programme was designed to meet the needs of the TU teachers whose ICT skills and ODL pedagogy skills were at very different levels. At some campuses, the teachers had very slow internet connections and no servers of their own, while at others the use of Moodle was already part of the daily practices. These kinds of differences were natural also for the regions in which these campuses reside: potential students close to Kathmandu and other population centres were better equipped to access and use online learning environments and open materials than students in regions where internet access was slow.

Taking in consideration the very different working environments in Nepal and Finland, it was decided to customise the training for each region, beginning from their current needs. Naturally, the cultural context is also very different between these two countries. In Finland, teachers have a lot of autonomy in how they design and run their courses, what tools they will use and how



they will assess their students. The teachers are highly trained, a master's degree and pedagogical training being basic requirements. Students are self-regulated and used to open-ended assignments. In Nepal, however, teachers follow a strict curricula handed to them from administration and their students will attend TU wide examinations at the end of their courses. Students are used to being given specific and clear assignments.

The approach taken in the TPP-Nepal project was based mostly on mentoring and support activities. Expert trainers analysed the campus-specific situations and visited each campus to get to know their situations before they began the training *in situ*. General seminars were also arranged where selected staff members from all the campuses came together to learn and share ideas and experiences.

A core group of teachers were invited to Finland to attend a month-long training period. They received in-depth understanding of the Finnish approach to teaching and guidance. The Image 1 below shows the general outline of this programme. The goal of the programme was to provide understanding on how Finns approach teaching and ODL pedagogy and also to provide the attendees with further tools and understanding of what and how they could adapt of this thinking to their own cultural and regional context.



Figure 1. Outline of the training programme in Finland

Some of the main goals of the training included deeper understanding of the different forms of constructivism – from an individual-centric cognitive approach to a culture-centric sociocultural approach. Teaching in Nepal has traditionally been individual-centric (students attend lectures, learn from textbooks and take examinations) while the Finnish system is more culture-oriented (students familiarise themselves with previous knowledge (textbooks) and deepen their understanding in a group setting, examinations can include

group activities). The Finnish team presented examples of this pedagogical approach and how guidance and counselling is intertwined into this structure at all levels.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

One of the aims of the project was to support Tribhuvan University in developing guidance and counselling plans for campuses to ensure that students will receive enough support during their studies in all three content areas of GC: support for studying and learning, support for professional growth and psychosocial support.

During the project some important goals concerning guidance and counselling were achieved. First and foremost, the importance and significance of GC was recognized in TU, especially in preventing student drop-outs. In addition, further openings to develop GC in teacher training were discussed and concrete GC plans in participating campuses were being developed. Of course, in new ODL courses GC for learning and studying has been included in the course descriptions.

Naturally there are some challenges still to overcome. Because the concept of GC was relatively new in Nepal, there were some natural misunderstandings, mostly due to the different meanings in the language that was used. Obviously, the lack of ODL friendly infrastructure and the lack of ICT skills amongst the staff members were slowing down the processes and there are still barriers to overcome in the ODL mode guidance and counselling.

## PURPOSE OF THE PUBLICATION

This publication includes articles written by TPP-Nepal participants at each of the campuses that the project was carried out on. Some of them focus on discussing the ODL development made at the campuses in general while others pick a specific development target that they discuss from their own perspective. Because of the above-mentioned vast regional differences, the articles posit very different stages of ODL development, but there are also some obstacles that are felt at all campuses.

Analysis of the obstacles and constraints can help to build a better understanding of the issue and its complexity, and the information has been and will be disseminated internally at TU as well as to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, MoEST and wider audience through the publication produced in the project.

## 2 DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME IN TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY, NEPAL: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Shyam Krishna Maharjan

### ABSTRACT

*This paper intends to highlight the development of the open and distance learning programme in TU. It has been prepared based on my personal observation experience: the observer as a participant, the observer in the third person and the observer as an evaluator. The ToT-Nepal Project (2013–2015) and TPP-Nepal Project (2017–2019) were conducted in Nepal successfully in collaboration with the Finnish JAMK and HAMK universities of applied sciences and Tribhuvan University of Nepal. These projects played significant roles in developing the capacity of the faculties of the campuses under the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. The faculties of seven campuses have developed competencies in ODL pedagogy, ICT/LMS, and guidance and counselling, and are ready to implement the new programme in the campuses as expected by the project. More than 200 people from the FoE have benefited from these programmes. Hopefully, the ODL two-semester B.Ed. programme in Mathematics and Social Studies, as well as the two-semester M.Ed. programme in Science, will be popularised in the pursuit of higher education. Nevertheless, several challenges exist, such as new experience, administrative problems, inadequate infrastructure, etc. Therefore, the FoE and responsible campuses should launch the programme cautiously and successfully in order to achieve long-term sustainability.*

### KEYWORDS

*Guidance and counselling, learning management system, open and distance learning, pedagogy.*



Development process through the eyes of the participating campuses. (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of open and distance education is not new, as it was developed in the 19th century in the form of a correspondence education and training programme in Britain. The first distance education course in the modern sense was provided by Sir Isaac Pitman in the 1840s, who taught a system of shorthand by mailing texts transcribed into shorthand on postcards and receiving transcriptions from his students in return for correction (Wikipedia). In the late 19th century, the University of Chicago launched the first major correspondence programme, in which the teacher and learner were at different locations, in the US (Ghosh, Nath, Agarwal, Nath & Chaudhari 2012). At that time, the programme was addressed to a wide range of potential partners: governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, specialised institutions, associations, industrial corporations, telecommunication companies and others interested in this field. After the development of radio during the First World War and television in the 1950s, the mode of instruction outside of the traditional classroom had suddenly found new delivery systems (ibid. 1.) Recently, this kind of educational system has been rapidly gaining popularity in the world with the development of information and communication technology, internet and social media. Of the countries in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC),

Pakistan first established its Open University in 1974 (Acharya 2015). The Government of Nepal, in turn, first established a separate open university, 'Nepal Open University,' in 2016.

An open and distance education system is centred on open access to education for learners faced with constraints on time and location with regard to regular attendance at an educational institute. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (French: Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle) (CEDEFOP 2008) defined open and distance learning as a learning system that gives the learner a degree of flexibility in the choice of topics, place, pace and/or method. It is an educational approach which is imparted through communication media, social media, reference materials and audio-visual aids with separation of the teacher and the learner except during a contact session. Open and distance education has been popularised globally in many highly developed countries as well as in middle income and low-income countries. Students from any country in the world can join ODL classes.

Tribhuvan University (TU), established in Nepal in 1959, is the oldest and largest university in Nepal in terms of the number of students and number of campuses. According to The Himalayan Times (2018), TU is a non-profit public higher education institution. It has been ranked among the top 800 to 1,000 universities in the world as mentioned in the United Kingdom-based Times Higher Education World University Rankings. This university is the 11th largest university in the world in terms of student enrolment. It had 61 constituent and 1,084 affiliated campuses in 2017 throughout Nepal and has served to produce higher level human resources in several disciplines. The university contains five institutes: Institute of Medicine, Institute of Engineering, Institute of Science and Technology, Institute of Forestry, and Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science. Likewise, there are four faculties, namely the Faculty of Education (FoE), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Management, and Faculty of Law. TU has been providing higher education to around 80% of Nepalese students while charging a minimum fee (TU today 2013–2014).

The FoE was established in 1956 as the College of Education in order to produce trained schoolteachers. It is one of the largest and oldest faculties in Nepal that has been conducting various programmes in 26 constituent campuses and 590 affiliated campuses throughout the country (TU 2019). It has been running four-year Bachelor of Education, one-year Bachelor of Education, M. Phil and PhD programmes in different subject areas. It has also been running 9-semester B.Ed. programmes in information and communications technology and special needs education. The main objective of the faculty is to

produce qualified and trained teachers for different school levels. In addition, the faculty has produced human resources such as educational planners, researchers and educational administrators.

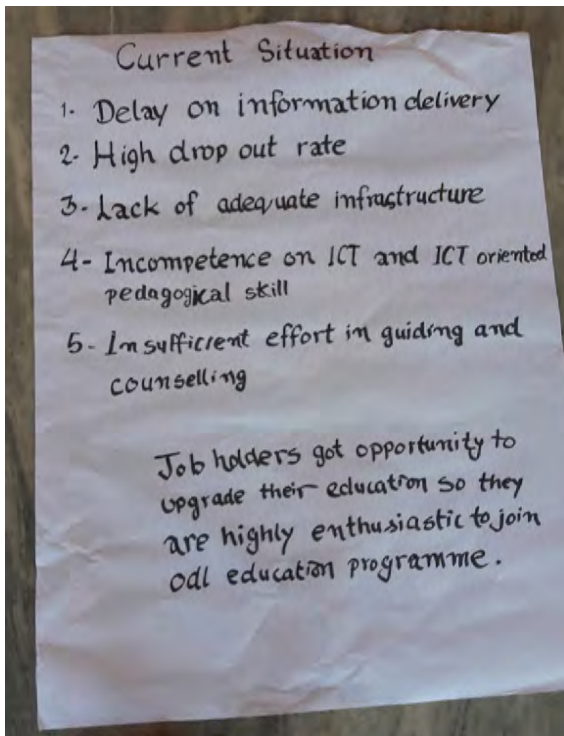
On the basis of the constitutional provision and the Higher Education Policy of Nepal, persons who have completed the higher secondary level of education, including marginal people, women, people from remote areas, poorer people etc., have the right to access higher education, if they wish. In this connection, the former prime minister, in his capacity as Chancellor, instructed TU in its Senate meeting in 2010 to begin providing higher education in dual mode with conventional and open and distance learning (ODL). This was because people from remote areas, marginal and poor people and job holders cannot attend colleges regularly in order to get higher education. Therefore, the FoE has committed to developing the ODL programme in TU, taking the following characteristics into consideration:

**Characteristics of the ODL programme:**

- Higher involvement of teachers
- Face to face, online, offline and independent learning
- Peer instruction
- Support for students
- Use of advanced ICT
- Flexibility in internal evaluation
- Flexibility in course duration

The report of the School Sector Reform Plan, 2009–2015 (SSRP), mandated that secondary school teachers should have a Master’s Degree in Education. However, there were 13,000 secondary school teachers who only had a bachelor’s degree. This posed a conundrum, as the teachers are unable to leave their jobs to upgrade their educational qualification, while the government is unable to conduct an in-service programme for the teachers to upgrade their qualification. Therefore, a better solution to this problem would be running an ODL programme in all regions of Nepal to upgrade the qualification of those teachers who cannot attend regular college lessons while leaving their jobs.

The Dean’s Office of the FoE conducted the Implementation of Professional Degree Programme for Qualification Upgrading of Teachers Working in



Needs for the ODL development.  
(Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

Schools of Nepal (2011–2015) in collaboration with the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) (now the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development) and the Ministry of Education, aimed at developing the capacity of the faculties of the six campuses to run the ODL programme through this programme. Then the FoE implemented the M.Ed. programme in Curriculum and Evaluation, Health Education and Nepali Language Education through the ODL mode in six regional campuses to upgrade teacher qualification from 2013 onwards as a pilot programme. De-

spite the support of the Ministry of Education, the FoE felt the need for experienced teachers in ODL pedagogy, ICT and ICT infrastructure while running the M.Ed. programme through the ODL mode.

Based on those challenges and demands, the Faculty of Education searched for partner organisations and universities nationally and globally. In the Finnish JAMK University of Applied Sciences and HAMK University of Applied Sciences, which were world-renowned through their teacher education programmes, the FoE found suitable partner organisations for running ODL in collaborative programmes. Several activities were run to develop the capacity of the FoE with the collaboration of these universities, including financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Finnish HEI-ICI programme for the Training of Trainers for the Teacher Qualification Upgrading Programme in Nepal (ToT-Nepal Project 2013–2015).

The following benefits were achieved by the FoE through the ToT programme:

- 74 teachers were trained in pedagogical and ICT knowledge and skills
- 33 SLMs were produced
- Some essential ICT devices and reference books were provided
- Exposure visits to administrators and ICT experts were arranged

FoE, TU identified a lack of trained teachers in the subjects of mathematics, social studies and science in secondary schools. No academic programme has been conducted in campuses at the B.Ed. level in social studies, but the Ministry of Education has implemented social studies as a compulsory subject at the secondary school level. As a result, schools in Nepal faced high demand for Social Studies subject teachers in secondary schools. Regarding mathematics and science education at the secondary school level, it has been noted that teachers have less pedagogical knowledge and skills. Therefore, the implementation of a two-semester B.Ed. programme in Social Studies and Mathematics and a two-semester M.Ed. programme in Science via the ODL mode are the best options in order to increase the number of qualified teachers in social studies, mathematics and science. The teachers of these subjects have a valuable opportunity to upgrade their qualification via the open and distance learning mode. Again, it was felt that the FoE had no adequate trainers, infrastructure and budget to conduct such programmes through DOL.

In consideration of these demands, the second collaboration, Teachers Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP-Nepal Project – 2017–2019), was made with JAMK and HAMK universities of applied sciences, with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland via the HEI ICI programme, to build the capacity of the FoE and campuses in order to implement a two-semester B.Ed. programme in Social Studies and Mathematics and a two-semester M.Ed. in Science.

## THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE TPP-NEPAL PROJECT

The open and distance education of FoE, TU carries unique and special characteristics. For example, it provides M. Ed. programmes with minimum tuition fees in six campuses that are situated in all provinces except Province No. 1 in order for people wishing to acquire higher education to have easy access to higher education. All the campuses have teacher educators trained



in planning, pedagogical skills, guidance and counselling and the learning management system (LMS).

In order to run the ODL programme effectively, the Dean's Office of the FoE has prepared an Operational Modality which provides clear guidelines for running the ODL programme. It consists of different sections, including introductory, ODL management committee, management of programme coordinators, management of teachers and staff, curriculum structure, management of infrastructure, financial aspect, student admission procedure, responsibility of coordinator and teachers, mode of running contact and online classes, evaluation and examination procedures, certification and monitoring, and the evaluation programme. It also clarifies the terminology used in modality, special characteristics of ODL, aims and objectives, requirements of students, etc. for those who wish to be admitted into the programme.

The ODL pedagogy, guidance and counselling and ICT experts of JAMK and HAMK universities of applied sciences and the master trainers and ICT experts of FoE, TU conducted several trainings and workshops for the teacher educators of seven campuses. Likewise, 28 teacher educators were provided with intensive training in Finland by the Finnish experts. Having finished their training, these competent ODL teachers would then implement the ODL programme in campuses.

The following achievements were attained by the TPP-Nepal Project (2017–2019):

- More than 100 persons, including teacher educators, administrators, master trainers, campus chiefs, assistant campus chiefs, campus coordinators, the head of the subject committee, ICT experts, the guidance and counselling expert, administrative staff, librarians and others, benefitted directly from the TPP-project.
- 28 faculties received short-term and long-term training in Nepal and Finland in planning, pedagogical skills, guidance and counselling and the learning management system (LMS).
- Basic ICT devices were provided in campuses and the Dean's Office.
- The TPP-Nepal project conducted exposure visits to administrators and ICT experts.
- The programme has supported the production of SLMs, along with the teacher's handbook, joint publication and the operational modality of the ODL programme.

## PROCESS OF ODL IMPLEMENTATION IN FOE, TU

After building up capacity in the FoE and implementing the required changes in the campuses, the advertisement for admission is conducted through different media, such as national papers, TV channels, radio, social media, the FoE website, etc. The admission form is uploaded in the website of FoE, TU, including rules and regulations, student support, the features of ODL, and the procedures of the teaching learning system, which is easily accessible to anyone, including the potential learners from different provinces. During the submission of the admission form, students are provided with valuable guidance and counselling about the programme. The first contact session is conducted for 5–7 days by either the campuses or the centre.

During the first contact session, the programme procedure, evaluation system, final examination, responsibilities of students and teachers, teacher's work plan and class schedule, operational calendar, etc. are clearly informed to the learners. Likewise, the curriculum and self-learning materials are distributed to the learners. In addition, the learners are given basic information and concepts about each prescribed course by the subject teachers. The ICT experts share information about ICT, the process of logging in to Moodle, handling Moodle, performing assessment, etc. The learners are also given the task of independent learning.

After completing the first contact session, the online class is conducted according to the individual teacher's work plan and schedule. Prior to the final examination, the students are invited to attend the second contact session in the centre or campuses, and the teachers provide them with guidance based on their problems and the needs of different courses. The final examination is then conducted as per the rules of the examination section of the FoE.

## IMPACTS OF THE TOT- AND TPP-PROGRAMMES

The ToT-Nepal Project 2013–2015 and TPP-Nepal Project (2017–2019) aimed at developing the capacity of the FoE to implement the ODL programme in campuses in line with the national demand, which led to the following impacts:

- Change in attitude of administrators and faculties in the ODL programme
- Improvement in ICT-friendly classrooms (e-learning infrastructure)
- Improvement in sustainability and access to higher education

- Upgrading the educational qualification of the teachers
- Encouragement in faculties to use ICT technology
- Providing guidance and counselling for the target persons
- Providing higher education with minimum expense
- Establishment of open and distance learning organisations

## CHALLENGES OF THE ODL PROGRAMME IN THE FOE

Despite running the TPP-Nepal Project (2017–2019) successfully, enabling the FoE and its faculties to implement the ODL programme effectively, the FoE is not free from several challenges, as mentioned below:

- Lacklustre advertisement, publicity and marketing of the ODL programme
- Lack of funds for the ODL programme from the TU budget
- No separate administrative staff for ODL in neither the Faculty of Education nor the campuses
- Low ICT skills among students
- Low ICT infrastructure
- No e-library facilities
- No separate teachers for the ODL programme
- No flexibility in learning contents

## CONCLUSIONS

FoE, TU has implemented the M.Ed. programme through ODL in six campuses since 2013 on the basis of national demand. Nevertheless, it has several challenges and hindrances, such as its newness, the lack of a separate budget from TU, the lack of a Moodle platform, the lack of separate administrative staff, an atmosphere of being an extra burden in the Dean's Office and campuses, less information communication and technology, the

lack of resource materials, etc., that hamper the efficient operation of ODL. Recently, all the campuses under TU conducted their M.Ed. programmes in the semester system throughout Nepal, which demands regular attendance from the students and continuous assessment. But in the ODL mode, students only need to go to campuses for some days for admission and contact sessions, while the programme otherwise runs with the use of advanced pedagogy and ICT. It is assumed that in this year job holders are enrolled in the M.Ed. programme in different campuses. Along with this, it is expected that the new programme will particularly attract more job holders, marginalised persons, persons from remote areas, females, etc. to upgrade their qualifications by studying from their own residences.

The TPP-Nepal project has conducted several activities successfully and played a significant role in developing the capacity of faculties, the FoE and campuses. Hopefully, the ODL programme in B.Ed. as well as M.Ed. will be popularised for higher education in different fields. For this purpose, attractive and regular advertisement through radio, FM, the press, TV, social media and hoarding boards, along with marketing to the target group through dissemination, guidance and counselling, and visiting schools, should be conducted regularly at the right times. Commitment, dedication, responsibility and ownership from the Dean's Office and campuses play a significant role with regard to the success of the programme and maintaining its sustainability. Furthermore, trained teachers and ICT experts are to be managed for the ODL programme. Moreover, the cooperation of internal and external resources should be tapped and utilised. More importantly, regular monitoring and feedbacks should be made and utilised. The ODL programme should also be run in other needy subjects. Along with this, TU should allocate a regular budget for the ODL programme because it is also an integral programme of FoE, TU.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Prof. Dr Prakash Man Shrestha, the former Dean of FoE, TU, Dr Tuovi Leppänen, Project Manager of TPP-Nepal Project, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Dr Seija Koskela, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Dr Marko Susimetsä, HAMK University of Applied Sciences and Mr Rajan Kumar Kandel, Assistant Campus Chief of Surkhet Campus (Education) for their valuable feedback for this paper.

## REFERENCES

About Tribhuvan University. The Himalayan Times. Accessed on 08 October 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/tribhuvan-university>

Acharya, K. 2015. Open and distance learning in Nepal: Prospects and challenges. Accessed on 3 January 2020. Retrieved from <https://kufit.wordpress.com/2012/07/20/open-and-distance-learning-odl-in-nepal-prospects-and-challenges/>

CEDEFOP. 2008. Accessed on 12 December 2019. Retrieved from <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/education-and-training-glossary> Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP-Nepal Project 2017–2019). An evaluative study. 2019. FoE, TU.

Ghosh, S., Nath, J., Agarwal, S., Nath, A., & Chaudhari, A. K. 2012. Open and distance learning (ODL) system: past present and future – a systematic study of alternative education system. *Journal of Global Research in Computer Science*, 34, 53–57. Accessed on 8.12.2019. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276031945>

School sector reform plan 2009–2015 Kesharmahal, Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education.

School sector development plan 2016/17–2022/23. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education.

TU 2019. Accessed on 14.12.2019. Retrieved from <http://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/>

TU today 2013–2014. Kirtipur: Tribhuvan University.

Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance\\_education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance_education)

### 3 INITIATIVES AND IMPACT OF UNIVERSITIES' COLLABORATION FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

Rajani Rajbhandary & Mohan Paudel

#### ABSTRACT

*Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education, TPP-Nepal Project, 2017–2019 is a joint programme by Tribhuvan University, Nepal, and JAMK and HAMK universities of applied sciences, Finland, that is responsible for the capacity building of the faculties of Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. The project was funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland through the HEI ICI programme. The main aim of HEI ICI is to support partners in building stable, efficient and equitable societies as well as well-functioning, relevant and accessible higher education to the students by enhancing human capacities, which in this case was launched through the Dean's Office in Faculty of Education, TU. Thus, the TPP-project supported the FoE and the seven constituent campuses of TU in infrastructure development and teacher preparation for the ODL-based programme. This project covered seven constituent campuses from five out of seven provinces in Nepal, which makes it probably the first such project to cover a wider area of the country.*

#### NEED FOR COLLABORATION

With the new political system of the "Federal Republic", and after 10 years of civil war in Nepal, the demand for quality public education has significantly increased. As a result, the Government of Nepal (GoN) and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoEST) have taken an initiative approach to improve the existing educational system by introducing the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) in 2009–2015 and the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) in 2015–2020. Taking into consideration the commitment of the political parties, the attempt to put a constitutional provision into practice, and the implementation of the SSRP and SSDP, Faculty of Education (FoE), Tribhuvan University (TU) and the JAMK and HAMK universities of applied sciences collaborated to address these educational development needs and strategies and national policies. Resulting in the Training of Trainers for Qualification

Upgrading Programme in Nepal (ToT-Nepal 2013–2015) and the Teacher Preparation Programme through the ODL mode for enhancing the quality of school education (TPP – 2017–2020).

The main objective of

- 1 the ToT-project – to prepare the trained teachers to conduct a two-semester M.Ed. programme via the ODL mode in Health Education, Nepali Education and Curriculum and Evaluation,
- 2 the TPP-project – to prepare the trained science, math and social studies teachers to conduct a two-semester M.Ed. and B.Ed programme in their respective subjects via the ODL mode

Actions speak louder than words, as the saying goes, and the TPP-project utilised an action-oriented approach to support ODL-based higher education in Nepal.

The modalities of the ODL programme were chosen in accordance with local circumstances and needs. Stormont, Thomas and Garderen (2012) opined that "when schools are adopting new practices, it is critical that there are continued efforts to explore ways to use all available resources wisely and build capacity for change" (ibid., 399). A quality ODL programme in higher education largely depends on the quality of the faculty, curriculum standards, technological infrastructure and research activities. Studies related to school education showed a lack of subject-specialised teachers in schools that hinder the governmental aim of achieving higher standards in school education. Tribhuvan University is both the biggest university in terms of student enrolment and the most trusted university in Nepal. According to a report, out of a total of 361,077 university students in Nepal, 284,453 (78.78%) were enrolled in Tribhuvan University in the year 2074 B. S. (2017 C.E.) TU has a good network and access to almost the entire Nepal through 1,161 campuses, including 60 constituent campuses, 524 affiliated community campuses and 577 affiliated private campuses (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 2017). Student enrolment is not a problem, according to the data, but education quality is questioned. On the other hand, because of the shortage of science, social studies and math teachers in schools, a teaching license is open to all regardless of their education degree or training.

ODL is extremely important, especially from the viewpoint of equality of and access to education and the increased competence of Tribhuvan University.

In light of the resource and infrastructure difficulties faced by developing countries, collaboration is promoted (Mwakilasa 1992). After analysing and understanding the situation of the constituent campuses of TU and their educational needs, including technology-based ODL, a new approach has been launched in FoE, TU in the form of the ToT-project in 2013 and the TPP-project in 2017 to address the lack of skilled human resources in operating the ODL programme. Thus, collaboration in developing countries is promoted so that TU and Finnish higher education institutions can pool their resources for the common good and share in the delivery of distance education programmes, which in this case were done through exposure visits, joint training, information collection, compendiums, SLM production, joint research and publications, and the exchange of expertise with inter-institutional communication, funding and clarity in terms of an agreement (Perraton 1993).

Furthermore, administrators, teaching faculties and non-teaching staff need to be trained about the ODL approach of teaching and learning. International collaboration via the TPP-project is needed because it contributes a lot in preparing organisations in general and faculties in particular to launch the programme. It contributes to creating opportunities for working professionals and other interested groups of people to earn their education degrees at their own pace and localities. In such a scenario, collaboration with an international partner is deemed necessary in order to design, launch and sustain the programme. It is said that when teachers are asked to use new interventions without individualisation, support and a change in systems, they are likely to fail in their efforts (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman & Wallace 2005; Noell, Witt, Slider, Connell, Gatti & Williams 2005).

## COLLABORATION APPROACH

Collaboration is a way to increase the capacity of an organisation to meet the needs of stakeholders, and it is often recognised as an avenue for instilling changes in practices through support for school personnel (Reinke, Herman & Sprick 2011; Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak & Shogren 2011). Collaboration leads to changes in professionals' practices and supports schools in being adequately prepared.

The TPP-project was designed by using a needs-based approach. Collaboration between two universities enhances the internal capacity of FoE, TU to provide ODL service to people. The collaboration also adopted the service delivery approach, where universities and their funders wish to see the results through translating ideas into practice. The universities



jointly developed field scheduling programmes that identified a number of opportunities and challenges in developing and implementing ODL pedagogy in Nepal. Organisational empowerment through interdisciplinary collaborative practice is believed to lead to a sharing of resources among members of the teams, with the change process leading to team development, and is hence critical in establishing team effectiveness (Lancero & Gerber 1995; Orchard, Curran & Kabene 2005).

## TPP-MODEL OF THEORY OF CHANGE

The TPP-project has a clear objective, vision and plan on programme development, implementation and sustainability of the programme. The TPP-project emphasises the provision of knowledge support and infrastructure development for task execution in a planned way. It models the fundamental knowledge of the task specification plan deployed to support TU campuses, adopting a relevant, contextualised, flexible and adaptable dynamic working environment for the ODL mode.

After analysing and witnessing the project's efforts in bringing change, we propose the following Theory of Change model that will be useful in further developing the ODL programme.

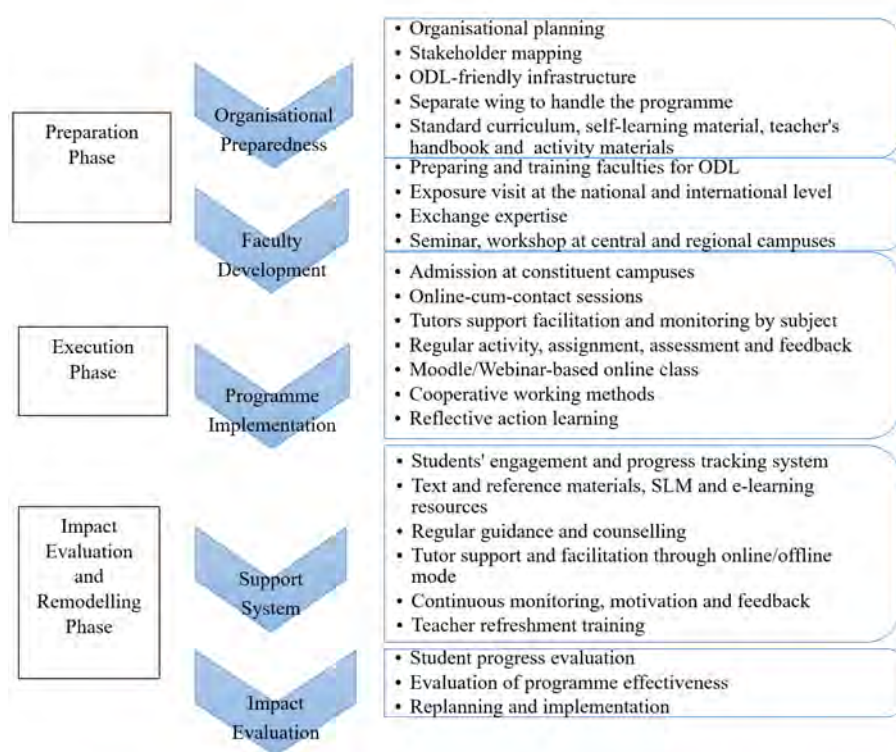


Figure 1. Theory of Change – model

## OUTPUTS OF COLLABORATION

Collaboration contributed greatly in developing and implementing the ODL programme in Tribhuvan University. It created space for faculties in TU to learn skills from international academia, allowing for the exchange of ideas and know-how. Collaboration with international partners created excellent opportunities for higher education in Nepal.

The project contribution can be broadly categorised into the following points:

- Infrastructure development – An emphasis was laid on developing basic infrastructure and recreating e-Learning environments to extend ODL in TU's constituent campuses throughout Nepal.

- Development of skilled manpower – The project has launched needs-based training and exposure visits for TU administrators, faculty members and non-teaching staff (library, ICT lab) from FoE, TU and regional campuses. In order to ensure better implementation and sustainability of the ODL programme, an emphasis was placed on preparing highly skilled and motivated faculties. In Finland, a one-month ICT and programme development training programme was given to 28 faculty members from five subject areas representing the FoE and seven constituent campuses of TU.
- Operational Strategies – The project activities, workshops and seminars were taken into account at FoE, TU and regional campuses so that they fit into the annual activity plans of the organisations. Administrators and teachers helped with designing operational strategies for their respective campuses.
- Preparation of ODL-friendly curricula, SLMs and teacher’s manual.

The TPP-project supported seven campuses with putting into place several initiatives to bring changes in teacher education and promoting higher-quality education through the ODL education system. The project was not only limited to training faculties but also supported campuses to some extent in building infrastructure and setting campus-based strategies to implement ODL. This mode increases access to higher education at an affordable cost to all aspiring citizens who are unable to enrol in face-to-face mode. The collaboration between universities helped in achieving the target of developing and promoting higher-quality education, transmission and dissemination of knowledge in a coordinated and integrated way.

## POST-COLLABORATION APPROACH

With a growing capacity to develop ODL systematically, TU is able to expand the delivery of ODL to other faculties as well. Faculty of Education, TU, took the responsibility of implementing the designed ODL programme. According to the coordinators of the programme, it was agreed that new dimensions of future collaboration for the sustainability of ODL in Nepal would be sought.

## CONCLUSION

In sum, TPP-project has achieved the set objective of enhancing the capacity of the Faculty of Education and constituent campuses of TU to launch ODL in Nepal. The well-planned and stepwise strategies for the implementation and sustainability of the programme are praiseworthy. Direct involvement of TU faculties together with international experts creates a significant impact on the development of ODL in Nepal. The future of the TPP-project will depend upon administrative interest, adaptation strategies, resource management and contribution, and the dedication of faculties, as well as public and university demand.

## REFERENCES

Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., Friedman, R., & Wallace, F. 2005. Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature. FMHI Publication #231. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network.

Lancero, A.W., & Gerber, R.M. 1995. Comparing work satisfaction in two case management models. *Nursing Management*, 26, 11, 45–48.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. 2017. Education in figures 2017. At a glance. Kathmandu: Author.

Mwakilasa, A. 1992. Distance Education for Health Personnel. New Strategies. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Noell, G. H., Witt, J. C., Slider, N. J., Connell, J. E., Gatti, S. L., & Williams, K. L. 2005. Treatment implementation following behavioural consultation in schools: A comparison of three follow-up strategies. *School Psychology Review*, 34, 87–106.

Orchard, C.A., Curran, V., & Kabene, S. 2005. Creating a culture for interdisciplinary collaborative professional practice, *Medical Education Online*, 10, 1, 4387, DOI: 10.3402/meo.v10i.4387.

Perraton, H. 1993. National developments and international cooperation in distance education in Commonwealth Africa. In M. John and D. Keegan (Eds.), *Distance Education: New Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Sprick, R. 2011. Motivational interviewing for effective classroom management: The Classroom Check-up. New York: Guilford Press.

Stormont, M., Thomas, C.N., & Garderen, D. V. 2012. The special issue: building capacity to improve student outcomes through collaboration: current issues and innovative approaches. *Psychology in the schools*, vol. 49, 5, Wiley online article periodicals, inc. Accessed at 7 Jan 2020. Retrieved from DOI: 10.1002/pits.21605

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E., Soodak, L., & Shogren, K. A. 2011. *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Positive outcomes through partnership and trust* 6th ed., Upper Saddle River. NJ: Pearson.

## 4 OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES: REVIEW OF ODL PROGRAMME IN SIRAHA CAMPUS

Rajeshwer P. Yadav

### ABSTRACT

*The open and distance learning programme is a new and more innovative way of study than face-to-face modes of learning in Faculty of Education, TU. As the study's name, "Opportunities & Challenges: Review of the existing ODL Programme", shows, the aim was to examine the ODL programme at the M.Ed. level. The study adopted the descriptive survey design in order to collect both quantitative and qualitative information related to opportunities and challenges faced by all ODL instructors, learners and related administrative staff in Siraha Campus. The collected data were organised, tabulated, analysed and interpreted by using simple statistical tools such as percentage. The result show that conducting the M.Ed. ODL programme provides better opportunities for the instructor and learner as well as the institution to improve and change their traditional teaching learning patterns. Majority of the respondents agreed that lack of time management, inadequate knowledge and skills regarding use of ICT learning tools, an unsupportive learning environment, less effective campus contact sessions etc. were major challenges and obstacles for developing a positive environment for the ODL programme.*

### INTRODUCTION

Open and distance education has added another dimension to the facilities of education, from school to higher-level fields. Our contextual, formal and informal modes of learning are less effective due to various causes. As an alternative to the present situation, educationists and researchers are quite attracted to the Open & Distance Learning (ODL) concept. ODL education is quite innovative and flexible and progresses according to its own capacity.

The UK, Germany, Norway, Finland, USA, Japan, Sri Lanka and even India also emphasise the high priority of these programmes through the concept of open university (Basu 2012). In Nepal, the Faculty of Education is also beginning to start the M.Ed. ODL programme in higher education with technical support from the Finnish JAMK and HAMK universities of applied sciences.



Teacher trainers going to Siraha campus in February 2019. (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

ODL has grown into an important global strategy in overcoming obstacles to access to existing education (UNESCO 2004). In this programme, the challenges are the high student dropout rate, delays in course completion, less effective concentration in learning, the lack of a comfortable feel due to learners facing multiple burdens, and psychological and pedagogical challenges. In this study, we found that the same challenges are also faced by the conducting institute.

Siraha Campus was established in 2024 B.S. (1967 C.E.) under the name of the National Educational Teacher Training Centre with the purpose of producing educational technicians and teachers. Later, in 2039 (1982 C.E.), the campus was attached to Tribhuvan University under the name of S.S.M.Y.M. Campus Siraha after the implementation of the National Educational System Plan (NESP – 2028). It began to produce trained teachers according to the newly introduced curriculum (2028 B.S, 1971 C.E.). In 2038 (1981 C.E.), the campus also started to run a general education programme at the PCL, bachelor (2048 B.S., 1991 C.E.) and master levels (2066 B.S., 2009 C.E.), as well as the M.Ed. ODL programme (2070 B.S., 2013 C.E.), in accordance with the NESP curriculum.

Siraha Campus has a copious amount of physical facilities, including the requisite classrooms, a laboratory, a computer lab, a library, health service, the student's hostel, an extracurricular section, an easily accessible playground, etc. The campus has altogether 60 teachers and 26 staff members and separate ODL Department and ICT teachers. The campus has supported the students with various ways in their studying. A total of 130 learners from different catchment areas study in the ODL programme (Siraha campus record).

## RATIONALE OF THE ODL PROGRAMME

Data from the Ministry of Education and NECD show that around 13,000 secondary school teachers only have bachelor-level academic qualifications. If they do not upgrade their qualifications to an M.Ed. level, they will be unable to teach classes 9 to 12. In this situation, only an M.Ed. ODL programme is sufficiently reliable to upgrade the teacher qualification. As pointed out earlier, this research was motivated by the lack of research in teacher education via the ODL mode in the context of the Faculty of Education, and by a long-standing personal interest in learning and teaching at a distance as well as my academic background. Therefore, this programme is very essential in providing awareness and training to all teachers, as well as in both ICT and professional areas. That is why I am curious to know about the situation and review the opportunities and challenges of the ODL programme in Siraha Campus.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are: 1) to identify and review the existing physical facilities and the related manpower from the viewpoint of the M.Ed. ODL programme, 2) to identify the opportunities and challenges regarding conducting the programme, and 3) to support the effective implementation of the programme through the ODL mode.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

In modern-day Nepal, everything has changed and a new way of learning has been introduced with information and communication technologies, i.e. computers and the internet, which are the best means of acquiring new knowledge or information these days. The e-learning technologies mostly



used in education consist of web-based content or materials, websites, blogs, wikis, email, etc. (Aryal & Aryal 2008).

The open and distance learning students of Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) had to struggle with a lack of time for studying, difficulties in access and use of ICT and insufficient SLMs. Similarly, a high dropout rate and late programme completion were other challenges (Maxwell, Barbra, Kudzu & Zebron 2015).

The ODL mode presents new challenges in information dissemination, especially in developing countries. Mossberg (2003) observed that technical competence is needed in order to have effective access to contemporary ICT, which is a challenge to distance learners. In this study, it was found that hardware and software operator skills in particular were needed in the field of technical competence.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Nepal have begun implementing ODL as e-learning to facilitate the traditional on-campus teaching and learning activities. It is believed that e-learning provides new opportunities to both the students and the HEIs by creating new and exciting opportunities (Wagner, Hassanein & Head 2008). Technology-enhanced ODL is another opportunity for Nepalese HEIs to reach students throughout the country and beyond. Thus, teaching is not limited within the boundaries of the four walls of a classroom; the courses are accessible to every student connected to the internet from all over the world.

Opportunities & Challenges for Campus-based Study concluded that a dual-mode institution is critical, especially in Africa. In this study, Cameroon, Kenya and Rwanda applied a framework on innovation adoption to case studies of ODL in higher education. In these cases, the dual-mode was not systematic and there were various barriers in national policy, infrastructure, organisational structure and capacity, which in turn complicated the perception of student and staff skills (Kanwar, Carr, Ortlieb & Mohee 2018.)

In addition, technology, according to Jung (2008), has the potential to improve the quality of education, increase access to education and pedagogical innovation, and create high market value. Pedagogical innovation here refers to the use of a learner-centred approach in a social constructivist learning environment, whereby learners will construct new knowledge collaboratively and build a global learning community to create knowledge through the use of multimedia resources. With increasing access, ICT expands learning opportunities as people will be able to learn anytime and everywhere.



Department of Open and distance learning on the Siraha campus (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

## RESEARCH METHODS AND STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This study adopted descriptive survey methods. The sample of this study consisted of all 109 M.Ed. ODL students enrolled in the 2071–2075 B.S. (2014–2018 C.E.) batch of Siraha Campus, 11 instructors and seven administrators related to the ODL programme.

Descriptive survey methods were applied to identify the existing situation. Questionnaires, interview schedules, test questions, etc. were applied face-to-face or via online/e-mail, mobile or other ICT modes as much as possible. Campus data were used as secondary sources. The collected data were presented on a table, analysed and interpreted by using statistical tools.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

### 1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXISTING SITUATION OF THE ODL PROGRAMME:

Altogether, the sample included 11 Instructors, seven administrative staff members and a total of 130 ODL learners enrolled from 2071 to 2075 B.S. (2014–2018 C.E.) in the M.Ed. ODL programme. The existing situation is shown in Table 1 below:

Year	Total no. of enrolled students	No. of Continued	No. of Dropouts
2070	25 (Male-23, Female-02)	21 (84%)	04 (16%)
2071	25 (Male-18, Female-07)	18 (72%)	07 (28%)
2072/2073	43 (Male-36, Female-07)	35 (81%)	08 (19%)
2074	12 (Male-09, Female-03)	10 (83%)	02 (17%)
2075	25 (Male-19, Female-06)	25 (100%)	No dropouts
Total 5 batches	Total no. of students 130 Male-105 (81%) Female-25(19%)	109 (84%)	21 (16%)

In total, 130 students were enrolled in the ODL programme. Of these, only 19 per cent were female and the rest were male. Similarly, around 84 per cent continued with the session while 16 per cent dropped out. In this case, the dropout rate increased day by day. In the 2071 B.S. (2014 C.E) batch the dropout rate was as high as 28 per cent. Dropping out and gender discrimination were major problems in this programme due to various hidden and overt causes.

**TABLE 2. Responses on opportunities and challenges facing ODL instructors and learners**

S.N	Some individual related responses:	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	There are good opportunities in conducting the ODL Programme			
	I. Instructor	5 (45.5)	4 (36)	2 (18.5)
	II. Administrator	2 (28.5)	3 (43)	2 (28.5)
	III. Learner	34 (31.2)	51 (46.8)	24 (22)
2.	Utilise the alternative way of learning	47 (43.2)	33 (30.2)	29 (26.6)
3.	Improve and change your traditional way of the pedagogical learning pattern from the ODL programme	46 (42.2)	37 (33.9)	26 (23.9)
4.	Acceptance of parallel value of certificate as well as face-to-face mode of learning	51 (46.8)	29 (26.6)	29 (26.6)
5.	Lack of sufficient time for pedagogical learning	87 (79.8)	12 (11)	10 (9.2)
6.	Lack of support from family, employer, tutors, friends, society and other resources	68 (62.4)	26 (23.9)	15 (13.7)
7.	Unfavourable home environment for pedagogical learning	85 (80)	15 (13.7)	09 (8.3)
8.	Available and sufficient SLMs, digital tools, e-learning, printed pedagogical learning materials	22 (20.2)	30 (27.5)	57 (52.3)
9.	Having skills/experience in use of ICT tools, Moodle, ICT technology for ODL mode of pedagogical learning	16 (14.7)	25 (22.9)	68 (62.4)
10.	You have fulfilled the instructions from guidance and counselling received at contact sessions conducted in your campus	28 (25.7)	27 (24.8)	54 (49.5)

## 2. OPPORTUNITY-RELATED RESPONSES OF INSTRUCTORS, ADMINISTRATORS AND ODL LEARNERS:

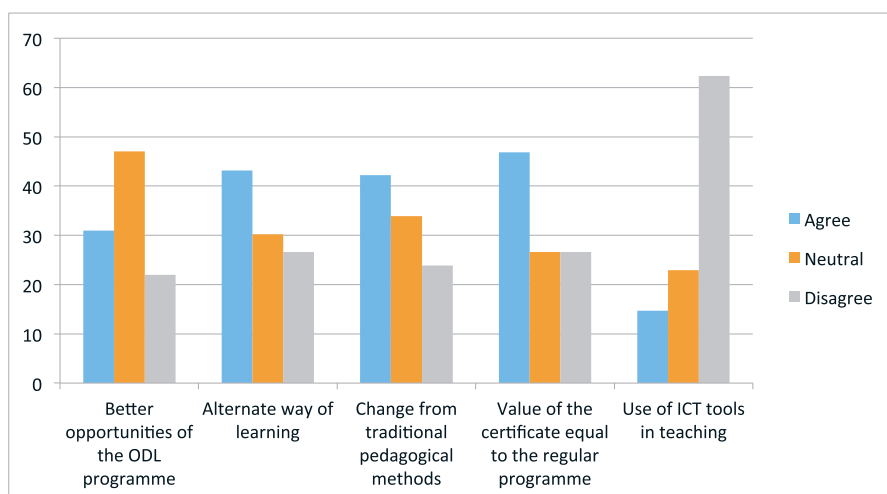


Figure 1. Opportunity of the ODL programme

Figure 1 shows that 45.5 per cent of instructors, 27.5 per cent of administrators and only 31 per cent of ODL learners were strongly accepting of the better opportunity of this ODL programme. In contrast, around a quarter of the respondents disagreed. It can be stated that the majority of learners do not understand the nature of the ODL programme. Similarly, 26.6 per cent of ODL learners did not know that ODL is an alternative to the face-to-face mode of learning. It was also noted in the research that ODL is one of the better practices in changing our traditional pattern of pedagogical learning. 24 per cent of ODL learners disagreed on this. Yet 26.6 per cent still thought that face-to-face mode is preferable to other learning modes. The use of ICT tools is one specific ability known to increase pedagogical learning, but only 15 per cent of the learners were able to practice the use of these tools in pedagogical activities. The majority of the learners did not have access to ICT skills. Hence the research showed that the respondents were aware of the various opportunities provided by ODL, but they did not realise the benefits due to the challenges involved in ODL delivery.

### 3. RESPONSE-RELATED CHALLENGES FACING THE ODL PROGRAMME:

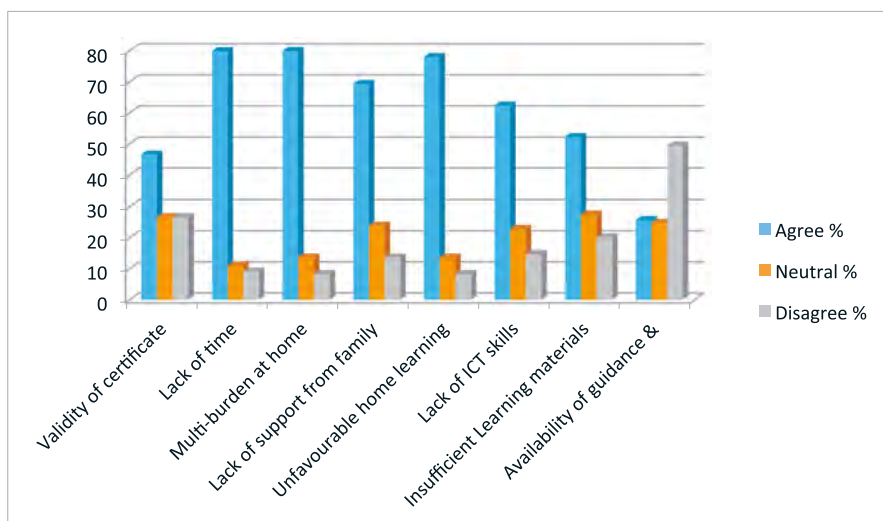


Figure 2. Challenges facing the ODL programme

In the questionnaire, 26.6 per cent of the respondents refused to regard ODL certificates as degrees equal to those of the regular mode. This means that doubts regarding the validity of ODL certificates exist in the minds of the learners.

The above Figure 2 also shows that 80 per cent of the respondents did not have enough time to learn pedagogy due to multiple burdens in their family. 62.4 per cent of the respondents said that they lacked support from their family, environment, etc. In the same way, 80 per cent of the respondents agreed that they had an unfavourable home learning environment. Similarly, 62.4 per cent of the respondents admitted to other challenges and difficulties regarding learning, such as a lack of technical skills and materials necessary for ICT access. 52.3 per cent of the learners admitted to having insufficient learning materials. Similarly, 49.5 per cent of the learners felt that they had received insufficient guidance and counselling from the campus ODL programme.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that there are several opportunities and challenges faced by ODL students. These conditions are individual, instructional and institutional. All in all, half of the instructors and ODL learners have undergone great changes in their knowledge, attitude and skills with regard to the use of self-learning-oriented methods and materials. These have directly or indirectly helped shift the paradigm from a traditional pedagogical practice to an ICT-oriented (innovative) practice in teaching learning. Likewise, major challenges such as a high dropout rate, unavailability of digital learning tools and skills, lack of sufficient time for study etc. also occur.

The findings show clearly that our pedagogical learning practice is dominated by face-to-face modes, with most teachers and learners having to learn without digital tools due to inadequate tools and skills.

Due to the maximum utilisation of ICT labs in the ODL programme, there exists an institutional opportunity in the enhancement of teacher quality and manpower. This is hampered, however, by major challenges: the lack of supportive ODL learning environments, students having difficulties in moving on to new content, delayed shipments of study materials or their absence, a lack of student support services in the areas of guidance and counselling, inadequate academic support, less effective contact sessions and a lack of administrative services at regional centres.

## SUGGESTIONS

In line with the above findings, the following suggestions are made.

The institute should conduct an awareness programme about the knowledge, attitude and practice of the ODL programme in the catchment areas. Students should be equipped with independent study skills. The institute should also provide separate training to students on how to work with ICT self-learning tools in ODL modes of learning. Competent, self-motivated and committed academic personnel should be recruited. Administrative and counselling services at regional centres need improvement to ensure that students with various problems have easy access to these services, and the ODL Department must ensure enough production and delivery of study materials.

## REFERENCES

Aryal, A., & Aryal, A. 2008. E-learning in Nepal: Prospects and Challenges. Accessed on 2 February 2019. Retrieved from [http://nascoit.org.np/published\\_journals/?s=E-learning-in-Nepal-Prospects-and-Challenges.pdf](http://nascoit.org.np/published_journals/?s=E-learning-in-Nepal-Prospects-and-Challenges.pdf)

Basu, S. 2012. Open and distance learning: challenges and opportunities IGNO University, India. Paper of discussion programme through a view on Wednesday 12 September 2012.

Jung, I. 2008. ICT and quality assurance to support ubiquitous access to distance education: Promises, realities and recent breakthroughs. 5th EDEN Research Workshop, 20–30 October 2008 Paris, France. Accessed on 5 January 2019. Retrieved from [https://www.slideshare.net/eden\\_online](https://www.slideshare.net/eden_online)

Kanwar, A.S., Carr, A., Ortlieb K., & Mohee R. 2018. Opportunities and challenges for campus-based universities in Africa to translate into dual-mode delivery. In *Distance Education* 2, 38, 140–158. Accessed on 4 February 2019. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2018.1457944>

Maxwell, C.C., Barbra, M., Kudzai, C., & Zabron, S. 2015. Challenges for open and distance learning students: Experiences from students of the Zimbabwe Open University. *Journal of education and practice*, 6, 18.

Mossberg, K., Tolbert, C., & Stansbury, M. 2003. *Virtual inequality: beyond the digital device*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

UNESCO. 2004. Final report of the meeting of higher education partners. World conference on higher education. Paris: UNESCO.

Wagner, N., Hassanein, K., & Head, M. 2008. Who is responsible for e-learning success in higher education? A stakeholders' analysis. *Educational technology and society*, 26–36.



## 5 ODL DEVELOPMENT IN GORKHA CAMPUS: A GLIMPSE

Sanjaya Adhikari

### ABSTRACT

*This article tries to overview the need and development of ODL in the campuses under TU, with particular focus on the implementation status, examine the opportunities and challenges facing Gorkha Campus and make some conclusions regarding the solution for the development and effective implementation of ODL programmes in TU. The article also reveals the author's personal reflection of ODL development in Gorkha Campus.*

### KEYWORDS

*Open and distance learning (ODL), policy, alternative learning, SWOC analysis, ODL development*

### INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Open and distance learning (ODL) is one of the emerging fields in education and it has a growing influence on learning opportunities. It provides open access to education to those who are deprived of it due to the constraints of time, place and other factors. In other words, it refers to the teaching conducted by someone who is not physically present in front of the learners and probably not in any actual classrooms.

The concept of distance education started already in the late 19th century. The first correspondence programme was launched in the United States at Chicago University. The university made its programme more flexible in order to reach learners and teachers who were geographically scattered and couldn't come face-to-face sessions due to various reasons (Ghosh, Nath, Agrawal and Nath, 2012).

After the development of radio during the First World War and television in the 1950s, the mode of instruction was changed for those students and teachers who were deprived of a face-to-face delivery mechanism and searched for alternative solutions to traditional classrooms (Ghosh et al., 2012).



ODL training on the Gorkha campus. (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

Since then, many more things have changed. ODL is growing fast because of the rapid development of information and communication technologies in recent years and especially after the introduction of web-based technologies, especially the World Wide Web, the information system through which ODL reaches its towering height. The emergence of the internet and related networks help the teacher and learner enter the global educational community. The growth of information and communications technology (ICT) has brought innovation to teaching methodologies. This also make a new range of resources accessible to students and teachers, not only for the purposes of ODL but also for conventional classroom teaching.

The role of UNESCO in the development of the ODL programme was very remarkable. ODL became one of the major alternative solutions for those deprived groups or individuals who cannot access the mainstream of education. ODL can be one of the best alternative solutions for them, which can really assist in one of the priorities of the organisation, namely 'ensuring the right to education for all.' UNESCO's support to its member states in 'fostering basic education for all' is one of the milestones in the development

of ODL. It provides great support to international, interregional and regional co-operation for the promotion of ODL in aiding deprived students through alternative learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2012). This laid the foundation for developing nations like Nepal to introduce ODL in their education systems, as several projects were started in the technical and financial spheres in support of their own and other national and international agencies.

## ODL DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

The education culture in Nepal has a long history, starting from the Gurukul system where spiritual and religious knowledge and life skills were taught mainly to Hindus. Similar kinds of educational cultures were observed in Gumbas (for Buddhists) and Madarsas (for Muslims). These learning centres are still prevalent, though many schools and higher education institutes have been established to provide formal education. Nonetheless, the tutoring convention has been dominated by the face-to-face mode (Pangeni 2016).

The first attempt towards the practice of ODL started in 1958 in the College of Education in the area of adult education. This was launched through radio broadcasting. After that, the Ministry of Education (MoE), with financial and technical support from USAID, launched the radio education teacher training project in 1978. This became the popular means of helping in-service teachers in their professional development through the ODL mode. Later, in 1993, the Distance Education Centre (DEC) was established under the MoE as per the provision made by the National Education Commission in the same year. Teacher training and education awareness programmes were conducted via radio broadcasts. This broadened considerably when the DEC unified with the National Centre for Education Development in 2005 and conducted professional development training courses for primary and secondary level teachers, SLC support programmes and radio programmes on education information (Dahal 2014).

The policy and directives to regulate open and distance learning are the Open and Distance Learning Policy 2007, Directives on Distance Education / Open Learning Programme 2007 and its third amendment in 2014. The provision for ODL has been recognised by the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009–2015 and the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). This plan helps in recognising all kinds of traditional modes of education and harmonising them with the alternative open learning provisions.

## ODL DEVELOPMENT IN TU

Gosh et al. (2012) argue that distance education is incorporated in higher education in two ways: single-mode open universities are established, and traditional universities offer their programmes via the ODL or dual modes. Nepal Open University (NOU), established in 2016, is the first single-mode open university in Nepal. However, Tribhuvan University (TU) is recognised as the first and biggest institution in Nepal to offer higher education with a variety of disciplines in conventional mode, i.e. the face-to-face mode. When realising the importance of the ODL mechanism in imparting knowledge to diversified and scattered individuals and groups, TU made a provision to integrate e-learning components in conventional programmes to make a hybridised system to increase learning opportunities in higher education. The Open and Distance Education Centre (ODEC, TU) was established in 2015 as a constituent independent academic organisation under TU which aims to provide access to quality higher education through ODL (TUODEC 2015).

Faculty of Education (FoE), TU has also begun to offer its programmes through the ODL mode. A major project was launched in its seven constituent campuses in 2013 in collaboration with the Finnish JAMK University of Applied Sciences and HAMK University of Applied Sciences. The project was 'Training of Trainers for the Teacher Qualification Upgrading Programme in Nepal (ToT-Nepal) 2013–2015'. This project aimed to support the effective implementation of the SSRP (2009–2015), which is the roadmap to quality education for all in Nepal. This project supports teacher educators in planning and implementing the teacher education programme via the ODL mode. Seven campus chiefs, 62 teachers and seven ICT experts from regional campuses were trained to lay the foundation and implement the ODL mechanism in their campuses (JAMK's School of Professional Teacher Education, 2019). The project continued as the 'Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL mode for Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP-Nepal) in 2017–2019', which aimed to enhance the quality and relevance of education in Nepal by improving access to the teacher qualification upgrading programme via ODL. Faculty of Education, TU implemented this project in its constituent campuses after realising that ODL provides a tool for equitable access to qualification upgrading programmes that are also accessible for students from remote areas who are unable to regularly attend classes on campuses. This programme was grounded on the SSDP (2016–2023) with the major theme of improving the quality and relevance of education (Finnish National Agency for Education 2019).



Department of Open and distance learning on Gorkha campus. (Photo: Tuovi Lep-pänen)

## ODL DEVELOPMENT IN GORKHA CAMPUS

Gorkha Campus is one of the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University (TU) which was established in 1978 as a centre for running different credited and non-credited training courses developed for teachers. During its more than three decades of historical trajectories, the campus has been recognised as one of the prominent education campuses in the country. It is a leading institution of Gorkha District in bachelor's to master's levels not only in the Faculty of Education (FoE) but also in the Faculty of Management (FoM) and the Institute of Science and Technology (IST). Under 10 departments within the FoE, FoM and IST, the campus runs five programmes and offers 20 courses in the bachelor's and master's levels. The campus runs all its programmes via the face-to-face mode.

Though the campus has expanded different programmes vertically and horizontally and added more academic and physical facilities recently, the students' enrolment and pass rates seem less than satisfactory.

*A general observation shows that, with the establishment of public campuses in the surrounding districts, the catchment area of this campus is gradually shrinking. If we look at the history of this campus, the students enrolled were found to be much more motivated in classroom participation and interaction than their peers since it was solely responsible for fulfilling the demands of the job market. But for the last decade, as several public and private campuses began operating, the flow of student enrolment has decreased. This has also affected the motivation of the learners since there are no job guarantees in the market. Absenteeism and irregularity have been identified as the crucial problems in the campus (Gorkha Campus 2014).*

This had a negative effect on the pass rate of the campus, which is one of the big question marks regarding the quality of the education provided by the campus.

Seeking alternative solutions to provide effective programmes, the campus has started its master's programme in English Education, Nepali Education Curriculum and Evaluation Education through the ODL mode, with FoE, TU initiating the programme. The campus is also planning to run its bachelor's programme in Math Education and Social Studies Education through the ODL mode. The campus has sorted out the following reasons to start the above-mentioned programmes through the ODL mode: 1) It could be the best medium of instructions for the in-service teachers and other general students; 2) Most of the students from remote areas would get an opportunity to get their degree; 3) All the students could be brought to the mainstream of education; 4) In-service teachers in the Western regions would be provided with the opportunity to get the required degree as all the schools are going to be higher-level secondary schools.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The significant impact of the ToT-Nepal Project and TPP-Nepal Project is a milestone in the development of ODL in the FoE and all the seven regional campuses under the FoE. Gorkha Campus is one of the regional campuses in which this project was launched. 16 teachers directly benefited from the project in developing insight about ODL and pedagogy, as the project focus was on introducing ODL pedagogy for the effective implementation of the ODL courses. Part of the project also involved developing the ODL curriculum, self-learning materials and other logistics. The support for infrastructure development in establishing an e- library was also a remarkable aspect of

this support. As a regional campus, Gorkha Campus received all kinds of support with which a campus can run the ODL programme. The teachers are trained in specific subjects to implement their ODL courses from their working stations. The campus' ICT expert and library staff have also been trained to facilitate both students and teachers in ICT-related tasks. The campus has a guidance and counselling cell to help students during their course time. The campus has been advertising the programme through various mediums. At this initial stage there has been a very positive response from the students taking ODL courses offered by the campus.

Establishing and implementing the ODL mechanism at the campus level is very challenging considering the limited resources. With limited strengths and opportunities, Gorkha campus is starting its programme through the ODL mode by overshooting its weaknesses and threats.

## CAMPUS-BASED SWOT

The campus has some strengths that laid the foundation for the establishment of the ODL programme. A well-equipped computer lab designed especially for the ODL programme, and enough branded and non-branded desktops computers and laptops computers for each department, provides space to students and teachers to engage in ODL-related activities. The campus' internet access is 3.5 Mbps both in wired and wireless form. A free Wi-Fi service is provided by the campus on its premises. The assistance of technical facilities like printers and electricity (with generators / backups, solar power) facilitates the smooth conduct of programs. Multimedia projectors in the classroom make it easier to conduct contact sessions in the campus. Subject-specific and techno-friendly full-time and part-time teaching and non-teaching staff are the great asset of this campus.

However, the decreasing number of student enrolment has always been one of the weaknesses of the campus, not only in the programmes operating in the ODL mode but also those in the conventional mode. Globalisation and urbanisation have been the major factors posing challenges in keeping students in the campus until their course completion. The remaining students are from remote areas and low economic backgrounds, which poses a significant hurdle for them in the continuation of their studies. As such, they require some kind of employment to maintain their daily expenses, which in turn contributes to a low motivation towards completing their courses. Student motivation towards higher education in Nepal is very low because of the lack of proper job placements after studies and increasing unemployment. In some cases,

some human resources of the campus without an ICT background have also been observed as a weakness in implementing ODL courses in the campus.

The campus has been offering ODL-based programmes, showcasing some of the opportunities as its positive aspect. Students from job-based backgrounds find these programmes helpful because they can enrol in various courses without having to leave their jobs, and the campus offers these courses with a fee structure that is more affordable than the regular programme. Many technology-literate, dedicated and experienced faculty members are working with a very supportive campus administration. Satisfactory ODL infrastructure and an increasing number of student dropouts in conventional mode programmes are a good sign for ODL marketing and implementing ODL-based programmes. Local governmental bodies have a positive attitude towards campus and ODL-based programmes because there are no other campuses offering anything similar in the provincial level.

Even so, there are many challenges at different levels of ODL development in the campus. The financial management has always been a major challenge in the decentralised campus, with no budget allocated from the university management towards implementing new courses offered by the campus. Existing teachers who were appointed for the programmes in the conventional mode find it difficult to deliver and disseminate knowledge through the ODL mode. Students from low economic backgrounds, with little to no ICT skills and from areas with no internet coverage find these courses more challenging. In the present context of TU, students may find ODL more problematic than the conventional mode as there are some contradictory rules and regulations in the ODL and conventional modes related to admission, attendance and exams. Timely admission has been another challenge, as TU opens admission of both programmes at different times. There is no provision of contact sessions and exams through the online mode. Students find it difficult to come to the campus for these reasons, as they live very far from the campus and cannot attend sessions and exams in the campus during the allotted time.

## SOLUTIONS AT THE CAMPUS AND UNIVERSITY LEVELS

Though the campus faces many challenges, there is no point to conclude that ODL development is in a very critical stage in Gorkha Campus specifically or TU in general.

Gorkha Campus, as a decentralised unit of TU, is able to overcome some of the challenges. ODL-friendly rules and regulations bring ease and positive impact on learners to pursue ODL-related programmes from the campus.



Moreover, the fee structure of ODL-based programmes, which is more affordable than that of the conventional mode programmes, certainly attracts the students towards ODL-based programmes. The strict implementation of the TU rules regarding attendance in regular programmes also attracts students towards ODL-based programmes. Advertising ODL programmes through different mediums makes students from different parts of the country aware of the programmes and facilities that they can receive from the campus. The effectiveness of the ODL programme is maintained by the in-time management of orientation and different contact sessions and exams at the campus level. The guidance and counselling mechanism of the campus plays a very vital role in supporting the student's' motivation towards the programme in various stages throughout the whole programme. The teachers with separate and ODL-specific roles, the coordinating mechanism and necessary administrative support at the campus level ensure effective implementation of the programme.

The university-level mechanism, especially that of the FoE, is another apex body to overcome the ODL-related challenges under the constituent campuses. In-time preparation of the ODL courses and its effective dissemination on the lower units help the campuses in implementing the programmes. Frequent communication and effective monitoring lay the foundation for making ODL-friendly rules and regulations. The in-time preparation of self-learning materials and in-time administration of examinations keep the student's' drive towards programme completion intact. Student dropouts in the ODL programme can be reduced by revising the courses as per the needs of the students and demands of the job market, which they are going to face after their courses. The faculty enhancement programmes via short-term and long-term trainings should be conducted on a regular basis to strengthen the capacity of the faculty members, which in the long run will be a great asset when offering any kinds of programmes under the FoE. It is very important for the FoE to recommend to the higher authorities to keep the ODL programme as a higher priority of the university and allocate the necessary budgets to its constituent campuses, with which they can run ODL programmes and manage ICT-related matters.

## CONCLUSION

ODL is at its beginning phase in the context of Nepal, though the ODL mechanism has already been developed and practiced in the developed countries for a long time. The development of ODL in Nepal had always been regarded as a lesser priority before the policy and directives to regulate open and distance learning were made in 2007. But now it is among the priorities of

the state and its universities and educational organisations. It has also been among the priorities of the learners as they started to select the educational programmes offered through the ODL mode from the universities of either their own nation or that of other countries. University programmes through ODL have now become the greatest assets of any universities and nations. TU has been prioritising and offering its programmes through the ODL mode to ensure quality education to its learners, with ensuring quality education to all being the major theme of the national policy of education.

## REFERENCES

Dahal, M.P. 2014. Distance education and open school in the context of Nepal. *Distance Education*, 15, 15, 56–62.

Finnish National Agency for Education. 2017. Accessed on 12 December 2019. Retrieved from [https://www.oph.fi/en/projects/tpp-nepal/project description](https://www.oph.fi/en/projects/tpp-nepal/project%20description)

Ghosh, S., Nath, J., Agrawal, S., & Nath, A. 2012. Open and distance learning (ODL) education system: past, present and future – a systematic study of an alternative education system. *Journal of Global Research in Computer Science*, 3, 4, 53–57.

Gorkha Campus. 2014. Educational Quality of Gorkha Campus: An Analysis and Ways of Enhancing. Gorkha: Author.

JAMK's School of Professional Teacher Education. Accessed on 11 November 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.jamk.fi/en/Research-and-Development/RDI-Projects/Nepal/Other-projects/>

Ministry of Education. 2007. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Policy, 2063 Accessed on 15 December 2019. Retrieved from <https://moe.gov.np/article/210/open-and-distance-learning-odl-policy-2063.html>

Pangeni, S.K. 2016. Open and Distance Learning: Cultural Practices in Nepal. *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 19, 2, 32–45. Accessed on 7 December 2019. Retrieved from [http://www.eurodl.org/materials /contrib/2016/Pangeni.pdf](http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2016/Pangeni.pdf)

UNESCO. 2012. Teacher Education through Distance Learning Technology Curriculum Evaluation. Paris: UNESCO. Accessed on 9 December. Retrieved from <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000128463>

## 6 EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Bhim Bahadur Bhandari

### ABSTRACT

*Learning anything formally and informally is the education of life. We emphasise formal education to children and adults. We prefer formal education for our children in reality. The state provides formal education through its educational curriculum and institutions. A proper and good education is very important to all. Education facilitates quality learning all throughout life among people of any age group, caste, creed, religion and region. Education gives us acknowledgement of the world around us and changes things for the better. It helps us build an opinion and have points of view on things in life. Education is a process of achieving knowledge, values, skills, beliefs and moral habits. It teaches pupils to respect others in life. It grants the skill to manage one's own life and happiness. It gives a sense of love to people and nations.*

*Education helps one to get employment for one's livelihood. Good education provides knowledge, skill and the art of life that makes living easy and happy. In this article I discuss the importance of equal opportunities to education in Nepal.*

### INTRODUCTION

The constitution of Nepal has a special legal and compulsory provision to provide education to all as a fundamental right. Article number 31 of the **Constitution of Nepal 2072** has guaranteed the right to education as a fundamental right of every citizen, which includes the right to access to education, the right to compulsory and free basic education, and the right to free education up to the secondary level. Though the constitution guarantees the rights to education to all citizens, there exist cases where even primary-level education has been denied to citizens. A large number of dropouts from primary school is also a societal and national headache. There is a gap which can never be overcome by the Government of Nepal. To solve such inaccessible educational problems requires a special emphasis and roadmap. For that to happen, the government should first be honest about the issues at hand. Secondly, the government should have much more willpower to solve the problem at hand. Special slogans, provisions, budgets and implementation

can make the dreams of the constitution into a reality. Holistic planning and impressive implementation will be necessary to accomplishing this goal.

Surkhet Campus (Education) is situated at Birendranagar, the capital and largest city of Karnali province. The campus was established in 2029 B.S. (1972 C.E.) at Nepalgunj in place of Surkhet. Later, in 2040 B.S. (1983 C.E.), it was moved to Birendranagar Surkhet from Nepalgunj (An Introductory Booklet, 2075 B.S. (2018 C.E.), Surkhet Campus Edition).

There are two constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University in this province. Furthermore, 32 affiliated campuses of TU also operate in the province. Among these, Surkhet Campus is the leading and largest of the higher educational institutions. It provides education to a great range of geographical catchment areas and different subjects for bachelor's and master's level students. Surkhet Campus has run two types of education model, with one being the face-to-face mode of education and the second being the open and distance learning (ODL) mode of education. The ODL mode was recently started and a nominal number of students and teachers have engaged in it. The ODL mode of education is only for master's level students. The ODL subjects are Curriculum and Evaluation, Nepali Education and Health Education. As the subjects are limited, the number of ODL enrolments is also limited.

Online teaching and learning is a growing trend in ODL and gaining wider popularity among higher education institutions in Nepal. Online teaching and learning is carried out in ODL with the help of computers and technologies via the internet. The use of technology offers a wide range of opportunities in ODL, including promoting the quality of interaction among learners and interaction between learners and lecturers.

With the benefits of using technology for online teaching and learning known across the globe, the higher education system has now been transformed into a world where extreme usage of tablets and social media is very common for both teaching as well as learning. According to Kim and Bonk (2006), technology has played and continues to play an important role in the development and expansion of online education. The way we use technology for teaching and learning has enhanced our education and proved to have a positive impact on the education process. This adoption of technology has enriched the popularity for ODL among learners, as it offers flexibility and accessibility. Similarly, ODL lecturers have found that the use of technology can improve the interaction as well as collaboration among learners. ODL offers learners the opportunity to study at their own pace, with the learners having the opportunity to learn at anytime, anywhere. With the help of technology for online teaching and learning, the materials can now be

accessed from a computer or mobile devices. This has created more equal opportunities for the learners. Technology offers opportunities to promote interaction between learners and lecturers as well as with experts in ODL (Mathew & Ebele Iloanya 2016).

## IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Equity in education means that personal, social and educational circumstances such as gender, ethnicity, economic and financial status, family background, etc. are not obstacles to achieving education. It means that the nation, state or society should provide free and compulsory education to all its citizens regardless of any obstacles. Any problems hindering a child from going to school should be removed. Unfavourable conditions are problems for the state to solve, in accordance with the needs of students. Equity should prohibit discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. It has two dimensions: fairness and inclusion. Fairness means ensuring that social circumstances are no obstacles in achieving one's educational potential. Inclusion means equal participation regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, caste, race and economic status. Inclusion ensures a basic minimum standard of education for all. Everyone should be able to read, write, do simple maths and study at school, campus and universities. Nobody is denied access to education regardless of their circumstances. Equity gives each student what they need to perform at an acceptable level. Equity gives each person the same chance, e.g. every school gets the same level of funding. If it is not enough to some schools, it is not equity. Hence, equity provides the amount of funds that a school needs to run well. Equity means not only providing quality education to the needy, but also removing hindrances from students so that they can get an education. Equity removes the problems that prevent students from going to schools, colleges and universities.

## PRACTICES OF EQUITY IN EDUCATION IN SURKHET CAMPUS (EDUCATION)

Surkhet Campus also lays an emphasis on providing quality education easily. It provides scholarships to poor and talented students whose financial condition is unsound. A small amount of money is paid by the campus itself in the form of a scholarship in order to provide free tuition, and similar scholarships or free education are also given to disabled students as well. Hostel accommodations is also a kind of reward for poor students during their study years. In Surkhet

Campus there are two hostels, one for boys and another for girls, with 60 and 40 accommodations respectively. The capacity of the hostels is very small, but a large number of students adjust to them well. As it is, Surkhet Campus is doing its utmost with regard to this equity mission. All other accommodation facilities and scholarships are lacking because of the limited resources of the campus. Let us be hopeful that we will one day be able to provide a large number of students with hostels, scholarships and other.

## WHAT IS LACKING?

The major challenges are access of technology, affordability and power supply. Access to technology is significant challenge in online teaching and learning in Nepal. The areas where network connection is a problem and people face challenges in accessing information technology as a result of poor infrastructure. These are major barriers for the use of technology in online teaching and learning.

Schools and campuses in Nepal cannot provide education to everyone on an equitable basis because the education system of Nepal is reluctant in this matter. Neither government-owned education institutions nor private sector schools and colleges can provide this. As government resources are limited, it cannot widen the horizon of equity in education. Nevertheless, the government should allocate more funds for it. Every school should take the initiative to provide equitable facilities on a basic level. One should be able to attend school without problems. The Government of Nepal should increase its educational budget, ensuring that nobody remains away from educational institutions without completing their education. No student should face the hurdles, circumstances and negative fortunes during their school or university days.

## SUGGESTIONS

Those students who cannot afford their expenses during their studies should get the chance to work at schools, colleges or universities. We can employ them in libraries, canteens, administrative jobs, cleaning and sanitary work, and even as teaching assistants for the junior classes. Or as sports coaches. Or bus drivers for schools or colleges. There may be several jobs that can be done by the students during their study days. It will make it possible for those students who face economic problems to study. The first and most important means of study is money. Solving this problem makes equity in

education easier. Gender, ethnic and other social discrimination also create problems for children going to school. It is suggested that senior students can teach juniors during study hours. Not only would this be fruitful to the juniors in their studies, but the seniors would also benefit. It will lessen the expenses of a school or college.

## CONCLUSION

Education is a basic need of every society. Educated manpower is a basic need of a country. Education is a person's best weapon. It is the most powerful quality of a person. A better education system can enhance the social, scientific and technological improvement of a country. If you want to make a country rich, provide the best quality of education to all citizens. To make the people prosperous and happy, provide education to all on an equitable basis. Raising the standard of living of a marginalised group of people requires equitable support in education in all walks of life.

The quality of education given to the children today forecasts the life of the people and a country twenty years later. The education system of today will show what kind of people there will be tomorrow, and what kind of stage a country will reach.

## SOURCES

An Introductory Booklet, 2075 B.S., Surkhet Campus Edition

Kim, K. J., & Bonk, C. J. 2006. The Future of Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: The Survey Says. *Educause Quarterly*, 29, 22–30.

Mathew, I. R. & Ebele Iloanya, J. 2016. Open and Distance Learning: Benefits and Challenges of Technology Usage for Online Teaching and Learning in Africa. Accessed on 11 January 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Open-and-Distance-Learning%3A-Benefits-and-Challenges-Mathew-EbeleIloanya/cda5417c3c95dd467931b068e9d121e44cc8ab44>

# 7 OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: AN ALTERNATIVE MODE OF DELIVERY IN THE NEPALESE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Bishnu Prasad Ghimire

## ABSTRACT

*The Nepalese education system is dominated by face-to-face tutoring. It has a long history, ranging from the Gurukul culture to the present system of formal schooling. The emerging practices of technology use in education have promoted online learning as a form of open and distance education and gained in popularity. Open and distance mode of learning has now become an effective mode of delivery in the field of education. This paper explains the context of open and distance learning (ODL) in Nepal, the need and importance of ODL as an alternative mode of learning, the current situation of ODL in Butwal Multiple Campus, and the challenges regarding ODL.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education in Nepal has been dominated by face-to-face tutoring that has a long history, ranging from the Gurukul culture to the present system of formal schooling. In the Gurukul system, students used to go to a Guru's Ashram (teacher's home or temple) where the Guru used to teach spiritual and religious knowledge and life skills. However, the emerging practices of technology use in education have been promoting online learning (OL) as an alternative mode of delivery in education, and it has been gaining popularity among contemporary Nepalese students.

Many people think that open and distance learning is complicated and technically sophisticated. But this is not the case. It is defined as linking a teacher and students in several geographical locations via technology that allows for interaction. It is also interpreted as the offering of educational programmes designed to facilitate a learning strategy that does not depend on day-to-day contact teaching but makes the best use of the potential of the students to study on their own. Furthermore, it provides interactive study materials and decentralised learning facilities where students can seek academic and other forms of educational assistance when they need it. The use of modern technology and flexibility of time allow people to access



education as per their needs, convenience and interests at any time of their life.

In the past, Nepalese teachers and students were largely limited to chalk and talk with regard to their methods, including the use of the blackboard and textbook as teaching materials. These days, all possible teaching materials are at their disposal, including audio, video, animated and simulated objects, software tools, internet/web tools, smartboard, electronic pen, and many more as per the need of the lesson they design. The Nepalese education system is on its way to making a grand shift towards adapting innovative technology. Technology-enhanced ODL has become an opportunity to reach the students across the country and beyond.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Distance education in Nepal was started when the College of Education launched the Radio Education Programme for teacher training and promoting adult education in 1957. The implementation of the New Education System Plan in 1971 (NESP) made training mandatory for teachers to have permanent tenure. Even so, the College of Education was unable to train all the teachers. It was realised after the enactment of the National Education System Plan (NESP) that the conventional face-to-face approach to teacher training alone would not be enough to cater to the needs of trained teachers in the country. The government had to look for an alternative means to train more teachers. For that, the Institute of Education (IOE) initiated a new programme called Teacher Training through distance learning in 1976/77. This programme was mainly intended to upgrade the qualifications of SLC teachers serving in primary schools and in-service training for primary school teachers in remote areas.

The Institute of Education created the Extension Division and developed a set of self- learning materials based on the curriculum. This scheme had two contact sessions in order to help the teachers overcome their difficulties in understanding the materials. These contact sessions were organised during the vacations in their teaching jobs. During the contact sessions, the tutors assessed the students' progress as a part of formative evaluation. The tutors provided feedback to the learners with guidance for their remaining works to be completed within the stipulated time of the academic session. This programme was supported by UNICEF. The programme was discontinued after the Radio Teacher Training (RETT) programme was implemented by the Government of Nepal with the help of USAID in 1978. Faculty of Education,

Tribhuvan University has been running the B.Ed. programme via distance mode. Nine centres in TU's constituent campuses were established for this purpose. The students followed the same curriculum and examinations as the regular students of TU.

In order to promote distance media education in Nepal, Radio Nepal, FM radios, Nepal Television and other TV channels play a major role. The ten-month in-service training course for primary teachers constituted four packages of 2.5 months each. The second and third packages of the training were delivered in distance mode through radio broadcasting by the distance education centre and the first and fourth packages in face-to-face mode by the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) through its nine Primary Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs). In addition, the trainees were supplied with self-learning materials in order to support the radio lessons. The training was also followed by contact sessions every weekend, which were organised at the Resource Centre to provide the trainees with an opportunity to interact with the resource persons to avoid confusions encountered on the radio broadcasting and the self-learning materials. Thus, the DEC and NCED have been two institutes under the MoE responsible for joint in-service training to primary school teachers.

The establishment of Nepal Open University in 2016 has now opened the door for many students to enhance their qualifications in diverse disciplines. It has conducted many programmes from the graduate to the M.Phil. level. Its prime objective is to equip its learners with knowledge, skills and competencies through flexible, learner-centred and technology-based ways.

## THE ROLE OF TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY IN STRENGTHENING ODL

The role of Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University has been very important in the collaboration with the two respective universities of applied sciences of Finland, JAMK University of Applied Sciences and HAMK University of Applied Sciences, in implementing *ToT-Nepal, Training of Trainers for Teacher Qualification Upgrading Programme in Nepal (ToT-Nepal project)* to upgrade teacher qualifications through the ODL mode. The teacher trainers of FoE, TU have participated in thematic workshops on the following themes: ICTE and ODL as a training model and educational method, pedagogy and adult learner's assessment and evaluation, teacher's professional development and development research. As a result of the ToT-project, the participants have started to build regional ODL training models. The project was implemented from 2013 to 2015.



Boudhanath, Katmandu, Nepal (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

Another continuation has been the *Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP-Nepal Project)*, a capacity development project between Tribhuvan University, Nepal and JAMK University of Applied Sciences together with HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland. The duration of the project is from 1 March 2017 to 30 March 2020. It has carried out many workshops, trainings and seminars and managed an exposure visit to Finland. A group of teachers from seven campuses of TU have visited Finland and taken part in a training programme from 8 May 2018 to 1 June 2018. The training covered the following themes: Moodle as an e-learning platform, library services, open science, pedagogical models, guidance and counselling in ODL.

As a result of the ToT-Nepal Project, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University initially introduced a six-semester (three years) ODL programme for M.Ed. students, but it couldn't be so effective because there was already an annual two-year course for the students in regular face-to-face mode, and they could attend the final exams without having to be in attendance at class. There was a big question mark about the duration of the same programme in two modes. Now there is uniformity in the duration (both of the modes are on a semester basis), syllabus, evaluation and assessment system. The students who cannot join and attend regular classes are getting admission through the ODL mode instead, and there are an increasing number of students. Their access has helped a lot to upgrade their qualifications.

The TPP-Nepal project has prepared trainers to implement one-year B. Ed. and M. Ed. programmes through the ODL mode from the Faculty of Education, TU. These programmes are based on the semester system. The one-year M. Ed. is a new programme but there is already a one-year B. Ed. programme which is based on an annual system. Some of the subjects, like Social Studies, Health Education and Educational Administration and Supervision, are already taught in the distance mode even in the annual system. There is a lack of uniformity, as there was with the M.Ed. level annual mode and the ODL mode as discussed above. Therefore, we need to address the issue before implementing the new programme.

## PROGRAMMES IN BUTWAL MULTIPLE CAMPUS

Butwal Multiple Campus (BMC) is one of the major constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. It is the largest in area and number of students in Province No.5 of Nepal. BMC was established as a Primary Teachers' Training Centre in 1973 (2030 B.S.), which at present is an academic centre for many students of Rupandehi and various nearby districts such as Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu, Palpa, Arghakhanchi, Gulmi, Syangja, Dang, Baglung, Parbat and many other parts of provinces no. 6 and 7 in Nepal. Since its establishment it has been running various prominent academic disciplines such as Education, Humanities, Basic Science, Law (L.L.B.) and Management in various levels. It has focused on upholding the quantity and quality education in diverse faculties. It has bachelor's levels in basic science (B. Sc.), BSC-CSIT, B.Ed. programmes with science, ICT Ed., one-year B. Ed. courses (regular and distance mode), B.A., L.L.B., B.B.S. and B.B.A. Likewise, to uplift the overall academic status the following master's degree programmes are being run effectively: Nepali (M.A. and M. Ed.), Economics (M.A.), English (M.A. and M. Ed.), M.Ed. in Health, Mathematics, Education Planning and Management, M.B.S. in Management, Sociological and Anthropological study and ODL M.Ed. Health and Nepali Education. The campus has developed infrastructure to conduct the various programmes. It has a well-equipped library with internet access, a CSIT lab, an ICT lab and e-library. It likewise has sufficient classrooms with adequate furniture.

## RATIONALE OF THE ODL PROGRAMME IN THE CAMPUS

Butwal Multiple Campus is one of the constituent campuses of the first and central university in Nepal, Tribhuvan University. It is situated in the western part of the country. Butwal is now a temporary capital of Province No. 5 during the restructuring of the country after it became a federal republic. It is also one of the country's main industrial areas and an educational hub. There have been discussions about the need and importance of a Regional University. Regarding these issues, Butwal Multiple Campus can certainly be developed as an academic centre with new infrastructure where many programmes in different disciplines can be implemented successfully, including ODL.

The campus has been conducting the ODL programme as an alternative to the traditional pedagogical training process. It is to provide an opportunity to those who are job holders and who have difficulty in accessing education which would help uplift their academic qualifications. The main focus is on those who cannot participate in the regular face-to-face mode of education. It helps to provide an educational opportunity to the students who live in remote and rural areas by producing well-qualified teachers for different levels. The participants are acquainted with the modern technologies of teaching- learning and ICT skills. The programme helps to build an inclusive information society with learner-centred instruction.

## ODL PROGRAMME IN THE CAMPUS

Butwal Multiple Campus was established as a Primary Teachers' Training Centre from the very beginning. Now it has been running many programmes in different disciplines. The ODL programme in the campus was first started in 2013 when Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University implemented a six-semester-based M. Ed. programme. At that time, the regular face-to-face mode was based on an annual system when student attendance was not compulsory. There were only a few students in the first semester, and the first five-day contact session was held in December 2013. All the students appeared at the final exams of the first semester but later dropped out of the programme.

ODL was restored at the campus in 2017 after the six-semester course had been conducted for four semesters, and the regular face-to-face mode programme has also been run on a semester basis, with student attendance having become compulsory. Now there has been uniformity in the syllabus, curriculum, textbooks and evaluation system between the two different

modes. Students who cannot attend the regular mode are now attracted to this mode of learning, and it has been gaining publicity. The campus has been conducting master's level programmes in Health and Nepali Education and is planning to run bachelor's level programmes through this mode. The increasing number of students in the programme shows the growing popularity of this mode of learning as an alternative mode of delivery in our education system.

## ODL ACTIVITIES IN THE CAMPUS

### 1 Preparation for the Programme

At the beginning of the academic session we hold a meeting with the campus administration, librarian, account officer, examination officer and ODL tutors to make a strategic plan for the effective implementation of the programme. The need for and importance of the programme is communicated in advertisements via local radio, TV and newspapers. An interaction programme with potential students and stakeholders is held in order to provide guidance and counselling and make the students ready to enrol in the programme and become ready for the first contact session.

### 2 First Contact Session

In the initial phase, the students receive orientation about the programme, rules and regulations, and information about the roles and responsibilities of the tutors and students. Then there is dissemination about the courses they have to study. The tutors provide subject-specific guidance and counselling with instructional guidelines. The students get assignments and continuous feedback throughout the session. They also get a two-day ICT class to familiarise them with the ICT tools used in instruction. Then there is distance teaching through the use of mail, websites, blogs, chat, Skype, group chat in the messenger, phones, etc. The tutors send and collect the related materials, including assignments, and provide feedback to the students via mail, messenger and cell phone.

### 3 Second Contact Session

In this session the students submit their assignments and receive feedback. There is discussion about the difficulties they encountered over the course of their learning. They receive subject-specific individual guidance and counselling. There is internal evaluation of individual students, followed by feedback. They are instructed to be ready for the end of semester exams.

## CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAMME

Open and distance learning has now become an effective alternative mode of delivery in the education system. It has provided opportunities to students who cannot attend in the regular face-to-face mode to upgrade their academic career. The implementation of this mode of teaching and learning would certainly be effective if we use modern technology in our education system. However, we face many challenges in making the best use of it in our context.

There exists a lack of coordination between the Dean's Office and campuses. The final exam results of the students are not published on time. Students come with very poor or non-existent ICT skills, and some of them live in such remote areas that there is no access to the internet or even cell phones. Most of the students are job holders and don't receive study leave during the contact sessions and exam periods. The use of Moodle as an effective platform for learning has not been functioning well on account of students with poor ICT knowledge and skills and having no access to the internet. The semester system will not gain in popularity so long as there is an annual system at the bachelor's level.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ODL PROGRAMME

There should be coordination between the centre and regional campuses. Students should get basic ICT skills training before enrolment in order to be familiar with the use of ICT. Final exam results should be published on time so that the students don't have to wait long. Notices and information need to be provided on time to the regional campuses. The annual system should be phased out for the semester system to be implemented successfully. Training tutors is necessary from time to time in order to develop their professional skills.

## CONCLUSION

Open and distance learning bridges the formal and non-formal sectors. It is one of the most feasible modes of instruction to come about in recent years. The open and distance learning mode is an alternative route to formal schooling, with the provision of the school curriculum and an external examination system, and variation in learning materials in the form of print, audio-visual cassettes, broadcast, telecast, audio-visual conferencing, etc. via resource materials, face-to-face interactions and distance tutoring. This mode of education is intended for all kinds of people, young and adults, and for many purposes including literacy, vocational, technical, scientific and academic. This mode is the most potential and dynamic one for any developed or developing country. Due to advances in technology, more effective equipment and learning materials are being invented, which will in turn enhance the quality and efficiency of open and distance learning.

## REFERENCES

- MoE. 2010. Teacher development policy guidelines. Sanothimi: Bhaktapur, NCED.
- NCED. 2011. Preparing for effective implementation of school sector reform plan 2009–2015: teacher development policy guideline. Sanothimi: Bhaktapur, NCED/ MoE.
- Tribhuvan University Open and Distance Education Centre. 2015. Introduction. Accessed on 2 September 2019. Retrieved from <http://odectu.edu.np/index.php/introduction/>



## 8 CHANGING ROLE OF A TEACHER IN DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGY

Yubraj Joshi

### ABSTRACT

*The teachers' role should be neither static nor stereotypical, though it should evolve along with the passage of time, in accordance with the needs of society and the learners as well as the innovative exploitation of ICT-friendly pedagogy. Most of the teachers following the traditional role focus on the exploitation of textbooks through face-to-face lectures in order to accomplish their objectives on time, rather than applying information and computer technology that focuses on competence and permits the learners to learn in their own way and at their own pace. Both the students and the parents are determined to make the teachers more accountable in the delivery of knowledge in the traditional role. There are implications in the changing roles of teachers who work in the ODL mode, applying digital devices and technologies, developed and designed learning modules and various assessment tools. Instead of being limited to a subject-based curriculum, they should be provided with the autonomy to develop the curriculum based on competences and learning outcomes, yet this has not been addressed in the prevailing policies of Tribhuvan University. The article is oriented towards the changing role of the teachers that is expected to be more appropriate for the effective implementation of ODL in a real sense.*

### INTRODUCTION

Teachers need to overcome many existing challenges and obstacles in society, though this is not considered to be part of the traditional role of the teacher. Most of the teachers merely deal with the textbooks designed on the basis of the curriculum, if they are available. Whenever students make inquiries, the teachers invariably rely on the prescribed textbooks. With the passage of time, the application of information and computer technology has proven to influence the changing role of the teachers. The teachers' jobs are assumed to be something more than simply assigning and evaluating tasks based on the textbooks. They have to work with the curriculum and make corrections, with insertion and omission if necessary,

with their primary consideration being contemporary society and learners, as well as regarding the application of the innovative methods and techniques. They need a certain amount of autonomy to amend the curriculum to make it competence-based and address the creative issues regarding the students. There is no flexibility in the current policies of Tribhuvan University that allows campus teachers to design and implement the curriculum to thrive on the potential of the students in our campus while working under the ODL mode. We teachers can only develop the learning materials and evaluation tools that will only be applied in the internal examination and assessments, whereas the question papers for the final examinations are set and distributed by the Dean's Office.

## TRADITIONAL ROLE

Professional teachers are expected to have mastered their respective subject matters. They deal with the didactic purpose of impart knowledge to the students while being limited to the specific subject. We are accustomed to the face-to-face mode when teaching any subjects for a long time. Not only the teachers but also the students find it easier to have a teacher that delivers lectures on the particular subjects and sets certain assignments to be accomplished within the determined time span. Most of the teachers attempt to show that they possess superior knowledge in comparison with their students and are satisfied if their students pass the periodic examinations. Traditionally, the role of the teachers is regarded as completing the course within the academic year without measuring the competence that the students have achieved in the process.

The success and failure of the students is directly attached to the skill and efforts of the teachers. The students are not encouraged to bear responsibility for their learning. Not only the students but also the parents are determined to make the teachers more accountable in the delivery of knowledge. They expect to benefit much more from the face to face mode of teaching that does not permit the application of information and computer technology friendly pedagogy. Open and distance learning has been introduced to the students, though most of the teachers and students are not convinced by it. However, they are accustomed to the traditional role of the teachers that assumes to impart knowledge to the students and works with the subject-based curriculum.



Streetlife in Kathmandu. (Photo: Tuovi Leppänen)

## CHANGING ROLE

Essentially, the curriculum designed by Tribhuvan University is subject-based rather than competence-based, which does not take into account so well the differences between the individual learners' abilities, knowledge, preferences and learning styles. We need to conduct a proper analysis of the competences in light of the globalisation of education.

Many commentators use the term 'facilitator' to describe a particular kind of teacher who is democratic rather than autocratic, and who fosters learner autonomy through the use of group and pair work and by acting as more of a resource than a transmitter of knowledge (Harmer 2007).

The 'new pedagogies' can be defined succinctly as a new model of learning partnerships between and among students and teachers, aiming towards deep learning goals and enabled by pervasive digital access (Fullan & Langworthy 2014).

Even though the new technology offers unique opportunities for promoting reflective and collaborative learning, the traditional teacher-centred knowledge

transmission metaphor still dominates in online units, i.e. information exchange is still the primary practice of many network groups where students find themselves scrolling through pages of online text. According to Hiltz (1998, 7) 'Colleges and universities ought to be concerned not with how fast they can "put their courses on the Web" but with finding out how this technology can be used to build and sustain learning communities'. Furthermore, the world's increasing dependence on lifelong access to new knowledge is transforming the landscape of higher education and forcing the academy to rethink virtually all of its systems and traditions (Rowly, Lujan & Dolence 1998). Laurillard (2002) sees the challenges to university teaching in getting away from the transmissionist model and creating 'reflective practicum' by turning the academics into reflective practitioners. By being reflective practitioners, the higher education lecturers are engaged in understanding and evaluating the process of teaching and learning, rather than the teaching objectives. The objective now is to improve the quality of their teaching practice as well as having the opportunities to learn about themselves (McNiff, 1993). This can yield evidence and insights that can and do assist in the critical transformation of practice (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000).

In order to achieve quality of learning online, the teacher should also emphasise human social interactions. The social elements of the discussions were interspersed among the academic content. This appeared to strengthen the development of this community of learners. Indeed, according to Bonk, Kirkley, Hara and Dennen (2001, 80) the social side is an 'important indicator of the online course's success or failure'. Undoubtedly, with the contributions of the participants we managed to create a positive environment conducive to interaction and peer learning.

We have to develop the policy to grant autonomy to the teachers to set the competencies and learning outcomes in the curriculum, as a curriculum designed for all might not be appropriate in every context. The socioeconomic and educational background of the learners also plays a vital role in learning. The teachers' traditionally accepted role is to follow the curriculum and conduct classroom activities to achieve the set goals. There is a certain process which needs to be undertaken while amending the curriculum from a process-oriented to a result-oriented one that is regarded to be time-consuming in the context of Nepal.

The ODL teachers are in touch with the students through digital devices and technologies. They have to develop and apply learning modules and various assessment tools. The subject-based curriculum does not permit the teachers to mention the competences and learning outcomes. It is less

effective in enhancing the potential of the learners. The learning environment might vary from place to place and community to community. It is mostly the teacher who can make better plans for learning.

We will gain experience from the personal examples of individual students, types of classes, and timing activities. We will then be able to bring up these examples for comparison in the future. We will also get a repertoire of exercises and whole stock lessons and courses (Woodward, 2010). The teachers can attend the meetings, seminars and workshops to discuss and finalise the learning methods, teaching methods, learning environments and assessment methods. The previous years' teaching experience and individual learners' opinions may be fruitful in developing the curriculum. The process for developing the curriculum in a similar way may not be allowed in our context, which is why the teachers' role is traditional or general when developing professional pedagogy.

Most of the students are deprived from enhancing their academic qualification owing to the problems of irregular attendance in the campus classes. These are the ones who are expected to benefit the most from the ODL programme. Though the teachers have no authority to develop a competence- based curriculum, they are applying ICT pedagogy. Though our campus is not fully provided with the liberty to develop a competence-based curriculum, the teachers are setting assignments and designing learning activities to evaluate the students' competences. The students and teachers are found to have been convinced by the changing role of the teachers after commencing working in the ODL mode.

## CONCLUSION

We should try to change the role of teachers in developing professional pedagogy to engage the students in the ODL programme and enhance the learners' competences. The learning environment and methods might play a significant role in making the learners more responsible. Since the competences and learning outcomes may not be static, the teachers should be provided with the authority to design and amend the curriculum periodically or when necessary. The teachers should provide appropriate input in the teaching learning realm. The teachers, students, government officials engaging in education sectors, educational planners, experts, university's concern units and the members of the legislature shall be involved in collaborative efforts to change the role of teachers in developing professional pedagogy. A separate autonomous unit for operating and regulating the ODL programme in the

Dean's Office of the Faculty of Education should be established, and policy and guidelines to implementing the changing role of teachers in developing professional pedagogy should also be developed.

## REFERENCES

Bonk, C., Kirkley, J., Hara, N. & Dennen, V. 2001. Finding the instructor in post-secondary online learning: pedagogical, social, managerial, and technological location. In J. Stephenson, ed. *Teaching and Learning Online: Pedagogies for new technologies*. Kogan Page: London 76–98.

Fullan, M. & Langworthy, M. 2014. *A Rich Seam: How New Pedagogies Find Deep Learning*. London: Pearson.

Harmer, J. 2007. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 4ed. Pearson Longman.

Hiltz, S. R. 1998. Collaborative learning in asynchronous learning networks: building learning communities. *WebNet 98 World conference of the Www, Internet, and intranet Proceedings*, Orlando, FL, Eric 427 705

Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. 2000. Participatory action research. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publication, 567–607.

Laurillard, D. 2002. Rethinking teaching for the knowledge society. *EDUCAUSE review*, January/February. Accessed on 3 January 2020. Retrieved from <http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm0201.pdf>

McNiff, J. 1993. *Teaching as Learning: An action research approach*. London: Routledge.

Rowly, D. J., Lujan, H. D. & Dolence, M. G. 1998. *Strategic choices for the academy: how the demand for lifelong learning will re-create higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Woodward, T. 2010. *Planning Lessons and Courses*. Cambridge: University Press.

## SUMMARY

The long-term cooperation between three universities in Nepal and Finland has provided a great lesson to all the partners. These articles have emphasised the challenges and strengths of the development and cooperation in the context of Nepal. Over the last decade, it has become increasingly important to develop information and communication technology in order to help achieving the UN goal of Education for All. As stated in the first article, the UN's Education for All goal was the starting principle for the cooperation between Nepal and Finland. However, development of the technology was not the main target of the capacity building effort in the HEI ICI cooperation in the two projects of ToT and TPP-Nepal. The main goal was to develop the capacity of teacher trainers and enable the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University to independently offer teacher education through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) education model.

As a nationwide university, Tribhuvan University has a unique task in offering higher education in Nepal, as its campuses cover the whole country. In these articles, the variation of the different contexts of Nepal has been outlined. The need to develop ODL has been a common one for all campuses. After the massive earthquake of 2015, many families have moved to the capital area, while those who have not had the capacity to move have remained in the rural areas. This is a threat to provincial campuses, and they have subsequently had to think of ways to ensure high-quality education for potential students. The Open and Distance Learning education model has offered one solution to this concern.

The Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University has opened the door towards a flexible higher education model in teacher education. Such a door, once opened, cannot be closed again. Open and distance education is an essential part of higher education globally. It offers a unique chance to access higher education. The motivation to study at a higher education level is high in all parts of Nepal, which in turn motivates higher education institutions to develop learning opportunities. We need to remember that all nations have a responsibility to offer equal opportunities for education. High-quality education develops society as a whole.

Developing the new education model does not rely on one or two projects. It is about the long-term reformation of the education sector, which requires

structural cooperation between different actors, such as universities and governmental administration. In addition, the education policy needs to support this process, as has occurred in Nepal through the School Sector Development policy report.

We thank the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University, seven provincial campuses and all teacher trainers and campus staff who have been brave in starting this new education model. You have been pioneers in this long-term development. Trusting the Open and Distance Learning education model and its methods will go a long way towards the process for high quality and open education in the future. Being a pioneer is never easy, but it is a worthy role. The development partners in Nepal and Finland encourage all universities to start new processes in the development of Open and Distance Learning education. It will ensure equal opportunities for learning and a better future for our globe.





# AUTHORS

## **Sanjaya Adhikari**

Lecturer, ODL Coordinator, Department of Open and Distance Learning, Gorkha Campus, Nepal

## **Bhim Bahadur Bhandari**

ODL Coordinator, Surkhet Campus, Nepal

## **Bishnu Prasad Ghimire**

ODL Co-ordinator, Butwal Multiple Campus, Nepal

## **Yubraj Joshi**

ODL co-coordinator, Dadeldhura Multiple Campus, Nepal

## **Seija Koskela**

Senior lecturer, PhD, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, School of Professional Teacher Education, Finland

## **Tuovi Leppänen**

Senior lecturer, Project Manager, PhD, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, School of Professional Teacher Education, Finland

## **Shyam Krishna Maharjan**

Professor, PhD, Tribhuvan Univeristy, Faculty of Education, Nepal

## **Mohan Paudel**

Lecturer, Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

## **Rajani Rajbhandary**

Professor, Project Coordinator, PhD, Tribhuvan University, Sanothimi Campus, Nepal

## **Marko Susimetsä**

Senior Lecturer, PhD, HAMK University of Applied Sciences, School of Professional Teacher Education, Finland

**Rajeshwer P. Yadav**

Associate Professor, Coordinator, ODL Department of Siraha Campus, Nepal



JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES  
Publications



SALES AND DISTRIBUTION  
JAMK University of Applied Sciences Library  
P.O. Box 207, FI-40101 Jyväskylä  
Rajakatu 35, FI-40200 Jyväskylä  
Tel. +358 040 552 6541  
julkaisut@jamk.fi  
www.jamk.fi/julkaisut

ONLINE SHOP  
www.tahtijulkaisut.net

jamk.fi

# jamk.fi

JAMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES  
P.O. Box 207, FI-40101 Jyväskylä, Finland  
Rajakatu 35, FI-40200 Jyväskylä, Finland  
Tel. +358 20 743 8100  
Fax +358 14 449 9694  
[www.jamk.fi](http://www.jamk.fi)

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION



The Teacher Preparation Programme through ODL Mode for Enhancing Quality in Education (TPP-Nepal Project) was a HEI-ICI project carried out in 2017–2020 by Finnish universities of applied sciences in Jyväskylä (JAMK) and Hämeenlinna (HAMK) in cooperation with Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

This publication includes articles written by the TPP-Nepal project participants at each of the seven campuses that the project was carried out on. Some of them focus on discussing the ODL development made at the campuses in general while others pick a more specific development target that they discuss from their own perspective. The articles posit very different stages of ODL development, but there are also some obstacles that are felt at all campuses.

ISBN 978-951-830-563-0