



Open Universities - India's Answer to Challenges in Higher Education

Manjulika Srivastava

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Millions have been able to advance their careers and enrich their lives by studying with an Open University (OU). OUs have introduced innovative methods in education by adopting a learner-centred approach to education characterized by a set of openness which allows learners minimum restrictions of age, qualification, pace, place and time unlike those prescribed by the conventional system. With its horizontal mobility OUs transcend the barriers of time, space, creed, community and religion thus breaking the myth of elitism associated with conventional education. In fact OUs are best suited for meeting the 21st century's demands of creation of knowledge in new emerging areas and providing skill development in all possible sectors. In *Open Universities: India's Answer to Challenges in Higher Education*, Manjulika Srivastava, Professor of Distance Education in the Distance Education Council (DEC), IGNOU, examines the growth of OUs in India over the past three decades. She explores the quantum and quality of contribution made by OUs in increasing the enrollment ratio, providing flexibility and variety in course selection and professional development. Being closely associated with the system since two decades, she has also outlined the measures that are needed to be taken to consolidate and strengthen the system. Backed by documented research, she presents a strong case against removing the biases regarding OUs as a poor cousins of conventional universities.

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