

CHALLENGES FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Open and Distance Learning is a parallel system to formal education system and has been developed as an alternative approach in resolving problems of access to education. Open and Distance Learning programs have their own unique dimensions and their strength and weakness. Some major problems are the high rate of student drop-out and late completion of programs. High drop-out and late completion of programs are mainly due to some factors which affects Open and Distance Learning and its learners. Early marriage, lack of safety in school, distance from school, and low aspiration related to girls' education also lead them to drop out. Due to drop out they are compelled to leave out their dreams. With Open and Distance Learning, women who have been dropped out formal education because of one reason or other, have benefited immensely. Open and distance learning has gained a wide acceptance by the women and youth groups specifically in India. But every mode of education may have its strengths and its flaws. People have held their respective opinions about the overall efficacy of distance learning ever since its inception. This difference in opinions gives rise to a wide variety of attitudes towards distance learning among the learners as well as the teachers. An attempt was made in the present study to assess the Attitude towards Open and Distance Learning System. The aim of this study is to examine the students' attitude towards open learning. A sample of 50 post graduate students who are enrolled in a distance learning centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Keywords: *Open and Distance Learning, Women Learner, Attitude, Post-Graduate.*

INTRODUCTION

The access to information on our finger tips has made distribution of educational content available to masses and we are living in the digital era. Distance education is the necessity of present days' time. for our country because of population and resources. Formal education is not sufficient to cover all the people. Distance and open education have proved to be beneficial not only for the students from the far-off places, but also to the students within a better reach of educational facilities. The distance mode of learning has provided a tremendous boost to the field of education. Open and Distance learning system which gives second chance of learning to those who have left their dream behind. Open and Distance Learning is a general term for the use of postal system, mass communication methods, telecommunication and internet to provide or enhance learning. In Open and Distance Learning system, teachers and learners need not necessarily be present either at same place or same time. It is flexible in regard to modalities and time of teaching and learning as also the admission criteria without compromising necessary quality considerations. In India, Open and Distance Learning for higher education is provided through various Open University and institutions run by Center, State and private organization. Open and distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education now a days and it has substantial impact on all education delivery systems. The open and distance learning system is growing fast specifically because of the development of Internet-based information technologies, and the World Wide Web. Open and Distance Learning system can be effectively used for providing continuing education, leisure time learning, vocation training, life skills training and women empowerment. It is advantageous for women, specially-able people, people residing in geographically remote areas and other marginalized groups.

Freeman said that "Attitude is a dispositional readiness to respond to certain institutions, persons or objects in a consistent manner which has been learned and has become one's typical mode of response." For the success and sustenance of any educational program, opinions and attitudes of its potential clientele towards the program are very important. Zimbaro and Ebbesen (1970) opined that the affective, cognitive, and behavioural components of attitude may develop evaluative nature of mind which will develop linking for and emotional affinity towards distance education. It is evident that attitudinal changes toward distance education system play a great role in its success or failure. Collins, K. Osei (2013) studied that students' perceptions of distance learning were positive.

Respondents indicated that they were satisfied with teaching and learning by distance and also with learner support provided by the host institutes. The present study aims to study the attitude of women beneficiaries enrolled in Open and Distance Learning system.

Objectives

The study has been conducted with the following objectives:

- (i) To study the socio-economic profile of women beneficiaries enrolled in Open and Distance Learning system.
- (ii) To study the attitudes of women beneficiaries enrolled in Open and Distance Learning system.

Methodology

The present research is exploratory descriptive in nature. The data was collected through survey method.

Sample

The researcher used purposive random Sampling Method for data collection. The sample comprised with 50 women learners who were enrolled in various post graduate degree programs at study center of Indira Gandhi National Open University run by Pannalal Girdharlal Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (PGDAV) College in South Delhi

Tool Used in The Study

The researcher used adapted Attitude Scale, which was developed by Kumar (1999). It consists of 70 statements (30 positive statements and 40 negative) on eight areas of distance education: general; admission procedures; self-instructional material (SLM); multimedia instructions; assignments; counselling sessions; study centres and evaluation system. The Likert scale was administered on five-point continuum like... strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with a scoring of 5,4,3,2 and 1 for positive statements and 1,2,3,4 and 5 for negative statements, respectively with a total score range of 70 to 350.

Data Analysis

Keeping in view of the objectives of the study the collected data was analysed by using statistical methods like Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, Coefficient of Variance, T-test and p-value.

Interpretation

1. Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic statuses of the respondents have been dealt in respect of these variables: age, place of birth, caste, education, occupation and marital status.

1.1 Age Group

Table 1.1: Age Group Distribution

S. No.	Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	20 to 25 years	45	90%
2.	26 to 30 years	5	10%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

The age group of the selected respondents is presented in Table 1.1. It can be noted from the table that about 90% of the respondents are in the age group of 20 to 25 years and only 10% of them in the age group 26 to 30 years.

1.2 Place of Birth

Table 1.2: Place of Birth

S. No.	Place of Birth	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Delhi	39	78%
2.	Uttar Pradesh	6	12%
3.	Haryana	2	4%
4.	Tamil Nadu	1	2%
5.	Rajasthan	1	2%
6.	Bihar	1	2%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

The distribution of respondents has been done according to their place of birth in Table 1.2. It reveals that maximum 78% of respondents have their birth place in Delhi. The respondents from Uttar Pradesh are only 12% followed by Haryana with 4%. 2% of each from total respondents are from Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Bihar states respectively.

1.3 Caste Wise Distribution

Table 1.3: Caste Wise Distribution

S. No.	Caste	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	General	28	56%
2.	OBC	15	30%
3.	SC	7	14%
4.	ST	0	0
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.3 reveals that most of the respondents i.e., 56% to General category. The respondents from Other Backward Caste (OBC) are 30% followed by 14% from Scheduled Caste Category. None of them belong to Schedule Tribe Category.

1.4 Last Regular Education Attended

Table 1.4 Last Regular Education attended

S. No.	Previously Regular Education Attended	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	College	33	66%
2.	School	17	34%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

It is found in Table 1.4 that 66% of the respondents have taken education from regular education system till college level and after they switch to distance education. On the other hand, 34% of the respondents have taken regular education up to school level.

1.5 Marital Status

Table 1.5 Marital Status Wise Distribution

S. No.	Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Married	4	8%
2.	Unmarried	46	92%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.5 highlights the distribution of the respondents as per their marital status. Maximum 92% of the respondents are unmarried and only 8% are married.

1.6 Occupation

Table 1.6 Occupation Wise Distribution

S. No.	Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Full time occupation	11	22%
2.	No engagement	39	78%
	Total	50	100%

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.6 shows the current status of occupation of the respondents and it reveals that 22% of the respondents are engaged in any kind of employment with the studies simultaneously. 78% of the respondents have no engagement in employment and they engaged in distance learning program only.

2. Attitude Score of The Respondents

For the interpretation of the scores on attitude scale towards distance education score norms are given. An attitude score for each category has been obtained by summing up the weights that have been assigned to the responses made to each of the 70 statements by respondents. There are 8 Categories on which score has been measured on Likert five-point scale response categories i.e., Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

2.1 Category 1: General

Table 2.1: Attitude Score in 'General' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	Distance Education helps in controlling undue rush to the conventional college/institutions.	9 (18.4%)	23 (46.94%)	9 (18.37%)	8 (16.33%)	0 (0.00%)	49
2.	Distance education is a less expensive mode than that of formal education	16 (32.0%)	25 (50%)	1 (2.00%)	8 (16%)	0 (0.00%)	50
3.	The Degree/diplomas obtained through distance education are not valued through the regular system	2 (4.3%)	5 (10.87%)	14 (30.43%)	18 (39.13%)	7 (15.22%)	46
4.	Distance education has a bright future in India	7 (14.9%)	13 (27.66%)	13 (27.66%)	13 (27.66%)	1 (2.13%)	47
5.	Generally weak students join courses through distance education	5 (10.2%)	16 (32.65%)	4 (8.16%)	15 (30.61%)	9 (18.37%)	49
6.	Distance education is more useful for working people to upgrade their qualification.	22 (45.8%)	19 (39.58%)	3 (6.25%)	2 (4.17%)	2 (4.17%)	48
7.	Quality of learning through distance education is not at all inferior to the learning through regular classroom	5 (10.2%)	20 (40.82%)	10 (20.41%)	10 (20.41%)	4 (8.16%)	49
8.	Distance mode of education is not suitable for Professional/technical education.	9 (18.0%)	15 (30%)	8 (16.00%)	12 (24.00%)	6 (12%)	50
9.	Most of the distance learners are careless in their studies.	5 (10.0%)	26 (52%)	9 (18%)	3 (6.00%)	7 (14%)	50
10.	Distance education provided opportunities to the persons neglected so far, for higher education.	9 (18.4%)	25 (51.02%)	10 (20.41%)	4 (8.16%)	1 (2.04%)	49

Source: Primary Data

General category contains 10 items with five-point response category and it is related with distance education system. For **Item No. 1** it is evident that maximum 46.94% of the respondents Agree followed by 18.4 % Strongly Agree and 18.37% Undecided 16.3 % Disagree and 0 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, there are 50 % of the respondents Agree, 32 % Strongly Agree, 16 % Disagree and 2 % Undecided and 0 % Strongly Disagree. However, 39.13 % of respondents are Disagree with **Item 3** followed by 30.43 % Undecided, 15.22 % Strongly Disagree, 10.87 % Agree and 4.30 % Strongly Agree. Here 27.66 % of the respondents from each category are Agree, Undecided and Disagree with **Item 4** followed by 14.9 % Strongly Agree and 2.13 % Strongly Disagree. In **Item 5**, there 32.65 % of respondents are Agree followed by 30.61 % Disagree, 18.37 % Strongly Disagree, 10.20 % Strongly Agree and 8.16 % Undecided. For **Item 6** there 45.8 % of the respondents Strongly Agree, 39.58 % are Agree, 6.25 % are Undecided and 4.17 % are Strongly Disagree and Disagree. With **Item 7** Maximum 40.82 % are Agree followed by 20.41 % are Disagree and Undecided respectively, 10.2 % are Strongly Agree and 8.16 % are Strongly Disagree. With **Item 8** there are 30 % Agree followed by 24% Disagree 18% Strongly Agree, 16% Undecided and 12 % Strongly Disagree. In **Item 9** there are 52 % of respondents Agree followed by 18 % Undecided, 14 % Strongly Disagree, 10 % Strongly Agree and 6 % Disagree. In **Item 10** there are 51.02 % of respondents Agree followed by 20.41 % Undecided, 18.4 % Strongly Agree, 8.16 % Disagree and 2.04 % Strongly Disagree.

2.2 Category 2: Admission Procedures

Table 2.2: Attitude Score in 'Admission Procedures' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	In distance education mode, information regarding starting of course is not made available in advance.	8 (16.3%)	18 (36.73%)	7 (14.29%)	13 (26.53%)	3 (6.12%)	49
2.	Admissions to distance education courses are free from regional/state biases.	8 (16.3%)	15 (30.61%)	6 (12.24%)	15 (30.61%)	5 (10.20%)	49

3.	Out of those admitted to distance education courses a very limited number of learners complete the course.	8 (16%)	22 (44%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	3 (6%)	50
4.	Previous achievement however low, do not come into the way of pursuing the studies through distance mode.	9 (19.1%)	19 (40.43%)	7 (14.89%)	12 (25.53%)	0 (0.00%)	47
5.	Due to lack of sophistication of admission procedure in distance education, many students pursue two courses at a time.	8 (16.3%)	21 (42.86%)	11 (22.45%)	6 (12.24%)	3 (6.12%)	49

Source: Primary Data

Admission Procedure category contains 5 items with five-point response category. It is found that maximum 36.73 % of the respondents Agree with **Item 1** followed by 26.53 % Disagree, 16.3 Strongly Agree, 14.29 Undecided. 6.12 % are Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, 30.61 % of the respondents are Agree and Disagree both, 16.3 % Strongly Agree, 12.24 % Undecided and 10.20 % Strongly Disagree. With Item 3 44.00 % of respondents Agree followed by 20.00 % Undecided, 16.00 % Strongly Agree, 14.00 % Disagree and 6.00 % Strongly Disagree. With Item 4 40.43 % of the respondents from each category are Agree, 25.53 Disagree followed by 19.1 % are Strongly Agree and 14.89 % Undecided and 0% Strongly Agree. In **Item 5** there 42.86 % of respondents are Agree followed by 22.45 % Undecided, 16.3 %, Disagree 12.24 % and 8.16 % Strongly Disagree.

2.3 Category 3: Self-Learning Materials

Table 2.3: Attitude Score in 'Self-Learning Material' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	The self-instructional materials provided in distance education mode are easy to understand.	1 (2.2%)	29 (63.04%)	5 (10.87%)	10 (21.74%)	1 (2.17%)	46
2.	Generally, the study materials are not made available in time to distance learners.	8 (17%)	22 (46.81%)	6 (12.77%)	7 (14.89%)	4 (8.51%)	47

3.	The activities included in the self-instructional materials promote habit of independent study.	4 (8.3%)	22 (45.83%)	10 (20.83%)	10 (20.83%)	2 (4.17%)	48
4.	The course materials provided are too bulky and burdensome.	7 (15.2%)	19 (41.30%)	10 (21.74%)	10 (21.74%)	0 (0%)	46
5.	The language used in the self-instructional materials is quite comprehensible	6 (12.5%)	18 (37.50%)	14 (29.17%)	10 (20.83%)	0 (0%)	48
6.	The self-instructional materials are effective enough to replace the teacher.	1 (2.0%)	15 (30.61%)	15 (30.61%)	17 (34.69%)	1 (2.04%)	49
7.	The self-instructional materials are not adequate enough to prepare for examination.	8 (16.3%)	17 (34.69%)	7 (14.29%)	15 (30.61%)	2 (4.08%)	49
8.	The supplementary materials supplied do not encourage further reading.	7 (14.0%)	15 (30.00%)	20 (40.00%)	8 (16.00%)	0 (0%)	50
9.	The self-instructional materials supplied are generally stereotyped and outdated.	8 (16.0%)	14 (28.00%)	9 (18.00%)	17 (34.00%)	2 (4%)	50
10.	Self-instructional materials of distance education do really help in self- learning.	7 (14.0%)	32 (64.00%)	4 (8.00%)	7 (14.00%)	0 (0%)	50

Source: Primary Data

Self-Learning Material category contains 10 items with five-point response category. It is evident for **Item 1** that maximum 63.04 % of the respondents Agree followed by 21.74 % Disagree, 10.87 % Undecided and 2.17 % Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree each. For **Item 2**, 46.81 % Agree, 17.00 % Strongly Agree, 14.89 % Disagree, 12.77 % Undecided and 8.51 % Strongly Disagree. With **Item 3** 45.83 % of respondents are Agree followed by 20.83 % Undecided and Disagree each, 8.3 % Strongly Agree and 4.17 % Strongly Disagree. With **Item 4** 41.30 % of Agree, 21.74 Undecided and Disagree followed by 15.2 % are Strongly Agree. In **Item 5** there 37.50 % of respondents Agree followed by 29.17 % Undecided, 20.83 % Disagree and 12.5 % Strongly Agree. For **Item 6** there

34.69 % Disagree, 30.61 % Agree and Undecided and 2.00 % are Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree. with Item 7 maximum 34.69 % are Agree followed by 30.61 % are Disagree, 16.3 % are Strongly Agree, 14.29 are Undecided and 4.08 % are Strongly Disagree. Besides, 40 % are Undecided with Item 8 followed by 30, 16 and 14 % Agree, Disagree and Strongly Agree. In Item 9, 34 % of respondents are Disagree followed by 28 % Agree, 18 % Undecided, 16 % Strongly Agree and 4.00 % Strongly Disagree. In Item 10, 64.00 % of respondents are Agree followed by 14.00 % Strongly Agree and Disagree, 8.00 % Undecided.

2.4 Category: 4 Multi Media Instructions

Table 2.4: Attitude Score in 'Multi Media Instructions' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	Generally, the audio/video materials used in distance education are of very poor quality.	8 (16.35%)	14 (28.57%)	16 (32.65%)	7 (14.29%)	4 (8.16%)	49
2.	The timing of the television broadcasts is generally suitable to the distance learners.	1 (2.2%)	16 (34.78%)	17 (36.96%)	9 (19.57%)	3 (6.52%)	46
3.	Normally television broadcast and referred websites are not watched by most of the distance learners.	4 (8.2%)	26 (53.06%)	8 (16.33%)	9 (18.37%)	2 (4.08%)	49
4.	The audio/video materials, e learning modules and television broadcasting helps in clarifying some of the concepts in the print material.	5 (10%)	29 (58%)	8 (16%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)	50
5.	Generally, schedules of television broadcasting are not made available in time to the distance learners.	9 (18%)	25 (50%)	10 (20%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	50
6.	It is the multi-media instruction which has a far-reaching effect on the learning of distance learners.	2 (4.1%)	22 (44.90%)	15 (30.61%)	8 (16.33%)	2 (4.08%)	49

7.	Generally various media employed in distance education lack coordination.	6 (12%)	18 (36%)	17 (34%)	8 (16%)	1 (2%)	50
8.	Unless the frequency of television broadcasting is increased distance learning may not be effective.	6 (12.2%)	19 (38.78%)	18 (36.73%)	4 (8.16%)	2 (4.08%)	49
9.	The facility of issuance of audio-video materials and e learning links are not properly extended to learners.	7 (14.9%)	19 (40.43%)	13 (27.66%)	7 (14.89%)	1 (2.12%)	47

Source: Primary Data

Multi-media Instruction category contains 9 items with five-point response category and it is related with Mutli-media used in distance education system. It is found that maximum 32.65 % of the respondents are Undecided with **Item 1** followed by 28.57 % are Agree, 16.35 % are Strongly Agree, 14.29 % are Disagree and 8.16 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, 36.96 % of the respondents are Undecided, 34.78 % are Agree, 19.57 % are Disagree, 6.52 % are Strongly Disagree and 2.2 % are Strongly Agree. 53.06 % of respondents are Agree with **Item 3** followed by 18.37 % Disagree, 16.33 % Undecided, 8.2 % Strongly Agree and 4.08 Strongly Disagree. 58 % of the respondents from are Agree, 16 % Undecided, 14 % Disagree, 10 % Strongly Agree, and with **Item 4** followed by 2 % are Strongly Disagree. In **Item 5**, 50 % of respondents are Agree followed by 20 % Undecided, 18 % Strongly Agree and 12 % Disagree. For **Item 6**, 44.90 % of the respondents are Agree, 30.61 % are Undecided, 16.33 % are Disagree and 4.08 % are Strongly Agree & Strongly Disagree in each. Maximum 36 % are Agree with **Item 7** followed by 34 % are Undecided, 16 % are Disagree, 12 are Strongly Agree and 2 % are Strongly Disagree. Besides, 38.78 % are Agree with **Item 8** followed by 36.73, 12.2, 8.16 and 4.08 % Undecided, Strongly Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. In **Item 9**, 40.43 % of respondents are Agree followed by 27.66 % Undecided, 14.89 % Disagree & Strongly Agree and 2.12 % Strongly Disagree.

2.5 Category 5: Assignment

Table 2.5 Attitude Score in 'Assignment' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	There are too many assignments required to be sent by the learners	12 (24%)	20 (40%)	8 (16%)	8 (16%)	2 (4%)	50
2.	The compulsion of sending required number of assignments helps the learners to go through the study materials carefully.	7 (14.3%)	26 (53.06%)	7 (14.29%)	7 (14.29%)	2 (4.08%)	49
3.	There is no proper time gap between two exams.	6 (12.2%)	10 (20.41%)	17 (34.69%)	13 (26.53%)	3 (6.12%)	49
4.	Generally, assignments are done with the help of learning material and e learning modules.	7 (14.3%)	32 (65.31%)	6 (12.24%)	3 (6.12%)	1 (2.04%)	49
5.	Generally, the assignments are not returned back before the term end examination.	8 (16.7%)	18 (37.50%)	15 (31.25%)	6 (12.50%)	1 (2.08%)	48
6.	Responding to the assignments is a rewarding experience	10 (20%)	18 (36%)	11 (22%)	11 (22%)	0 (0%)	50
7.	The remarks made by the counsellor on the assignment are not educative	5 (10.2%)	17 (34.69%)	14 (28.57%)	9 (18.37%)	4 (8.16%)	49
8.	Sincere attempting on assignment helps in getting good grade in the final examination	20 (40%)	22 (44%)	5 (10%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	50
9.	Writing assignment is really a very boring task	7 (14%)	16 (32%)	9 (18%)	15 (30%)	3 (6%)	50
10.	The system of sending required number of assignments as compulsory for appearing examination should be abolished.	7 (14%)	19 (38%)	10 (20%)	13 (26%)	1 (2%)	50

Source: Primary Data

Assignment category contains 10 items with five-point response category and it is related with assignments given in distance education system. It is found that maximum 40.00 % of the respondents are Agree with **Item 1** followed by 24.00 % are Strongly Agree, 16.00 % are Disagree and Undecided and 4.00 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, 53.06 % of the respondents are Agree, 14.29 % are Strongly Agree, Disagree and Undecided in each category and 4.08 % are Strongly Disagree. 34.69 % of respondents are Disagree with **Item 3** followed by 26.53 % Disagree, 20.41 % Agree, 12.2 % Strongly Agree and 6.12 % Disagree. 65.31 % of the respondents from are Agree, 14.3 % Strongly Agree, 12.24 % Undecided and 6.12 % Disagree with **Item 4** followed by 2.04 % are Strongly Disagree. In **Item 5**, 37.50 % of respondents are Agree followed by 31.25 % Undecided, 16.7 % Strongly Agree, 6.12 % Disagree and 2.08 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 6**, 36.00 % of the respondents are Agree, 22.00 % are Disagree and Undecided and 20.00 % are Strongly Agree. Maximum 34.69 % are Agree with **Item 7** followed by 28.57 % are Undecided, 18.37 % are Disagree, 10.20 are Strongly Agree and 8.6 % are Strongly Disagree. Besides, 44 % are Agree with **Item 8** followed by 40, 10 and 6 % Strongly Agree, Undecided and Disagree. In **Item 9**, 32 % of respondents are Agree followed by 30 % Disagree, 18 % Undecided, 14 % Strongly Agree and 6.00 % Strongly Disagree. In **Item 10**, 38.00 % of respondents are Strongly Agree followed by 26.00 % Disagree, 20.00 % Undecided, 14.00 % Agree and 2.00 % Disagree.

2.6 Category 6: Consulting Services

Table 2.6: Attitude Score in 'Consulting Sessions' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	The counselling sessions are generally hopeless	7 (14.3%)	12 (24.49%)	16 (32.65%)	13 (26.53%)	1 (2.04%)	49
2.	Interaction with the counsellors help in developing new insight	7 (14.3%)	23 (46.94%)	12 (24.49%)	7 (14.29%)	0 (0%)	49
3.	Generally counselling sessions are starved of necessary facilities and equipment.	5 (10.2%)	14 (28.57%)	16 (32.65%)	14 (28.57%)	0 (0%)	49
4.	Counselling sessions helps to remove isolation in studies	5 (10.2%)	25 (51.02%)	12 (24.49%)	7 (14.29%)	0 (0%)	49

5.	Generally, the dates of organizing counselling sessions are not communicated in advance.	6 (12%)	13 (26%)	13 (26%)	16 (32%)	2 (4%)	50
6.	The number of counselling sessions are too less to make any impact.	9 (18.8%)	14 (29.17%)	15 (31.25%)	8 (16.67%)	2 (4.17%)	48
7.	Two –way communication between the counsellor and the learner helps to arouse interest in studies.	3 (6.3%)	23 (47.92%)	13 (27.08%)	8 (16.67%)	1 (2.08%)	48
8.	Generally, counsellors are inexperienced persons in the field of distance teaching	7 (14.9%)	10 (21.28%)	10 (21.28%)	16 (34.04%)	4 (8.52%)	47
9.	For distance learners attending counselling classes should be made optional.	7 (14.6%)	17 (35.42%)	6 (12.50%)	15 (31.25%)	3 (6.25%)	48

Source: Primary Data

Consulting Services category contains 9 items with five-point response category and it is related with Counselling in distance education system. It is investigated that 32.65 % of the respondents are Undecided with **Item 1** followed by 26.53 % are Disagree 24.49 % are A, 14.3 % are Strongly Agree, and 2.04 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, 46.94 % of the respondents are Agree, 32.65 % are Undecided, 14.29 % are Strongly Agree and Disagree in each category. 32.65 % of respondents are Undecided with **Item 3** followed by 28.57 % Disagree & Agree in each, 10.2 % Strongly Agree. 51.02 % of the respondents from are Agree, 24.49 % Undecided 14.29 % are Disagree with **Item 4** followed by 10.2 % are Strongly Agree. In **Item 5**, 32.00 % of respondents are Disagree followed by 26.00 % Undecided & Agree in each, 12 % Strongly Agree, and 4 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 6**, 31.25 % of the respondents are Undecided, 29.17 % are Agree, 16.67 % are Disagree, 18.8 % are Strongly Agree and 4.17 % are Strongly Disagree. Maximum 47.92 % are Agree with **Item 7** followed by 27.08 % are Undecided, 16.67 % are Disagree, 6.3 are Strongly Agree and 2.08 % are Strongly Disagree. Besides, 34.04 % are Disagree with **Item 8** followed by 21.28 % Agree & Undecided, 14.9 % are Strongly Agree, and 8.52 % are Strongly Disagree. In **Item 9**, 35.42 % of respondents are Agree followed by 31.25 % Disagree, 12.50 % Undecided, 14.6 % Strongly Agree and 6.25 % Strongly Disagree.

2.7 Category 7: Study Center

Table 2.7: Attitude Score in 'Study Center' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	Generally, the library facilities at the study centers are adequate.	7 (14.3%)	14 (28.57%)	15 (30.61%)	10 (20.41%)	3 (6.12%)	49
2.	Generally, the study centers located at inconvenient places.	5 (10.4%)	13 (27.08%)	5 (10.00%)	19 (39.58%)	6 (12.50%)	48
3.	Postponement of counselling classes is a regular feature in the study centers.	2 (4%)	18 (36%)	14 (28%)	11 (22%)	5 (10%)	50
4.	Study centers are not well equipped to provide adequate information regarding admission to various courses.	6 (12.5%)	12 (25%)	10 (20.83%)	15 (31.25%)	5 (10.42%)	48
5.	The staffs of study center generally cooperate with the students.	11 (22%)	29 (58%)	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	50
6.	Generally, the study centers fail to provide an institutional climate for distance learners	4 (8%)	18 (36%)	11 (22%)	15 (30%)	2 (4%)	50
7.	Generally, the study centers lack in physical facilities	7 (14.9%)	12 (25.53%)	12 (25.53%)	10 (21.28%)	6 (12.77%)	47
8.	Generally, the study centers are the means of arranging for gossiping	4 (8%)	15 (30%)	10 (20%)	13 (26%)	8 (16%)	50

Source: Primary Data

Study Center category contains 8 items with five-point response category and it is related with study center environment under distance education system. It is investigated that 30.61 % of the respondents are Undecided with **Item 1** followed by 28.57 % are Agree, 20.41 % are Disagree, 14.3 % are Strongly Agree, and 6.12 % are Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, 39.58 % of the respondents are

Disagree, 27.8 % are Agree, 12.0 % are Strongly Disagree and 10.04 % are Undecided & Strongly Agree in each category. 36 % of respondents are Agree with **Item 3** followed by 28 % Undecided, 22 % are Disagree, 10 % are Strongly Disagree and 4 % Strongly Agree. 31.25 % of the respondents are Disagree, 25 % are Agree, 20.83 % are Undecided with **Item 4** followed by 12.5 % are Strongly Agree and 10.42 % are Strongly Disagree. In **Item 5**, 58 % of respondents are Agree followed by 22 % Strongly Agree, 12 % are Undecided, 6 % are Disagree and 2 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 6**, 36 % of the respondents are Agree, 30 % are Disagree, 22 % are Undecided, 8 % are Strongly Agree and 4 % are Strongly Disagree. 25.53 % are Agree & Undecided with **Item 7** followed by 21.28 % are Disagree, 14.9 are Strongly Agree and 12.77 % are Strongly Disagree. Besides, 30 % are Agree with **Item 8** followed by 26 % are Disagree, 20 % are Undecided, 8 % are Strongly Agree, and 16 % are Strongly Disagree

2.8 Category 8: Evaluation System

Table 2.8: Attitude Score in 'Evaluation System' Category

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1.	Generally, the scheme of examinations is realistically planned	5 (10%)	25 (50%)	11 (22%)	8 (16%)	1 (2%)	50
2.	Normally distance learners appear for examination without much of the preparation.	9 (15.3%)	12 (20.34%)	12 (20.34%)	17 (28.81%)	0 (0%)	50
3.	Generally, the examinations questions in distance education do not test proper understanding of the content.	3 (6%)	21 (42%)	16 (32%)	8 (16%)	2 (4%)	50
4.	Grades provided in distance education reflect genuine measure of achievement	6 (12%)	18 (36%)	16 (32%)	8 (16%)	2 (4%)	50
5.	Distance mode examinations do not promote competitive spirit for better learning	7 (14%)	13 (26%)	10 (20%)	15 (30%)	5 (10%)	50
6.	There are too many formalities to be completed before the examination are held.	6 (12.2%)	12 (15.0%)	11 (22.45%)	11 (22.45%)	9 (18.37%)	49

7.	Unrealistic allotment of the examination centers for distance education cause great inconvenience.	7 (14.3%)	14 (28.57%)	13 (26.53%)	6 (12.24%)	9 (18.37%)	49
8.	It is not feasible to attempt the whole questions paper in the given time limit.	5 (10%)	13 (26%)	13 (26%)	10 (20%)	9 (18%)	50
9.	Delivery of intimation cards at the eleventh hour has a negative effect on achievement of learners.	6 (12.2%)	8 (16.33%)	21 (42.86%)	7 (14.29%)	7 (14.29%)	49

Source: Primary Data

Evaluation System category contains 9 items with five-point response category and it is related with evaluation system applied under distance education system. It shows that 50 % of the respondents are Agree with **Item 1** followed by 22 % are Undecided, 16 % are Disagree, 10 % are Strongly Agree, and 2 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 2**, 28.81 % of the respondents are Disagree, 20.24 % are Agree & Undecided in each, and 15.3 % are Strongly Agree. 42 % of respondents are Agree with **Item 3** followed by 32 % Undecided, 16 % Disagree, 6 % Strongly Agree and 4 % Strongly Disagree. 36 % of the respondents from are Agree, 32 % are Undecided, 16 % Disagree with **Item 4** followed by 12 % are Strongly Agree and 4 % are Strongly Disagree. In **Item 5**, 30 % of respondents are Disagree followed by 26 % Agree, 20 % are Undecided, 14 % are Strongly Agree and 10 % Strongly Disagree. For **Item 6**, 22.45 % of the respondents are Undecided & Disagree, 18.37 % are Strongly Disagree, 15 % are Agree, and 12.2 % are Strongly Agree. 28.57 % are Agree and 26.53 % are Undecided with **Item 7** followed by 18.37 % are Strongly Disagree, 14.9 are Strongly Agree and 12.24 % are Disagree. Besides, 26 % are Agree & Undecided with **Item 8** followed by 20 % are Disagree, 18 % are Strongly Disagree and 10 % are Strongly Agree. With **Item 9**, 42.86 % are Undecided, 16.23 % are Agree, 14.29 % are Strongly Disagree & Disagree and 12.2 % are Strongly Agree.

2.9 Distribution of Attitude Score

The following test Mean, Coefficient of Variance, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, t-value and p-value were used to know the attitude.

Table 2.9: Category wise Attitude Score

S. No.	Category	N	Mean	Coefficient of Variance (COV %)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	Remarks (two-tailed at.01 level)
1.	General	50	33.22	23.85	4.88	0.6901	48.1354	Significant
2.	Admission Procedure	50	14.96	9.84	3.14	0.4441	33.6214	Significant
3.	Self-Learning Material	50	29.02	25.69	5.07	0.717	40.4738	Significant
4.	Multi-Media Instruction	50	24.48	11.93	3.45	1.687	14.506	Significant
5.	Assignments	50	31.16	15.28	3.91	2.162	14.4198	Significant
6.	Consulting Sessions	50	27.04	13.06	3.61	0.511	52.9654	Significant
7.	Study Centers	50	24.74	18.93	4.35	0.615	40.2157	Significant
8.	Evaluation System	50	27.02	35.37	5.95	0.841	32.111	Significant

*Degree of Freedom (n-1); (50-1) =49

Category 1: General: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 33.22 with standard deviation 4.88 and 23.85% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 48.1354 with two tailed p value which is less than .01, the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 2: Admission Procedure: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 14.96 with standard deviation 3.14 and 9.84% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 33.6214 with two tailed p value which is less than .01, the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 3: Self-Learning Material: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 29.02 with standard deviation 5.07 and 25.69% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 40.4738 with two tailed p value which is less than .01, the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 4: Multi Media Instruction: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 24.48 with standard deviation 3.45 and 11.93% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 14.506 with two tailed p value which is less than .01, the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 5: Assignment: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 31.16 with standard deviation 3.91 and 15.28% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 14.4198 with two tailed p value which is less than .01, the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 6: Consulting Sessions: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 27.04 with standard deviation 3.61 and 13.06% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 52.9654 with two tailed p value which is less than .01, the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 7: Study Centers: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 24.74 with standard deviation 4.35 and 18.93% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 40.2157 with two tailed p value which is less than .01; the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Category 8: Evaluation System: The observed data from the table (2.9) shows that the Mean score of respondents is 27.02 with standard deviation 5.95 and 35.37% variance in the group. The calculative t value is 32.111 with two tailed p value which is less than .01; the result is significant at $p < .01$ level.

Findings & Conclusion

- Maximum respondents belong to age group of 20-25 years.
- Most of the respondents have attended UG level education from Regular Education System.
- More than half of the respondents are showing positive attitude towards items in General Category for Distance and Open Learning System.

- Most of the respondents are having positive attitude towards Admission Procedure, Self-Learning Material, Multi-Media Instruction, Assignments, Consulting Session, Study Center at Distance Education system and Evaluation System in Distance Learning Education.
- With the highest mean score, respondents show more positive attitude towards “General” and “Assignment” in Distance Education System. Category “Admission Procedure” is having Lowest mean score with reference to positive attitude.

Recommendation

- Workshop and Seminar should be organized to give women learners more opportunities and exposure in Distance Education.
- As these women learners have positive attitudes for distance education, opportunities for placement should be explored for them.
- Promotion of further studies like research and advance course among post graduate women learners.
- Information about of e-learning material should be more publicized and be more frequent.

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