

**MASTER OF ARTS IN DISTANCE  
EDUCATION (MADE)  
Term-End Examination,  
June, 2021**

MDE-413 : Learner Support Systems and Services

*Time : Three Hours*

*Maximum Weightage : 75%*

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- Note :** (i) Attempt all the **three** questions.  
(ii) All **three** questions carry equal weightage.
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1. Answer any **one** of the following questions in about **1200** words :
  - (a) Describe the characteristics of distance learners and explain what different kinds of learner support are needed to facilitate the effective study of a distance learner.
  - (b) Explain the importance of academic counselling in distance education. How will you organise a counselling session for distance learners on a topic of your choice ? Discuss with examples.

2. Answer any **four** of the following questions in about **300** words each :
- (a) Write a short note on resource based learning.
  - (b) Define the term quality assurance in the context of open and distance learning (ODL). Write down how can quality be assured for providing effective learner support services.
  - (c) What is a study centre ? Describe its major functions.
  - (d) Identify major factors that contribute to distance learners achievement.
  - (e) Write a short note on global tutor comments with appropriate examples.
  - (f) What is life-long learning ? Discuss this concept in the context of open distance education.
3. Answer any **one** of the following :
- (a) What is assessment ? Discuss different types of assessment in the context of open and distance learning system in about **1200** words.
  - (b) The following is an excerpt from an actual assignment-response (see Appendix-I). Write your marginal comments in the margin provided and global comments on the assessment sheet (enclosed). Award a grade on the assignment response on five-point scale, using letter grade A, B, C, D and E.  
  
The notional correlates of these letter grades respectively are :  
  
Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. After evaluation attach the evaluated script and the 'Assessment Sheet' with your examination answer-sheet. Award a grade in the box provided and also write the global comments on the assessment sheet.

**[NOTE : PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS APPENDIX (ASSIGNMENT-  
RESPONSE) AND ATTACH TO YOUR ANSWER SHEET  
WITH THE ASSESSMENT SHEET]**

Enrolment No. :

Grade :

### APPENDIX-I

MDE-413 : Learner Support Systems and Services

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Space for comments

Assignments-Response

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***Question :***

Discuss various issues Indian higher education is facing in general and particularly due to globalization process. Critically appraise the likely future development in higher education with focus on distance education.

***Answer :***

Indian higher education system is not just large but vastly complex too and therefore present a bewildering variety of organizational and management modes and designs. Indian higher education system has a long history with its universities like, Nalanda and Takshashila dating back to several centuries which had a wide global recognition. In 1857 three major universities were established at Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai under the supervision of London University to prepare personnel to support British colonial rule. After

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independence new thrust areas have been identified like, promotion of scientific and technological education and research as well as professional education and training in Indian higher education. Various institutions were established to cater these needs for the growth and development of the nation.

In the last 50 years India has come up with five IITs with the collaboration of some industrial nations, some IIMs and some important institutions in the field of medical science, agriculture and other technical education. From the above discussion, it is clear that Indian higher education has always been influenced and had an impact in international arena. In brief, Indian higher education is changing time to time because of globalization.

Globalization of higher education is linked with the issues of quality, financing and privatization. For a long time, Indian students are going to the European and North American countries for higher and specialized education. There has been a definite change in this trend after opening up of the Indian market in 1991. Some of the foreign universities are offering their courses in India. Even our students are doing the international programmes according to their needs. By this way, Indian educational market has been influenced by the globalization. In the same

manner, various Indian universities including IGNOU are attracting students from third world countries; from Africa and South Asia and offering various programmes of international standard through conventional and distance pattern. The Government of India could not give sufficient support to its national institutes to compete with the international higher educational institutions. But, on the contrast, various international agencies like British Council for UK, the USIS for the US, and the Aus Aid for Australia have a strong hold in Indian higher education.

Hence, Indian higher education system has to address some of the problems seriously to increase the competitiveness due to globalization.

**Various issues and challenges in Indian higher educational system :—**

There are certain areas of serious concern in the development of higher education in India. The most important features are uneven development, poorly equipped, substandards etc. In India, these institutions have been able to provide education to only 6% of the relevant age group. It shows the deficiency in their number. At the same time, the employment problem in the educated mass is a major concern.

- **Relevance and quality :-**

The concepts of relevance and quality have immense value in higher education. The institutes like IITs, IIMs and IISc are the centers of excellence in India. They are offering the courses of international standard. They have changing their curriculum time to time. Overallly we can say, to meet the global needs, they are maintaining the quality of their programmes and the relevance has been taken care of. But, on the contrast, maximum universities or colleges in India have a poor quality education. This is due to many reasons.

- (a) **Infrastructural deficiency** :—The inadequacy of infrastructure in most institutions is a serious impediment to meaningful reforms. There are not just enough resources to make good these deficiencies.
- (b) **Lack of academic cooperation** :—Due to some reasons academics are not taking any initiatives for new innovations and quality development. For that reason most of the universities are lacking these.
- (c) **Less freedom of the teachers** : — The system has not given sufficient freedom to all teachers for the development of new courses and new programmes of relevance's.

All important over here is that the courses and programmes offered by the universities should be relevant to the life and work of people. The skill and

competencies necessary to apply the knowledge they have acquired in solving the problems of social and economic development should be encouraged. Due to poor quality and standard Indian institutions have not been able to compete in the international area, while globalization is at its peak.

- **Access and Equity :-**

Like other developing countries, India is facing serious challenges in the areas of access and equity. The demand for higher education has been increasing over the years and it now far exceeds the human and material resources at our disposal to provide for such growing demands. Infrastructural development and other facilities are not enough to meet the demand of accessibility.

(a) **Less number of higher educational institutions :-** The population of India is growing rapidly which has crossed 1000 millions. But, approximately there are 320 universities and 16885 colleges in India. Which is less in numbers to meet the needs of the people ?

(b) **Higher Education has been confined to urban areas—**Most of the educational institutions are situated in metros, cities, in smaller or bigger towns. Due to many impediments, the rural people are not in a position to access these institutions like poor

economic condition, distance and lack of information.

- (c) **Language barrier** :- India is a land of diversities, by its language, culture and geographical disparities. Many a time's language becomes a barrier in higher education.

The issue of equity is related to the issue of access. Access is not always on an equitable basis for our learners. Women, the poor, minority groups and the differently able are mostly affected. As the number of universities and colleges in India is less, they are not in a position to accommodate all the learners equally. The seats in the reputed institutions are fixed in number. For this reason, many deserving learners are been deprived of choosing the disciplines of their own.

- **Women in Higher Education** :-

The participation of the women in higher education has been a subject of extensive debate. The enrollment of women in India is very less. In 1982-83, it was near about 28% whereas in the engineering and technology related courses it is only 6.2% to meet these challenges though special women colleges and institutions have been established, they could not able to improve satisfactorily. In the era of globalization the issues of access and equity are of serious concern. Some mechanisms should be developed to give access and equity to every one in



the country. Then, only our educational institutions can give a challenge to the international competitors.

- **Resources in Higher Education :-**

Like in other countries, India does not have sufficient resource supply in higher education. There are problems of allocation to the education sector ignoring the claims of other sectors of development, besides considering the competing claims of various sub-sectors within the educational budget. Resource utilization is also another shortcoming.

Subsidization in higher education is a big challenge before the Government of India. The amount the Government is charging to the students is very less in comparison to the expenditure for the higher education. At the same time, only 10% people are using the audio-video and TV programme on education, which shows the poor resource utilization. In this age of globalization the learners need the courses of their choice in a cost effective manner. As the impact of globalization is growing day by day, India needs certain professional and technical courses which can provide the Indian learners employability. Therefore, globalization plays an important role in shaping the Indian higher education.

- **Future Development :-**

Higher education in India stands at the cross roads. It is destined to take a course different from the one it

has followed so far. This would, however, be a development over and in continuation of some of the existing experiences. This change will be both by design and compulsion. Higher education as mentioned earlier has been resilient as indicated by the frequent expert committee reviews. This spirit of reforms will continue. At the same time, changes will have to be made under the compulsion of globalization and global competitiveness in education as well as the resource crunch. New technologies in higher education giving birth to the new learning system and knowledge networks will add to this environment of change.

- **Future Developments and Distance Education :-**

Open and distance education is coming as a best alternative of the conventional system in higher education. Some conventional institutions are providing their courses through a distance mode. Though the number at present is in between 60-70, they will increase rapidly in near future. Along with IGNOU many more open universities are coming up to meet the needs of the present hour. Around 20% enrollment in higher education is covered by open educational institutions.

The open universities have brought in an open choice of courses and curriculum which the conventional

universities have failed to offer. In the coming decades, the universities will be challenged to offer individualized curriculum or 'designer curriculum'. In distance education the use multimedia technology is wide. They offer their courses on internet. The use of multichannel technology by the open universities will influence the conventional pattern. This will reduce the existing gap between the conventional pattern and open learning pattern in terms of quality of delivery of instruction.

With these eminent changes in higher education, coupled with the reduction in government subsidy, the teaching community will be challenged in more than one respect in the future. The future criteria for survival in the profession will be quality and continuous up gradation of professional skill.

Higher education is the most sensitive and important segments in Indian education. In order to compete in the global market, India has to substantially expand its higher education facilities. The changes in higher education will determine its future in the era of globalization.

**ASSESSMENT SHEET**  
**(To be filled in Duplicate)\***

Enrolment No. \_\_\_\_\_ Programme \_\_\_\_\_ Assessment Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluator's Comments**

If the space is not sufficient, please use back page

**Please tick ✓ in the relevant box below**

**CONTENT**

Accurate Information      Inaccurate Information

Adequate Coverage      Inadequate Coverage

Good Conceptual Analysis      Poor Conceptual Analysis

**STRUCTURE & PRESENTATION**

Well Planned      Inadequately Planned

Concise      Too Long or too Short

Clearly Expressed      Not Clearly Expressed