



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

Commonwealth Educational
Media Centre for Asia

What ails Indian Distance Education Research?

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My Perspectives

- Research helps in understanding how little we know about a subject
- Research is a humbling experience
- Research is not possible without standing on shoulder of giants in the field
- Research is a process of sharing new knowledge
- Research follows the 'method of science'
- Research information should be freely and openly available

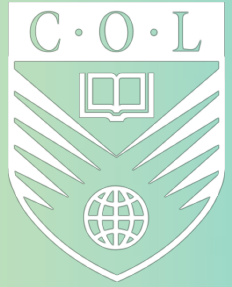


Research and Open Distance Learning (ODL)

- Distance education caters to the growing demands of education/higher education
- No ODL institution can serve its stakeholders adequately without research (Koul, 2009)
- Research in ODL is often criticized for lack of rigor
- Madhava Menon Committee report emphasizes research in ODL

Indian ODL Research

| Name of the Journal | Published Since | Number of Papers from India |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning</i> | 2000 | 07 |
| <i>American Journal of Distance Education</i> | 1987 | 01 |
| <i>Distance Education</i> | 1980 | 08 |
| <i>Open Learning</i> | 1986 | 11 |
| <i>Asian Journal of Distance Education</i> | 2003 | 42 |
| <i>European Journal of Open Distance e-Learning</i> | 1997 | 02 |
| Total | | 71 |



Indian contributions and IJOL

- Zawacki-Richter et al (2009): only 1.7% contributions from India; no Indian scholar featured in the top contributors
- Indian Journal of Open Learning started in 1992
- 66% contributions in IJOL are by Indian authors (Mishra, 2002)
- About 50% contributions are by Indian authors in IJOL (Tripathi & Kanungo, 2010)

ODL Research Concerns

- Over 80% ODL research comes from five countries (Mishra, 1997)
- Lack of empirical research (Rekkedal, 1994)
- Researchers have modest training in social science research (Calvert, 1988)
- Researchers failed to refer to previous works (Moore, 1985)
- Researchers need to 're-tool' themselves (Clavert, 1984)

ODL research concerns and areas

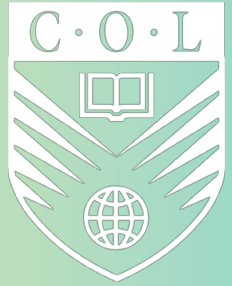
- Most studies in India are descriptive surveys or experimental studies with poor methodological footing (Panda, 1992)
- Commonly used survey approaches, and collaborative research is increasing
- Learner centred issues often covered
- Research in ODL is also constrained by heavy administrative workload

Attitudes toward ODL research

■ Researchers

- Believe research in ODL is important
- Indicated that research results should be used more for improving day-to-day work of the system
- Indicated less appreciation for qualitative methods
- Emphasized encouragement and recognition of good research work

Source: Nembiakkim & Mishra (2010)

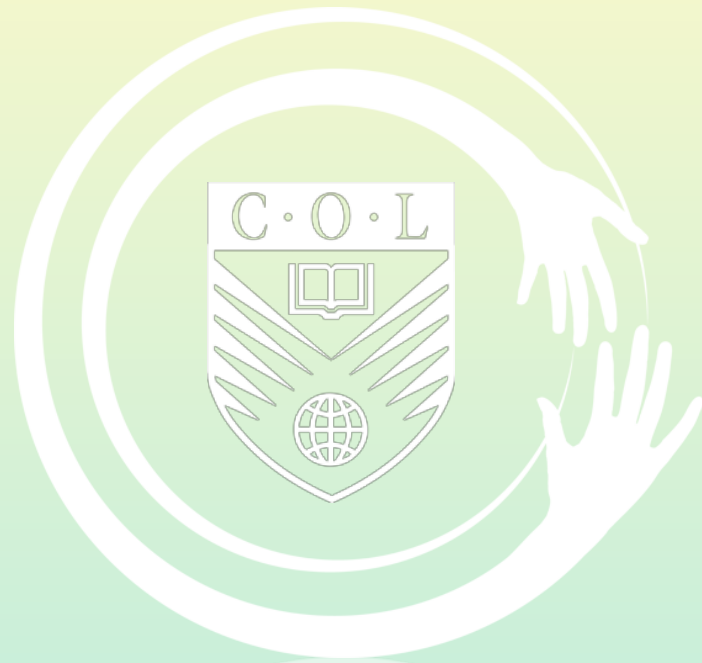


Research Problems/Barriers

- Lack of time
- Lack of resources
- Difficulties in conduct of collaborative research
- Articulating research problem
- Appropriate choice of research methods and implementation
- Re-inventing the wheel
- Language and style of reporting

Encouraging Indian ODL Research

- Example of *Asian Journal of Distance Education*
- Increasing funding support for ODL research
- Online sharing of research reports
- Researchers must deeply engage in the discipline of ODL before embarking on research



Thank You

