** **

**REPORT ON**

**TWO DAY WORKSHOP ON**

**DEVELOPMENT OF SELF LEARNING MATERIALS FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE MODE OF LEARNING**

**HELD ON 6th -7th MARCH, 2018**

**ORGANISED BY**

**CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

**TEZPUR UNIVERSITY**

**IN COLLABORATION WITH**

**Teaching Learning Centre**

**Tezpur University**

**Under**

**PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA**

**NATIONAL MISSION ON TEACHERS AND TEACHING**

**MHRD, GOI**

**Prologue:**

Open and Distance Learning has assumed the status of the most rapidly growing segment of education in today’s world because of its approaches on flexible learning opportunities to individual and group learners resulting in both education and training. Well defined as a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both, Open and Distance Learning has been a boon to the learners who are unable to access traditional classroom learning.

As distance learning is different from the conventional mode of teaching in the sense that there is limited physical presence of the instructor, Self-Learning Materials become an important aspect of it so much so that at times they serve the role of the instructors to the learners. The Self-Learning Materials should not only impart knowledge to the learners but they should be capable enough to stimulate and motivate them to learn. The potential impact of distance learning on all education lies in the very use of instructional materials complemented by visual, auditory, audio-visual and multimedia content.

The structure of Self-Learning Materials, therefore, requires careful design and implementation. Continual skill upgrading, implementing and retraining the technological advances and safe use of print and web-based materials, have been the need of the hour for the effective implementation of this fastest growing area of knowledge.

The two day workshop held on **March 6 & 7, 2018** was organized keeping in view the importance of quality Self Learning Materials in distance learning. All the contributors of Self Learning Materials from Tezpur University and outside were urged to register for this workshop to take full advantage of the lectures and practical sessions that have specially been designed for them under the guidance of experts. The workshop aimed to train the authors of SLM to prepare learner friendly materials using upgraded technological devices, minimize the absence of teacher centric mode facilitated by the face to face leaning and enhance the possibility of reaching the learners with maximum output.

The workshop started with a brief inaugural where a host of guests and invitees were present and delivered. Prof. M.M. Sarma, the former Vice Chancellor (acting) inaugurated the workshop as the Chief Guest. The other dignitaries of the Inaugural Session included Resource Persons Prof. Santosh Panda and Prof. C.R.K. Murthy from IGNOU, and Prof. M.K. Sarma, Director, TLC. Among the invitees, the Registrar Dr. Biren Das, Prof. S.K. Dutta, Director, CIQA, Dr. Rajeev K. Doley, Director, CID and Member Secretary, CIQA, Dr. Madhurima Goswami, Head, Chandraprabha Saikiani Centre for Women’s Studies, and Heads of Departments and other faculty members of the University. A total number of 46 participants had attended the two-day workshop consisting of six technical sessions. Among the participants, 90% are authors of SLMs of CODL while others are interested resource persons to be associated with CODL as SLM writers.

Prof. Debabrata Das, the Director of CODL, while introducing the theme to the participants emphasized the ever increasing role of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for overall learning process worldwide and also brought in blended learning into the context explaining about the contribution of ODL system in the enhancement of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the country leading to the national agenda of making it 30% by the year 2025. Prof. Das urged that ODL has also contributed significantly in the outreach to the disadvantaged sections of the society including SCs, STs and women evidenced by the higher growth rate of enrolment in higher education through ODL of those sections compared to the face to face mode of education. He also put the point into context that there is a paradigm shift of the methodology, pedagogy and delivery of ODL mode during recent times in search of enhanced quality. He added that the materials that are provided to the learners in ODL are no longer referred to as “Study Materials” rather they are now called “Self-Learning Materials” since those materials are self-explanatory and easily comprehensible to the learners so that they do not need much help from external sources or a teacher to learn them. He also emphasized on the quality of Self-Learning Materials since they serve as the most crucial deciding factor in the context of the quality of ODL. Centre for Open and Distance Learning is mandated to contribute to the quality outreach of education to all in flexible mode and in the tryst of achieving the goal, the current workshop is a humble attempt.

In his speech, Prof. M.K. Sarma gave a brief description about Teaching Learning Center (TLC) which is an initiative under Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT) - a mission undertaken by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. The main objective of PMMMNMTT is to create an atmosphere conducive to all round development across the country for teaching and learning and TLC is tirelessly working towards achieving this objective. Prof. Sarma talked about the active role played by TLC in organizing workshops and seminars not only in Tezpur University but also all over the state. He emphasized on the importance of a holistic approach in teaching learning process. Teaching learning process cannot go only by catering to the needs of learners under face to face mode but it encompasses the holistic improvement of the teaching learning process including distance learners. He further added that though the Self Learning Materials in ODL are supplemented by audio-visual materials, the importance of written materials can never be undermined. The workshop, he believed, would not only help the participants in writing quality SLMs but it would also help them to think creatively and innovatively.

Former Vice Chancellor, Prof. M.M. Sarma suggested that the SLMs should be written in a way that the learner enjoys studying them. In this context he shared his personal experience with distance education in 1982 at one of the pioneer institutes, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) Hyderabad, which is now known as English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU). That was the time when he first had access to Self Learning Materials and he was quite amazed to find the same quite interesting and highly entertaining. CIEFL had even presented subjects like Linguistics and Grammar in a humorous manner. Since the quality of distance learning depends a lot on the quality of the SLMs, the writer of SLM needs to be able to predict the areas where a learner is likely to face problems or get bored. He added that adding humour to the SLMs along with the inclusion of audio-visual content can be an effective way to make distance learning interesting. Prof. Sarma then cited the example of Finland which tops Human Capital Index and where 60% of the students going to school go for higher education. In order to improve the poor scenario in India in this context, he believes that distance learning can play a crucial role. With this deliberation he declared the session to be inaugurated. The Inaugural Session was ended with a vote of thanks by Partha Pratim Kalita, Assistant Registrar, CODL.

**Resource persons’ Profiles:**

**Prof. Santosh Panda**

Prof. Santosh Panda, Ph.D. in Education is a Professor of Distance Education since 1997 at the Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). He has also acted as former Director of STRIDE.

Prof. Panda was the Chairperson of National Council for Teacher Education. He was also Director of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), Founding Director of Inter-University Consortium (IUC) at IGNOU, Director, Centre for Flexible & Distance Learning, the University of South Pacific, Fiji Islands.

He acted as Visiting Professor at University of London (UK), Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), University of New Mexico (USA), Beijing Normal University (China, P R); Adjunct Professor at University of Maryland (USA); and a senior Fulbright Scholar at University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA,

Prof. Panda has conducted workshops in about 25 countries. He keeps interest and consults in areas of teacher education, distance education and online learning/ OERs/ MOOCs, staff development, higher education, financing and costing, accreditation and quality assurance, programme evaluation, and open schooling. He has provided consultancy to wide number of organisations like British Council, Commonwealth of Learning, Ford Foundation, UNESCO, World Bank etc. including the Governments of many foreign countries.

He is the former chief editor of the refereed Indian Journal of Open Learning, and sits on the Editorial Board of above dozen prestigious refereed international journals.

Prof Panda has 48 publications in Refereed Journals, 44 Book Chapters, 34 Conference Papers and 19 Books in his credit.

**Prof. C.R.K. Murthy**

Prof C.R.K.Murthy holds a Ph.D in Education and has been closely associated with the growth of Distance Education in the country. Prof. Murthy started his career as Lecturer in Distance Education in 1992, simultaneously resuming equivalent positions in Academic planning and International Relations till 1998. He is presently working as the Professor of Distance Education at Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education. Prof Murthy held the position of Director, (STRIDE), IGNOU from 2013 to 2016. He was also associated with organizations like NCERT, NIEPA in national level Research Projects/Surveys in areas related to Educational Planning and Administration.

As the Director of STRIDE he was responsible for giving direction to various activities such as Staff development, Systemic research, Programme Evaluation Studies, designing, Developing and Production of materials related to various aspects of ODL, educational planning and management in general and open and distance higher education systems in particular, student support services etc

Prof. Murthy has a wide experience in planning, designing and conducting more than 300 workshops/training programmes in various aspects of distance education in India and abroad (Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana, Singapore, Dubai; New Zealand and Papua New Guinea (PNG). He has interacted with more than 20,000 teachers and professionals involved in ODL systems at higher education level.

He is credited with successfully completing many research projects in distance education. ProfMurthy also assumed the role of Chief Editor of Indian Journal of Open Learning (IJOL)till 2016, and currently he is a member of several boards and councils. Prof Murthy also has a large number of research papers and books on various aspects related to higher education and distance education in his credit.

**Participants’ Profile:**

The forty six participants who participated in the workshop are a dynamic group, consisting of teachers from various institutions of Higher Education and research scholars pursuing their PhDs. The participants belong to different areas of learning, namely English and Foreign Languages, Sociology, Mass Communication and Journalism, Management, Energy, Mathematics and Education.

Ninety five registrations were received for the workshop, out of which the participants were selected on the basis of their current contribution to the development of Self Learning Materials for CODL, including a few who were shortlisted on the basis of their interest and potential to develop Self Learning Materials in future. 42 out of the total participants are contributing to the development of Self Learning Materials.

**Outcome of the Workshop:**

**Framework Design of SLM**

There were six technical sessions taken by Prof. Santosh Panda and Prof. C.R.K. Murthy on various aspects of ODL and development of SLM. The sessions were delivered through lectures as well as group hands on exercise. On the basis of the inputs given by the Resource Persons, a brief framework design of SLM is prepared and presented below.

1. **Open and Distance Learning: An Overview**

The process of teaching and learning has been undergoing change and modifications and accordingly, the regulations laid down by UGC are also changing. The move towards a system of Distributed Learning and Blended Education has demanded that a professor needs to adapt herself/himself to the changes brought in the teaching learning process. These changes encompass introduction of online component, web-based learning, delivery through audio-visual mode of learning, activity based learning etc. Recent innovations in teaching-learning process involve all the above mentioned means of learning along with the traditional classroom-based teaching-learning process. ODL system has a close connection with blended education because it caters to the needs of learners who are away from the campus without compromising on the quality of their education. The ODL system has undergone a paradigm shift from traditional correspondence system to ICT based learning. High degree of flexibility is brought into the ODL system emphasizing on quality materials and mode of delivery. Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) has emphasized on ensuring access to education to all through its member countries including India. India has contributed immensely, especially towards the outreach of education through establishment of Open and Distance Learning institutions and Open Universities. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) being the largest open university hosting over seven lakh students has emerged as the largest caterer to the ODL mode of education posing as ‘People’s University’.

State Open University system has also contributed in an impactful way offering various academic programmes. Pioneered by Karnataka State Open University, currently India has 13 State Open Universities, one State Private Open University and 117 Dual Mode Universities apart from IGNOU at the national level catering to over 40 lakh learners. However, there have been concerns in a few quarters in regard to the quality of the education offered by the ODL institutions culminating in academic degrees. Government of India through University Grants Commission (UGC) recognizes the degrees offered through ODL mode equivalent to the degrees obtained through the face to face mode of learning from recognized universities. This has perhaps influenced the increased number of enrolment in ODL and some institutions took undue advantage ignoring the quality aspect of education. The situation is also fuelled by the absence of a rigorous regulation although Distance Education Council hosted at IGNOU monitored the ODL system throughout the country until recently.

Having realized the concerns in quality materials and delivery, UGC has stepped in and taken over the regulatory role; abolishing Distance Education Council and establishing an arm into it by the name of Distance Education Bureau. There has been regulatory transformation in the ODL system of the country by the enactment of a new regulation in the name and style of UGC (ODL) Regulations, 2017 which attempts to bring in significant changes in the quality of ODL system. It is in this context that the faculty members, counsellors and resource persons need to re-energize themselves in the tune of the new regulatory framework.

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has shifted the focus from lecturing to the improvement of quality education. Under the CBCS, there is a core course in every semester to be compulsorily studied by a student along with elective course that can be chosen from a pool papers. The elective course can be generic that adds generic proficiency to the students or it can be discipline centric or it can be chosen form an unrelated discipline. Along with core and elective courses, there is also foundation course in the CBCS. Each course in CBCS is divided into theory, practical and tutorial. Such a system demands that the onus of learning should be on the learners while the teachers play the role of facilitators.

An important topic that needs to be understood in terms of ODL is plagiarism. Paraphrasing someone else’s ideas or words without giving due credit, writing quotation without using quotation marks, citing source incorrectly, keeping the sentence structure of someone else’s writing with some changes to the words, all amount to plagiarism. It is also important to note that self-plagiarism which is the reuse of one’s own work without citing the original work, should also be avoided.

1. **SLM Structure and Development**

In ODL mode the SLMs play the role of an instructor. Therefore, there are certain characteristics of SLMs that need to be kept in mind-

1. Self Learning Materials should be self-explanatory so that a learner does not require any external support to understand the content.
2. Self Learning Materials should be self-contained and the learner should not require additional material to understand the same topic.
3. SLMs should also provide guidance to the learners about how to proceed with the course and should be self-directed.
4. SLMs should be capable of motivating the learner by citing familiar situations and help in raising curiosity in the minds of the learners.
5. The SLMs should also be self-evaluating and should contain exercises, activities, self-assessment questions etc.

These characteristics differentiate textbooks from SLMs.

**II.I** **Textbooks vs SLMs**

In order to prepare quality SLMs, a writer needs to understand the difference between a textbook and an SLM. The following points shall highlight this difference:

1. A textbook assumes interest while an SLM is supposed to arouse interest in the learners.
2. Textbooks are written mainly for the teacher. A teacher follows the textbook to explain the concepts to the learners. On the other hand, SLMs are written exclusively for the learners. The content of an SLM should be such that they are easily comprehensible to the learners.
3. In a textbook there is no indication of study time. The teacher decides the study time for the students. On the other hand, SLMs give estimates of study time to the learners.
4. Textbooks are written for wider market whereas SLMs are written for particular learner group.
5. A textbook rarely states aims and objectives whereas an SLM always gives aims and objectives.
6. Textbooks are structured for subject specialists while SLMs are structured according to the needs of the learners.
7. There is little or no self-assessment in a textbook whereas an SLM lays major emphasis on self-assessment.

**II.II SLM Design**

The Self Learning Materials have a definite structure depending upon the subject and level of learning. There is a standardization of terminologies used in ODL systems. These terminologies have a structural hierarchy that is followed as shown in the following figure:



\*Taken from the PPT of Prof. CRK Murthy

A programme is divided into courses and which are further divided into blocks. Each block consists of Units. The content of the units are further broken into sections and sub-sections. The structure of a unit refers to the detailed itemization of the content. This itemization of content into sections and sub-sections presents a clear outline to the learners and help them in overviewing and locating the desired content of the unit.

A unit is designed based on the time a learner should invest in finishing it. The design should help the learners in retaining their motivation throughout.

**II.III Structure of a Unit**

A unit consists of three parts-

1. **The beginning:** The beginning should comprise of the unit structure that is the framework of all the content of the unit placed in sequence. It is followed by the introduction that briefs the learner about the theme and provides study guidance. While writing the introduction, care must be taken that the language is simple and direct so that the content appears interesting and not difficult and cumbersome to the learners. The objectives of the unit are also placed in the beginning to help in measuring the learning outcomes in advance. While writing the objectives it is advisable to use certain behavioural terms as follows:

**Descriptive verbs-** define, describe, explain etc.

**Discriminative verbs-** compare, differentiate, distinguish, classify etc.

**Motor performance verbs-** drive, type, draw, measure, write etc.
To have a clear understanding of how these terms can be incorporated in objectives; the following example may be referred to-

**Objectives:**

After reading this unit, you shall be able to:

1. Explain the concept of Self Learning Materials;
2. Differentiate between Textbooks and SLMs;
3. Prepare a proper structure of a Unit.
4. **The main content of the unit:** The main body of the unit is the main content of the unit arranged in a logical order. The main body answers the questions of the learners and makes addition to their existing knowledge. The content should be written in learner friendly language and personalized style so that the learner gets the feel that the content is directly conversing with him/her. The use of personal pronouns like ‘You’ and ‘We’ will help in this regard. While writing the main content of the unit, it is very important that the linkage is maintained properly. Each idea or sentence should be linked to the next idea or sentence. The main body should also include illustrations, wherever required. Activities like ‘Check Your Progress’ (CYPs), ‘Self-Assessment Questions’ (SAQs), Stop and Read, Reflection Spot etc. should also be incorporated to make the content more learner oriented.

**The following summarizes the structure of the main body of the unit:**

* Small steps- In order to provide learner-centric education, the content should be divided into small sections so that the learner can move from one section to the other in a systematic manner.
* Logical arrangement- in order to maintain a logical arrangement, the following principles are to be followed:
* From Known to unknown- The new concepts presented to the learners should be linked to their pre-knowledge. It is only then the new knowledge will be meaningful to the learners.
* From simple to complex- The content should be started with easy ideas/ concepts and should gradually move to the complex ones.
* From concrete to abstract- Concrete materials should be presented first and gradually abstractions should be introduced.
* From particular to general- Before generalizing a concept, a few particular cases need to be discussed
* From actual to representative- The learners should be first advised to engage themselves in some real or actual events or objects related to the unit before proceeding with it. If engaging with real events or objects is not possible, representative forms such as charts, diagrams etc. can be used to make the content easy to learn.
* Personalised style- The content should be more personal and interactive such that the learner feels that he/she is given individual attention. It should build conversation between a teacher (the role of which is played by the SLM) and a learner.
* Language- Language is a crucial deciding factor for the effectiveness of an SLM. Keeping the language simple, effective and direct is imperative in distance learning. The use of words should be such that the learner does not need to consult a dictionary quite often.
* Sentences- It is important that the writer keeps the sentences short and simple. It is always advisable to break down lengthy sentences into two or more small and simple sentences. The sentences should communicate the ideas and concepts directly.
* Vocabulary- Though the use of jargons might make the content appear more scholarly, the same should be avoided in SLMs since the focus should be more on how well the learners can understand the content through simple and direct language.
* Paragraphs- While writing SLMs, it is advisable to present one idea in one paragraph. Paragraphing makes the content more systematic and clearer.
* Illustration, CYPs, SAQs, Activities- These need to be effectively used in the content to make it more interesting, comprehensible and to stimulate the learners’ imagination and creativity.
1. **The conclusion:** The concluding part sums up the entire unit. It is a repetition of what has already been discussed. Thus it helps the learner to recall the important points in the unit and to check if they have completed all the learning activities. It also consists of glossary, references, suggested readings, self-assessment questions and activities.

Here is the structure of a sample unit:

UNIT 1: TUTOR COMMENTS

* 1. Introduction
	2. Objectives
	3. Tutor Comments and the Distance Tutor: Scope and Significance
	4. Various Types Of Tutor Comments
		1. Harmful Comments
		2. Hollow Comments
		3. Misleading Comments
		4. Positive Comments
		5. Negative Comments
		6. Null Comments
		7. Constructive Comments
		8. Global Comments
	5. Summary
	6. Glossary
	7. Suggested Readings
	8. References
	9. Answer to SAQs /CYPs

**Conclusion:**

The insightful sessions of the workshop were quite helpful for the participants as was reflected in the modifications that they made in their write-ups during their presentation. The knowledge about the various aspects related to ODL as well the changes brought in its realm with the advent of ICT and blended learning indeed helped the participants in understanding the whole concept, aims and objectives of ODL. The sessions gave a clear description about the characteristics of SLM and how an SLM is different from a textbook. Such distinct characteristics imply that the design and curriculum of an SLM cannot be the same as used while developing a textbook. The sessions gave a clear description about the instructional design issues, curriculum design, and transaction that highlight the importance of concept maps involved in the development of an SLM. Keeping the language and content of SLM learner friendly is another important aspect that the participants learnt during the workshop. It is indeed very important that an SLM is learner centric lest the aim of ODL remains unmet. Hands on sessions in the workshop and activities, presentations by the participants contributed to quality development of SLM for ODL system. It is confirmed that the inputs of the workshop will reflect in the SLM of CODL in future.