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### ABSTRACT

Establishment of Open University (1969) in United Kingdom aroused the interest of Educationists and policy makers from world over for its unique multi-media approach of teaching and learning methods. In 1962, in India, Correspondence Education introduced to stop the upper class and castes domination and give an ample chance of higher education to common man and deprived classes, but failed due to its poor quality study materials and standards.

Distance Education (Distance Education) started in India, with a biggest mandate to disseminate education in the in the nook and corner of the county, by removing rigid rules of conventional system of education and adopted the multi-media technological approach to reach the unreached masses without compromising the quality.

The Founder Vice Chancellor of the State level Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU, 1982) and National level Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU, 1985) Late Prof. G. Ram Reddy said, that the need for DE in India based on three reasons, Access, Quality and Relevance, in terms of access the ground reality for rural masses need to travel 80 kilometers to reach a college or Institute. Quality is not the same in metros and in rural areas. Relevance is, India needs more technical, vocational and pure science courses, but we offer more Fine Arts, and Social Sciences courses.

Keeping I view of the above said problems as a mandate, IGNOU created opportunities for higher, vocational and technical education to millions of aspiring learners, those who have missed out education in the first phase of their life, with a paradigm shift from teacher centered to leaner centric; allowing to learn in their own environment, pace, place and time, without any barriers of caste, creed, age or sex. Heterogeneous population enrolled in IGNOU like, in service persons, housewives, industrial workers, self-employed entrepreneurs, medical, military, jail mates, geographically remote learners, physically challenged, agriculture laborers, youth who cannot get admission due to limited seats in colleges, got an opportunity in IGNOU for career advancement or professional development. IGNOU has students ranging from the age group 21-90 years.

IGNOU started with 4000 students; today it is the largest mega university in the world with 3 million students. Its teaching and learning methodology can be divided into three broad areas like, creation of Self-learning materials, Students Support Services and Technology mediated learning through ICT tools (Information, communication and

Technology). These unique systems of education certainly call for an impact study on learners. In spite of supportive governmental policies and Constitutional amendments, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Muslims status of higher education is dismally in the lowest order. In this research study, SC's and Muslim students empowerment aspects has been reviewed, critically and analytically on the basis of complex social matrix and also on the IGNOU's teaching and learning methodologies, i.e., pedagogical aspects, administrative aspects and technology mediated learning aspects. The study indicates fruitful results of IGNOU's DE methodology.