

# **Factors Influencing Urbanized Students to Select ODL Courses over Regular Courses - An Empirical Study Based On Kolkata**

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## **Abstract**

*The objective of distance learning in India is to provide opportunities for higher education to a large segment of population especially disadvantaged groups living in remote and rural areas, adults, housewives and working people. At least 40% of students' population at post graduate level prefers to study through distance mode. In real life situation it has been seen most of the students who are perusing professional courses through Open Distance Learning (ODL) are not from remote and rural areas but from urban areas. In this context we are going to analyze the factors which are influencing the students of Kolkata who are completely urbanized, to select ODL courses over the regular courses and their level of satisfaction after completion of these courses.*

**Keywords:** *Open Distance Learning (ODL), Urbanized Students, Professional Courses.*

**Introduction:** Open Distance Learning programs have been in existence for a considerable period of time. Studies reveal that distance education programs are there from the last century. But in this century, mainly by last 25 years, Distance Education as a system of learning has attracted many individual to pursue their higher education through ODL system. In this period of heightened interest, ODL system has experienced many changes within the discipline, especially regarding its management, pedagogy and accessibility. Now a day's Distance education is available to both types of aspirants; rural and urban. The target population of ODL courses in India is disadvantaged groups living in remote and rural areas, adults, housewives and working people. In reality it is seen that a large number of people who are pursuing professional courses through distance education are from urban area. This group consists of students, working professionals, housewives. In this context Kolkata is taken as the sample space for this research. In this study difference of opinion is clearly visible and the factors which actually motivate urban people to do ODL courses are somehow modified than rural people. Their (urban people) socio economic structure is entirely different from rural people and it reflects in their respective responses.

**Objective of the study:** This study will try to find out the factors which are playing major role in the selection of ODL courses by the urbanized students, to have professional degrees.

## **Literature Review:**

It is said (Ansari,2002) that the best development in ODL program is done through the design and development of courses, adoption of appropriate teaching and learning methodologies ,development of institutional structures for effective management. Nearly 40% of the total

incremental demand of higher education is absorbed by ODL system. The communication Technology facilitated the dissemination of good practices across the institutions.

From the previous study (Kanjilal) it is seen that the ongoing developments in computer and telecommunication technologies have brought tremendous changes in the ODL system. Central concept of distance education is the separation of teacher from the learner. IT is the ideal channel of communication for ODL as it uses various interconnection media to unite the teacher and the learner.

**Research Methodology:**

100 students of Kolkata have been randomly selected as the sample size for this study. Each of them was given a questionnaire to be filled up according to their opinion. This sample population is consists of students who are pursuing regular courses and the students who are pursuing ODL courses.

Their respective responses are first tabulated and then this data is analyzed by using some Statistical methods like Multiple Regression, Correlation analysis etc. with the help of SPSS software. Qualitative methods are also used to analyze respondents’ attitude towards ODL courses. This study has been done mainly based on primary research.

**Analysis:** Based on the given questionnaire the responses of the respondents are tabulated and then different types of relationship, of the variable “Interested to do ODL courses” are analyzed with respect to the other five variables.

Table 1: Response of the respondents based on the questionnaire.

S. No.	Employment status	Interested to do ODL courses	%of marks obtained	Age of the respondent	Use of technical media	ODL is less expensive
1	1	1	2	1	1	1
2	2	1	1	2	1	2
3	2	2	1	3	2	2
4	1	1	2	2	1	2
5	1	1	1	2	2	2
6	1	1	1	2	1	1
7	1	1	1	2	1	2
8	2	2	1	2	2	2
9	1	2	2	1	2	1
10	2	2	2	1	1	1

11	2	2	2	2	2	2
12	1	2	1	2	1	2
13	2	2	2	3	2	2
14	2	2	1	2	2	2
15	1	1	1	1	1	1
16	2	2	2	3	2	2
17	2	2	2	2	2	2
18	1	1	1	1	1	1
19	1	1	1	2	1	2
20	1	1	1	1	1	1
21	1	1	1	1	1	1
22	2	2	1	2	2	2
23	1	1	1	3	1	1
24	2	1	1	1	2	1
25	2	1	1	2	1	2
26	1	1	1	2	1	2
27	2	2	2	2	2	2
28	2	2	1	2	1	2
29	1	1	2	2	1	2
30	2	2	2	2	2	2
31	2	2	2	1	2	1
32	1	1	1	1	1	1
33	1	1	1	3	1	2
34	1	1	1	1	1	1
35	1	1	1	1	1	1
36	2	2	2	1	2	2
37	1	1	1	2	1	2
38	2	2	2	2	1	2
39	2	2	2	2	2	2
40	1	1	1	2	1	2

41	2	2	2	2	2	2
42	2	2	2	2	2	2
43	1	1	1	3	1	2
44	2	2	1	1	2	1
45	2	2	1	2	2	2
46	1	1	1	2	1	2
47	1	1	1	2	1	2
48	1	1	1	2	1	2
49	1	1	1	2	1	2
50	2	2	2	2	1	2
51	1	1	1	2	1	2
52	2	2	2	2	2	2
53	2	2	2	3	2	1
54	1	1	1	1	1	1
55	2	2	2	2	2	2
56	2	2	2	1	2	1
57	1	1	1	1	1	1
58	2	2	2	2	1	2
59	2	2	2	2	1	2
60	1	1	1	1	1	1
61	1	1	1	2	1	2
62	1	1	2	2	1	2
63	1	1	1	3	1	2
64	2	1	1	2	1	2
65	1	2	2	2	2	2
66	2	1	1	1	1	1
67	2	1	1	2	1	2
68	1	1	1	1	1	1
69	2	2	2	1	1	1
70	2	2	2	2	1	2

71	1	1	1	1	1	1
72	1	1	1	1	2	1
73	1	1	2	3	1	2
74	2	2	2	1	2	1
75	2	2	2	1	2	1
76	2	1	1	2	1	2
77	2	2	2	2	2	2
78	2	2	2	2	2	2
79	1	1	1	2	1	2
80	1	1	1	2	1	2
81	2	2	2	2	2	2
82	2	2	2	2	1	2
83	1	1	1	3	1	2
84	1	1	1	2	1	2
85	1	1	1	2	1	2
86	1	1	1	2	1	2
87	2	2	2	2	2	2
88	1	1	1	2	1	2
89	2	2	2	2	2	2
90	2	2	2	2	2	2
91	1	1	1	2	1	2
92	2	2	2	2	2	2
93	2	2	2	3	2	2
94	1	1	1	2	1	2
95	2	2	1	1	2	1
96	2	2	2	1	2	2
97	1	1	1	2	1	2
98	1	1	1	2	1	2
99	1	1	2	2	1	2
100	1	1	1	2	1	2

Table 2: Index for Table 1.

Variable Values		
Value		Label
Employment	1	employed
	2	unemployed
Interest	1	ODL
	2	Regular
Marks	1	less than 55%
	2	more than 55%
Age	1	age group of 18-25years
	2	age group of 26-35years
	3	more than 35 years
Media	1	important reason to select ODL
	2	not so important factor
Expense	1	yes
	2	no

At first the response are analyzed with respect to “Percentage marks obtained” and “Interested to do ODL courses” when other remaining variables are not taken into consideration. In this context it is found that the people who obtained more than 55% of marks in HSC level or in Graduation they are keener to do Regular courses. Whereas those who scored less than 55% marks in HSC and in Graduation they are more interested in ODL courses to pursue their professional courses. But some exception is always there who’s’ decisions are not affected by the factor “Percentage marks obtained”. Calculations are done based on Table 1.

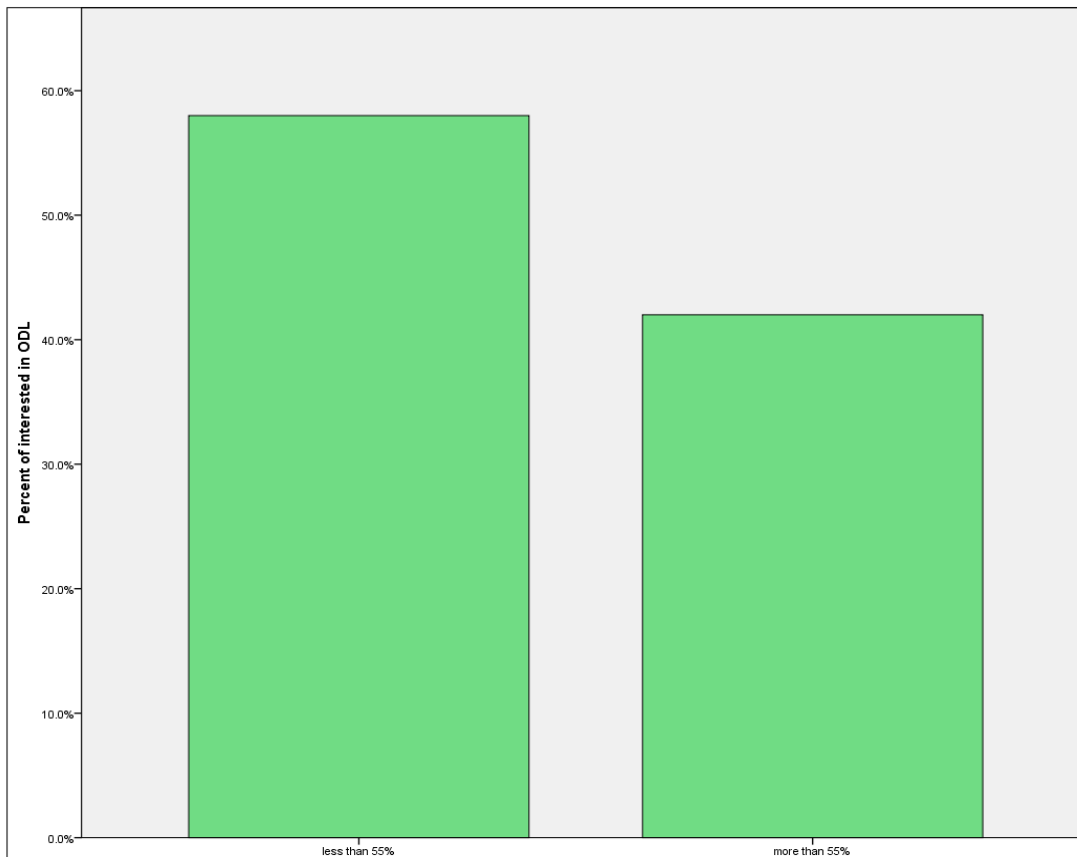
**Table 3: Showing %of marks obtained**

	Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
less than 55%	58	58.0	58.0	58.0
Valid more than 55%	42	42.0	42.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4: Showing Interested to do ODL courses**

	Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
ODL	55	55.0	55.0	55.0
Valid Regular	45	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Chart 1: showing “Percent of interested in ODL” and “% of marks obtained”



In the Chart 1, in the “y axis” the variable “Percent of interested in ODL” is shown and in “x axis” the variable “% of marks obtained”- “less than 55 %” and “more than 55% “ are shown. From this chart it can be said that almost 60% of people who scored less than 55% marks are interested in ODL and only 40% of people who scored more than 55% marks are interested in ODL.

Now the co-relationship between the variables “Employment status” and “Interested to do ODL courses” are analyzed with respect to each other, when other remaining variables are not taken into consideration. In this case data from Table 1 is used.

**Table 5 : Correlations**

		Employment status	Interested to do ODL courses
Employment status	Pearson Correlation	1	.802**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	24.990	19.950
	Covariance	.252	.202
	N	100	100
	Pearson Correlation	.802**	1
Interested to do ODL courses	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	19.950	24.750
	Covariance	.202	.250
	N	100	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient “r” lies from  $-1 \leq r \leq +1$ . In this case correlation coefficient is 0.802 which is quite significant. This shows a positive relationship between these two variables. Working Respondents of Kolkata are more interested to do ODL courses because they don’t want to leave their present job and not only that they want to upgrade their present profile in the same job or at the time of job change.

Three very important variables are there which influence decision of urban people to choose between Regular course and ODL course. For this purpose Multiple Regression is used to analyze the relationship among the variables “Age of the respondent”, “Use of technical media”, “ODL is less expensive” and “Interested to do ODL courses”. For calculation purpose “Interested to do ODL courses” is taken as Dependent variable and “Age of the respondent”, “Use of technical media”, “ODL is less expensive” are taken as Independent variables.

**Table 6: Coefficients**



Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Standard Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.238	.164		1.452	.150	-.087	.562		
	Age of the respondent	-.044	.078	-.052	-.556	.579	-.199	.112	.520	1.924
	Use of technical media	.756	.069	.738	10.885	.000	.618	.894	.999	1.001
	Odl is less expensive	.145	.104	.131	1.393	.167	-.062	.352	.519	1.926

a. Dependent Variable: Interested to do ODL courses

The Regression equation is  $y = 0.238 - 0.044x_1 + 0.756x_2 + 0.145x_3$

**Table 7 :Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.748 <sup>a</sup>	.560	.546	.337

a. Predictors: (Constant), ODL is less expensive, Use of technical media, Age of the respondent

b. Dependent Variable: Interested to do ODL courses

From the Table 7 it is seen that value of R square is 0.560 which shows there is 56% of variation in the dependent variable is explained by the predictor variables. The Regression equation appears to be useful because value of R square is more than 0.50.

**Findings:** From the whole analysis it can be said that, Interest of urban people to chose ODL over Regular courses for pursuing professional courses are influenced by the factors:

- Employment status of the people
- %of marks obtained in HSC or in Graduation
- Age of the respondent
- Use of technical media for learning
- ODL is less expensive than Regular courses.

There are other reasons also to select ODL courses, which some of the respondents identified but for calculation purpose which are not considered, these are:

- Few respondents who are also mothers, they think their higher education will benefit their children also. So to keem balance between family life and their student life, they would like to chose or they have chosen ODL courses.
- Higher Degree gives social respect and at the age of more than 35 few respondents want to go for ODL courses.
- Few respondents want to start their own business venture in future and now they are salaried employees and for that they need professional degrees, in this case their preference goes with ODL courses.

**Conclusion:** From this study it can be said that the scope of ODL system has been widened. Different factors are influencing those people who also have facility to go for regular courses in spite of that they have chosen ODL courses. In near future it can be expected that more students from Cities and Metropolitan Cities will consider ODL courses for climbing up the corporate ladder through the professional courses. There is further scope of research in this topic based on spatiotemporal variables which regulates student's attitude towards ODL courses.

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