

FSN FORUM - DISCUSSION TOPIC NO. 3, 2009

**SHARING INNOVATIVE AND FLEXIBLE CAPACITY BUILDING  
PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPMENT**  
FROM 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH TO 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

Dear all,

My name is Umesh Chandra Pandey and I am working for the School of Good Governance & Policy Analysis (<http://www.sushasanmp.in/>) as Knowledge Management Director. I started my academic career initially as a physicist, with a MPhil in Environmental Sciences and then a PhD in Physics in 1999. I completed a Post graduate Diploma in distance Education (PGDDE) and have been working in distance and open learning and actively involved in research and development activities in this field for 18 years.

Agriculture Development has come to a sharp focus as the deadline to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is approaching fast. **Capacity building** of huge population involved in agriculture for acquisition of skills and knowledge aimed at better agricultural productivity is now a major issue confronting us which has implication for meeting almost all the 8 MDGs. The situation is complex as most of the population which requires to be targeted is socio economically most disadvantaged, politically marginalized and living in geographically inaccessible areas.

It is a gigantic task confronting us as despite massive expansion in conventional systems of education the situation continues to remain grim. Conventional ways and means of imparting education have proved to be economically non viable and developing countries can not afford to make financial commitments of required scale.

There is a clear-cut realisation that we need to have a major shift from traditional teaching learning practices. Innovation and flexibility should be the hallmark of any alternative system of education.

There is now an almost consensus that **Open and Distance Learning (ODL)** systems with a focus on **Innovation and Flexibility** are the only indispensable tools to meet this challenge keeping in view of the resource constraints of developing countries. Being a distance educator it interests me a lot to **devise innovative ways of imparting education to the disadvantaged people**. Such innovation and flexibility can not be a one time affair but should be an ongoing process.

I feel that keeping in view the MDGs we need to deliberate on effectiveness of such **alternate ways of capacity building and share experiences in a big way**. I wish to refer to a very interesting key note address entitled "Distance Education and Development" delivered by Prof A W Khan Asstt Director General UNESCO in ICDE conference at New Delhi (<http://www.ignou.ac.in/ICDE2005/Keynote/AW%20Khan.pdf>). The key note address talks about innovative concept of community based knowledge networks. I feel that we need to innovate in a big way to create **community based learning systems** which is so important from the point of view of MDGs

I hereby wish to invite the attention of the community members about this vital issue of **devising innovative and flexible ODL practices** specially keeping in mind the MDGs. It will help the community members to share experiences and practices and replicate them elsewhere.

Dr U C Pandey  
Director (Knowledge Management)  
School of Good Governance and Policy Analysis  
India