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Distance Education in the Remote Islands of Maldives

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ABSTRACT

Maldives is a country in the Indian Ocean consisting of 200 inhabited islands. Due to the small population sizes in the rural islands infrastructure development had been a major hurdle in Maldives. This has led to the lack of secondary schools in most of the islands in the country. This research aimed at creating a distance education model that can provide access to secondary education to the students in these islands. The research looked at the existing infrastructure of Maldives and the different media used in other countries in the world to provide distance education. Based on these two sets of information a criteria was made to develop a distance education model suitable in Maldivian context. A theoretical model was then developed to suit these requirements in Maldives. The accessibility of this model was then evaluated through a field study in Maldives to find out whether the model was able to reach the students in the outer islands. A learning system was designed based on this theoretical model and implemented in different parts of the country. A questionnaire survey was then carried out to find whether the students accepted the learning system as a mode of study. The study showed that the theoretical model was able to provide access to the students in the outer islands of Maldives. Three aspects of accessibility in the outer islands were investigated, namely physical access, student learning, and student acceptance. Since the evaluation included a successful implementation of the proposed model in some of remotest inhabited islands in Maldives, physical accessibility was achieved. The study showed that the students using the proposed model were able to achieve grades similar or higher to those they obtain in normal schooling. This showed the students' ability to learn using the proposed model. Finally, the study showed that most students liked using the proposed model and were willing to use it for other courses.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
AIOU	-	Allama Iqbal Open University
BOU	-	Bangladesh Open University
CAI	-	Computer Assisted Instruction
CASCADE	-	Computer Assisted Curriculum Analysis, Design and Evaluation
CDB	-	Canadian Development Bank
CMC	-	Computer Mediated Communication
CMI	-	Computer Managed Instruction
COL	-	Commonwealth of Learning
ICCE	-	International Council of Correspondence Education
ICDE	-	International Council for Open and Distance Education
IGNOU	-	Indira Gandhi National Open University
INSAT	-	Indian Satellite
IRI	-	Interactive Radio Instruction
ITESM	-	Technological Institute of Monterry
ITFS	-	Instructional Television Fixed Service
NCC	-	Non-Campus Countries
OUSL	-	Open University Sri Lanka
RME	-	Realistic Mathematics Education
SCS	-	Space Collaboration System

SITE	-	Satellite Instructional Television Equipment
TAM	-	Technology Acceptance Model
TLC	-	Telelearning Centre
TVM	-	Television Maldives
UGC	-	University Grants Commission
USP	-	University of South Pacific
UWI	-	University of West Indies
UWIDITE	-	University of West Indies Distance Teaching Experiment
VCI	-	Virtual Campus Initiative
WorLD	-	World Links for Development