UNIT 2  THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE-1

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2.0  OBJECTIVES

In unit 1, we have given you some idea about the socio-political rationale behind the development of the distance education system in general. We have also talked about the influence of social and political changes on the educational system using the Indian case as an illustration. In this unit, we aim to provide you with an account of the functioning of distance teaching institutions in Europe.

By the end of this unit, you will have:

- traced the genesis of distance education; and
- acquired an overall understanding of the status which the distance educational system has gained in Europe.

2.1  INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in unit 1, distance education was born of pressing social compulsions, dynamics of change and new cultures. It indicates a healthy evolution in the field of education, though in certain ways it may be considered a revolutionary development because it marks a significant break from the centuries old formal or 'face-to-face' teaching system leading to the development of an innovative multi-media teaching/learning system.
Growth and Present Status

You will notice while reading through this unit that some of the countries we have chosen for study have independent open universities and some have various other forms of distance education. The cause for the latter might be, besides logistics, the sheer complexity of the prevailing structural systems and/or strong networks of vested interests trying to perpetuate them. However, the goal of open/distance education, in whatever form it is practised, is to make available education/training to all those who aspire for it.

2.2 THE GENESIS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

A brief sketch of the genesis of distance education is essential here to have a clear picture of the role of the distance mode of teaching/learning on the international scene.

If we try to trace the genesis of distance education, we notice that some early forms of this innovative system of teaching/learning were the instructive letters in the Old Testament and some other works in early Greek-Roman history. The instructive letter played a significant role in the Roman Catholic Church right from the Epistles of St. Paul. The Age of Enlightenment was, perhaps, the most fertile period for instructive letters.

The general belief, however, has been that the history of modern correspondence instruction began in 1840 with Isaac Pitman’s Shorthand Course for distance students through the Penny Post, when uniform Penny Postage was introduced in the UK. Nevertheless, some researchers have traced the forerunners of the distance education of today to 1833 when a private teacher of English taught composition by post, providing two-way communication, which is the predominant characteristic of distance education. In 1856, a School of Modern Languages established by Langenscheidt and Toussaint in Germany started teaching foreign languages through correspondence. In the USA, the first efforts to organise correspondence instruction were made in 1873. Later on, the idea of a land grant college with a campus extending to the state boundaries resulted in the establishment of correspondence courses in some universities in 1890. Although correspondence education played only a limited role in the formal secondary school system, and in colleges and universities, it has been more extensive in the USA than in any other country. In Europe, pioneering work was done in Germany and Sweden in 1890 with the establishment of Fern Lehrinstitute in Berlin and Hermods in Sweden. With the onset of the twentieth century, a number of correspondence instruction schools were set up throughout Europe.

We shall, at this juncture, deviate a little from the main stream of our discussion to talk about the birth of the term ‘distance education’. Varied names such as ‘home study’, ‘postal tuition’, ‘correspondence courses’, ‘independent study’, etc. were given to the earlier forms of distance education and its programmes throughout the world. Even now, terms like ‘off-campus studies’, ‘external studies’, ‘non-formal education’, etc., continue to be in use. Of these, the term ‘correspondence education’ has been widely accepted. All these terms were essentially associated with non-traditional teaching-learning programmes, which had many similarities. They, very often, embody the phenomenon of teachers linked with varied learners through the printed word and later on with the development of science and technology, through various kinds of
Check Your Progress 1

**Notes:**

a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

List at least two reasons for choosing the term 'distance education' to denote the distance mode of teaching/learning.

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Having seen how the term 'distance education' came into currency, let us now go back to our discussion of the genesis of distance education.

### 2.2.1 Developments in the Twentieth Century

As said earlier, with the onset of the twentieth century, a number of correspondence instruction schools were set up throughout Europe. In Russia, (in fact, the former USSR as a whole) correspondence study became the main form of study at the university level by the early 1960s – more students studied through correspondence courses than through regular classroom instruction in colleges and universities. In Japan, over a million students are studying through correspondence courses. In Australia and New Zealand, correspondence instruction came to be used in the compulsory school system to teach children who had never been to a classroom. In England a number of private correspondence colleges were set up to coach students for various school and university examinations.
Before we attempt studying the status of distance education in various countries at greater length, it is necessary that we also talk about the gradual but steady growth of distance education in the overall sphere of education.

2.2.2 The International Fora

The wide-spread acceptance of correspondence courses prompted some imaginative correspondence educators to organise an international forum for this innovative system of education.

International Council for Distance Education (ICDE)

The credit for establishing the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) in 1938 goes to Mr. J.W. Gibson who was for many years the Director of High School Correspondence Instruction at Victoria, British Columbia in Canada. The first World Conference of this Council was held in Victoria, B.C. in August 1938, and 87 delegates, mostly from Canada and the US attended the conference. Australia, New Zealand and Scotland were also represented. Mr. Rex C. Haight was elected the first President of ICCE.

World War II delayed the second ICCE conference which was ultimately held in 1948, presided over by Dr. Kunte O’ Broady, the Director of Extension Division, the University of Nebraska. One hundred and eighteen delegates from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and the Philippines participated in this conference. The following table gives you the year and venue of the ICDE conferences that have been held so far.

Table 2.1: ICDE Conferences: A glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Delegates</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>President/Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Victoria B. C</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rex C. Haight (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Lincoln, Nebraska</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kunte O’ Broady (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Christchurch.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A. G. Butchers (NZ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Pennsylvania, US</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>William R. Young (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Alberta, Canada</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>G.F. Bruce/G.J. Buck (Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Gearheart, Oregon</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Viron A. Moore (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Donald Cameron (Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Renee Erdos (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>W8ITenton, Virginia</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Charles A Wedemeyer (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Delegates</td>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>President/Host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Brighton, UK</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Borje Holmberg (Sweden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>New Delhi, India</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>David Young (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Vancouver, B. C.</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Bakshish Singh (India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Melbourne, Australia</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>John Daniel (Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Oslo, Norway</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Kevin Smith (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Caracas, Venezuela</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>David Sewart (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>David Sewart (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Birmingham, UK</td>
<td>1000 (App.)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Marian Croft (Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Vienna, Austria</td>
<td>1000 (App)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Ing. Hagen (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Dusseldorf, Germany</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Fern Universitat Hegan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Hongkong, China</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>The Open University of Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Brazil Asociation for Distance (ABED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Maastricht, The Netherlands</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Open Universiteit, The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Bali, Indonesia</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The International Council is officially affiliated to UNESCO in category ‘A’ international non-governmental relations, and cooperates closely with the United Nations. With well over 100 countries represented, ICDE functions as the window to the world of open/distance education. Acting as a coordinating body, ICDE strives to promote knowledge of and improvement in, open/distance education throughout the world. ICDE provides for its member institutions consultancies and advice at reduced costs. Further, it offers opportunities for building strategic alliances as a global broker for finalising the programmes of member institutions.

ICDE has established various ‘interest groups’. One such group, for example, is called the ICDE Women’s International Network, which offers opportunities for women in open/distance education to meet and to deliberate on special issues, i.e., those with particular relevance for them.
Moreover, ICDE has close working relations with a number of associations of open/distance education institutions. We have presented some of them here:

- European Distance Education Network (EDNE)
- Association of Asian Open Universities (AAOU) (NUCEA), USA
- National University Continuing Education Association (NUCPA), USA
- Open and Distance Learning Association (ODLA), Australia
- Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA)
- West African Association of Distance Education (WAADE)
- Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE)
- United States Distance Learning Council (USDLC)
- Latin American Network for Development in Distance Education (REDLEAED)
- Norwegian Association for Distance Education (NADE)
- Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ)

ICDE has its permanent international headquarters at Gjerdrums vei 12,0486, in Oslo, Norway.

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

The Commonwealth of Learning is another such body. It is an international organisation, established by Commonwealth Governments in September 1988, following the Heads of Governments Meeting held in 1987. Its headquarters are in Vancouver and it is the only Commonwealth intergovernmental organisation located outside Britain.

The purpose of the Commonwealth Of Learning, as reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Commonwealth Governments, is

- to create and widen access to education, and
- to improve its quality, utilising distance education techniques and associate communication technologies to meet the particular requirements of member countries.

Thus, COL purports to strengthen member countries’ capacities to develop the human resources required for their economic and social advancement. The functions and objectives of COL include:

- assisting the creation and development of institutional capacity in distance education in member countries;
- facilitating the channelling of resources to projects and programmes in distance education; providing information and consultancy services on any aspect of distance education;
- providing information and consultancy services on any aspect of distance education; including the selection of appropriate technology;
• undertaking and supporting evaluation and applied research in
distance education;
• assisting the acquisition and delivery of teaching materials and more
generally facilitating access to them;
• commissioning and promoting the adaptation and development of
academic credit;
• assisting in the development of local support services to students;
and
• stimulating and supporting any other activities that fall within the
Agency’s areas of interest by such means as may be approved by the
Board of Governors.

2.2.3 World-wide Spread of Distance Education

According to the first report by Lord Walter Perry on the Index of
Institutions involved in Distance Learning, The State of Distance
Learning: World-wide (1984), which is based on the computerised data of
distance education institutions compiled by the International Centre for
Distance Learning (ICDL), Open University, Milton Keynes, UK, there
were over 2,10,000 students studying in 756 distance learning institutions
throughout the world.

As of now, i.e., October 1998, there are 1117 institutions in 103 countries
offering distance education programmes. The break up is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia Pacific</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>103</strong></td>
<td><strong>1117</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of courses available is over 38,000.

The progressive period

The period between 1960 and 1985 has been the most progressive one for
the development and credibility of distance education. The period
between 1985 and 1995 marks a stage of stability. The throes of
establishing the credibility of the system being over, the focus has been
shifted to consolidation and further innovations in this system of
education. More particularly, currently the emphasis is on assuring
quality in all its operations. Besides the growth in the number of
distance education institutions and distance learners, this period marks
the following:
Growth and Present Status

i) the realisation and development of research on various aspects of distance education;

ii) publication of books, surveys, reports, case studies, etc., connected with distance education;

iii) emergence of journals, bulletins, papers, newsletters on distance learning/education/teaching;

iv) establishment of regional and national associations of distance education;

v) organisation of a number of international, regional and national conferences/seminars/workshops on distance education;

vi) further evolution of distance education culminating in universities of the air, tele-universities, and open universities;

vii) search for and integration of new communication technology into the distance teaching/learning methodology;

viii) awareness among government bodies and societies about the relevance of distance education system to the educational needs of the people;

ix) widespread acceptance and credibility of distance system as an academically viable channel for imparting education at all levels; and

x) realisation of the potential of distance education for providing continuing/update/enrichment/refresher education to people engaged in different.

2.3 REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES – EUROPE

With this background of trends in the development of distance education over the past three decades or so, let us now have a glimpse of important developments in different regions of Europe. For purposes of convenience, the regions are arranged in alphabetical order. Before we take a look at the distance education system in different regions, we shall first try to get an overall idea about the flowering of distance education in Europe as a whole.

Europe has seen rapid strides in the development of distance education during the last few decades of the twentieth century, particularly in England, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands and Spain. The systems approach as well as educational technology have greatly influenced the development of institutionalised distance education during this period, resulting in detailed analysis of educational objectives, target groups, judicious selection of various communication media, try-out procedures, and evaluation of courses/programmes, etc. Research in distance education is another important area in which some institutions in West Europe have made a significant contribution.

A number of national and regional associations of correspondence/distance education also have been actively engaged in promoting the cause of distance education by organising conferences/seminars/workshops and in tackling problems faced by distance education institutes. The European Home Study Council (EHSC) established in
1968 launched a research programme concerning distance education methodology in 1970. The Council has also been engaged in staff development programmes and is bringing out a journal *Epistolodidaktika*. The Council is now known as the Association of European Correspondence Schools (AECS) and continues to publish the journal. Its special emphasis is on research in distance education and building cooperation among its member institutions.

Another significant development during this period was the establishment of an Information and Resource Unit in June 1978 to support the Open University Centre for International Cooperation and Services (OUCICS). The Unit ultimately became the United Nations University International Documentation Centre of Distance Learning. Computerisation of data about distance learning institutions and projects all over the world has widened the scope of compiling and disseminating the data.

The International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL) funded by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and COL was established to provide an information service in support of distance learning worldwide. Users of this service are located throughout the world. ICDL is located at the Open University (UK) Institute of Educational Technology. Its services comprise:

- a distance education database accessible online and available on CD-ROM
- a library collection on the theory and practice of distance education
- an information service dealing with users’ enquiries.

In the following sub-sections, we shall be talking about the significant status the distance education system has acquired in some European countries. But before going to discuss that, let us work on the following exercise.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Notes:**

a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What does ‘systems approach’ imply in the context of distance education?

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2.3.1 England

The establishment of the Open University at Milton Keynes, in England in 1969 turned out to be a significant milestone in the development of distance education. The Open University was established by a Royal Charter in 1969 as an independent and autonomous institution authorised to confer its own degrees. The university aims to provide a second chance to adults who have not received higher education and fuller professional training and qualifications for those who prefer to study while continuing to work, and to contribute substantially to continuing education in the UK. The university is located on a 70-acre site in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, and has offices in 13 regions covering the whole country.

This university has created a world-wide impact by producing effective course materials for all kinds of people, irrespective of age, sex, place of residence and formal qualifications. In fact, no educational qualifications are required for admission to undergraduate courses, but students must be at least 18 years old and residing in any European Community country (or in one of the certain other European countries in which it has agreed to register students). The normal minimum entrance requirement for postgraduates is identical to that which applies in conventional universities in the UK. The age and residential requirements of the undergraduate programme also apply to the continuing education programme, but in the case of professional and updating courses in this programme, stipulations are made concerning required levels of previous knowledge. In 1993, the University enrolled a total of more than 120,000 students.

The TV and radio programmes of the university have good educational value and are of interest to the general public as well. This university has provided expertise to a number of developing countries in establishing open universities or distance education institutes. A wide variety of courses is offered by the Open University, and their respective components are similarly varied. The printed materials which form the core of the university’s taught courses are supplemented by one or more of the following: audio cassettes, field trips, summer schools, and weekend or day schools. Attendance in tutorial and counselling sessions available in the university’s 250 Study Centres is optional. A student newspaper, Sesame, is published regularly and circulated to current student. The Open University Students Association organises study-related and social activities, clubs and societies. The Open University, through the Longman Group Ltd brings out a journal Open Learning (3 issues a year) which was started in 1980.

International Extension College, Cambridge, is another well known distance education institution, which in addition to offering distance education courses, provides consultancy and expertise to developing countries, particularly in Africa, for organising distance education institutions.

Besides, the institutions mentioned above, there are a large number of private correspondence institutions in England preparing external students for various public school/university examinations, and offering a variety of correspondence courses. The council for the Accreditation of Correspondence Colleges looks after the maintenance of standards by these institutions which account for more than 5 million students.
The Open University is a world leader in modern distance learning, the pioneer of teaching and learning methods which enable people to achieve their career and life goals studying at times and in places to suit them.

Mission

The Open University’s mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

Promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

Through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership we seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning.

How we deliver its mission

The OU was founded to open up higher education to all, regardless of their circumstances or where they live. We have students of all ages and backgrounds: school students wanting experience of university-level study, school leavers who choose to begin their careers while they study for a degree, people wanting to develop or update their skills, or change career entirely, and retired people wanting to explore new interests and keep mentally active.

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and we monitor ourselves to make sure we live up to our ideals.

The Universities says Open to all: what they mean by open admissions

Nearly all of our undergraduate courses have no formal entry requirements, either prior qualifications or experience. We allow people who have missed out on education to fulfil their potential and achieve a university-level qualification.

Believe that it is the qualifications with which our students leave, rather than those with which they enter, that count.

Supporting students with disabilities

The OU has more disabled students than any other UK or European university: the flexible nature of OU study and our experience in harnessing technology to enable all our students means almost 12,500 people with a wide range of disabilities – including mental health issues – study with us each year. an Access Centre dedicated to ensuring that wherever possible our disabled students are provided with additional support to enable them to take part in every aspect of university life. Support can range from special computer software to sitting exams in their own home, having a personal assistant at day or residential school, and advice on available funding support.

Widening participation in education

The university means, developed a range of ways to include people from under-represented groups in higher education. Working in partnership with locally-based organisations we are able to offer programmes that reach out to potential students in their communities. And we are also
working to make sure that these students receive the support they need to succeed in their studies.

Openings courses

*Studying an Openings course with the OU led Ruth and Frances on to work towards a degree in social sciences.*

Open access to the OU’s learning materials

As part of our mission we are making an increasing amount of Open University teaching and learning resources available free of charge to anyone with access to the internet, no matter where in the world they live. Our four biggest open access schemes are:

The multi-award-winning website, OpenLearn, makes OU course material and other educational resources available free of charge to potential learners anywhere in the world. They don’t need to register as students.

OpenLearn

The OU was the first British university to join the iTunes University - iTunes U – and is now seeing more than 250,000 downloads of its material each week.

The Open University on iTunes U

Extracts from Open University broadcasts and teaching materials can be viewed on YouTube, along with videos on OU research and student life.

OU View on YouTube

More than 15,000 research publications are now freely available to view and consult via Open Research Online, one of the largest university research collections in the UK.

The OU and iTunes U

The OU is the first university worldwide to achieve 20 million downloads of its learning materials on iTunes U and now has over 27 million downloads to date.

Is the OU a real university?

Because we are not a residential university and the vast majority of our students study part-time for a degree we don’t appear in most league tables. However, since 2005 The Open University has consistently been voted by our students into the top three universities for student satisfaction, topping the chart on three occasions. In 2011 the OU achieved a satisfaction rating of 93 per cent.

2.3.2 France

In France, university teaching at a distance was originally designed for initial training to upgrade teachers, but the scope was widened in due course of time. By 1986, eighteen formal universities were renamed Radio Universities. *The Centre de Télé-Enseignement Universitaire* provides university level courses of 2, 3 and 4 year duration. In addition to the students who enrol in these courses, other people also derive some benefit from the TV and radio programmes of these universities. There is active collaboration between some universities with regard to materials
for various courses and also useful exchange with overseas French speaking universities, particularly in the developing countries.

The Centre National d’Enseignement a Distance (CNED) is a state institution under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The CNED comprises eight different centres in France. It offers opportunities for joining distance higher education programmes, single courses and foundation courses at all levels, in France and abroad. Every year, about 70,000 young people of school age register at the CNED. Among those, many cannot go to school for various reasons, such as poor health, residence abroad, having no fixed address, or because they are high-level artists or athletes.

The CNED not only offers all levels of studies from the first-year-infants school (course préparatoire) to the secondary school examination (Baccalaureat) but also home packages for subjects which are not taught in school and support courses or summer courses. 80% of students registered at the NCED are adults in full-time employment. They follow courses in order to take one of the various competitive exams commonly held in France. Other students seek complementary training or even a change of profession.

Traditional media such as printed materials and audio and video cassettes are supported by advanced technology such as floppy discs, telematics (minitel), television, video-discs, CD-ROM, CD-video, visual conference links, video transmission for lessons, lectures, debates and seminars.

The number of students enrolled rose from 83,000 in 1950 to 350,000 in 1992, 80% of whom annually follow courses in 150 different countries.

2.3.3 Germany

The then German Democratic Republic (GDR) entered a new stage of social development around 1976 when education was expected to be a productive phase in students lives and to play a positive role in social development. Special emphasis was laid on the education of working people by means of distance education and evening classes leading to a university or technical degree. Distance education was also used, for several years, to provide further education to graduates of technical schools in the fields of agriculture, economics and technology. Approximately 40 per cent of technical school students were trained through distance education. Except for medicine, all other subjects available to on-campus students at the conventional universities were covered by distance education and evening colleges as well.

Commercial Correspondence Schools were quite popular in what was earlier known as West Germany, i.e., the Federal Republic of Germany.

Considering the increasing demands of the people, the State and Federal governments realised the need for their involvement in the development of distance education. This resulted in the establishment of the German Institute of Distance Education. (Deutsches Institute fur Fernstudien, DIFF) at Tubingen in 1965. It is an institute for research and development in the field of continuing education. It conducts research on teaching and learning processes in continuing education and develops and tests relevant teaching learning models. The aim is to optimise methods in continuing education, in particular for guided, media-supported self-study, which also plays a major role in distance
education. DIFF cooperates in research and development with various providers of continuing education, for instance, with institutions of higher education and with industry and commerce. Forms of cooperation range from providing advice on questions of continuing education methods to full-scale cooperative research and development projects.

In the wake of pressures from students seeking admission to institutions of higher-learning, and keeping in mind international trends in distance education, the State of North Rhine Westfalia took the initiative of establishing a distance teaching university, the Fern Universitate, at Hagen in November 1974. Although this university kept in mind the experience of other distance education universities, particularly the Open University in England, it has developed a character of its own and is specially known for research on distance education. It offers degree and other courses to over 20,000 German-speaking students and has broken new grounds by instituting a distance education course namely Essentials of Distance Education for distance educators. Printed materials, tapes, video cassettes, computers, telephone, etc. are the media being used to disseminate information and the emphasis on face-to-face teaching has become relatively insignificant.

2.3.4 Italy

In Italy, the Consorzio per l' Universita a Distanza (CUD) was established in 1984 with the purpose of providing a distance university system for Italy. The first students were admitted in 1986. CUD is a consortium established under Italian law Members include universities, multinational companies and government-related organisations. Teaching materials and student support services are organised by CUD on behalf of its university members. The headquarters of the consortium is in Rende, Cosenza, in the south of Italy, and it has an office in Rome also.

The first programmes offered were diplomas in informatics (the first diploma to be offered in Italy) and modern languages (both 3-years and part-time) and a laureate in economics (part-time equivalent of the Italian 4-year fulltime degree). Continuing education programmes and refresher courses are also available to teachers in secondary schools.

Audio and video cassettes and computer software supplement the print material. Material is provided to students at study centres, where regular computer access is available along with lectures, tutoring and counselling. Fifteen centres had been set up throughout Italy by 1991, and the plan was to have 25 in due course.

2.3.5 Netherlands

Having considered the needs of the adult population in the area of higher education, the Dutch government took a policy decision in 1971 to make flexible and diversified higher education available to the people. This ultimately led to the setting up of the Netherlands Open University which became functional in September 1984 with a network of 18 study centres, some of which are located in places where hardly any facilities for higher education had existed.

The university planned 15 courses in basic law, cultural sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, marketing, statistics and systems and their management. Although there were over 25,000 applicants, the university decided not to enrol more than 15,000 students for the first intake.
Students are enrolled for courses and not for a degree or diploma programme. However, through a combination of courses over a convenient period of time they can obtain a degree or diploma.

The European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) was established on 23 January 1987 by the principals of Europe’s major distance teaching institutions to foster co-operation among European organisations dedicated to higher education through distance teaching methodology. Members of the Association are non-profit institutions or non-profit consortia embracing independent higher education/teaching institutions and departments of universities/institutions which are responsible for distance (teaching) courses and research on distance education.

The mission of EADTU is to promote and support the creation of a European network for higher level distance education leading to the development of the European Open University Network. Fourteen non-profit organizations and 13 European countries currently participate in the activities of EADTU.

2.3.6 Norway

Correspondence education in Norway is provided by non-public correspondence schools. The government passed a law on correspondence education in 1948 to regulate correspondence education throughout the country. This resulted in the establishment of a government body, the Council for Correspondence Education, to advise the government on matters concerning correspondence education which is financed by the State, which pays 60 per cent of the course price to the students.

The correspondence schools on their own formed the Norwegian Association of Correspondence Schools in 1967, in order to have a common platform to negotiate and cooperate with public organisations. This Association, which has been playing a very effective role in the development of distance education in Norway, decided in 1985 to change its name to Norwegian Association for Distance Education (NADE).

The University of Oslo offers 18 courses through the distance mode. Though founded in 1811, its activity in the field of distance education started very recently.

2.3.7 Russia

Before we discuss the present Russia Open University (ROU), we should touch upon the educational scenario in the former USSR.

Distance education in the former USSR was born out of the necessity to train thousands of volunteers who offered to teach illiterate adults throughout the country, where about 76 per cent of the population was illiterate in the early 1920s. The vast contingent of ‘peoples teachers’ were trained through specially devised correspondence courses. As a result of this massive campaign, illiteracy was completely eradicated within two decades since the 1917 revolution.

The success of correspondence education in training people for adult literacy work led to the extension of this non-formal system of education to other areas also, because the traditional channel of full-time education could not ensure equality of opportunities, a principle to which the
government was committed for education, knowledge and culture to every citizen of every age group. Therefore, it was decided to have three channels of formal education – full-time, evening/part time and correspondence courses – for providing professional training and higher education through universities, teacher training colleges, polytechnics, etc.

Correspondence courses in the then USSR were organised on an All Union basis, in so far as syllabus and course materials were concerned. The universities or polytechnics followed the national syllabus and the course materials were produced and distributed by the Ministry of Education. The universities/institutions in the different Republics had the course materials translated and the basic course materials were supplemented according to local needs. Correspondence courses during 1970s attracted more students than the formal channel and the ratio, for quite a few years, was 55:45. There were over 500 correspondence faculties or departments attached to various universities or institutes throughout the then USSR and 16 autonomous institutes/polytechnics of correspondence studies offering diplomas as well as higher research courses. A wide range of courses were available to over three million students.

Correspondence students were required to take a year more than the students from the formal channel of studies, i.e., six years as compared to five years for the formal Diploma Courses. However, they were given a number of incentives like paid leave and travel subsidy for attending contact sessions and taking the examinations, and a day off every week for studies in the fifth and the sixth years. Like other students they were entitled to free education up to the highest level.

The Russia Open University, founded in October 1990, is both a scientific and an educational organization established by the Union of Soviet Teacher Innovators, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and the Soviet Culture Foundation. The mission of the University is to carry out research, to design projects, and to implement scientific achievements. The primary purpose of Russia Open University (ROU) is to provide access to higher education to all those students who are admitted to and who excelled in the appropriate secondary schools. ROU provides access to education for people of all ages who may wish to learn, for any reason whatsoever. The University grew from 20,000 students in 1990 to more than 100,000 in 1992. At present, efforts are on to involve industry and the private sector to offer quality courses which can compete in the changed market driven economy. What we have discussed would be equally valid for Russia too.

2.3.8 Eastern Europe

The collapse of former USSR has had tremendous impact on the distance education system in Russia and East European countries. The socio-political changes in these countries have affected all institutions, including those of distance education. The previous support from the state and the consultative models of distance education which assured distance learners leave with pay for attending face-to-face contact programmes have disappeared. The central planning at the state level and arrangements to produce graduates in the areas needed by the national economies have also been given up. The market driven economy demands different types of planning, courses and student support.
From the papers presented at the 17th World Conference of the ICDE (1995), we could figure out the following concerns of and trends in the distance education practices as they obtain in Eastern Europe.

- To change the distance education policies to suit the privatised market driven economic situations;
- To deviate from the previous consultation model which required regular face-to-face contact between the institution and the learners;
- To adopt more and more the distance education models of Western democracies which facilitate individual rather than social objectives and career development;
- To persuade distance teaching institutions to generate their own resources by linking up with industry and business, and not to depend on the state entirely as was the case previously; and
- To offer quality courses appropriate to train and supply the workforce to sustain and develop competitive market-economies rather than continuing with courses appropriate for centralised planned economies of the Soviet era.

The consequences of the above trends and concerns are many. But a few of these are worth mentioning.

- With the sudden change of policies and the subsequent withdrawal of state funding, the institutions of distance education are passing through a crisis.
- The social base of the learners has dramatically changed. It is no longer the natural right of everybody to get assistance to go for higher levels or professionally oriented distance education. Now, there is a compulsion for institutions to admit only those who can pay and offer only those courses which are qualitatively good and in demand.
- There is a sharp decline in enrolment from the working families and equally a sharp increase in the enrolment of learners who can pay for the courses. It means that while the overall enrolment of distance learners for the new courses will continue at 30-40 percent as it was earlier, their socio-economic profile is bound to change drastically. In fact this has already happened in Russia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine and Albania.
- Autonomy of distance teaching institutions now means that they are free to revise their fee structures, develop courses with a market orientation and get money from agencies other than the state.
- There is a growing tendency to look towards western institutions for help in reshaping, adapting and creating appropriate models of institutions, policies and courses.

From the foregoing details it is clear that distance education in Eastern Europe is passing through a period of trial. Its future will depend much on the future socio-political developments in this region.

2.3.9 Spain

In Spain, distance education received a big boost with the establishment of Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in 1972. The specific aim of the university is to widen access to higher education for ‘disadvantaged social groups’. The university offers three academic programmes:
Growth and Present Status

i) Admission courses (to help students pass the admission examination),

ii) Degree courses, and

iii) In-service training courses.

It also provides facilities for research studies. The total student enrolment in 1991/1992 was 123,963. Of these, nearly 84,000 were enrolled in degree courses and 35,000 in continuing education courses. The average age of students was 30 years.

The University has set up an Educational Science Institute for carrying out institutional research concerning its educational system.

2.3.10 Sweden

The history of distance education in Sweden goes back to 1898 when H.S. Hermods started a correspondence school. This school became one of the pioneers in the field of distance education in Europe. Being encouraged by the success of Hermods, a number of other schools came into existence, notably Brevskolan. A correspondence school of the Swedish National Defence was also set up subsequently. By 1966, with the merger of Norsk Korrespondanseshok Industrihgt (NKI), Hermods became the largest distance teaching institution of the world with an enrolment of nearly 150,000 students. Later on, Hermods was integrated with the State-owned Librer group of companies and came to be called Librer-Hermods. It continued to cater to the needs of thousands of correspondence students. But with the widening of access to all Swedish children to the official school system, greater emphasis on social aspects of education through learning together in groups and greater opportunities for adult education of the under-privileged sections of society, distance education suffered a setback in Sweden.

Swedish universities started distance education programmes for university level courses in 1968 as a supplementary form of study, like the evening classes and local external courses. As in Australia (see sub-section 3.4.1), the university departments look after the on-campus as well as the distance education courses.

The Swedish Association for Distance Education (SADE) was founded in 1984. Its members are various institutions and other agencies involved in distance education. Members also include individuals interested in the field. A separate section for higher education was also established including all 14 universities and university colleges to enable representation of appropriate SADE member institutions in EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities). These universities are degree granting state institutions recognised by the Swedish Government. Distance education, at this level is an integrated, departmental activity mainly carried out on a small scale in a dual-mode structure.

Distance education at the post secondary level is now well established in Sweden. A ruling and statutory principle of Swedish higher education is that all institutions of higher education are to be organised so as to ensure a fair geographical and social distribution of educational opportunities and to further recurrent education.

Post secondary distance education is characterised by a highly decentralised system. Institutional structures, production and delivery systems vary from university to university. Each department engaged in
distance education is independently responsible for the course programme and for the media and methods used. There is no central control of distance education, nor does the individual university impose any restriction on the liberty of the individual department to organise its distance teaching. Distance teaching forms an integral part of departmental activities and as such a ‘distance teacher’ usually has ‘conventional’ teaching duties as well.

Distance education is dominated by separate courses although full length study programmes are also offered in this form. A degree programme can combine traditional on campus courses and distance education courses.

2.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we:

i) attempted to trace the genesis of distance education,

ii) touched upon the themes of the emergence of the term ‘distance education’ to denote the distance mode of teaching/learning, and the establishment of international fora to give distance education a unique place in the domain of education, and

iii) informed you about the significance which has been attached to distance education in European countries.

2.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

i) The term ‘correspondence education’ which has popularly been used to denote the distance mode of teaching/learning is restricted primarily to mean the postal delivery of print materials which are not necessarily self-instructional in nature. In other words, the term is felt to be inadequate to encompass the various media being used in the distance education system.

ii) The terms such as ‘correspondence education’ and ‘postal study/tuition’ which have often been related to the distance mode of teaching/learning came into existence mainly because of their association with the delivery system, whereas the term ‘distance education’ reflects the multi-media approach to dissemination of information.

Check Your Progress 2

In distance education, the systems approach is used to layout appropriate procedures for an effective instructional system. The steps may vary but they essentially comprise

i) need analysis/assessment,

ii) curriculum development,

iii) media production,

iv) identification of modes of delivery, and

v) evaluation.