
UNIT 1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Unit Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Growth and Development of Open and Distance Education
 - 1.2.1 Global: An Overview
 - 1.2.2 National: An Overview
- 1.3 Policy Perspective in India
 - 1.3.1 Indian Education Commission (1964-66) onwards
 - 1.3.2 Future Perspective
- 1.4 Rationale for Distance Education
 - 1.4.1 Access to Education
 - 1.4.2 Quality of Education
 - 1.4.3 Relevance of Education
 - 1.4.4 Cost of Education
- 1.5 Democratisation of Education
 - 1.5.1 Equality of Educational Opportunities
 - 1.5.2 Reduction of Regional Disparities
 - 1.5.3 Reduction of Social and Gender Disparities
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions
- 1.8 References
- 1.9 Unit End Exercises

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Beginning with correspondence courses, Distance Education (DE) has passed through different stages and gradually evolved during the past one and a half century. Due to felt need and consistent efforts for democratisation of education after the Second World War, DE as a system received greater significance and expanded in almost all the countries of the world. It has now established itself as a vast system of Open and Distance Education (ODE) to reckon within the education sector. ODE system has been offering its programmes covering different levels from open schooling to open university through distance education mode, which is now popularly called Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. Thus the ODE system runs as parallel, complementary and supplementary to the conventional system of education. Its concept and functions have, however, been very much related to the development of information and communication technology in general, and educational technology in particular.

In this unit, you will be presented with an overview of historical developments of ODE, its scenarios at national and international levels as well as its rationale and future perspective. Now, look at the objectives which give you guidance as to what exactly you would be learning here.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the genesis and growth of ODE;
- depict scenario of ODE at national and international levels;
- explain the rationale and future perspectives of ODE in India;
- enunciate the state's policy towards ODE in India; and
- appreciate the significance of ODE in democratization of education.

1.2 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

In this section, let us look at the origin and development of open and distance education (ODE), which is actually the transformed, evolved and popular usage of previously called distance education (DE). DE had its roots in the correspondence courses or studies, which simply mean study materials, usually lecture notes, sent by tutors to the students by post. The idea originated in the nineteenth century in England.

Correspondence studies took formal shape in Bath, England, 1840 when Isaac Pitman started offering his course in shorthand via the New Penny Post. The International Correspondence School, the oldest correspondence education institution of U. K. was established in 1880. A number of correspondence education institutions came up during the 20th century in U. K. These institutions mainly helped the external degree students who studied at home with the help of correspondence courses or material. However, for various reasons these institutions did not have equal status of an affiliated colleges or university.

With the establishment of Open University of U. K. in 1969 and followed by establishment of open universities in different countries across the world distance education grew at a faster rate and assumed a gigantic position at international level. Let us look at its international scenario now.

1.2.1 Global: An Overview

The creation of the first Open University in the world in 1969 at Milton Keynes, U. K. was a major development in the history of ODE. In fact, the then Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson got the idea of starting a University of the Air after his visit to the erstwhile Soviet Union in the 1950s. It took another two decades to give a definite shape to his idea.

Open entry, multimedia-based teaching-learning, credit system and credit transfer, unconventional courses, and strong support system are the unique features of the Open University, U.K. It has triggered the growth of Open Universities in Europe and across the world.

The American experience of DE reveals a different picture. It is variously named as home study, external study, correspondence study, etc. Different universities started correspondence education programmes mostly during the 20th century. These include University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin, Illinois Wesleyan

University, University of California, University of Nebraska, The University of Florida, and Pennsylvania State University, among others. There are more than 60 universities offering correspondence courses in the USA. The universities offering independent study programmes are affiliated to the independent study division of the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA).

Another leading country promoting DE is Australia. The basic reason behind popularisation of DE in Australia is identified with geographical distances of the territory with many islands. A very small population scattered over a wider territory does not suit the functioning of formal educational institutions. Australia has long standing experiences of providing correspondence education programmes at Primary Stage, Secondary Stage and Tertiary Stage. For instance, the Western Australia Correspondence School provides correspondence courses to the children from 1 to 10 years of schooling. At higher secondary stage there exist isolated students under matriculation scheme. At tertiary stage, one of the oldest institutions offering correspondence education is the University of Queensland, since 1911. The Australian model of DE adopts dual mode of functioning. The faculty members of Australian Universities teach students of on-campus regular courses as well as of external (off-campus) correspondence courses. In Australia and New Zealand dual mode education has been successfully practiced.

In 1996, faced with a new mandate to play a greater role in regional human development, UWI embarked upon a process of transition to dual mode operation, but the process has been fraught with difficulties (Morgan 2000:108). Koul (2000: 236) identifies 15 areas of dysfunction caused by the unrealistic nature of the basic assumptions that underpinned the original planning process which it may be helpful to summarise here (Andrea Hope, See <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bafd/3f3e3e2a87435f7b3ce53c4eb2e348c9725c.pdf>):

- 1) The model assumed that all faculty had 20% of unused time that they could devote to DE operations. Faculty disputed this, though they would have been willing to work for DE in their own time for extra pay;
- 2) Administrative units did not uniformly accept responsibility for DE related work, to the extent that DE students are not counted as those of the university and they are treated indifferently;
- 3) Existing rules and regulations are insensitive to the needs of DE students, leading to bitterness and disaffection among the students;
- 4) Faculty indifference or antagonism results in poor quality delivery to DE students, and a strong faculty power base results in a 'toothless' DE Centre without authority to demand results;
- 5) Failure to cost services properly and lack of understanding of or concern for DE operations leads to inefficient use of funds;
- 6) Low priority given to DE work leads to delays and results in a poor reputation;
- 7) The special Board created to oversee DE is subservient to other senior boards that are well recognized and well entrenched within the institutional ethos, so that its power to effect change is severely hampered;
- 8) DE work is given no place in the scheme of career advancement in the university and is therefore scoffed at;

- 9) Conflicts between Faculty and instructional designers lead to delays in course production and delivery;
- 10) Mandated local tutorial support is not always available at all local centres.

The consequences for the students were inevitable:

- Confusion with registration, selection of courses and award of exemptions;
- Delayed and/or piecemeal supply of study materials, defective instructional design and confusion in assignment handling;
- Confusion in the organization of teleconferences, absenteeism among course coordinators, local tutors and students and indifference to learners' enquiries;
- Delayed appointment/non-availability of tutors, and demotivating size of tutorial groups;
- Confusion in the conduct of examinations, distribution of wrong question papers, loss of answer scripts, problems with remarking or review of scripts, inordinately delayed and lost results.

Koul's prescription for corrective action includes:

- The establishment of an effective and well documented quality assurance system relating to academic and administrative functions;
- A concerted effort to bolster the key major operations that DE depends on - support services, course preparation, dispatch and distribution of materials, recruitment and training of tutors, accurate scheduling of teleconferences and top level functionality of the digital network;
- Modification of relevant rules, regulations and related practices and associated changes to administrative structures and work culture;
- Dedicated and independent budgeting to ensure appropriate investment in DE;
- Investing in technology and training to maximize the use of technology-mediated learning; and
- Establishing a Board that is able to formulate policies and implement them effectively.

Consequently, UWI improved its practices and expanded its reach.

DE in Russia has added a new dimension to workers' education. DE played a major role after the 1917 revolution in the building of a socialist economy and society. The Educational Reform Act of the erstwhile USSR (1958) gave sound base for correspondence courses, part-time / external courses. In Russia correspondence education is offered at the levels of Secondary Schools, Polytechnics, Universities and other institutions. Correspondence education programmes are quite popular in almost all the Russian universities. Around 30 to 50 percent students of total strength of state universities get enrolled in correspondence courses. They make use of multimedia instructional programmes inter-linked with short-term campus studies in the universities.

The Asian experience of DE spans over three decades mainly being influenced by the experience of the UKOU. The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) of

Pakistan, established in 1974, is the pioneer of DE at tertiary stage. It offers a large number of courses in the UKOU model.

The Open University of Sri Lanka (1980) functions with the objectives of upgrading educational status of employed persons, providing opportunities for life long and continuing education, etc. Sri Lanka also makes use of distance education facilities to school learners preparing for public education. The Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka adopted DE models for in-service teacher education programmes.

Bangladesh established Bangladesh Open University in 1990.

Thailand took a major step in establishing Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) in 1976. Almost 90 percent of its students are the employed adults, It makes use of self-instructional print based materials accompanied by audio cassettes. Radio and TV programmes supplement such materials. Certain degree of personal contact facilities are provided through study centres.

In India, with the modest beginning made in the form of correspondence courses by University of Delhi as a pilot project during 1962, DE has gradually evolved into a vast system of Open Education spread across the length and breadth of the country. You can find an overview its historical developments in sub-section 1.2.2 below.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions”.

- 1) What was the major development in the growth of DE at international level in 1969?

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1.2.2 National: An Overview

In India, DE system originated at the university level and moved towards school education. This is, of course, a general feature in the history of DE internationally. DE background can be traced to the fifties. The post-independence era made an uneven expansion of higher education system in terms of enrolment, institutional establishments, varieties of programmes, etc. The rate of expansion of higher education did not match with the rate of growth of economy. Gradually the focus of expansion shifted from higher education to expansion of school system. Meeting heavy expenses involved in establishment of universities and colleges for exorbitant number of needy students was a complex and difficult task in Indian education system. The heavy pressure on the formal system of higher

education paved the way for opening up of correspondence courses. The inception of DE through correspondence education programmes had dual purpose. One, to divert the pressure group of aspirants of higher education to correspondence education programmes, which made it cost effective. Two, democratisation of higher education.

The University of Delhi was the first one to introduce correspondence courses as a pilot project during 1962. It was introduced on the basis of the report of the Expert Committee in March 1961. Subsequently, the University of Delhi had appointed a sub-committee to recommend different courses at the first degree level. The success of the Delhi University's DE courses motivated other universities and institutions of national importance to introduce several kinds of programmes through correspondence. In the meanwhile, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had taken initiative in streamlining the guidelines for correspondence courses. The Ministry of Education, Government of India had deputed three successive delegations to the then USSR to study the system of correspondence education during the years 1967, 1968 and 1971 respectively. The UGC came out with the guidelines for correspondence courses during the year of 1969. It specified the aims of correspondence courses as providing educational opportunities to:

- Students who had to discontinue their formal education owing to pecuniary and other circumstances;
- Students in geographically remote areas;
- Students who had to discontinue education because of lack of aptitude and motivation, but who may later on become motivated;
- Students who cannot get admission or do not wish to join a regular college or university department, although they have the necessary qualification to pursue higher education;
- Individuals who look upon education as a life-time activity and may either like to refresh their knowledge in an existing discipline or acquire knowledge as a new area (UGC, 1988).

As a consequence of the above developments, a number of universities introduced correspondence courses in different fields leading to degrees, diplomas and certificates. Thus, the dual mode universities offering their programmes through both conventional face-to-face mode and distance mode gained momentum during 1960s-70s.

During 1970s, initiatives began for establishing open university in India. The introduction of open university system in the country has been linked with creation of open university in the UK in 1969. During the International Education year (1970) the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in Collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the UGC, and the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO organised a seminar on 'Open University' in December, 1970. The Seminar recommended the establishment of an open university in India on an experimental basis. Subsequently, the Government of India had appointed eight member working group on Open University under the chairmanship of G. Parthasarathy to consider the establishment of open university. After having studied thoroughly the pattern of the Open University, UK, the working group had submitted its report in 1974

recommending creation of an open university in India. On the basis of the recommendation of the working group a draft bill was prepared by the Union Government for the establishment of a National Open University. However, the process was delayed.

In the meanwhile, the Government of Andhra Pradesh took initiative and established a state open university on May 25, 1982, following the recommendations of an Expert Committee under the chairmanship of G. Ram Reddy. The Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU) was later renamed as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU).

During January 1985, the Union Government made a policy statement for establishment of a national open university. In pursuance of it and after due efforts a national open university named after late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi came into existence on September 20, 1985. Since then the Open University system occupied a unique position in DE in India today, mainly because of its autonomous character in the field. Thus, a new era of single mode universities offering programmes only thorough distance mode began in 1980s. In course of time, Indira Gandhi National Open University began to play dual role of: introduction and promotion of open university and distance education system; and co-ordination and determination of the standards in such systems. Soon it became popular by its acronym IGNOU all over the country.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the success of BRAOU and IGNOU, other states like Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka, among other states, have established state open universities in the respective states. Meanwhile the Institutes of Correspondence Courses (ICCs) in dual mode universities also got re-designated or transformed into Directorates of Distance Education (DDEs).

At present, the number of the dual mode and single mode universities and institutions put together is more than 200. We will discuss more about these developments in Unit-3.

Further, while the DE at higher education level started in 1962, the idea of starting DE at school stage originated in 1964 itself through recommendation of conference of Boards of Secondary Education. The National Policy on Education, 1968 promoted this idea. Initially its main purpose of DE at school level was to give opportunity to school dropouts / external candidates to appear in the Secondary / Higher Secondary Certificate examination through different inputs of correspondence courses. After a few years the Boards of Secondary Education of different states and union territories started offering correspondence courses in Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Orissa and MP. Thus while DE was first introduced in India in 1960s at tertiary level, the correspondence courses at secondary level were also started in several states by 1970s.

In August 1974, a working group was appointed by the NCERT to explore the plausibility of setting up the open school. In November, 1978 the CBSE and NCERT organised an international seminar on open schooling. As an off-shoot of recommendations these agencies / organizations the open school was set up by CBSE, New Delhi, in July 1979. In 1989, the Ministry of Human Resource Development established the National Open School (NOS) and the open school

was amalgamated with NOS. Subsequently, the Andhra Pradesh Open School (APOS) was created in the year 1991, followed by other states. The initiatives during 1995-96 led to creation of open schools in UP, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan as well. National Consortium of Open School in India (NCOS) has also been set up by NOS.

We will discuss more about DE in India in Unit-3. It is important to note that growth and development of distance education in India has its grounding in different recommendations and expressions of various educational bodies and policy documents which give clear perspective of DE in India. We will discuss the policy perspective of DE in India in greater detail in Section 1.3 that follows.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions”.

2) i) Write the sequence of development of OU system in India.

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ii) What are the common features of OUs in India?

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iii) What is the main reason for creation of DE programmes at school level?

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iv) Why should teacher education programmes be organised through DE?

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1.3 POLICY PERSPECTIVE IN INDIA

The policy of Government of India towards distance education has been consistently favourable since the beginning of the sixties. The demand for higher education after independence and the resultant increase in the expansion of educational facilities prompted the Planning Commission to spell out strategies in this regard.

“... In addition to the provision in the plan for expansion of facilities for higher education, proposals for evening colleges, correspondence courses and the award of external degrees are at present under consideration” (GOI, 1960: 589).

1.3.1 Indian Education Commission (1964-66) onwards

Consequently, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) resolved that the matter be studied in details. The Ministry of Education then appointed an Expert Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari, which made significant recommendations on the nature, scope and modes of organisation of correspondence courses. Yadav and Panda (1996) sum up a few major suggestions of this committee as follows:

- i) Correspondence courses leading to a degree or equivalent qualifications should be administered by universities only.
- ii) For the present, correspondence courses should be confined to a first university degree.
- iii) For part of the course, there should be personal contact between the teacher and the taught, ‘contact’ classes being organised on a tutorial in preference to a lecture basis.
- iv) To maintain educational standards, it is necessary to associate top-ranking scholars and teachers with the preparation of courses and the selection of textbooks. Some arrangements ensure continuing improvement in the quality of work.
- v) The correspondence method is susceptible of use in both science and humanities. However, for the present, in view of organisational difficulties the courses be started in the faculties of Arts and Commerce; but Science courses should be incorporated as early as possible.
- vi) For a first degree, correspondence courses should normally take longer than a degree at a regular college, say four years instead of the usual three. Outstanding students may, however, be able to compress this into a period of three years. Flexibility in all matters relating to the application of the system to varying needs is strongly recommended.
- vii) Fees for students applying for these courses should be reasonably high in the first year but should be progressively lowered in the second and third years and perhaps, if this is possible, be eliminated altogether in the fourth year.
- viii) Two supplementary aids, viz. (a) refresher courses, and (b) use of audio and television are recommended. In order to raise the standards it is desirable to correct too much of reliance on the written word and to give due importance to spoken language.

- ix) Correspondence courses should be run in the first instance by one university, i.e. the University of Delhi and the subjects to be included in the course as well as the details of administration should be as suggested by the Working Committee of the University of Delhi.
- x) It is important to ensure that the scheme is administered so as to achieve economy. This will be possible by virtue of the fact that many items of expenditure incurred at regular colleges can be eliminated under the correspondence system, and also if an adequate number of students participate in it, it should be possible to reap the benefits of large scale organisation (GOI, 1962).

Education Commission (1964-66)

The University of Delhi in 1962 for the first time in the country started correspondence courses at the university level. However, the first clear statement on distance education / correspondence courses was made in the *Report of the Education Commission* (1964-66), which mentioned:

“There must also be a method of taking education to the millions who depend upon their own effort to study whenever they can find time to do so. We consider that correspondence or home-study courses provide the right answer for these situations.

The correspondence or home-study course is a well tried and tested technique. Experience of correspondence courses in other countries of the world, such as the USA, Sweden, the USSR, Japan and Australia, where they have been used extensively for a long time, as well as the limited and brief experience at the University of Delhi encourages us to recommend fuller exploitation of the method for a wide range of purposes. There is hardly any ground for the apprehension that correspondence courses are an inferior form of education than what is given in regular schools and colleges. Experience abroad and experiments in India have shown results which, on balance, tend to strengthen the case for correspondence education.”

The Education Commission further stated:

“It is obvious that these universities should not be the only agencies which should organize correspondence courses. Provision of correspondence courses should be one important function of the extension service of developmental departments of government such as agriculture, industries, cooperation and health. This should prove to be a valuable method of conveying to the educated and the neo-literate alike such knowledge and improved techniques as the departments concerned wish to put across.”

National Policy of Education (1968)

The National Policy of Education (1968) incorporated the recommendations of the Educational Commission in the following words:

“... (13) *Part-time Education and Correspondence courses: Part-time education and correspondence courses should be developed on a large scale at the university stage. Such facilities should also be developed for secondary school students, for teachers and for agricultural, industrial and other workers. Education through part-time and correspondence courses should be given the same status as full-time education. Such facilities will smoothen transition from school to work, promote the cause of education and provide opportunities to the large number of people who have the desire to educate themselves further but cannot do so on a full-time basis*”.

University Grants Commission Guidelines

In 1974 the University Grants Commission issued guidelines on distance education / correspondence courses. It enunciated:

“The objective of correspondence education is to provide an alternative method of education to enable a large number of persons with necessary aptitude to acquire further knowledge and improve their professional competence. Correspondence courses are thus intended to cater for: (a) Students who had to discontinue their formal education owing to pecuniary and other circumstances; (b) Students in geographically remote areas; (c) Students who had to discontinue education because of lack aptitude and motivation but who may later on became motivated; (d) Students who can't find a seat or do not wish to join a regular college or university department although they have the necessary qualifications to pursue higher education; and (e) Individuals who look upon education as a life-time activity and may acquire knowledge in a new area”.

Establishment of IGNOU

The Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in 1985 by an Act of the Parliament. Among its objectives, the university was assigned, as a focal one, an additional role of maintenance of standards in Distance Education. More specifically “it shall be the duty of the University to take all such steps as it may deem fit for the promotion of open university and distance education system and for the determination of standards of teaching, evaluation and research in such system, and for the purpose of performing this function, the university shall have such powers, including the power to allocate and disburse grants to colleges, whether admitted to its privileges or not, or to any other university or institution of higher learning as may be specified by the statutes”.

New Education Policy (1986)

In 1986, the Government of India announced its New Education Policy which laid special emphasis on distance education and open learning system. Some excerpts from NEP are:

Para 3.11: Lifelong education is a cherished goal of the educational process. This presupposes universal literacy. Opportunities will be provided to the youth, housewives, agricultural and industrial workers, and professionals to continue the education of their choice at the pace suited to them. The future thrust will be in the direction of open and distance learning.

Para 4.13: A vast program of adult and continuing education will be implemented through various ways and channels, including ... (g) programmes of distance learning.

Para 5.35: The Open University System has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education and as an instrument of democratizing education.

Para 5.36: The Indira Gandhi National Open University established in 1985 in fulfillment of these objectives will be strengthened.

Para 5.37: This powerful instrument will have to be developed with care and extended with caution.

Para 6.6 : In view of the present rigid entry requirements to formal courses restricting the access of a large segment of people to technical and managerial education, programmes through a distance learning process, including use of the mass media, will be offered. Technical and management education programme, including education in polytechnics, will also be a flexible modular pattern based on credits with provision for multi-point entry. A strong guidance and counselling service will be provided.

Para 8.10: Modern communication technologies have the potential to bypass several stages and sequences in the process of development encountered in earlier decades. Both constraints of time and distance at once become manageable. In order to avoid structural dualism, modern educational technology must reach out to the most distant areas and the most deprived sections of beneficiaries simultaneously with the areas of comparative affluence and ready availability.

Establishment of Distance Education Council (DEC)

In May 1991, the Board of Management of IGNOU formulated the Statute for the establishment of the Distance Education Council (DEC) for promotion, coordination and maintenance of standards in the open university and the distance education system, which is one of the main objectives of establishment of IGNOU. The major functions assigned to DEC are:

- i) Promotion, coordination and determination of standards in the open university and the distance education system.
- ii) Establishment of a network of open universities and distance education institutions.
- iii) Identification of priority areas in which distance education programmes should be organised and providing necessary support for organising them.
- iv) Identification of learner groups and the types and nature of programmes to be organised for them
- v) Training of personnel for distance education, and
- vi) Provision of financial support to open universities and distance education institutions for their development and taking up special projects.

Revised National Policy on Education (1992)

In 1992, the Government of India revised the National Policy on Education (1986). The following are few specific recommendations of revised NPE (1992).

Para 4.13: Comprehensive programmes of post-literacy and continuing education will be provided for neo-literate and youth who have received primary education with a view to enabling them to retain and upgrade their literacy skills and to harness it for the improvement of their living and working conditions. These programmes would include ... (g) programmes of distance learning.

Para 5.35: The open learning system has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education as an instrument of democratising education and to make it a lifelong process. The flexibility and innovativeness of the open learning system are particularly suited to the diverse requirements of the citizens of our country, including those who had joined the vocational stream.

Para 5.36: The Indira Gandhi National Open University, established in 1985 in fulfillment of these objectives, will be strengthened. It would also provide support to establishment of open universities in the states.

Para 5.37: The National Open School will be strengthened and open learning facilities extended in a phased manner at the secondary level in all parts of the country.

CABE Committee on Distance Education

In 1995, the CABE Committee on Distance Education, recommended establishment of an open university in each state of India. It has also proposed the establishment of an open university network with the major objective of sharing resources, minimising duplication, ensuring uniform standards, promoting student mobility and developing efficient student support services. The committee recommended that the proposed open university network should be based on the following considerations:

- i) There ought to be no duplication of effort among different institutes in the preparation and production of programmes.
- ii) A good course developed by any institute should be available to all open universities / institutes on mutually agreed terms and conditions. The user institutions should not be required to meet the development cost of such courses.
- iii) Institutions which are not in a position to produce high quality programmes should be able to draw upon the resources of the network for joint development of courses.
- iv) Selected institutes in different states can take up the task of translating courses and programmes in the network into different languages and enroll students who wish to pursue these programmes through the medium of the local language.

- v) With the participation of large number of institutions, the student support services for programmes in the network can be organised on a more effective and decentralized basis. It should also be possible to cut the cost involved in every distance education institute by setting up an independent network of support facilities. The possibility of establishing composite Study Centres and Sharing Studio facilities should be explored earnestly.
- vi) The network while promoting open university programmes on a large scale can involve institutes of formal education in designing programmes and in participating in the network. Such participation can build bridges between conventional courses and distance education programmes leading to meaningful reorganisation of the higher education system.
- vii) The network when established can support a large body of students through a division of responsibility (types of programme, media of instruction, terrestrial division, etc.) (CABE, 1995).

National Knowledge Commission (2006-2009)

In its summary of recommendations, NKC has given more importance to open and distance education and open education resources.

Open and Distance Education and Open Education Resources: Development of open and distance education and open education resources is imperative to achieve the objectives of expansion, excellence and inclusion in higher education. More than one-fifth of the students enrolled in higher education are in Open and Distance Education stream. NKC recommendations on distance education focus on creating a national ICT infrastructure, improving regulatory structures, developing web-based common resources, establishing a credit bank and providing a national testing service. To supplement this NKC also recommends that the production of quality content and leveraging global open education resources, needs to be focused in a comprehensive manner. We need to encourage open access for all material – research papers, books, periodicals, etc. (Government of India, 2009, p.15).

Distance Education Bureau (DEB) 2012

In pursuance of the directions issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, Government of India dated 29.12.2012, the regulatory functions with regard to Distance Education programmes in higher education have now been vested with the University Grants Commission. The Distance Education Council which was the erstwhile regulator of Distance Education programmes, has been dissolved and all regulatory functions are being undertaken by the UGC. (<http://www.ugc.ac.in/deb/>). You are aware that in May 1991, the Board of Management of IGNOU formulated the Statute for the establishment of the Distance Education Council (DEC) for promotion, coordination and maintenance of standards in the open university and distance education system in India.

National Policy on Education 2016 — Report of the Committee for Evolution of New Education Policy

One of the broad objectives of the New National Policy on Education, 2016 emphasised the significance of education and technology in the globalised world, and it states as follows.

3.2.11: NPE should aim to equip and enable students to remain relevant in a globalized, digital world (p.13).

It also emphasizes the role, place and significance of Open and Distance Learning / Education as follows:

- 7.10.1 Open and Distance Learning (ODL), which envisages a system as an alternative to conventional classrooms, is gaining acceptance in many parts of the world; it provides the flexibility to continue such learning from distant places, as well as alongside job commitments. Until recently the online system in India consisted of courses offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and some State Open Universities (SOUs); in recent years a range of institutions and universities, as well as ‘Institutes’ have sprung up to cater to varying needs.
- 7.10.8 ODL through dual mode universities and through MOOCs should be accorded appropriate priority because of India’s existing and latent strength in terms of IT capability, probability of near-term expansion of IT connectivity and enormous interest evinced by leading universities and institutions in promoting ODL education.
- 7.10.9 The Ministry of HRD and the UGC have already moved forward to sponsor ‘SWAYAM’ an indigenous MOOC platform.
- 7.10.10 The demand for ODL / MOOCs is bound to rise in future years, through which technologies will find favor from learners are still open issues; it is recommended that the developments in this field be watched carefully.

The above points present the perspective of open and distance learning/education in India in the coming years.

Check Your Progress

- Notes:** a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.
 b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions”.
 3) Enumerate the policy decisions relating to Distance Education in India.

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1.3.2 Future Perspective

To understand the future perspectives better let us have a look at the following targets set for the Twelfth Plan (http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf):

- 1) Ensure universal access and, in keeping with letter and spirit of the RTE Act, provide good-quality free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years;
- 2) Improve attendance and reduce dropout rates at the elementary level to below 10 per cent and lower the percentage of out-of-school children (OoSC) at the elementary level to below 2 per cent for all socio-economic and minority groups and in all States;
- 3) Increase enrolments at higher levels of education and raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the secondary level to over 90 per cent, at the Senior Secondary level to over 65 per cent;
- 4) Raise the overall literacy rate to over 80 per cent and reduce the gender gap in literacy to less than 10 per cent;
- 5) Provide at least one year of well-supported/well-resourced pre-school education in primary schools to all children, particularly those in educationally backward blocks (EBBs); and
- 6) Improve learning outcomes that are measured, monitored and reported independently at all levels of school education with a special focus on ensuring that all children master basic reading and numeracy skills by class 2 and skills of critical thinking, expression and problem solving by class 5.

In the light of the above, there is a great scope for quantitative expansion of ODE in the country. The beginning of 21st century has witnessed tremendous expansion of DE at elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The open schools will have to expand their scope from elementary to higher secondary stage. The vocational education, functional literacy and continuing education would get high priority.

The university level programmes will undergo a phase of transformation. The rate of expansion of enrolment is likely to be accelerated. Almost 50 percent of the total enrolment of higher education system can be accommodated through ODE programmes. Besides emphasis on quantitative expansion, ODE system would be strengthened qualitatively.

At dual mode institutional level the correspondence education mode will be transformed to DE mode giving more emphasis on multimedia-based self-study materials, students support services, adoption of telecommunication-based media facilities, continuous evaluation system, etc., which are prevalent in the open universities.

While traditional universities will expand their bases of ODE programmes there will be gradual expansion of open universities in every state. The IGNOU will continue to play a major role in the in ODE at higher education level all over the country. At all India level, a consortium approach will assume greater significance in sharing resources of ODE including a number of innovative and need-based programmes will be introduced through this approach.

There will be increasing cooperation and co-ordination among different ODE institutions, Media Institutions, Door Darshan, Indian Space Research Organisation and Commonwealth of Learning for further expansion of multimedia-based learning programmes leading to strengthening of open and distance learning system. New National Policy on Education, 2016 on the anvil will become a reality soon and subsequent efforts of its implementation are expected to galvanise all efforts in the direction of strengthening ODE system.

In this context, it is important to watch what shape the following policy provisions of NPE, 2016 (Report of the Committee for Evolution of New Education Policy) will take in course of the policy formulation and its implementation, for it will have more determining impact on ODE in India.

8.5.13 The committee notes that the field of distance school education will undergo rapid expansion in the coming years. Already the private sector has moved into this field, as it sees this as one of financial opportunity. It is important that as the sector evolves, the government should not be caught at a later date with events having overtaken its institutions, as has happened in the case of higher education. While a revamped NIOS may be the premier national agency for dissemination of schooling material, conduct of examinations, etc, (much like IGNOU is in the higher education space) some thinking is required to establish an appropriate regulatory authority to keep track of developments in this regard, to provide the legal framework for any government intervention, equally to provide support, encouragement and mentorship to healthy private initiatives in this regard.

8.5.14 The Committee recommends that an upgraded NIOS or any other designated agency should create two new national level examinations systems to certify Class X and Class XII equivalent achievement, which should be credible, reliable and seen as definitive. These systems will cater to different kinds of needs not so far addressed by the formal education system, and can be used by different varieties of end users. The proposal for 10 lakh new fellowships for higher education mentioned elsewhere could use this Class XII examination as the benchmark for selection of candidates, with appropriate classifications. It is also proposed that the Class XII examination system may be created as soon as possible, with the Class X examination to follow.

8.3.2 The UGC currently performs three primary functions: it oversees the distribution of grants to universities/colleges in India; secondly, the UGC provides scholarships/fellowships, covering more than 80,000 beneficiaries annually; and its third main function is to recognize universities and monitor conformity to its regulations by universities and colleges in the country.

8.3.3 While UGC, over the years has issued a series of regulations for achieving better quality and efficient management of colleges and universities, it has not been able to ensure effective enforcement of those regulations. The committee was informed that there are widespread irregularities in grant of approval of institutions and courses. There are serious concerns about the quality of education provided by a large number of colleges/universities; it is the responsibility of UGC to monitor standards of education in higher education institutions and the

UGC has not succeeded in ensuring this. The credibility of the UGC has been seriously dented by approvals given to a large number of sub-standard colleges and deemed universities.

- 8.3.4 An expert Committee recently has examined thoroughly the past, present and future role of UGC, whose report is under examination by the Ministry. It is understood that the report had concluded that the UGC does not have the adequate number of personnel, of requisite quality, to be an effective regulatory force in the higher education sector. It is recommended that as the new overarching higher education management law is enacted, which the Committee suggests should be very soon, the UGC Act should be allowed to lapse.
- 8.3.5 The Committee elsewhere has recommended a separate mechanism for disbursement of fellowships. The UGC could be revamped, made considerably leaner and thinner, and could be the nodal point for administration of the proposed National Higher Education Fellowship programme, without any other promotional or regulatory function to perform.

We will now discuss the rationale for distance education.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

As a welfare state, the Government of India is obliged to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years as per Article 45 of the Indian constitution. To meet this obligation a number of programmes such as the Universalisation of Elementary Education, Education for All, etc. have been launched. However, the situation remained far from satisfactory. Even the course of events such as 86th Amendment of the Constitution in 2002 that amended Articles 21, 45 and 51A led to enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, popularly called RTE Act. This also did not give satisfactory results by the target date of 31 March, 2015. It has further been extended and such extensions may happen in future too. Nevertheless, one good aspect of progress in education sector in India is that the literacy rate increased six times from 12% to 74% during 1951-2011, and there is universal enrolment of children at primary school level. Though there has been an increase in literacy rate over the decades and national literacy rate reached nearer to the threshold level of 75% the situation is still appalling with 272,950,015 illiterates. Thus, its count of illiterates which is the largest in the world (i.e. more than one-third of global illiterates), the dropout rates at different levels of schooling and the quality of education are also matters of a grave concern for India. In the higher education sector, the situation is no different. There has been an increase in demand for higher education over the years. More and more people are not able to have access to higher education due to various reasons. Only 10 percent of the relevant age group has access to higher education. Further, the quality of education in all institutions of learning is not the same. There are very few elite institutions with international standards while most others fall flat when we talk of quality. But, the situation worsened in the recent past when not a single higher education institution figured in the top 500 world universities, though subsequently Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is the only institution that figured somewhere between 300 and 400 as ranked by the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) for 2013. Many educational

opportunities available in the country are rendered useless due to the irrelevant curriculum, which has no utility to the population it serves. In this context, let us discuss the rationale / need of distance education under three specific headings, viz.

- Problem of Growing Numbers and Limited Access to Education
- Quality of Education
- Relevance of Education

1.4.1 Access to Education

The country has made significant progress in improving access to education in recent years. The mean years of schooling of the working population (those over 15 years old) increased from 4.19 years in 2000 to 5.12 years in 2010. Enrolment of children at the primary education stage has now reached near universal levels. The growth of enrolment in secondary education accelerated from 4.3 per cent per year during the 1990s to 6.27 per cent per year in the decade ending 2009-10. Youth literacy increased from 60 per cent in 1983 to 91 per cent in 2009-10 and adult literacy improved from 64.8 per cent in 2001 to 74 per cent in 2011 (Government of India, 2013, pp.47-48).

Let us examine the issue of ‘access’ to education. Adult literacy rate increased from 52% to 74% between 1991 and 2011. In terms of the percentage of literate people, though the national average is 74, there has been a wide geographical disparity with female literacy rate being 51 % in Bihar and 52 in Rajasthan to 92% in Kerala. The gender disparity is thus more alarming because the female literacy rate is only 65.5% as against male literacy rate of 84.1% (See Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: State and U.T.-wise Literacy Rates: 1991-2011

Sl. No.	State/Union Territory	Literacy Rate								
		1991			2001			2011		
		Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
1	A & N Islands	65.5	79.0	73.0	75.2	86.3	81.3	82.4	90.3	86.6
2	Andhra Pradesh	32.7	55.1	44.1	50.4	70.3	60.5	59.1	74.9	67.0
3	Arunachal Pradesh	29.7	51.5	41.6	43.5	63.8	54.3	57.7	72.6	65.4
4	Assam	43.0	61.9	52.9	54.6	71.3	63.3	66.3	77.8	72.2
5	Bihar	22.0	51.4	37.5	33.1	59.7	47.0	51.5	71.2	61.8
6	Chandigarh	72.3	82.0	77.8	76.5	86.1	81.9	81.2	90.0	86.0
7	Chhattisgarh	27.5	58.1	42.9	51.9	77.4	64.7	60.2	80.3	70.3
8	D & N Haveli	27.0	53.6	40.7	43.0	73.3	60.0	64.3	85.2	76.2
9	Daman & Diu	59.4	82.7	71.2	70.4	88.4	81.1	79.5	91.5	87.1
10	Delhi	67.0	82.0	75.3	74.7	87.3	81.7	80.8	90.9	86.2
11	Goa	67.1	83.6	75.5	75.4	88.4	82.0	84.7	92.6	88.7
12	Gujarat	48.6	73.1	61.3	58.6	80.5	70.0	69.7	85.8	78.0
13	Haryana	40.5	69.1	55.9	45.7	78.5	67.9	65.9	84.1	75.6

14	Himachal Pradesh	52.1	75.4	63.9	67.4	85.4	76.5	75.9	89.5	82.8
15	Jammu & Kashmir	NA	NA	NA	43.0	66.6	55.5	56.4	76.8	67.2
16	Jharkhand	-	-	-	38.9	67.3	53.6	55.4	76.8	66.4
17	Karnataka	44.3	67.3	56.0	56.9	76.1	66.6	68.1	82.5	75.4
18	Kerala	86.1	93.6	89.8	87.9	94.2	90.9	92.1	96.1	94.0
19	Lakshadweep	72.9	90.2	81.8	80.5	92.5	86.7	87.9	95.6	91.8
20	Madhya Pradesh	29.4	58.5	44.7	50.3	76.1	63.7	59.2	78.7	69.3
21	Maharashtra	52.3	76.6	64.9	67.0	86.0	76.9	75.9	88.4	82.3
22	Manipur	47.6	71.6	59.9	60.5	80.3	70.5	72.4	86.1	79.2
23	Meghalaya	44.9	53.1	49.1	59.6	65.4	62.6	72.9	76.0	74.4
24	Mizoram	78.6	85.6	82.27	86.8	90.7	88.8	89.3	93.3	91.3
25	Nagaland	54.8	67.6	61.7	61.5	71.2	66.6	76.1	82.8	79.6
26	Odisha	34.7	63.1	49.1	50.5	75.4	63.1	64.0	81.6	72.9
27	Puducherry	65.6	83.7	74.7	73.9	88.6	81.2	80.7	91.3	85.8
28	Punjab	50.4	65.7	58.5	63.4	75.2	69.7	70.7	80.4	75.8
29	Rajasthan	20.4	55.0	38.6	43.9	75.7	60.4	52.1	79.2	66.1
30	Sikkim	46.7	65.7	56.9	60.4	76.0	68.8	75.6	86.6	81.4
31	Tamil Nadu	51.3	73.8	62.7	64.4	82.4	73.5	73.4	86.8	80.1
32	Tripura	49.7	70.6	60.4	64.9	81.0	73.2	82.7	91.5	87.2
33	Uttar Pradesh	24.4	54.8	40.7	42.2	68.8	56.3	57.2	77.3	67.7
34	Uttarakhand	41.6	72.8	57.8	59.6	83.3	71.6	70.0	87.4	78.8
35	West Bengal	46.6	67.8	57.7	59.6	77.0	68.6	70.5	81.7	76.3
	India	39.3	64.1	52.2	53.7	75.3	64.8	65.5	82.1	74.0

Notes: 1) Literacy rates pertain to the population aged 7 years and above.

2) Literacy rates for 1991 exclude Jammu & Kashmir and for 2001 and 2011 exclude Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapat district of Manipur.

Source: Office of Registrar General, India. (Accessed from http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/man_and_women/Chapter%203.pdf).

As mentioned above, India is home of largest population of illiterate adults (287 million) in the world, amounting to 37% of the global total. 47.78 % out of school children are girls. In the next census they will be calculated as illiterate women, which would then have a ripple effect on the education of their children. India is ranked 123rd out of 135 countries in female literacy rate. The percentage of women to the total number of school teachers has gone up from 29.3% in 1991 to 47.16% in 2013-14. (<https://www.oxfamindia.org/education/10-facts-on-illiteracy-in-India-that-you-must-know>).

India has 1.4 million schools and 7.7 million teachers. 98 percent of habitations have a primary school (class I-V) within one kilometer and 92 percent have an upper primary school (class VI-VIII) within a three-kilometer walking distance (<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/primary-education-in-india-progress-and->

challenges/). According to latest U-DISE data (NEUPA, 2016), there are 1,522,346 schools covering all the levels.

Further, retention of children in schools is still an issue and dropout rates continue to be high. Nationally 29 percent of children dropout before completing five years of primary school, and 43 percent before finishing upper primary school. High school completion is only 42 percent (i.e. 58 per cent dropout before completing this level). This lands India among the top five nations for out-of-school children of primary school age, with 1.4 million 6 to 11 year-olds not attending school. Only 53 percent of schools have functional girls' toilets and 74 percent have access to drinking water (<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/primary-education-in-india-progress-and-challenges/>).

All these reflect lack of adequate access to school education. It calls for school education through open and distance education.

Access to Higher Education

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013. (<http://mhrd.gov.in/university-and-higher-education>).

Higher education in India has witnessed no doubt a remarkable expansion. Number of institutions, the student enrolment and GER have also gone up. The expenditure on education has also increased over the years, but not in terms of percentage of expenditure to GNP. For example, public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP has remained low (around 4% only) in India in comparison with developed and developing countries (See Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Trends in Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GNP (Developed and Developing countries vis-à-vis India)

Country	Developed					Country	Developing				
	1985	1996	1999	2006	2008		1985	1996	1999	2006	2008
Canada	6.6	7.0	6.0	5.1	5.0	Mexico	3.9	4.9	4.5	5.6	4.9
USA	4.9	5.4	5.0	5.3	5.5	Malaysia	6.6	5.2	6.1	6.6	4.6
Japan	4.9	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4	Columbia	2.9	4.4	4.5	4.9	4.1
Australia	5.6	3.6	5.1	4.7	4.9	Thailand	3.8	4.1	5.1	4.3	6.3
UK	4.9	5.4	4.6	5.5	5.5	Russian Federation	3.2	4.1	3.9	4.0
France	5.8	6.1	5.7	5.7	5.5	Brazil	3.8	5.2	4.4	4.1	5.3
Finland	5.4	7.6	6.3	6.4	5.9	Jamaica	5.7	5.2	5.6	6.6

Germany	5.4	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.4	Zambia	4.7	2.2	2.0	2.1	1.5
Denmark	7.2	8.2	8.2	8.3	7.8	Bangladesh	1.9	2.9	2.3	2.6	2.2
Rep of Korea	4.5	3.7	3.8	4.6	4.2	Pakistan	2.5	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.9
Netherlands	6.4	5.2	4.8	5.2	5.4	South Africa	6.0	7.9	6.2	5.5	5.6
Italy	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.3	China	2.5	2.3	1.9
India	3.4	3.4	4.0	3.3	3.2	India	3.4	3.4	4.0	3.3	3.2

Note: '....' Indicates data not available.

Sources: i) UNDP: Human Development Report 1999.

ii) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2008, 2009 & 2011.

(See http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/40610/12/15_chapter6.pdf).

Even the plan outlays and expenditure have increased over the years. Table 1.3 presents data for 50 years from first to tenth five year plan covering different sectors of education. This indicates the decrease in the percentage of expenditure on higher education when compared to elementary education.

Table 1.3: Outlay and Expenditure on Education in Five Year Plans (Centre and States / UTs)

(Rs. in Millions)

Five Year Plan		Elementary Education	Adult Edn.	Secondary Education	Higher Education	Others	Technical Education	Total
1 th Plan	Outlay	930(55)	50(3)	220(13)	150(9)	110(6)	230(14)	1690(100)
	Exp.	850(56)	50(3)	200(13)	140(9)	90(6)	200(13)	1530(100)
2 nd Plan	Outlay	930(34)	50(2)	490(18)	470(17)	280(10)	510(19)	2730(100)
	Exp.	950(35)	40(1)	510(19)	480(18)	230(9)	490(18)	2700(100)
3 rd Plan	Outlay	2090(37)	60(1)	880(15)	820(15)	230(5)	1420(25)	5500(100)
	Exp.	2010(35)	20(0.3)	1030(17.7)	870(15)	640(11)	1250(21)	5820(100)
4 th Plan	Outlay	2560(32)	80(1)	1180(15)	8130(22)	1190(15)	1060(15)	8090(100)
	Exp.	2390(31)	60(1)	1400(18)	1950(25)	880(11)	1060(14)	7740(100)
5 th Plan	Outlay	4100(33)	180(1)	2500(20)	2920(23)	1220(10)	1560(13)	12480(100)
	Exp.	3170(36)	230(4)	1560(18)	2050(23)	660(7)	1070(12)	8840(100)
6 th Plan	Outlay	9050(37)	1280(5)	3980(16)	4860(20)	2450(10)	2780(12)	24400(100)
	Exp.	8900(32)	1534(6)	7430(27)	5370(19)	1326(5)	3180(11)	27740(100)
7 th Plan	Outlay	19640(36)	5490(10)	6680(12)	4200(8)	11740(21)	6830(13)	54480(100)
	Exp.	28280(37)	6098(8)	18290(24)	11900(16)	632(1)	10850(14)	76050(100)
8 th Plan	Outlay	92010(47)	15550(8)	34980(18)	15160(8)	10440(5)	27860(14)	196000(100)
	Exp.	124240(49)	11707(5)	57890(22)	23610(9)	11513(5)	25180(10)	254140(100)
9 th Plan	Outlay	273630(55)	11020(2)	95260(19)	43500(9)	26780(5)	47790(10)	497980(100)
	Exp.	268110(54)	8905(2)	93840(19)	42890(9)	33105(7)	46900(9)	493750(100)
10 th Plan	Outlay	452651(53)	17734(2)	161936(19)	77112(9)	61690(7)	85197(10)	856320(100)
	Exp.	649951(67.5)	14037(1.5)	109013(11)	69543(7.5)	63670(6.5)	59457(6)	965672(100)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate %age of outlay and expenditure to total Education.

Sources:

- 1) *Budgetary Resources for Education 1951-52 to 1993-94*. Department of education, MHRD, Government of India.
- 2) *Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education – Government of India: 1994-95 to 2002*. Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.
- 3) *Analysis of Annual Plans of Education Sector during Seventh Plan and Eighth Plan: Education*. Planning Commission, New Delhi.
- 4) *Financial Progress of Education Sector during Ninth and Tenth Plans*. Education Division, Planning Commission, New Delhi.
- 5) *Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education: 2002-03 to 2004-05, 2003-04 to 2005-06, 2004-05 to 2006-07*. MHRD, Government of India.

(See IGNOU. 2009: *Five-Year Plans and Adult Education*, Blcok-1 of MAE-002 of MAAE programme. New Delhi: IGNOU).

According to AISHE (2013-14) there were 723 Universities, 36634 colleges and 11664 Stand Alone Institutions. Total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 32.3 million with 17.5 million boys and 14.8 million girls. Girls constitute 46% of the total enrolment. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is 23.0, which is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. GER for male population is 23.9 and for females it is 22.0. For Scheduled Castes, it is 17.1 and for Scheduled Tribes, it is 11.3 as compared to the national GER of 23.0. About 79% students are enrolled in Undergraduate level programme. At Undergraduate level the highest number (40.4%) of students is enrolled in Arts/ Humanities/Social Sciences courses followed by Engineering & Technology (17.4%), Commerce (13.9%) and Science (13.8%). Only 107890 students are enrolled in Ph.D. that is less than 0.4% of the total student enrolment in higher education. Distance education enrolment constitutes 12.15% of the total enrolment in higher education, of which 45.39% are female students (Government of India, 2015).

In Table 1.4 you can notice the growth rate of enrolment in ODL programmes in the Eleventh Plan.

Table 1.4: Growth of Enrolment in ODL Programmes in the Eleventh Plan

Institution	Enrolment (in lakh)			Growth Rate (per cent)
	2006–2007	2011–2012	Increase	
Indira Gandhi National Open University	4.68	6.97	2.29	8.3
State Open Universities (SOU)	7.77	10.80	3.03	6.8
Distance Education Institutions (DEI)	14.96	24.24	9.28	10.1
Total	27.41	42.01	14.60	8.9

Source: Distance Education Council (Government of India, 2013, p.93). Accessed from http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf.

The Government of India has accorded great importance to open and distance education in the Twelfth Plan, as evidenced from the high expectations of its share of contribution to education (See Table 1.5).

Table 1.5: Enrolment Targets by Level/Type for the Twelfth Plan
(Student numbers in lakh)

Level / Type	2011–12 (Estimates)	2016–17 (Targets)	Growth Rate (Per Cent)
PhD	1	3	24.6
PG General	17.3	33.2	13.9
PG Technical	5	12.2	19.5
UG General	116.6	128	1.9
UG Technical	45	66	8.0
Sub-total	184.9	242.4	5.6
Diploma	33	65	14.5
Total	217.9	307.4	7.1
ODL	42	52	4.4
Grand Total	259.9	359.4	6.7
Population (18–23 years)	1,451.2	1,427.4	-0.1
GER (%)	17.9	25.2	

Source: Planning Commission Estimates/Targets. (Government of India, 2013, p.96, see http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf).

At this stage, after having seen the Tables above, you are, perhaps, convinced of as to why these statistical data have been presented to you. There are obvious reasons because they explain you that:

- In spite of increase in the number of educational institutions and facilities, only 6% of the relevant age group receives higher education;
- The budget for higher education has been decreasing, with the emphasis of the Government on elementary education; and
- With the increase in emphasis on elementary and secondary education, in all probability, the demands for higher education will also be more and more.

In such a situation, do you think it possible for the existing conventional institutions with limited facilities and the prevalent practice of face-to-face classroom teaching alone be able to meet the challenges of providing access to increasing numbers? The answer is obviously a big 'No'. This is so because with depleting resources it is not possible to start more conventional institutions that are expensive due to huge infrastructural requirements such as buildings and equipments. At the same time no democratic government can resist the pressure of expansion of higher education opportunities for its people. The answer clearly lies in distance education only because it is not only cost-effective (See sub-section 1.4.4 below. It is also discussed in detail in Unit-15 of Block-4) but also has the potential and flexibility to provide equal access and quality education to a large number of students such as those of:

- all rural, tribal and urban areas;

- economically weaker sections of the society, who normally do not or unable to attend colleges due to financial constraints;
- all disadvantaged groups including women, who, due to their social, geographical or physical conditions, find it extremely difficult to attend regular colleges; and
- working individuals who wish to improve their skills, qualifications, etc., without losing wages and time.

The system of distance education thus required potential and features to facilitate bridging the regional, gender and other disparities, which we will discuss in Section 1.5.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions”.

4. Explain why distance education is important for access to higher education.

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1.4.2 Quality of Education

Quality of education is a relative concept and can only be defined with reference to our concept of ‘quality’. The term quality is being widely discussed these days and a considerable debate has gone into it. Several authors have quoted Pirsig (1974) to illustrate the amorphous nature of the concept:

Quality ... you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! There's nothing to folk about. But if you can't say what Quality is, how do you know that it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes, it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purposes it really does exist ... So round and round you go spinning mental wheels, and nowhere finding any place to get traction. What the hell is Quality? What it is? (p.179).

As such quality means different things to different people. It is something like ‘beauty’ that lies in the eye of the beholder. However, the definition of quality in higher education can be approached in five different ways such as:

- Exceptionally high standards;
- Consistent zero-defect;
- Fitness for purpose, i.e., meeting the stated purpose;

- Value for money; and
- Transformative, meaning transformation of the participants.

In educational terms, these may be interpreted and even demonstrated as follows:

Standards in terms of acquiring knowledge and skills would mean a particular quantum of both should have been mastered by the student in a given discipline. The mastery can be demonstrated through one's thinking, speaking, writing and doing. For example, an M.A. graduate in economics must be able to prove his/her understanding through either speaking, writing or applying the knowledge learnt. If none of these happens, then, the degree doesn't have any value and the institution(s) offering such degrees as the above do not have standards. In other words, Pirsig's provocative statements to think of the difficulties in 'defining' quality should not be taken as absence of 'quality' and 'standards'. Similarly, the other attributes of quality can be defined meaningfully in the socio-academic contexts, and more so in the context of open and distance education.

Whichever way we look at education in India, it is certain that we can't say emphatically that its standard is equal throughout the country. It varies from institution to institution and from urban to rural areas. There are certain schools, colleges and universities in the country, which can be considered very good and even excellent in terms of international standards. But, very few can afford to go to such institutions. All government-funded schools and colleges also can't be said to have equal standard. By and large, the quality of education varies and high quality education is confined to certain institutions located in a few pockets of urban areas. Moreover, such institutions are accessible to only richer class or higher strata of the society. In other words, quality is confined to elitist institutions only. On the contrary, distance education enables us to provide quality education to one and all without any kind of barriers, as the same set of instructional materials in different media are accessible to all the learners. To spread quality education to the masses in some form or other, we have to think of strategies different from conventional, face-to-face education, because of lack of resources.

1.4.3 Relevance of Education

Some of the charges commonly leveled against the conventional educational system are that:

- the educational programmes/courses offered are not relevant to the existing social needs;
- the highest paid teachers are reaching fewer and fewer elitist students;
- the age-old classroom teaching method is becoming more and more stale and ineffective;
- the rigidity regarding course-duration, classroom attendance, etc., remain unchallenged; and
- the benefits of higher and better education continue to be enjoyed by a privileged few.

These valid criticisms are the result of the mismatch between socio-economic and academic needs, and the conventional educational system as it exists today. Interesting facts are: where more technical education is needed, we provide more arts courses; where we need more intermediate level technologists, we are

producing more graduates with academic interests; and where more continuing education is required to upgrade and update the skills and knowledge of different categories of professionals, we are providing more and more of general education.

The faculty-wise enrolment figures indicate that in 1995-96, while 40.4% of the total enrolment was in Arts Courses, there was only 1.1% in Agriculture, and 2.3% in Education (Table 1.6.).

Table 1.6: Student Enrolment in the Universities (Faculty-wise): 1991-92 to 1995-96

Faculty	1991-92 Growth		1992-93		1993-94		1994-95		1995-96		Annual Rate*
	Enrolment	% of total	Enrolment	% of total	Enrolment	% of total	Enrolment	% of total	Enrolment	% of total	
Arts (Including oriental learning)	2129418	40.4	2238626	40.4	2352970	40.4	2473027	40.4	2592925	40.4	4.4
Science	1033614	19.6	1086353	19.6	1141680	19.6	1199830	19.6	1260200	19.6	4.4
Commerce	1154804	21.9	1213688	21.9	1275478	21.9	1340560	21.9	1410119	21.9	4.4
Education	121115	2.3	127304	2.3	133797	2.3	140620	2.3	147720	2.3	4.4
Engineering / Technology	258028	4.9	271213	4.9	285045	4.9	299583	4.9	315720	4.9	4.5
Medicine	179040	3.4	188189	3.4	197786	3.4	207874	3.4	219918	3.4	4.6
Agriculture	55292	1.1	58120	1.1	61091	1.1	64200	1.1	67990	1.1	4.6
Veterinary Science	13356	0.3	13840	0.3	14550	0.3	15288	0.3	16201	0.3	4.3
Law	279092	5.3	293353	5.3	308314	5.3	324038	5.3	342440	5.3	4.5
Others	42127	0.8	44280	0.8	46538	0.8	48912	0.8	52401	0.8	4.9
Total	5265886	100.0	5534966	100.0	5817249	100.0	6113929	100.0	6425624	100.0	4.4

Source: *University Grants Commission Annual Report, 1995-96.* (Note: *Annual growth rate is added by separately calculating it based on the data in the Table of source)

If we compare data in Tables 1.6 and 1.7, we can notice that, within ten years, the enrolment figures have almost doubled from 1995-96 to 2006-07 in all fields of study / disciplines, and annual growth rate between 2006-07 and 2011-12, in comparison with that between 1991-92 and 1995-96, has almost multiplied by six times in the case of Engineering, three times in the case of Education as well as Medicine, two times in the case of Commerce and Management, and four times in case of others, while in the rest of the fields of study there were minor fluctuations.

Education has lacked 'application' value is one of the major criticisms. Further, whenever demand rises due to the developments in technology and industry, it is essential for schools and colleges to design such a curriculum of relevance to the needs and demands of the time. In today's age of professionalism, there is a growing demand for continuing education and training of the workforce due to ever changing science and technology. As such the present socio-economic environment and industrial development emphasise the need for:

- part-time education with a more flexible arrangement for learning in order to meet the requirements of younger and adult persons who learn and earn simultaneously;
- specialised courses for those who are in-service;
- intellectual stimulation on the part of adults; and
- certification without undergoing the formalities of conventional system.

Table 1.7: Growth of Enrolment by Field of Study during the Eleventh Plan (in lakh)

Faculty	2006–07		2011–12		Growth Rate (Per cent)
	Enrolment	% of Total	Enrolment	% of Total	
Arts	54.86	39.6	65.78	30.2	3.7
Science	25.43	18.4	30.57	14.0	3.8
Commerce and Management	22.87	16.5	34.34	15.8	8.5L
Education	6.21	4.5	13.00	6.0	15.9
Engineering	18.06	13.0	54.68	25.0	24.8
Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy	5.98	4.3	12.02	5.5	15.0
Agriculture and Veterinary Science	0.93	0.7	1.21	0.6	5.4
Law	3.00	2.2	3.48	1.6	3.0
Others	1.16	0.8	2.78	1.3	19.1
Total	138.5	100	217.86	100	9.5

Source: UGC, AICTE, NCTE and INC. (Government of India, 2013, p.94; See http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf).

The distance education system has the potential to facilitate provision for all the above needs and demands. The wide range of courses on offer by the Indian open universities can be seen as the examples of relevant courses meeting the needs of divergent groups of learners. The Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nasik has courses even for farmers. The Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi offers courses in Computers, Engineering and Technology, Management, Health Science, Education, Higher Education, Distance Education, etc relevant to the societal needs.

1.4.4 Cost of Education

The cost of education in conventional system is certainly costlier compared to distance education. This is a well-known and universally accepted fact. The reasons can be attributed to the nature and types of costs involved at both institutional level and the individual student's level. The tuition fee and other fees charged by conventional universities / institutions are exorbitantly high,

and education thus is not accessible to all those who cannot afford it. On the contrary, though the fee structures of distance learning programmes vary widely within and across the institutions, the cost of education through ODEIs is always much less than that of the conventional institutions. Further, the students of distance learning system are free from the costs of accommodation, boarding and regular transportation expenses. Above all, unlike the ODE system, the opportunity cost or income foregone by the students of conventional system is an important factor to reckon. The distance learners enjoy great advantage as they learn while earning. Distance learning, thus, is definitely more cost-effective and a better choice of investment by the learners on their education.

At the institutional level, the cost covers different resources required to be procured, utilized and maintained for providing education. The resources required are men, materials and machines including information and communication technologies. These costs are mainly of two types — capital costs on land, buildings, equipments, furniture and the like, which are fixed costs annualized over their expected life; and revenues costs which are recurring in nature.

According to Rumble (2001), the costs of any system, at the macro-level, are driven by a combination of the following factors, all of which are susceptible to management control:

- The number of courses offered,
- The course-populations,
- The lengths of course lifetimes,
- The media and technologies chosen,
- The extent to which cost-inducing actions, for example, the use of copyrighted materials, are avoided,
- The extent to which costs are placed on students, either as tuition, or by moving the system boundaries so that activities the institution might once have paid for are now paid for by students (e.g. access to tutorial and library services),
- The extent to which the institution employs people on contracts for service (i.e. salaried posts) to develop courses and teach students, rather than on contracts of service (i.e. hired as casual labor, to be paid by the manuscript/script/tutorial hour/test marked, etc.),
- The extent to which the institution adopts working practices that reduce the costs of labor by, for example, designing courses to be wrapped-around existing textbooks rather than developing new materials, and using author-editor models of course design, rather than big course team models,
- The use of technology to increase the student load per academic or administrator,
- Increases in the teaching load of academic staff at the expense of other functions – for example, research and public service, and
- Labor for labor substitution – the replacement of expensive academic labor by student and adjunct labor, in order to reduce staff costs.

The institutional costs of a fully developed e-education systems would include:

- Developing e-materials,
- Teaching (and assessing) students online,
- Accessing the web site,
- Administering students online,
- Providing the infrastructure and support within which e-education can operate, and
- Planning and managing e-education at the macro-level.

Within ODL the studies by Hülsmann (2000) and Rumble (2001) established beyond reasonable doubt that Internet-based text is more expensive than printed text (by a factor of 2), with the cheaper media being print and audio.

All the above factors are required to be taken into account in comparing the cost-effectiveness of the ODL programmes or the ODEIs with that of conventional education.

Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit under “Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions”.

5) Explain how Distance Education provides socially relevant quality education.

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1.5 DEMOCRATISATION OF EDUCATION

In a democratic country like India, the nation can progress only through democratisation of education system. The success of democracy depends upon education of its citizens. As a principle it was emphasised that education including higher education should adopt the democratic means of providing equal opportunities to those who aspire for it.

1.5.1 Equality of Educational Opportunities

The Constitution of India provided for equality of educational opportunities to all citizens of the country. Educational opportunities are required to be provided to all individuals to fulfill their aspirations to progress, achieve higher status, position, emolument and overall personality development to their fullest extent. So, every individual should have opportunity for education on the basis of equity and equality. It should pave the way for their vertical mobility and educational career, among others.

Equality of educational opportunity thus includes provision of education for all, irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, sex and location. It doesn't mean identity of educational opportunity for all but a means best suited to the intelligence and aptitude of every student. Therefore, the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 emphasized that equality of education means to provide for equal opportunity to all, not only in access but also in the conditions for success. This is essential because there are physical, social, gender, economic, cultural, geographic and other factors that affect equity and equality of educational opportunities to the individuals. These include age, sex and physical ability (includes disability), socio-economic status of the individual and the family, geographical conditions, availability of educational facilities, affordability and so on. Thus, we can find many reasons for inequality:

The important causes of inequality of educational opportunities in India thus include:

- a) Non-availability of proportionate number of primary, secondary and higher educational institutions.
- b) Differences in the standards of existing conventional schools, colleges and higher educational institutions.
- c) Poverty of the masses and their inability to afford the costs of education for themselves and of their children.
- d) Gender disparity in education at all levels/stages of education.
- e) Disparity in educational development among different sections of the society, specially among the SCs / STs, marginalized and other backward sections.
- f) Poor educational provision for meeting the special needs of the deprived, the disadvantaged and the differently-able children.
- g) Proven inability of the conventional education system to meet the growing demand for education.

As you can recall from section 1.2.2 different commissions, policies and committees' reports have emphasized promotion of equal opportunity to all the needy sections of the society and the role of open and distance education in this regard. And from Section 1.4, you will appreciate the fact that ODE is essential for meeting the lifelong learning and educational needs, aspirations, etc of different sections of the society as well as to promote democratization of educational provision on the basis of equity and equality.

1.5.2 Reduction of Regional Disparities

The post-independence era made an uneven expansion of higher education system in terms of enrolment, institutional establishments, varieties of programmes,

etc. The rate of expansion of higher education did not match with the rate of growth of economy. Gradually the focus of expansion shifted from higher education to expansion of school system. Meeting heavy expenses involved in establishment of universities and colleges for exorbitant number of needy students was a complex and difficult task. As you know, the heavy pressure on the formal system of higher education paved the way for opening up of correspondence courses, followed by distance education programmes and currently and popularly called ODL programmes.

Nevertheless, in spite of increased access to education at secondary and tertiary levels, regional disparities continue at these levels. Within the relatively low GER at the secondary level, there are wide regional and inter-state variations. Among the major States, secondary level GERs are as low as 29 per cent in Jharkhand and 35 per cent in Bihar, and as high as 89 per cent in Himachal Pradesh and 98 per cent in Kerala, as compared to the national level (62.7 per cent). At the Senior Secondary level, the GER ranges from being very low at 6.5 per cent in Jharkhand and 13 per cent in Assam and quite high at 60 per cent in Haryana and 69 per cent in Himachal Pradesh. In addition, in some States like Rajasthan and MP, the gender gap in GER is as wide as 20 per cent (Government of India, 2013, p.69).

In reducing the regional disparities in education at all levels, ODE has a promising role to play, as per the expectations of the Government of India.

1.5.3 Reduction of Social and Gender Disparities

A significant reduction in socio-economic inequality in access to education and a narrowing of the gap between SCs/STs and other social groups has been achieved (Government of India, 2013, p.48). Yet, Estimated Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India is 23.0%, which is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. For Scheduled Castes it is 17.1% and for Scheduled Tribes it is 11.3%. GER for male population at all India level is 23.9% whereas for SC males it is 17.7% and 12.5% for ST males. Similarly, GER for female population at all India level is 22.0% whereas for SC females it is 16.4% and for ST females, it is 10.2%. The GER for females in all categories is highest in Chandigarh with 65.6%. Delhi, Goa, Manipur, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttarakhand also have GER of more than 30 for their female population. For international comparability, GER has also been calculated taking 18-22 years population and it comes out to be 26.6 at All India Level (Government of India, 2015).

Key results of the AISHE 2013-14 Survey (Government of India, 2015) also reveals that there is significant progress in higher education. Total enrolment in higher education in India has been estimated to be 32.3 million — with 17.5 million boys and 14.8 million girls. Girls constitute 46% of the total enrolment. Distance education enrolment constitutes 12.15% of the total enrolment in higher education, of which 45.39% are female students at all-India level. There are merely 65 female teachers per 100 male teachers. The average number of females per 100 male non-teaching staff is approximately 40.

In order to further reduce the existing gender gaps in higher education, it is essential to improve overall educational provisions with due reprioritization of expenditure patterns in the education sector. This can be made possible by way of increasing allocations to basic education through non-formal adult education

and literacy programmes on one hand and by raising allocations at higher levels for encouraging greater female enrolment along with relevant strategies for reducing the direct and opportunity costs of both girls' schooling and women's education.

In view of the discussion in this unit, the future developments in India and abroad are more likely to be brighter.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt about the felt-need of the Governments and their efforts for promotion of distance education. It has acquainted you with an overview of the genesis and expansion of DE programmes in India and abroad. Distance education in India is considered to be indispensable for meeting the needs of a large number of people. It is a means of taking higher education to the millions. Moreover, it provides socially relevant, affordable and quality education to all, irrespective of time and place.

It has also presented the policy perspective of distance education India as well as the rationale underlying it, including democratization of education. You can analyse how DE institutions have gradually expanded their scope during the past half a century in India.

We have also seen that the policy of Government of India towards distance education has always been patronising. From recognising the distance mode as an acceptable means of education, the policy has gone into establishing and strengthening the ODE system throughout the country both at secondary and tertiary levels with networking and resource sharing over the years. The establishment of open universities, open schools and the setting up of the Distance Education Council, the precursor of the present Distance Education Bureau, are the important developments, among others, in the history of distance education in India. It concludes that DE will have a bright future as a system in the country and also abroad.

1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

- 1) The creation of the first Open University in the world in 1969 at Milton Keynes, U.K. was a major development in the history of DE at international level. This development was due to use of multimedia-based self-instructional materials and openness in opportunities for entrance into various programmes through different kinds of DE Institutions.
- 2)
 - i) Creation of APOU was followed by IGNOU and other state open universities.
 - ii) Common features of OUs in India include autonomous structure of higher education functioning in a 3 tier system with Headquarters, Regional Centres and wide network of Study Centres.
 - iii) Main reason for creation of DE programmes at school level is to provide alternative opportunities of schooling to deprived sections, drop-outs and external candidates.

- iv) Teacher education programmes are required to be organised through DE:
- for continuous professional growth of in-service teachers, and
 - for charging backlog of untrained teachers through capacity building.
- 3) Over the years since independence, there has been a consistent and supportive policy towards distance education. The following are few major developments on policy:
- CABE suggested correspondence education in 1961 and an expert committee headed by Dr. D. S. Kothari recommended to start correspondence course in University of Delhi, which started in 1962.
 - Education Commission (1964-65) recommended correspondence education.
 - National Education Policy (1968) reiterated the recommendations of Education Commission.
 - University Grants Commission issued guidelines for correspondence courses in 1974.
 - Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in 1985 as the apex body of distance education in India.
 - New Education Policy (1986) made special emphasis on Open Learning Systems.
 - Distance Education Council was established within IGNOU to promote, coordinate and maintain standards of distance education in India (1991).
 - Revised New Education Policy (1992) reiterated the emphasis on Open Learning System. Also mentioned about National Open School.
 - CABE Committee on Distance Education (1995) recommended establishment of a network of open universities and distance education institutions in India to share resources.
- 4) The reason is primarily the issue of growing numbers and increase in demands for higher education, which the conventional face-to-face system was unable to meet. The answer to this problem lies in distance education. Moreover, distance education facilitates access to higher education in remote areas; it has the potentiality to provide access to disadvantaged groups like women and other socially and economically weaker sections of the society.
- 5) When we talk of socially relevant quality education, we are essentially concerned with education that has application value. It means skill, besides knowledge, is one of the most important aspects of education. Distance Education makes it possible by understanding the needs of the society and developing courses which are socially relevant and also economically cost-effective.

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1.9 UNIT END EXERCISES

Unit End Questions

You may write brief notes or full-length answers to these questions in your own interest. It might help you during your preparation for examination.

- 1) Write a brief overview of historical developments in ODE in India and abroad (1000 words).
- 2) Describe the policy perspective of ODE in India (1000 words).
- 3) Explain the rationale for promotion of distance education in India (500 words)
- 4) Discuss the how education can be democratized in India (500 words)



Questions for Critical Reflection

- 1) “There have been some distortions in developments of ODE in India”. Try to justify the statement with your reflections on it.
- 2) Do you think ODE can ever be a completely parallel system of education to conventional system anywhere in the world? Justify your answer.

Activity



In the light of Section 1.5 and further reading from websites through Google search, try to make a list of different regional, social and gender disparities in education. Also, write down your reflective suggestions for reducing these disparities through Distance Education.

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