

**Block****1****OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION: GENESIS  
AND EVOLUTION****UNIT 1****Historical Developments****9****UNIT 2****Theoretical Foundations****46****UNIT 3****Indian Experiences****96****UNIT 4****Global Practices****111**

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# **BESE-131: Open and Distance Education**

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## **BLOCK 1 OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION: GENESIS AND EVOLUTION**

**Unit 1 Historical Developments**

**Unit 2 Theoretical Foundations**

**Unit 3 Indian Experiences**

**Unit 4 Global Practices**

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Unit 6 Media and Technology for ODE

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Unit 11 Assessment of Learner Performance

Unit 12 Learner Support Systems and Services

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## **BLOCK 4 PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF ODE**

Unit 13 Management of ODE Systems

Unit 14 Quality Assurance in ODE

Unit 15 Economics of ODE

Unit 16 Research in ODE

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# BESE-131 OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

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## Introduction to the Course

Welcome to course BESE-131 “Open and Distance Education”, which is an optional course forming a part of second year of B.Ed. (Revised) programme. It is organised into four Blocks and sixteen Units, with each Block containing 4 Units. The course is an attempt to provide a comprehensive view of open and distance education, broadly touching upon its genesis and evolution, its aspects and issues pertaining to teaching and learning at a distance including learner support services; and its planning and management.

The first Block, **Open and Distance Education: Genesis and Evolution**, deals with historical developments, theoretical foundations, Indian experiences including policy perspective and rationale, and global practices of open and distance education.

Block two, **Teaching at a Distance: Design and Development of ODE Resources**, deals with designing SLMs, media and technology for ODE, development of self-learning print materials, and development of eLearning resources. It focuses on different instructional designs, models and principles of designing SLMs. It highlights the role of different media and technology including technology-enabled teaching and learning and their concomitant influence in bringing out generational changes in ODE. It discusses different aspect of designing, preparation and editing of self-instructional print materials. It touches upon the types, systems, tools, resources and ways of developing and delivering eLearning resources.

In Block three, **Learner Support Services in ODE**, an attempt has been made to provide a bird’s eye view of distance learners and self-directed learning, counselling and tutoring in teaching at a distance, assessment of learner-performance at a distance, and learner support system and services in open and distance education.

Block four, **Planning and Management of ODE**, presents an overview of management of open and distance education systems, economics of ODE as well as quality assurance and research in ODE.

Since you are in the second year of B.Ed. programme, which is offered through open and distance education, you must have, by now, developed familiarity with this new mode and means of education. In other words, by now you have already got necessary experience not only to understand this optional course, **Open and Distance Education**, but also to reflect upon and relate your experience with the discourse in different contexts of this course.

After working through the course, you will realise that open and distance education, as an educational innovation:

- i) is well defined and highly institutionalised means of education for the disadvantaged;
- ii) is highly dependent on multi-media teaching and learning at a distance;
- iii) has an effective mechanism of its own for continuous and terminal evaluation of student’s learning; and
- iv) is a cost-effective system for generating adequate human capital for educational and national development.

You will appreciate that open and distance education is an appropriate and essential means of education for promoting the goals of “education for all”, “equality of educational opportunity” and “democratisation of education” from both quantitative and qualitative points of view.

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# BLOCK 1 OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION: GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

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## Introduction to Block 1

There are four units in this Block focusing on four specific themes related to the genesis and evolution of open and distance education. **Unit 1, Historical Developments**, presents an overview of growth and development of open and distance education (ODE) at global and national level, the rationale for ODE from the view points of access, quality, relevance and cost of education. It highlights importance of ODE in democratisation of education in terms of promotion of equality of educational opportunities, and in reduction of regional, social and gender disparities.

In **Unit 2, Theoretical Foundations**, the focus is on the concept of ODE, including some relevant terms. It presents an interesting discourse on a range of theories of distance education that provide comprehensive picture of underlying theory of ODE.

**Unit 3, Indian Experiences**, is devoted to practice of ODE in India. Its emphasis is on origin and development of ODE as well as its contribution to higher education, school education and teacher education. It also focuses on the problems and challenges of single mode as well as dual mode universities.

**Unit 4, Global Practices**, highlights the role of international agencies and regional and global association in ODE. It presents the regional perspectives in global practices with special reference to Africa, Asia, The Americas, Australia and Pacific, and Europe. It also touches upon significant practices of selected Universities at global level.

After working through this **Block**, you will be able to:

- describe the origin and development of ODE at national and international levels;
- explain the concept of ODE and distinguish different related terms in use;
- discuss different theories of distance education; and
- analyse and compare the Indian, regional and global experiences in ODE.

The instructional objectives of each of the units in this Block are presented in structured and self-instructional manner. A schematic representation of the design of units is given below to facilitate your access to the subject matter presented in this Block.

### UNIT X: (Title)

Unit	Structure
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X.0	Introduction
-----	--------------

X.1	Objectives
-----	------------

X.2	Section 1 (First main theme)
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X.2.1 Sub-section 1 of Section 1

X.2.2 Sub-section 2 of Section 1

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Check Your Progress Questions

X.3 Section 2 (Second main theme)

X.3.1 Sub-section 1 of section 2

X.3.2 Sub-section 2 of section 2

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.....

.....

Check Your Progress Questions

X.n Let Us Sum Up

X.n+1 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions

X.n+2 References

The **unit structure** in each unit represents the design of the unit. We suggest you to study the structure carefully before proceeding to read the unit. It will give you a glimpse of the contents organised in each unit.

We have divided the units into sections for easy reading and better comprehension. Each section is indicated distinctly by bold capitals and each sub-section by relatively smaller but bold typeface. The significant divisions within sub-sections are in still smaller bold typeface so as to make it easier for you to see their place within sub-sections, and the items which need to be highlighted are numbered i), ii), iii) and so on or a), b), c), etc. For the purpose of uniformity, we have employed the same scheme of partitioning in every unit throughout the course.

The section called **Objectives** in each unit tells you:

- what we have presented in the unit; and
- what we expect from you, once you complete working on the unit.

Towards the end of each unit, under the heading **Let Us Sum Up**, we summarise the whole unit for purposes of recapitulation and ready reference.

**Exercises** are provided at the end of each unit. These exercises are meant to help you check how far you have comprehended the contents of a section or a sub-section. Sometimes you find **in-text activities** which give you better sense of the content presented in a particular section of the unit. These activities mostly involve only deskwork, and they could be attempted without having to break the continuity of reading the unit.

While going through a unit, you jot down important points. The wide margin we have provided on each page of the booklet is precisely to provide space for writing down your notes. So you can make your notes on the margin as you work through the materials. Your notes will help you in keeping track of the text, in assimilating the text, in answering the self-check exercises, in writing the assignments and in reviewing and preparing for the examinations.

We hope that the space provided for answers to self-check exercises under **check your progress** is enough for your answers and you would like to work out the answers in the blank space(s) in the booklet. After having written your answers in the blank space(s), you may compare your answers with the ones provided at the end of the unit. You may be tempted to have a furtive glance at the answers given at the end of the unit, as soon as you come across an exercise. But, we do hope that you will overcome the temptations, and turn to the answers given (which are not the best necessarily) only after you write yours.

These exercises are meant to help you check your progress periodically and are not to be submitted for corrections, assessment or evaluation. We hope you will find these exercises useful as they will function as tools to help you keep on the right track while reading the unit.

**Suggested Readings** given, if any, at the end of each Unit or Block is a list of books and articles related to the theme of the unit. They are mostly meant as enrichment material. Sometimes, the websites mentioned under references/suggested readings will enable you to have immediate access to the same right at your desktop, for further reading and understanding. Our endeavour has been to ensure that these are accessible to you easily, quickly, freely or in cost-effective manner.

Besides, a few **Audio and Video programmes**, as supplementary materials, form part of this course. They are made available at the (programme) study centres.

This course also has an Assignment which you have to work on and send to the (programme in-charge) / Coordinator of the (programme) study centre you have been assigned to. The relevant assignment is, however, sent to you separately and it is, of course, changed every year or different for each batch of students admitted every year. You have to work on the given assignment for the course as required, since it is essential part of the course work. We wish you will work through this course effectively.





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# UNIT 1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

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## 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

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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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.

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## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

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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.

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## 1.2 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

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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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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](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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

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## 1.4 RATIONALE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

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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 86<sup>th</sup> 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
	<b>India</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>53.7</b>	<b>75.3</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>65.5</b>	<b>82.1</b>	<b>74.0</b>

**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](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	....	....
<b>India</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>India</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>

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](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 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	930(55)	50(3)	220(13)	<b>150(9)</b>	110(6)	230(14)	1690(100)
	Exp.	850(56)	50(3)	200(13)	<b>140(9)</b>	90(6)	200(13)	1530(100)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Plan	Outlay	930(34)	50(2)	490(18)	<b>470(17)</b>	280(10)	510(19)	2730(100)
	Exp.	950(35)	40(1)	510(19)	<b>480(18)</b>	230(9)	490(18)	2700(100)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Plan	Outlay	2090(37)	60(1)	880(15)	<b>820(15)</b>	230(5)	1420(25)	5500(100)
	Exp.	2010(35)	20(0.3)	1030(17.7)	<b>870(15)</b>	640(11)	1250(21)	5820(100)
4 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	2560(32)	80(1)	1180(15)	<b>8130(22)</b>	1190(15)	1060(15)	8090(100)
	Exp.	2390(31)	60(1)	1400(18)	<b>1950(25)</b>	880(11)	1060(14)	7740(100)
5 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	4100(33)	180(1)	2500(20)	<b>2920(23)</b>	1220(10)	1560(13)	12480(100)
	Exp.	3170(36)	230(4)	1560(18)	<b>2050(23)</b>	660(7)	1070(12)	8840(100)
6 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	9050(37)	1280(5)	3980(16)	<b>4860(20)</b>	2450(10)	2780(12)	24400(100)
	Exp.	8900(32)	1534(6)	7430(27)	<b>5370(19)</b>	1326(5)	3180(11)	27740(100)
7 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	19640(36)	5490(10)	6680(12)	<b>4200(8)</b>	11740(21)	6830(13)	54480(100)
	Exp.	28280(37)	6098(8)	18290(24)	<b>11900(16)</b>	632(1)	10850(14)	76050(100)
8 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	92010(47)	15550(8)	34980(18)	<b>15160(8)</b>	10440(5)	27860(14)	196000(100)
	Exp.	124240(49)	11707(5)	57890(22)	<b>23610(9)</b>	11513(5)	25180(10)	254140(100)
9 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	273630(55)	11020(2)	95260(19)	<b>43500(9)</b>	26780(5)	47790(10)	497980(100)
	Exp.	268110(54)	8905(2)	93840(19)	<b>42890(9)</b>	33105(7)	46900(9)	493750(100)
10 <sup>th</sup> Plan	Outlay	452651(53)	17734(2)	161936(19)	<b>77112(9)</b>	61690(7)	85197(10)	856320(100)
	Exp.	649951(67.5)	14037(1.5)	109013(11)	<b>69543(7.5)</b>	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
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.41</b>	<b>42.01</b>	<b>14.60</b>	<b>8.9</b>

**Source:** Distance Education Council (Government of India, 2013, p.93). Accessed from [http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp\\_vol3.pdf](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
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>184.9</b>	<b>242.4</b>	<b>5.6</b>
Diploma	33	65	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>217.9</b>	<b>307.4</b>	<b>7.1</b>
ODL	42	52	4.4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>259.9</b>	<b>359.4</b>	<b>6.7</b>
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](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	<b>4.4</b>
Science	1033614	19.6	1086353	19.6	1141680	19.6	1199830	19.6	1260200	19.6	<b>4.4</b>
Commerce	1154804	21.9	1213688	21.9	1275478	21.9	1340560	21.9	1410119	21.9	<b>4.4</b>
Education	121115	2.3	127304	2.3	133797	2.3	140620	2.3	147720	2.3	<b>4.4</b>
Engineering / Technology	258028	4.9	271213	4.9	285045	4.9	299583	4.9	315720	4.9	<b>4.5</b>
Medicine	179040	3.4	188189	3.4	197786	3.4	207874	3.4	219918	3.4	<b>4.6</b>
Agriculture	55292	1.1	58120	1.1	61091	1.1	64200	1.1	67990	1.1	<b>4.6</b>
Veterinary Science	13356	0.3	13840	0.3	14550	0.3	15288	0.3	16201	0.3	<b>4.3</b>
Law	279092	5.3	293353	5.3	308314	5.3	324038	5.3	342440	5.3	<b>4.5</b>
Others	42127	0.8	44280	0.8	46538	0.8	48912	0.8	52401	0.8	<b>4.9</b>
Total	5265886	100.0	5534966	100.0	5817249	100.0	6113929	100.0	6425624	100.0	<b>4.4</b>

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>138.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>217.86</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9.5</b>

**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](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

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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.

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## 1.6 LET US SUM UP

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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.

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## 1.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

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- 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

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### 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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## UNIT 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

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### Unit Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Defining Distance Education
  - 2.2.1 Wedemeyer
  - 2.2.2 Moore
  - 2.2.3 Dohmen
  - 2.2.4 Peters
  - 2.2.5 Holmberg
  - 2.2.6 Keegan
- 2.3 Relevant Terms Explained
  - 2.3.1 Non-Formal Education
  - 2.3.2 De-schooling
  - 2.3.3 Correspondence Education
  - 2.3.4 Distance Learning
  - 2.3.5 Open and Distance Learning
  - 2.3.6 Open Education
  - 2.3.7 Open and Distance Education
  - 2.3.8 Lifelong Learning/Education
    - 2.3.8.1 Concept
    - 2.3.8.2 Principles and Characteristics
    - 2.3.8.3 Implications for Implementation
- 2.4 Theories of Distance Education
  - 2.4.1 Distance Education Theory Development: An Overview
  - 2.4.2 Theory of Independent Study
  - 2.4.3 Theory of Transactional Distance and Learner Autonomy
  - 2.4.4 Theory of Industrialization of Teaching
  - 2.4.5 Theory of Guided Didactic Conversation
  - 2.4.6 Theory of Two-way Postal Communication
  - 2.4.7 Theory of Continuity of Concern
  - 2.4.8 Theory of Communication and Learner Control
  - 2.4.9 Theory of Re-integration of Teaching and Learning Acts
  - 2.4.10 Theory of Equivalency of Learning Experiences
  - 2.4.11 Evaluating Distance Education Theories
- 2.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions
- 2.7 References
- 2.8 Unit End Exercises

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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In Unit-1 you got an overview of the historical developments of ODE both at national and international levels. You know that distance education is very recent in comparison with centuries old conventional system of education. Distance



education has been evolving depending on the changing situations in which it is practised. It has its own norms, and follows its own approaches and methodology which are different from conventional system of education. It is non-conformist and non-traditional in nature. It makes adequate provision to impart instruction to learners at a distance by incorporating a variety of means and methods for didactic interaction between its students and teachers.

We know that distance education is an educational system supplementary, complementary and alternative to conventional / traditional system of education. As it stands today, it has evolved into an independent system of education, thanks to the growth of communication technologies and the cognitive sciences which are flexible enough to use the technologies for pedagogic purposes. It is an educational innovation to meet the ever increasing and diversified educational needs and demands of the society which are sequel to changing social, economic, and other conditions on one hand and technological developments on the other.

You need to understand the concept and theoretical foundations of distance education so as to appreciate its relative merits, its differences with other relevant terms and its footing in educational system. In this unit, we will therefore attempt to provide you an understanding about the concept of distance education and how it is different from the related terms in use including lifelong education and about different theories of distance education.

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## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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This unit presents you an overview of the concept and theory of distance education from the perspective of various thinkers in the field. After having gone through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept of distance education;
- distinguish the term 'distance education' from other related terms; and
- analyze different theories of distance education.

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## 2.2 DEFINING DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Distance education is a broader term both in terms of its denotation and connotation. Depending upon the knowledge, perceptions and points of view different people have defined distance education in different ways. It is, therefore, very difficult to arrive at a comprehensive definition that embraces all its connotations and denotations. Though it is difficult to come out with a succinct and universally acceptable definition of distance education, a few definitions offered by different people on different aspects of distance education would give us a comprehensive picture of the concept of distance education.

Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (IGNOU, 1995) presented the definitions of distance education given by Wedemeyer, Moore, Dohmen, Peters and Holmberg along with a brief and precise comment on each of these definitions. Let us look at these definitions and the comments as they present broader aspects forming part(s) of definition of distance education.

### 2.2.1 Wedemeyer

Wedemeyer (1977) has used the terms ‘open learning’, ‘distance education’ and ‘independent study’ in his works, but favours the last term consistently. He defines independent study as follows:

“Independent study consists’ of various forms of teaching-learning arrangements in which teachers and learners carry out their essential tasks and responsibilities apart from one another, communicating in a variety of ways. Its purposes are to free on-campus or internal learners from inappropriate class-placing or patterns, to provide off-campus or external learners with the opportunity to continue learning in their own environments, and to develop in all learners the capacity to carry on self-directed learning, the ultimate maturity required of the educated person”.

Notice that there is a suggestion for two kinds of ‘independent study’. One for the on-campus learner who may not want to and/or need to attend lectures regularly; the other for the off-campus learner who in any way is on his/her own. But, both these kinds are subordinate to the overwhelming idea of the ultimate social purpose of education — liberal education for social welfare. It is, therefore, not difficult to appreciate why in the United States of America, the expression ‘independent study’ is extensively being used to mean both ‘correspondence’ and ‘distance’ education. Besides, the expression does connote ‘open learning’ too, as one needs open access to education in order to become a truly ‘educated’ person.

### 2.2.2 Moore

Moore (1972 and 1973) is more explicit in his views on the characteristic features of distance education. According to him distance teaching may be defined as “the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviours are performed apart from learning behaviours, including those that, in a contiguous situation, would be performed in the learner’s presence, so that communication between the teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical or other devices.”

At least three features of distance education are clearly discernible in his definition:

- i) the teaching behaviour remains separated from the learning behaviour (e.g. correspondence courses);
- ii) fact-to-face teaching and learning forms a part of the system (e.g. contact programmes); and
- iii) electronic and other media may be used to effect learning and teaching (e.g. use of audio and video cassettes).

The first two of these features are similar to the ones which Wedemeyer has pointed. And if we interpret Wedemeyer’s expression, ‘communicating in a variety of ways’, broadly even the third feature listed above finds a place in his (Wedemeyer’s) definition. Whereas Wedemeyer focuses on the sociological aspect, Moore highlights the communicational (pedagogic) aspect.

### 2.2.3 Dohmen

Dohmen (1977) defines distance education as “a systematically organised form of self-study in which student counselling, the presentation of learning material and securing and supervising of students’ success is carried out by a team of teachers, each of whom has responsibilities. It is made possible at a distance by means of media which can cover long distances”.

This definition places emphasis upon the importance of self-study. This feature of distance education is emphasised in Wedemeyer’s definition too. Like Wedemeyer and Moore, Dohmen also emphasises correctly the use of the media which enables distance education to reach out to the consumer of education.

We notice that all the three thinkers quoted above focus, either explicitly or implicitly, on these two aspects of distance education:

- i) self-study, and
- ii) the use of media for educational communication.

The point being made is that as against the oral communication used in the conventional classroom type of teaching, which is not a process of self-study, distance education uses print, electronic media and oral or face-to-face situations for purposes of self-study which is the basis of distance education.

Now, we shall turn to a definition that presents a theoretical frame for the entire process of distance education.

### 2.2.4 Peters

Peters (1973) defines distance education as “a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes, which is rationalised by the application of division of labour and organizational principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media, specially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching material which makes it possible to instruct great numbers of students at the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialised form of teaching and learning.”

Peters’ definition is interesting because; besides the use of technical media and mass education, he emphasizes a specific ethos which relates distance education to the nature of the industrial society. It is also possible to view distance education as a system arising from the new and specific needs of an industrialising society in which almost all activities, including education, have to fit into time-schedules that are geared to more rigid working and learning conditions.

### 2.2.5 Holmberg

Holmberg (1981) defines distance education as the kind of education which covers “the various forms of study at all levels which are not under continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms on the same premises, but which nevertheless, benefit from running, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation”.

What is interesting about Holmberg’s definition is that distance education is being looked upon as an *organised educational programme*.

Let us now look at the definition offered by Keegan who culled out different aspects of distance education as found in different definitions and put them together in one.

### 2.2.6 Keegan

Keegan (1986) offers a comprehensive definition of distance education that encompasses all the essential elements. He defines distance education as a form of education characterised by:

- the quasi-permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process; this distinguishes it from conventional face-to-face education;
- the influence of an educational organisation both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; that distinguishes it from private study and teach-yourself programmes;
- the use of technical media; print, audio, video or computer to unite teacher and learner and carry the content of the course;
- the provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education.
- the quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the learning process so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialisation purposes.

This comprehensive definition of Keegan includes all the essential elements, aspects or characteristics of distance education as can be found in different definitions given above. As Keegan (1986) points out it is important to be able to say whether distance education is to be regarded as the same or different from University without walls, extra-mural studies, experiential learning, off-campus education, open learning, extended campus, etc. Keegan takes into account all the recent developments in communications and also theory building in this field. You will know, in brief, about these terms and few other related terms in the following section.

#### 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) i) Which thinker said that there is a need for human support in an industrialized teaching-learning system?

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ii) What is common in the definitions of Wedemeyer, Moore and Dohmen?

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## 2.3 RELEVANT TERMS EXPLAINED

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The term ‘distance education’ has been misunderstood by many people as a synonym to terms such as non-formal education, non-traditional education, open education, correspondence education, and so on. Here, you may recall the other terms used by Keegan and other thinkers in the previous section as well. All these terms currently in use create confusion regarding their precise meaning. This happens, particularly, when the terms are inadequately defined and/or improperly understood.

I believe you are, perhaps, clear about the concept and use of the term ‘distance education’ and not confused with related terms in the above paragraph. If you are still confused, do not worry. The following brief discussion on related terms will clear your confusion.

### 2.3.1 Non-formal Education

Non-formal education, as implied by the term, is supposed to be available outside the formal or conventional system and with enhanced access to many learners. It indicates that it is an education free from formalities or with relaxed formalities to make education more accessible to different kinds or types of learners.

Some call non-formal education non-traditional education. According to Hartnett (1972) *non-traditional education* is a set of learning experiences free of time and space limitations. Coombs et al (1973) define non-formal education as “any organised educational activity outside the established formal system — whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity — that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives”. To clarify this definition further, the same authors distinguished between informal and formal education. Informal education is “the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment from family and neighbours, from work and play, from market place, the library, and the mass media”. Formal education is defined by them as “the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded ‘education system’ running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialised programmes and institutions for full-time professional education and training.

However, Radcliffe and Colletta (1989) maintain that “in practice no hard lines of demarcation exist between formal, non-formal and informal education: while many activities may be perceived as falling exclusively into one category alone, many share aspects of two or all of them”. In other words, it is implied that the theoretical distinctions between the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal education are accepted.

Non-formal education can be organised at any level, ranging from primary education in schools to higher education. In Universities or institutions of higher learning, Open University is more current term coined to an institution providing the higher education in non-formal and open manner. It enhances possibilities for providing relevant, flexible, systematic and diversified education for the learners of diverse needs and interests.



### 2.3.2 De-schooling

De-schooling is the philosophy that underlines the concept of non-formal education. In simple terms it means bringing education out of the formal confines of the school. In other words, it espouses free education shorn of all rigidities of formal system like one point entry or single point admission, definite classroom, regular attendance, definite and common syllabus, rigid timings / periods of teaching and learning, examinations and so on.

*As early as the 1970s, Ivan Illich was beginning to imagine an educational future in which the proprietary knowledge relations of the conventional classroom were transformed:* “A major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching. Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside of school, and in school only in so far as school, in a few rich countries, has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives. Most learning happens casually, and even the most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction.” (<http://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-2/ivan-illich-on-deschooling>).

What then is the difference between non-formal education, de-schooling and open learning? In fact, these terms are synonymous and espouse the same philosophy. Non-formal education emphasises on freeing of educational process from the formalities / rigidities; while ‘de-schooling’ emphasises on bringing the education outside the physical environs of the school which, in broad sense, includes all the educational institutions.

Is correspondence education a step towards that direction? To answer it, let us understand what correspondence education is.

### 2.3.3 Correspondence Education

The humble beginning of correspondence education can be traced back to 1840 when Isaac Pitman began to teach shorthand by post (Morris, 2011; Rowntree, 1992). Pitman used the post to reach his many learners who equally got back to him through the same medium. After this initial experience the practice of correspondence education spread like wild fire throughout the world and very soon, all kinds of subjects and topics were taught through correspondence education.

Let us look at some progressive definitions and practice of correspondence education. Correspondence education consists of “batches of study materials sent by post to the student who then completes the required reading and exercises, and returns the latter to the college for assessment by an appointed personal tutor. The exercises are marked and the student receives comments, advice and general guidance” (Legge, 1982).

From the above definition, the following essential elements can be observed:

- i) supply of study materials to students by post;
- ii) reading and writing exercises / assignments by students; and
- iii) assessment and feedback by tutor on exercises/assignments to the students.



Though this definition ignores the need for face-to-face contact it indicates that there is organized instruction and education through post.

Correspondence education is the education conducted by the postal services without face-to-face contact between teacher and learners. Teaching is done by written or tape-recorded material sent to the learner whose progress is monitored through written or taped exercises sent to the teacher who corrects them and returns them to the learner with criticism and advice. It is also called correspondence study (Titmus, 1989). We can observe that this definition is also silent on face-to-face contact and human element. Yet it is slightly more advanced in the sense that it brings in electronic media within the purview of correspondence education.

From the above definitions, one thing that is very clear about the correspondence education is that it is a means of education for those who are literate with mastery over written language and with some educational qualifications or skill already possessed by them. Usually these literate are relatively more mature and would be in a position to learn on their own through self-study or self-understanding of the materials supplied to them, and there may or may not be a provision for face-to-face contact between the teacher and the learner. Generally, these printed learning materials are prepared by a few trained subject experts and are supplied to the learners by post for reading, alongside giving them some writing assignments. In general and in order to develop the students the feel of formal school/classroom atmosphere, contact classes/programmes are conducted at some convenient places where the learners and the instructors will have the chance for mutual interaction. Towards the end of the course, examinations will be conducted and the certificates, diplomas and/or degrees are awarded to the qualified candidates / learners.

How is correspondence education different from distance education?

### **Difference between Correspondence Education and Distance Education**

By combined reading of Section 2.2 with sub-section 2.3.3 above, it becomes easy for us to distinguish correspondence education from distance education. In correspondence education, print is the only medium of instruction and the printed lessons / materials are the only source of learning with or without provision for face-to-face contact between the students and teachers and among students. In distance education, besides the print medium, audio, video, radio, television, telephone, the computers, etc., form the instructional media. In both correspondence and distance education printed materials are sent by post, but distance education employs a multimedia approach including human (face-to-face) contact for instructional purposes. The student support services are more improved in distance education than in correspondence education. Both, correspondence education and distance education impart prescribed knowledge for issuing of certificates, but distance education aims at varied goals including training for better job prospects and job enhancement, change in attitudes, personal growth, etc. Though procedure of admission and examination are same in both correspondence education and distance education, the former is usually offered as an extension of conventional college / university education while the latter is offered by institutions which are mostly independent and autonomous. Thus, you have noticed that distinction between correspondence and distance education lies in their aims, approaches, methods, media and orientation.

Is distance education and distance learning one and the same?

### 2.3.4 Distance Learning

In distance education the emphasis is both on teaching and learning i.e. there is organized teaching to promote learning among the distance learners. In distance learning the emphasis is more on learning. In distance learning the focus is more on learning than on teaching. Distance learning assumes that in an educational enterprise the responsibility to learn rests more with the learner while the distance teacher simply plays the role of promoter or facilitator of learning who is usually separated from the learner by time, space and distance. Thus, in distance education, the distance teacher enjoys the freedom to choose his methodology, media, materials and support services that help learners to learn. Distance learning assumes that the responsibility to learn is mainly with the distance learner including the learner's choice and decision to enroll for a particular course or programme as well as the choice of media through which to learn what, how and with what pace.

While most psychologists would submit that learning means acquisition of information and knowledge that lead to change in behaviour (and this is the aim of education and the objective of distance education), distance learning leaves room for the learner to impute the information and material presented, based on his own understanding that may be different from the understanding the facilitator had intended. Additionally, the learner is at liberty to use his understanding and the information presented in any constructive way which suits his own will, circumstances and environment without recourse to the facilitator or institution that originated the learning material. (<http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/39188.pdf>). Thus, distance education presupposes organized teaching and learning, distance learning enjoins freedom and responsibility to the learner.

Then, how is 'distance learning' different from 'open and distance learning'.

### 2.3.5 Open and Distance Learning

Distance learning need not be open at all (Rowntree, 1992:30). This suggests that there exists a difference between "Open Learning" and "Distance Learning"; for many decades, the term "Distance Learning" has been used to describe learning organised, dispensed and acquired from a distance; the prefix "Open" became attached to Distance Learning towards the end of the 20th century as a result of three significant developments, namely, criticisms against the formal school system, GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and Globalisation. (<http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/39188.pdf>). It means distance learning can be open or more formal.

In 1994, when the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) made education an internationally saleable commodity; this agreement had profound positive effect on the development of Open and Distance Learning (Preece and Biao, 2011) and much to encourage educational interaction among societies that have not dreamt of educational collaboration as a result of the great geographical distance separating them (Ibid).

Learning opportunities thus opened up to many inhabitants of the Earth like it never did before and irrespective of their geographical location. The concept of

open learning then entered the educational diction and the prefix “Open” was added to “Distance Learning” to signify that, apart from being learning managed from a distance, it is equally “Open Learning” wherein “Open Learning” is understood to be,

*“... arrangements to enable people to learn at the time, place and space which satisfy their circumstances and requirements. The emphasis is on opening up opportunities by overcoming barriers that result from geographical isolation, personal work commitments or conventional course structures which have often prevented people from gaining access to the training they need,”* (Rowntree, 1992, See <http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/39188.pdf>).

And to be:

*“... a wide range of learning opportunities that both aim to assist learners in gaining access to knowledge and skills they would otherwise be denied and to give learners the optimum degree of control over their own learning.”* (Dixon, 1987; See <http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/39188.pdf>).

An essential characteristic of open learning is the removal of barriers to access and also to learning in terms of time, place, pace, technology. Ideally speaking, no-one person should be denied access to any open distance learning programme. But the fact is, no ODL programme is absolutely open in the true sense of openness. In other words, ‘open learning’ and ‘distance learning’ must be scalable depending upon degree of flexibility that is possible in given contexts.

### 2.3.6 Open Education

We are all aware that formal educational institutions have their formalities and restrictions which are related to admission, number of seats, course duration, instruction, examination and other procedures. If these restrictions and formalities are relaxed or removed learning and education become more flexible and open.

According to Jarvis (1990) *Open learning* is the title given to more flexible methods of study and teaching in which there is openness in access, content, delivery system and assessment. There are colleges or provider-based systems in which learners attend centres; local-based systems with ‘flexi-study’ and support but at which the learning is undertaken in the learners’ homes, and ‘distance learning systems’. Openness is, in fact, characterised by relaxed or no rigid entry qualifications, learning is according to one’s own pace and convenience, flexibility in the choice of courses, and use of modern and appropriate educational and communication technology. Open learning/education can be offered through distance learning systems or the contiguous / conventional system by introducing an element of openness or flexibility. It refers to the philosophy or the approach which can be practised in both the situations.

Escotet (1983) distinguishes open education from distance education. For him, open education is particularly characterized: by the philosophy of removal of restrictions, excursions and privileges; by the accreditation of students’ previous experiences; by the flexibility of the management of the time variable; and by substantial change in the traditional relationship between professors and students.

On the other hand, distance education is a *modality* which permits learners to learn from their own places of living or work. Distance education, thus, tends to encourage open education.

Now, you are, perhaps, clear about the two concepts — ‘distance’ and ‘openness’. While ‘distance’ refers to the *mode*, ‘openness’ refers to the *philosophy*. Openness is seen in terms of flexibility or relaxation in or lack of restrictions. Whereas the formal/conventional education is not necessarily closed, distance education may or may not be open. Open education is possible by both conventional and distance education institutions. But, in practice, it is true that due to their inherent character the formal institutions could not relax the restrictions to the extent that the distance education institutions could in matters of admission, curriculum, choice of courses, course combinations, examinations, evaluations, etc.

There are also many other terms such home study, independent study, off-campus studies, extra-mural studies, and external studies which are often loosely used as synonymous to distance education or open education. These terms are briefly explained below.

- i) **Home study:** It is an education designed for students to undertake study at home and to be away from the educational institution. This term is localised mainly in Europe, probably under the influence of Swedish schools of correspondence courses. However, it is being used at a few places in Canada and the USA also.
- ii) **Independent study:** We have read about Wedemeyer’s definition of independent study which is very clearly described. In fact, it is through his writings that this term has become current in North America.
- iii) **Off-campus studies:** To denote a contrast with on-campus traditional type of studies the expression ‘off-campus studies’ is widely used in the Pacific region — Australia and South-East Asian countries.
- iv) **External studies:** This is in use in Australia. It does confuse one when one thinks of the ‘external system’ as it functioned in London years ago. The London model of ‘external system’ makes it possible for learners to sit for recognised examinations, but teaching is not associated with the system necessarily. Australia adopted the term for obvious reasons and it is obvious too that the term does not connote all that is meant by the term ‘distance education’ today.
- v) **Extra-mural studies:** This expression is used in New Zealand to convey what distance education means to most of us.
- vi) **University without walls:** This is an ‘open learning’ movement in America which gives academic credit for career and life experiences and organises ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ courses.

With due regard to the local currency of these terms, there is no doubt that they are all part of internationally known terms referring to open and distance education (ODE).

**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) How is distance education different from correspondence education? Explain the terms ‘distance’ and ‘open’ in this context.

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**2.3.7 Open and Distance Education**

The term ‘open and distance education’ is the effect of combined expression of open education / open learning and distance education. It means a combination of *philosophy* (underlying the open learning or open education) and *mode* (underlying distance education). It means, Open and Distance Education i.e. *open education through distance mode*. It also implies that distance education need not always be open in real terms of the characteristics of ‘distance’ and ‘openness’, since openness of a programme is a relative character and all distance education programmes need not be and cannot be open to the same extent. In other words, distance education too can be more conventional in nature if it is based on rigid criteria; thus implying that distance education can be ‘*open distance education*’ or ‘*conventional distance education*’. Nevertheless, there is no single distance education programme which is absolutely open, as it is always considered and expressed in its relation with any other programme(s).

**Differences and similarities among the above terms:** For more clarity we always need to understand the terms, ‘open learning’, ‘flexible learning’, ‘online/virtual learning’, ‘open education’ and ‘distance education’ in their relative and comparative perspective because these terms are often used to mean the same thing by many, though there are significant differences among them. Thus the differences and similarities between and among these terms is in terms of extent of ‘openness’, ‘distance’, ‘flexibility’, ‘online’ and ‘virtuality’.

**2.3.8 Lifelong Learning/Education**

The belief that education is a lifelong process, not limited to childhood and youth, is not new. This is because of the fact that an individual spends more number of years in his adulthood than the childhood and youth and his performance in all the activities he is engaged in depends upon the nature and quality of his education in the functional areas. And, the conventional system of education has failed in many aspects and rendered itself inadequate to meet the changing educational needs and demands of different kinds of individuals. The important among these are the limited aims and objectives, inconveniences and shortcomings in didactic process, irrelevant curricula, and failures of the



conventional system as a whole. This has led to ‘a crisis of education’ and the system could not enable the individuals to face the challenges of modern and changing life. In the process of finding solutions to the crisis and to strive towards a learning society or an educative society, the concept of lifelong education found an increasing recognition and acceptance all over the world.

The UNESCO report entitled “Learning to be” (Faure, 1972) is the leading policy document on lifelong education. It contains a coherent philosophy developed about man, education and society to which the idea of lifelong learning was related. It adopts an optimistic view of education to change society. Eagerness to learn, ‘*libido sciendi*’ is deeply rooted in human nature and once external obstacles are removed it will provide the necessary motivation for lifelong learning. The society of the future will be a ‘learning society’ and the culture of future society will be “scientific humanism”. According to the report “every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. The idea of lifelong education is the key to the learning society. Lifelong education will be the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries”.

### 2.3.8.1 Concept

Let us look through some of the definitions of lifelong education for a better understanding of the concept. UNESCO (1976) defines ‘lifelong education’ as a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout one’s life. It includes formal, non-formal and informal education received by the individual. The educational and learning processes in which children, young people and adults of all ages are involved in the course of their lives, in whatever form, should be considered as a whole. Dave (1976) regards lifelong education as “a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the life-span of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their community. It is a comprehensive and unifying idea which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning for acquiring and enhancing enlightenment so as to attain the fullest possible development at the different stages of life. It is connected with both individual growth and social progress”. According to Jarvis (1990) lifelong education is any planned series of incidents having a humanistic bases directed towards the participants learning and understanding that may occur at any stage in the life-span. Reviewing certain approaches and underlying philosophies he expresses that the lifelong education is a concept and an ideal which remains rather meaningless unless it is actually implemented.

Though the terminology in the definitions is different, we can clearly understand lifelong education as a concept that:

- includes all types and processes of education of all people of all age groups;
- is not intended to cover a once for all experience confined to the initial cycle of full-time education that commenced in childhood, but a process that must continue throughout one’s life;
- encompasses continuous learning process which needs to provide specific opportunities for further and new education, both vocational and general, to each individual throughout life;
- attempts to keep the individual abreast of technical and social change in order that he may adopt to changes in his own circumstance (marriage,



parenthood, professional situation, old age, etc.) and may achieve his fullest potential for individual development; and

- embraces both individual's intentional and incidental learning experiences.

Cropley (1982) sums up “the emerging concept of lifelong education in three words indicating the main directions of change and emphasis: expansion, innovation and integration. *Expansion* means, learning process in time, in the multiplication of learning situations covering entire lifespan of the learner, in encompassing and unifying all its stages and forms and in offering all kinds of opportunities. *Innovation* finds alternative structures and patterns of learning, providing meaningful interrelationships between general and professional education, and adapting the present practices to new needs. *Integration* refers to, apart from interdisciplinarity, the educative potentialities of the home, the local community, the larger society, the world of work and the mass media in order to make the educational process more effective and to create new learning situations.

We may now understand that lifelong education, in its broadest sense, includes all the processes by which an individual acquires education continually or continuously throughout life for necessary career development and valuable personal enrichment. It means far from being limited to the period of attendance at school education, learning should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means and give the opportunity to all people for full development of the personality.

However, ‘education permanente’ a French term for ‘lifelong education’ specifies that higher education must be open to former students as well as mature students who have not previously had the opportunity to have higher education, even if they do not have necessary entrance qualifications. It implies that the education system needs to be remade to meet people’s lifelong but discontinuous needs, which might recur in personal, social, academic or vocational life.

There appears to be two approaches to lifelong education in contemporary literature. One that stretches ‘initial education’ to further it called *further education* and the other that stretches still forward throughout the life-span using the idea of *continuing education*. The aim of lifelong education should be to increase “each individual’s possibilities of expressing himself or herself on the intellectual, emotional, social and professional planes, as well as in relationship between the sexes, between the parents and children and so forth” (Titmus, 1989).

Lifelong education is, thus, the one where there is provision and utilisation of educational experiences throughout a person’s life. It implies learning throughout life and, therefore denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential inside and outside the education system. It intrinsically involves a radical reform of organisation; form and content of all other phases of education, and also implies a greater recognition of the educational functions of non-educational agencies such as business, industrial and agricultural firms.

### 2.3.8.2 Principles and Characteristics

Lifelong education calls for substantial changes in objectives, structures, curricula and methods within a global context of lifelong education. Since all aspects of education and life are interwoven in an organic whole, vital reforms are essential

not only in the first phase but also in adult education to make it a well organised system.

Most of the people spend much more of their lives as adults than as children and learning in adulthood plays an essential role. Therefore, it is obvious that adult education would be a major element in any system or scheme of lifelong education. The key principles of lifelong education, according to Titmus (1989), are that:

- a) the procedures for fostering lifelong education should be integral part of any education system;
- b) all elements of education should have equal status as that of schools and universities: and
- c) learning should be naturally and normally engaged in by all adults — universal education for adults just as universal education for children.

All these principles call for a comprehensive and unifying or integrated system of education that can engage all individuals in continuous learning process to make the society a learning society.

An idea of the characteristics of lifelong education may provide better understanding of the concept. The relevant definitive characteristics of lifelong education have been summarised by Dave (1973). They include:

- a) totality and universality in settings covered and clientele served;
- b) dynamism and diversity in teaching and learning methods and materials; and
- c) focus on promotion in learners of the personal characteristics necessary for lifelong learning (motivation, self-image, values, attitudes, and the like).

But, Cropley (1982) puts major characteristics of lifelong education in an elaborated manner. According to him lifelong education provides for:

- i) continuous learning throughout life — to continue education beyond childhood and youth and throughout adulthood;
- ii) needs of the very young — with a concern for very young children as their education lays down a basis for the later psychological development;
- iii) needs of adults — to, promote high levels of personal initiatives for continued development to meet needs of adults;
- iv) coordination of psychological domains — to follow the principle of horizontal integration to coordinate many domains of psychological functioning of a person;
- v) education for personal growth — to foster intrapersonal/intra-psychic growth;
- vi) education for social development — to educate on variety of roles and their changing nature, and to enhance ability to adopt to changed roles; and
- vii) education for equity — to provide equal access to education of all people at all stages.

According to the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, titled the “Learning: The treasure within”

(UNESCO, 1996) the following four pillars of learning are fundamental principles for reshaping education:

- ***Learning to know:*** to provide the cognitive tools required to better comprehend the world and its complexities, and to provide an appropriate and adequate foundation for future learning.
- ***Learning to do:*** to provide the skills that would enable individuals to effectively participate in the global economy and society.
- ***Learning to live together:*** to expose individuals to the values implicit within human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect and peace at all levels of society and human relationships to enable individuals and societies to live in peace and harmony.
- ***Learning to be:*** to provide self analytical and social skills to enable individuals to develop to their fullest potential psycho-socially, affectively as well as physically, for an all-round ‘complete person.

From the above discussion, you might have clearly understood that lifelong education requires radical transformation of the concept of education, complete overhaul of all forms of education and training needed by modern human beings in all stages of their life. The process of reforming the entire education system is not an easy task, as it has many implications for different elements of the system. We shall consider some of them here.

### 2.3.8.3 Implications for Implementation

Though the concept has achieved wide acceptance in theory, in practice it still falls far short of theory. This is so because the implementation of lifelong education has sweeping implications for learners and learning processes, teachers and the instructional methods, educational institutions and evaluation of lifelong learning. Knapper and Cropley (1985) and UNESCO (1996) discuss these implications in detail from basic education to university education in the efforts for educating the global village. A summary of details of these implications are presented below in very generalized form for your clear understanding of the same.

#### i) Learners and learning processes

All learners acquire education through formal, informal and non-formal processes of learning, when they are engaged in different activities in their life, though the proportions of time spent on particular kind of activities may differ from learner to learner. Provision of such comprehensive activities or experiences requires curricular restructuring with proper vertical and horizontal integration of the curricular experiences covering all forms of education in the day to day life and across the life of all kinds of learners — full-time and part-time, conventional and nonconventional, old and young, and so forth.

#### ii) Teachers and instructional methods

For promoting lifelong learning among the heterogeneous groups of learners the instructional strategies employed should be substantially different, diversified and sustainable to suit to their age, background, experiences, knowledge, etc. Cheap, individualised and mass instructional strategies and methods that impose less physical constraints of time and locations of learning

that link education and work need to be used for instruction. In tune with these, redefining the changing roles and responsibilities of teachers and promoting the acceptance of these are very crucial in this context of reforms.

**iii) Educational institutions**

The change in the nature and character of teaching and learning processes and methods, the change in the roles and functions of teachers and learners have their own implications for educational institutions. This would involve a transformation of existing institutions and/or starting of new kind of institutions with a proper mechanism for integration. Practical problems and difficulties in bringing about changes or in transforming admission policies and procedures, provision of teaching-learning facilities, achieving coordination among different units in the institutions and among different institutions, and in planning, financing and administering different tasks are to be taken into account.

**iv) Evaluation**

Since the lifelong education involves a transformation of educational institutions, more particularly institutions of higher learning, it calls for innovative approaches to evaluation of the learners, teaching-learning processes, programmes, procedures and the system/institutions as a whole. This would help in reviewing, redirecting and furthering reforms in the system of lifelong education.

We can understand that the instructional approaches such as distance and open learning with focus on individualised learning used by distance and open universities and other higher educational institutions of the kind all over the world embody some principles of lifelong education. Though it is a fact that the practice of lifelong education falls far too short of its theory, it is also true that, nowadays, lifelong education has become a reality to a great extent, and a precisely identified guiding principle for educational policy.

**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) How do you relate the term ‘lifelong education’ with the different terms you studied in previous section? Specify implications for implementation of lifelong education.

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## 2.4 THEORIES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

You know that distance education had its roots in the traditional practices associated with “correspondence courses” which created a new *modus operandi* leading to large-scale reproduction of teaching and learning practices. As a consequence of this phenomenon, a new model of distance education emerged, with the concept of industrialized education, having the core premise of creating massive economies of scale through standardization of production and distribution processes of education.

A discourse on theoretical foundations of distance education shall acquaint you with the most general issues and principles of distance education. In order to provide you an overview of significant ideas and various distinct lines of thought pertaining to this discipline of distance education, we will look at the seminal literature on distance education. Section 2.3 has provided you a thorough understanding of the concept of distance education, including the relevant terms. The distinct lines of thought presented in this section will enable you to get acquainted with the underlying theory and philosophy of distance education and also develop useful insights into the efficacy of the distance mode of teaching and learning.

Without a strong base in research and theory, distance education has struggled for recognition by the traditional academic community (Garrison, 1990; Hayes, 1990; mentioned at <http://www.aect.org/edtech/ed1/13/13-03.html>). However, since the early 1970s, when British Open University became an important reference in the domain of open and distance education, a growing body of academic research has dealt with theory building regarding research on distance education (Evans & Nation, 1990; Garrison, 1993, 2000; Holmberg, 1983, 1995; Keegan, 1993; Moore, 1973, 1990; Peters, 1983, 1989, 1993; mentioned at <http://www.aect.org/edtech/ed1/13/13-03.html>).

According to Evans & Nation (2003, p.789), any useful understanding of educational endeavours requires a deep consideration of the cultural, economic, and political contexts in which they occur. All theories being analyzed here hold that distance education should be treated as a phenomenon arising from socio-economic and other conditions typical of the 20th century.

### 2.4.1 Distance Education Theory Development: An Overview

It is an established fact that without a strong base in research and theory, distance education has struggled for recognition by the traditional academic community. As distance education struggles to identify appropriate theoretical frameworks, implementation issues also become important. These issues involve the learner, the instructor (the teacher), and the technology. Traditionally, both theoretical constructs and research studies in distance education have been considered in the context of an educational enterprise that was entirely separate from the standard, classroom-based, classical instructional model. Hence, our attempt here is to understand coherent, rigorous and valid theory or theories that formed the basis for the practice of distance education, which has grown tremendously in terms of students enrolment and the number of distance education institutions all over the globe.



The theoretical foundations of distance education describe and inform us about its practice and provide the primary means to guide about its future developments as well. With a view to give you a comprehensive overview of development of theories and the philosophies that underlie distance education, important theories are chosen and discussed below. Some of these ‘theories’ and their proponents are given below.

**Table 2.1: Distance education: Thinkers and theories**

S.No.	Name of the thinker	Major theoretical contribution
1.	Charles A. Wedemeyer	Independent study
2.	Michael G. Moore	Independent study (Revisited) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Distance’: a function of ‘dialogue’ and ‘individualisation’</li> <li>• Learner autonomy</li> </ul>
3.	Otto Peters	Industrialised form of teaching <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) division of labour,</li> <li>ii) mass production,</li> <li>iii) systematization, and</li> <li>iv) structure of buildings.</li> </ol>
4.	Borje Holmberg	Guided didactic conversation
5.	John A. Baath	Two-way postal communication <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) effective tutor-comments, and</li> <li>ii) pre-enrolment counselling.</li> </ol>
6.	David Sewart	Continuity of concern <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human element in an industrialized form of learning and teaching</li> </ul>
7.	Garrison and Baynton,	Communication and Learner Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• macro-structural level elements</li> <li>• micro-level transactional elements</li> </ul>
8.	Keegan	Re-integration of teaching and learning acts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separation of the teaching acts in time and place from the learning acts</li> <li>• re-integration of teaching and learning acts</li> </ul>
9.	Simonson and Schlosser	Equivalence of Learning Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local learners</li> <li>• Distance learners</li> </ul>

Let us now discuss in detail the relevant theories of distance education that helped it evolve into a new educational phenomenon.

### 2.4.2 Theory of Independent Study

*Theory of Independent Study* was formulated by Charles A. Wedemeyer, Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a pioneer in the field of independent and distance learning and is considered the father of modern distance education.

As early as 1965, Wedemeyer predicted today’s e-Learning (<http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/wedemeyer/aboutcw.cfm>):



“... the extension student of the future will probably not ‘attend’ classes; rather, the opportunities and processes of learning will come to him. He will learn at home, at the office, on the job, in the factory, store, or salesroom, or on the farm.”

“.. the teacher will reach students not only in his own state or region but nationally as well, since the media and methods employed by him in teaching will remove barriers of space and time in learning...”

The term independent study was used by Wedemeyer (1973; mentioned at <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/wedemeyer/aboutcw.cfm>) to describe distance education at the college or university level. He considered the independence of the student as the essence of distance education and thus preferred the term “independent study” to distance education. He was critical of contemporary patterns of higher education, which failed to utilize modern technologies in ways that could alter an institution.

Wedemeyer proposed the separation of teaching from learning as a way to break education’s “space-time barriers.” He suggested six characteristics of independent study systems. (<http://www.c31.uni-oldenburg.de/cde/found/simons99.htm>):

- 1) The student and teacher are separated.
- 2) The normal processes of teaching and learning are carried out in writing or through some other medium.
- 3) Teaching is individualized.
- 4) Learning takes place through the student’s activity.
- 5) Learning is made convenient for the student in the student’s own environment.
- 6) The learner takes responsibility for the pace of learning, with freedom to start and stop at any time.

Wedemeyer noted four common elements of every teaching-learning situation: a teacher, a learner or learners, a communications system or mode, and something to be taught or learned. He proposed a reorganization of these elements that would accommodate physical space and allow for greater learner freedom which is key to the success of distance education.

Wedemeyer is a liberal in outlook which is manifest in his work in the field of distance education. His contribution to the theoretical foundations of distance education comprises his analysis of the difference between distance education and the conventional face-to-face education. His analyses, while focusing on the major distinctions/differences between the two, present three key notions:

- i) autonomy of the learner
- ii) distance between the teacher and the learner, and
- iii) structural system,

which have since become the very bases of the overall concept of distance education. We shall discuss these three notions below and thus introduce you to what may be called Wedemeyer’s theory of ‘independent study’.

### a) **Autonomy of the learner**

Wedemeyer's definition of independent study (see sub-section 2.2.1) gives us a clue for understanding the concept of learner autonomy. According to him the teaching/learning arrangements should be such that the teachers and learners stay away from each other, and the didactic communication should take place in various ways to facilitate learning activities of both the on-campus and the off-campus students. Such arrangements should provide learning opportunities in one's own familiar situation and help one in building up through self-directed learning, the maturity which characterises an educated person.

The obvious basis of 'independent study' is Wedemeyer's liberal educational philosophy for 'continuing education'. He thinks that factors like geographical remoteness, poverty or any other type of social disadvantage, poor health or disadvantageous physical conditions, or any psychological conditions that inhibit one from undergoing institutionalized education, should in no way stand in one's way to achieve one's educational goals. The immediate pedagogical implication of such a philosophy is that we look for unorthodox means and modes of educating all those who are willing to be educated. If one cannot go away from one's place of work or residence because of one's economic or physical conditions, if one cannot attend a class because the classroom atmosphere is psychologically or sociologically hostile to one, or just because of compelling social commitments one cannot fit into the traditional school, college or university modes of education, the state must bring the education of one's choice to one's door steps. This is possible, only and only if the basic characteristic of that unorthodox system is to allow the teachers and the learners' work apart from one another. Consequent upon accepting this basic characteristic, we must admit that in this system, the word of mouth cannot be the major means of communication. By implication, the teacher-learner communication must take different forms: the printed word, a telephone talk, a radio talk, etc. The student should be able to choose her/his educational goals and work on her/his own pace to go about learning in her/his own way and also decide the way her/his achievements may be assessed.

The student of the above description is the *autonomous student* — an educated person in the real sense of the word. It is the distance mode of teaching that goes with the above student characteristics.

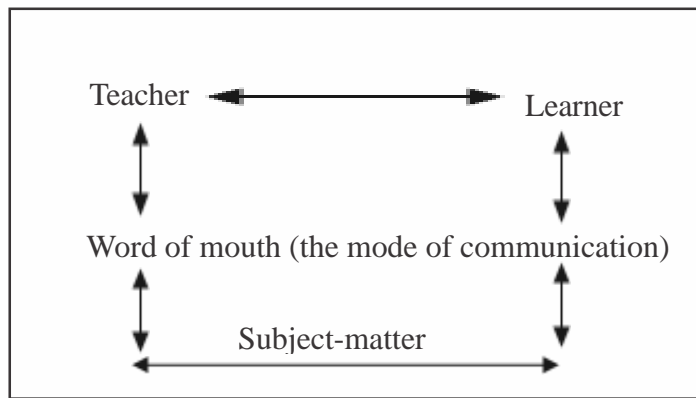
### b) **Distance between the learner and the teacher**

As indicated above, student autonomy has many pedagogic implications. The strongest of them all is that the learner has to learn apart from the teacher.

A classroom situation comprises five components

- i) the teacher,
- ii) the learner,
- iii) the subject-matter which is taught and learned,
- iv) a. communication system, and
- v) the classroom, i.e., the pedagogic site.

Wedemeyer sums up this description graphically as follows (See Figure 2.1):



**Fig. 2.1: The formal classroom situation**

This model of teaching and learning has a prestige which is the result of centuries of socially acceptable practice. It is a universally accredited socio-academic norm.

In the new proposition articulated above under learner autonomy, Wedemeyer challenges this age-old socio-academic norm, a cultural artefact which by virtue of its existence over the centuries does not appear to have any need for reform or alternatives.

Wedemeyer points to the gradual but definite process of social evolution which has built viable alternatives to this potent cultural artefact. This process of social evolution as outlined by him encompass:

- i) The invention of **writing** broke down the absolute monopoly of speech as the medium of communication; besides, writing made it possible to record communications and transfer them over space and time.
- ii) The invention of **printing** broke down the monopoly of single-copy-written communications. Printing allowed the same communication to be passed on at the same or differing time(s) over distances to as many receivers as one wanted to.
- iii) The development of **telecommunication** collapsed the dimensions of time and space; and when applied to education, telecommunication opens up hitherto unknown possibilities of teacher-learner contacts.
- iv) The development of **democratic philosophies**, broke down the monopoly of elitist and sectarian forms of education.
- v) The introduction of **correspondence education** was the result of sheer social needs and pressures. In its beginnings it was not a movement sponsored by the state, nor was it the result of a deliberate effort made by educationists individually or collectively.
- vi) The development of **programmed-learning** and **teaching machines** pointed to the possibility of self-instruction, and learner-based education.

These changes have made it possible to organise teaching and learning in ways considerably different from what is represented by the model presented in Figure 2.2. One of the possible new ways of organising teaching and learning may be represented as follows (See Figure 2.2):

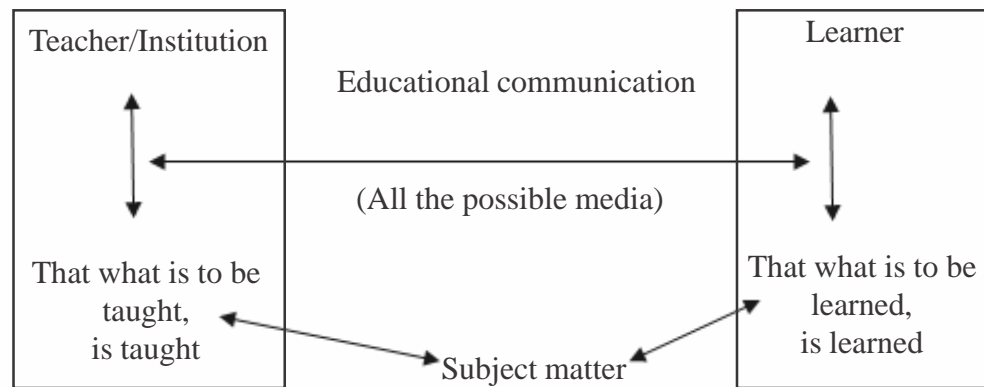


Fig. 2.2: A departure from the formal classroom situation

**Reformation of conventional socio-academic norms:** From the diagramme given above (Fig.2.2), it may be understood that the essential components that comprise a teaching-learning situation, namely the teacher, the learner, the subject-matter, and the mode of teaching-learning communication have remained intact. The difference suggested above is that instead of one box (see Fig. 2.2) we have two boxes now, both of them independent of each other. And the distance between the two boxes is filled by non-traditional means of educational communication which do not entirely do away with the traditional means of face-to-face (single box) communication. Thus the above model is not different from the one presented in Fig.2.2, as far as the basic components of a teaching-learning situation and their purposeful interaction are concerned. But if we use the proximity of these components as the major criterion for characterising the situation, the above model marks a complete departure from the traditional classroom model, which is a convenient concomitant of the face-to-face educational communication. Obviously, then, if the obsession about face-to-face educational communication is shaken off, i.e., a judicious variety of communication is adopted and perfected for purposes of being pedagogically effective, the confines of the classroom can be broken; and it will be possible for the learners to learn on their own, away from their teachers, and for teachers to teach even when they are away from learners. This situation, which is basically characterised by distance between the teacher and the learner, has a few significant implications for the overall teaching-learning process. The more significant of these are:

- i) the learner has the freedom to start, pace and stop his learning activities — it is he/she who is responsible for his/her progress or failure;
- ii) the learner is not necessarily torn away from his/her environment — physical, socio-cultural or geographical;
- iii) media other than the spoken word such as the printed word, audio-visuals, etc., are exploited for the benefit of both the teacher and the learner; and
- iv) learning can be made more and more relevant to individual needs and it is the learning activity which becomes more significant than the teaching effort.

Thus, distance education necessitates a change in both the learner-culture and the teacher-culture. The learner has to take such responsibilities and roles which traditionally did not belong to his/her culture and the same is the case with the teacher.

**c) Structural system**

The expected cultural changes which have been suggested above obviously necessitate redefining the characteristics of learners, teachers and the education system in order to make *non-contiguous educational communication* pedagogically effective. This characteristic of distance study means that the learner is physically at a long distance from the teacher for much, most or even all of the time during the teaching/learning process, in contrast to educational communication in a classroom situation which is ‘contiguous’. Such a redefinition of these characteristics forms the basis of a system that is structurally different from the traditional formal system of education. This new system may be visualised in the following features:

- i) the learner has to take much greater responsibility for learning than he/she was used to;
- ii) wider choice of both the content and the methods has to be provided to the learner;
- iii) individual differences among the learners have not only to be recognised, but also catered to;
- iv) learners have to be allowed their own pace to complete work through the courses — they may start, stop and/or complete the courses according to their own convenience and abilities;
- v) evaluation of student performance should be independent of the consequence, methods and place;
- vi) teachers should concentrate on educational tasks by withdrawing from social and administrative tasks — they should function more as managers of educational materials than as the traditional sources of all correct information and/or knowledge;
- vii) teachers should accept the role of media as a role complementary to their own — the implication is that the courses materials have to be reconceived and designed afresh;
- viii) the educational operation should effect a judicious media-mix — using all the media and methods should be one of the major principles of course design and production; and
- ix) the system should operate wherever the learner(s) may be — it should be independent of the domicile and grouping characteristic of the learners.

Thus, according to Wedemeyer, a system of education that is structured to incorporate the above characteristics is *an independent study system*.

**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) Write two reasons why an ‘independent study system’ is claimed to have the potential to change the ‘cultures’ of learners and teachers.

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Having completed this exercise, let us now turn to the second significant line of thought.

### 2.4.3 Theory of Transactional Distance and Learner Autonomy

*This is in fact European Theory of Independent Study, or Reformulated independent study or Independent Study Revisited or Theory of Independence and Control.* Michael G. Moore, the proponent of this theory, has worked at the University of Nova Scotia and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. His contribution to the theory of distance education does not consist in the presentation of a new concept thereof, but in a more insightful and analytical model which while essentially confirming the notions of Wedemeyer, sharpens them to build broad taxonomies to quantify the various degrees and types of independent study.

#### Moore's notion of independent study

For Moore, independent study is a generic term which describes all such educational transactions as may be distinguished from the traditional formal education in terms of the variables of 'distance' or/and 'autonomy'. For him, all educational transactions which allow these two variables are forms of independent study, be they open university programmes, correspondence courses, external degree programmes or teach-yourself programmes. Thus, all educational transactions can be classified in terms of these two variables, which can be expressed / represented as continua on the basis of two critical characteristics of the system of independent study, namely,

- dialogue, and
- individualisation

It is the difference in the degree of 'dialogue' and 'individualization' that differentiates a distance learner, a distance teacher, and distance teaching / learning from their counterparts in the traditional formal education. We shall elaborate on this.

- i) **Dialogue:** The term 'dialogue' is used to describe an interaction or series of interactions having positive qualities that other interactions might not have. A dialogue is purposeful, constructive and valued by each party. Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener; each is a contributor, and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties. There can be negative or neutral interactions; the term 'dialogue' is reserved for positive interactions. The direction of the dialogue in an educational relationship is towards the improved understanding of the student (Moore, 1997). It is thus a broad term which may best be interpreted by the expression 'academic interaction' aimed at effecting teaching and learning; teaching as far as the teacher or the institute is concerned, and learning as far as the learner is concerned. This 'dialogue' may take place in a face-to-face situation, by individual or group telephone, individual or group correspondence, or may be mainly one sided, as in the case of computer assisted instruction, programmed instruction, television, radio and text materials.
- ii) **Individualisation:** An educational programme is said to be highly 'individualised' if its curricular components namely objectives, methods, materials and evaluation have a very high correlation with the curricular components of the learner's learning programme. We understand that



*structure* expresses the rigidity or flexibility of the programme's educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods. Traditional academic programmes are thus highly 'structured', i.e., their curricular components, namely, objectives, methods, materials and evaluation are usually predetermined irrespective of what the needs of a particular learner may be. On the contrary, an academic programme which is flexible enough to cater to diverse learner-characteristics and needs cannot have a rigid structure; and a programme that lacks structure (in the sense in which the term has been used above) will make 'individualisation' of learning possible. It means, 'lack of structure' assures 'individualisation'. In other words, it describes the extent to which an education programme can accommodate or be responsive to each learner's individual needs.

According to this theory, *transactional distance* in distance education is thus not simply a geographic separation of learners and teachers, but, more importantly, it is a pedagogical concept. It is a concept describing the universe of teacher-learner relationships that exist when learners and instructors are separated by space and/or by time. This universe of relationships can be ordered into a typology that is shaped around the most elementary constructs of the field — namely, the 'structure' of instructional programmes, the 'interaction' (dialog) between learners and teachers, and the nature and degree of self-directedness or 'autonomy' of the learner. Whether *instructional dialogue* occurs its extent and nature is determined by the educational philosophy of the individual or group responsible for the design of the course, by the personalities of teacher and learner, by the subject-matter of the course, and by environmental factors. One of the major determinants of the extent to which the transactional distance will be overcome is whether instructional dialogue between learners and instructors is possible, and the extent to which it is achieved. As with dialogue, structure is a qualitative variable, and the extent of structure in a programme is determined largely by the nature of the communications media being employed, but also by the philosophy and emotional characteristics of teachers, the personalities and other characteristics of learners, and the constraints imposed by educational institutions. *Programme structure* variables constitute the second set of variables that determine transactional distance and these include the elements in the course design, or the ways in which the teaching programme is structured so that it can be delivered through the various communications media. Structure expresses the rigidity or flexibility of the programme's educational objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation methods. It describes the extent to which an education programme can accommodate or be responsive to each learner's individual needs (Moore, 1997, See <http://www.c3l.uni-oldenburg.de/cde/found/moore93.pdf>).

Within the family of distance education programmes there are many different degrees of transactional distance. Transactional distance is a relative rather than an absolute variable. The extent of transactional distance in an educational programme is a function of three sets of variables — in teaching, in learning and in the interaction of teaching and learning. These clusters of variables are named *Dialogue*, *Structure*, and *Learner Autonomy* (Moore, 1997, op cit).

Moore contends that a need for reformulation of conventional socio-academic norms is not only desirable but also imperative. This aim can be achieved through the practice of distance education as it promotes 'learner autonomy'. He suggests that '*physical distance*' alone is not significant in conceptualising 'distance


education'. What matters, besides, are the variables of 'individualisation' and 'dialogue', as a very high degree of both these variables makes a course / programme *less distant* pedagogically and, conversely, a very low degree of both the variables will make a course / programme *greatly distant*. In this context, we explain what Moore means by dialogue, and individualization.

For him *dialogue* is 'a measure of the degree to which the communication medium in a distance education programme permits learner-teacher interactions', and *individualisation* is 'a measure of the extent of the responsiveness' of a teaching programme to the objectives of an individual learner. Thus, an educational programme, in which the *learning programme* occurs separately in terms of time and place from the *teaching programme* allowing the learner control (of varying degrees) over the objectives of learning, learning tools, methods and evaluation, is an 'independent study' programme. Having studied Moore's notions of dialogue, individualisation and structure in his analysis of the notion of 'independent study' we show you how he uses these notions to expound his concepts of '*distance*' and '*autonomy*'.

#### A) Distance: a function of 'dialogue' and 'Individualisation'

A particular combination of the features of 'dialogue' and 'structure' in an academic programme will give it a character of its own. And different combinations of these features will give us differing categories of academic programmes. Using letter symbol +D for high dialogue, -D for lack of dialogue, -S for lack of structure, and +S for highly structured, Moore categorised the possible educational programmes as follows (See Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Programme types in terms of 'dialogue' and 'structure'**

Distance as the variable	Type	Programme Type	Examples
	-D +S	1. Programmes with no dialogue but with structure.	Programmes in which the communication method is radio or television.
	-D -S	2. Programmes with no dialogue and no structure.	Independent reading/study programmes of the 'self directed' kind.
	+D +S	3. Programmes with dialogue and structure.	Programmes using the two-way communication methods
	+D -S	4. Programmes with dialogue and no structure	A tutorial programme.

Thus, Moore used these variables, *dialogue* and *individualisation*, not only for the purposes of categorizing or classifying the academic programmes, but also to formulate his notion of *distance*. According to him, the actual distance between the learner and the teacher / institution should not be measured in terms of the spatial distance between the two, but in terms of the degrees of *dialogue* and *individualisation* which the academic programmes offer. This classification of

distance teaching/learning methods *on the basis of variability* of ‘dialogue’ and ‘individualisation’ makes it clear that the term ‘distance’ is not to be confused with the degree of physical ‘contiguity’. For example, learner X may be 400 miles away from his/her distance teaching institute, and learner Y just 4 miles away from his/her distance teaching institute; but there are arrangements which make it possible for learner X to interact with his/her institute and/or the teachers by telephone as many times a day as he/she would like to, as against learner Y who has to depend entirely on text materials sent to him/her by his/her institute which does not make any arrangements for additional academic interaction. In such a case, we shall say that relatively learner Y is more distant from his/her institute than learner X. Thus ‘distance’ in this context is to be seen as a function of ‘dialogue’ and that of ‘individualisation’. That is to say, the higher the degree of ‘dialogue’ and ‘individualisation’ the less distant the learner is from his/her teacher/institute, and the lower the degree of ‘dialogue’ and ‘individualisation’, the more distant the learner is from his/her teacher/institute.

So far, we discussed Moore’s concept of ‘distance’ as one of the characteristics of distance education. Now, we turn to its second characteristic namely ‘learner autonomy’.

### B) Learner autonomy

According to Moore, learner autonomy is the extent to which, in the teaching/learning relationship, the learner rather than the teacher determines the goals, the learning experiences, and the evaluation decisions of the learning programme. Distance education programmes can be examined to see to what extent the teacher or the learner controls the main teaching-learning processes, and can then be classified according to the degree of learner autonomy permitted by each programme. He found a relationship between transactional distance and learner autonomy. Students with advanced competence as autonomous learners appeared to be quite comfortable with less dialogic programmes with little structure; more dependent learners preferred programmes with more dialogue; some wanted a great deal of structure; while others preferred to rely on the informal structure provided in a close relationship with an instructor.

It will be a good idea to have quick glance at where we have very briefly explained what learner autonomy is. In the traditional educational system, education is thrust upon learners from the above, in which sense it is a top-down model. The curricular components are chosen and/or decided upon by the institute and/or the teacher, which/who prescribes the line to be followed by the learner. Let us elaborate on this point.

We have indicated earlier that a curricula unit is constituted by the statements of objectives of an academic programme, the methods that may be used to achieve those objectives, the materials which may suit those methods, and the evaluation-system which may help achieving those objectives through the agencies of the suggested methods and the prescribed materials. Accordingly, an academic programme for which the objectives, methods, materials and evaluation are decided by the institute/teacher may be termed *‘institute/teacher-determined’*. Against this background, it should not be difficult to visualise a programme which may be called ‘learner-determined’. We shall call a programme *‘learner-determined’* if its objectives, methods, materials and evaluation (all the four

curricular components) are determined by the learner himself/herself. Put differently, a learner-determined programme may be said to allow '*learner autonomy*'. Depending on the degree of 'learner autonomy' -which a particular programme may allow, we can classify it in a typology ranging from learner-determined' or 'autonomous' to 'institute/teacher determined' or 'non-autonomous'. What follows is an illustration to exemplify what we have said above.

Table 2.3 shows that learning programmes may range from 3N types to 3A types. Let us explain this further by taking a B.Ed programme as an example. The objectives of this programme are predetermined by the NCTE and university concerned. Thus, as far as the objectives of the programme are concerned, they do not allow autonomy to the learner and we indicate it by the letter 'N' (non-autonomous). The methods adopted and the materials used to effect teaching too are determined by the university and/or the teacher; so, on this account either the learner is not allowed any autonomy and again we indicate it by the letter 'N'. The same is the case with evaluation which is determined by the university. Thus, a B.Ed. programme is through and through a 'non-autonomous' programme, i.e. 3N type. On the other hand, a qualified engineer may join a course for purposes of his/her personal improvement in his/her profession, i.e., to keep himself/herself abreast with what is the latest in his/her field of specialisation. Assuming that many such courses are available, this engineer will choose a course, keeping in view his/her requirements and/or interests, i.e., he/she will decide on the objectives of the course, he/she will also decide on and follow the methodology and the materials according to his/her choice, and finally he/she will decide whether his/her objective is achieved. A course of this kind is completely 'autonomous' and we may call it a 3A type programme. And between the two types illustrated above there can be a range of course/programme types — some more and some less autonomous than others.

**Table 2.3: Programme Types in terms of Learner Autonomy**

Range of programme types	Sl. No.	Programme types	Setting of objectives	Procedure (Methods + Materials)	Evaluation
Teacher-determined (non-autonomous) (N)	1.	Most correspondence courses in India	N	N	N
	2.	Many private study courses	N	A	N
	3.	Studies in which learner controls evaluation only	N	N	A
	4.	Studies in which learner controls course content and evaluation	N	A	A
Learner-determined (autonomous) (A)	5.	Learning car driving	A	N	N
	6.	Learning sports skills	A	N	A
	7.	Studies for personal improvement	A	A	A

**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) Why has item 5, i.e., ‘learning car driving’ (in Table 2.3), been categorised as an ‘ANN’ type programme?

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**2.4.4 Theory of Industrialization of Teaching**

Theory of Industrialization of Teaching or Industrialised form of teaching and learning was propounded by Otto Peters. He was the first Vice-Chancellor of the Fern Universitat (the open university of the erstwhile West Germany) in 1975. Earlier he had worked at the German Institute of Distance Education in the former Federal Republic of Germany, where he developed significant insights into the process of distance education. His belief was that highly developed industrial societies had generated a vast variety of need for education. This fact coupled with the phenomenon of population explosion according to him, had rendered the conventional system of education inadequate to fulfill the educational needs of the ever growing number of learners. He, therefore, contended that new approaches have to be explored, new techniques developed and made available for application — all these have to be ‘industrial’ in character as the very need for them has arisen as a result of industrialisation.

**Rationale behind the theory: Phenomenal change in education**

Peters (1973) made his major contribution to the theory of distance education through a book entitled ‘The Didactical Structure of Distance Teaching: Investigations towards an industrialised form of teaching and learning’. (It was written originally in German). He concluded that *distance learning / teaching was an industrialised form of teaching and learning*. However, he did not ignore the conventional theoretical concepts in arriving at such conclusions. He used these inputs to strengthen his view that distance education is an ‘industrialised’ form of education. For example, the concepts developed by the German educational theorists like Heinmann and Schultz for traditional education namely ‘intention’, ‘content’, ‘methodology’, ‘choice of medium’, ‘personal characteristics’ and ‘socio-cultural situation’, when applied to the process of distance education, show that distance education is a phenomenon that is very different from conventional education. We shall elaborate on this point here:



- i) The didactical *intention* of a distance teacher is bound to be of a higher cognitive domain, but of lower degrees in psycho-motor and affective domains.
- ii) The choice of *content* cannot be as vast and varied in distance education as may be in the conventional system (Face-to-face components have to be introduced, if practicals of various types constitute parts of the content).
- iii) Teaching *methodology* and the selection of media also undergo major changes, as very many conventional methodologies cannot be used at a distance.
- iv) Differences in *personal characteristics* and *socio-cultural backgrounds* of the learners are also non-conventional — first generation learners compete with traditionally elite groups, middle-aged learners find themselves grouped with younger learners, etc.

This analysis made Peter conclude that the categories proposed for analysing conventional didactical structure are not adequate for analysing the structure and/or process of distance education.

Peters (1988) analysed distance education with the help of categories to ‘industrial’ theory and practice and concluded that for distance teaching to be effective, the *principle of division of labor is a critical element*. In his theory of industrialization, *the teaching process is gradually restructured through increased mechanization and automation*. Peters noted the following:

- The development of distance study courses is just as important as the preparatory work that takes place prior to the production process.
- The effectiveness of the teaching process is particularly dependent on planning and organization.
- Courses must be formalized and expectations from students standardized.
- The teaching process is largely objectified.
- The function of academics teaching at a distance has changed considerably vis-a-vis university teachers in conventional teaching.
- Distance study can only be economical with a concentration of the available resources and a centralized administration.

According to Peters, when decisions about the process of teaching and learning in distance education are made, the industrial structures characteristic of distance teaching should be taken into account.

### **Industrial characteristics of distance education: Parallelisms**

Here, we shall discuss some of the characteristics of distance education which have parallels in the industrial sector.

- i) ***Division of labour***: The production of teaching materials for purposes of distance education is an industrialized process. A whole range of experts from subject specialists, course writers and editors to instructional designers, printers, etc., work on industrial lines to produce materials to be used in ways different from those that are used to learn from conventional books. Basic industrial principle that is seen involved here is ‘division of labour’. This principle is not only applicable to the production of materials, but also



to the rest of the pedagogy processes — those who prepare the information and academic tasks are not the ones who supply or transmit them, those who supply/transmit them are not directly concerned with tuition and counselling, those engaged in tutoring and counselling can be different from those who evaluate learners' progress or assess their performance. In essence, each function is taken care of by a specialist.

- ii) **Mass production of teaching materials:** 'Mass production', obviously is a phenomenon of industries. When looked at from historical point of view, clear parallels are identifiable between industry and distance education. For example, the growth of industry is seen from individual labour to group effort, and manufacture to mass production to meet higher demands. So has been the case with the emergence of distance education. We can also see parallels in the progress from the initial use of tools, through simple mechanisation, to automation and computerisation and the parallel is quite striking.
- iii) **Systematisation of work procedures:** There are identifiable parallels between the consequences of industrialisation and those of distance education. For example, it has been realised that as in industrialisation, in distance education too, success depends, to a great extent, on:
- 'planning' which has to be scientific in nature,
  - formalisation of procedures,
  - standardisation of products,
  - systematisation of the overall process,
  - mechanisation which has implications for social and attitudinal changes in the manpower used for the purpose, and
  - heavy dependence on centralisation.
- iv) **Layout:** It may appear trivial to find a parallel even in the design of buildings, yet it is vital. What we are driving at is that the 'campus' of an open university is markedly different from that of a typical traditional university. In the former, the structures are more or less similar to those of an industry in the sense that it has separate sections for 'production', 'design', etc. And the role of teachers more often than not is similar to that of managers.

It is possible that one can add a few more parallels here. The intention, however, is not to present an exhaustive list. Those which are presented here are illustrative of the point that Peters tried to impress on. Having seen the parallels between distance education and industry, we should also know this industrialised form of education differs from the face-to-face system of education.

Peters rated these parallelisms high in his theorisation of distance education.

### **Distance Education — Most industrialised form of education**

Peters' conclusion is that, of all forms of education, distance education is the most industrialised one, and that along with the theory of industrialisation, the heuristic categories used therein are the best means to explain this new educational phenomenon. Peters differentiates educational communication as it obtains in the conventional education, which is supposed to be based on interpersonal

communication, and in distance education wherein communication is indirect, i.e., communication which is mostly effected through various media.

### Pedagogic aspects of Peters’ theory

Some of the significant pedagogic aspects of Peters’ theory are given below:

- i) In distance education, educational communication is artificial as the overall communication is broken up into components — print, audio, video, etc., which are effected mechanically. Such a sea-change in educational communication has assigned new roles for both the teachers and the learners. The teaching acts and the learning acts too, along with the responsibilities of the teacher and those of the learner have changed.
- ii) Teacher is more a ‘manager’ than a repository and the sole interpreter or commentator of information. The first task of the teacher, then, is to accept this new role and adapt himself/herself to the system of distance education. He/She is faced with a situation in which the entire teaching process and the teaching materials are split into many components, each of which is performed and managed by different persons and tools, which constitute the system. To adapt to this new system is to break off from a professional pattern that has centuries behind it.
- iii) Most of the learners who come to the fold of distance education have had their grounding in the conventional system of education. They find distance education attractive, for it allows them to have their own way — the instruction is not time-bound, place-bound, nor person-bound. They can choose from a vast variety of options open to them, take their own time to complete courses, choose their own places to work through the courses. These advantages notwithstanding, the responsibilities of a distance learner have not only increased, but also changed in character. Very often he/she finds it difficult to cope with this industrialised system and drops out.

These consequences of the industrialisation of education, as he viewed should, by implication, give rise to a new class of educationists who take the responsibility of making this industrialised system of education more humane, help the teacher adapt himself/herself and the learner to benefit most from this new educational situation. The process, as one can see it today, has already taken deep roots and spread all over the globe.

#### 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”.

6) Write four features which are common to an open university and an industry.

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## 2.4.5 Theory of Guided Didactic Conversation

The fourth significant contribution to the theory of distance education is the concept of ‘guided didactic conversation’ propounded by Borje Holmberg. He started as a lecturer in English and turned to distance education in 1956 on joining Hermods, the leading Swedish correspondence institution at Malmo, of which he became the director in 1965. He was a professor of distance education at Fern Universitat, Hagen, before he retired.

### Guided didactic conversation — an explanation

A prolific writer and a sound theoretician, Holmberg takes the view that the core of education is *learning by individual learners*. Having taken this stand, he believes that distance education should be accepted as an appropriate mode of education particularly suitable for *individual learning*, as it makes it possible for the learner to depend on his/her personal work which is essentially independent of face-to-face direct teaching. The distance learner is free to choose from the various support facilities made available to him/her — radio and TV programmes, audio and video cassettes, telephone and computer, even face-to-face teaching in contact programmes, etc. — but the onus of learning or achieving the academic objectives is on his/her own shoulders. He/she is engaged in what is being called ‘self-study’ or ‘independent study’. The significant point to be kept in mind is that a learner engaged in ‘self-study’ is not a loner. He/she does not go about his/her studies all alone. He/she has a whole team of administrators, writers, media producers, teachers, evaluators, tutors, educationists, counsellors, etc., working with him/her but all of them have supportive roles; they support individual learning or self-study. (A word of caution is necessary here. In the Indian situation, one can come across candidates who appear at university examinations privately, at some places they are called ‘external candidates’. Such private/external candidates are not to be confused with the kind of learner we have tried to define above. For Holmberg, a private external candidate is entirely on his/her own, he/she is a loner, but a distance learner, on the other hand, has all the support available for his/her ‘self-study’).

The support we have talked about earlier should be made available by the open university / correspondence institution or whatever name we may choose to give it. The essence of this academic support is to *build an academically fruitful relationship* between the individual learner and the supporting institution, and this relationship, according to Holmberg, is characterised by what he calls ‘*guided didactic conversation*’.

### Types of didactic conversation

Outlining this notion of ‘conversation’ in his book *Status and trends of distance education*, Holmberg (1981), says:

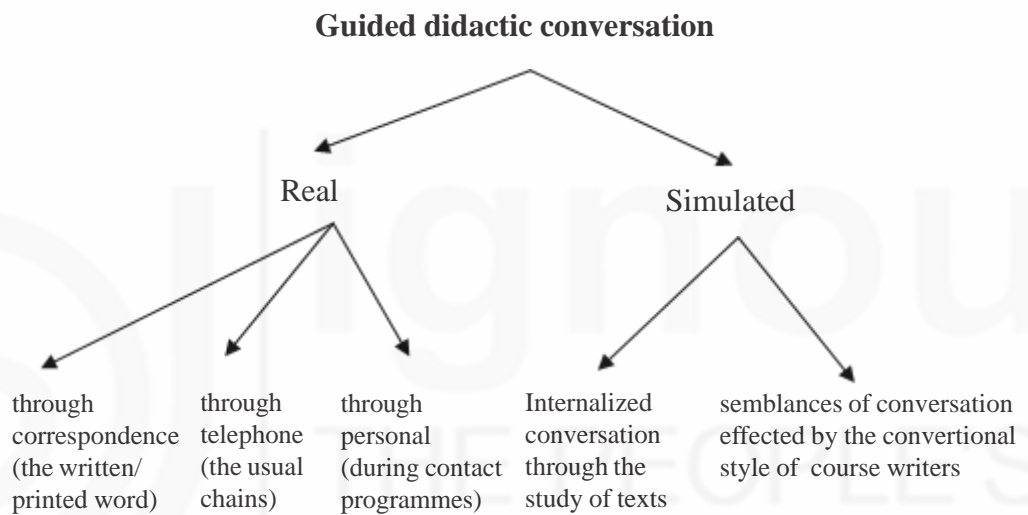
“A kind of conversation in the form of two-way traffic occurs through the written and telephone interaction between the students and the tutor and others belonging to the supporting organisation. Indirectly, conversation is brought about by the presentation of study matter, as this one-way traffic causes students to discuss the contents with themselves. The conversation is thus both real and simulated. The simulated conversation is not only what Lewis calls internalised conversation caused by a study of a text, but is a relationship between the course developers and the students, created by an easily readable and reasonably colloquial style of

presentation and the personal atmosphere of the course superficially characterised by, for instance, the author(s) referring to himself / herself / themselves as 'I' or 'we' respectively and the students being spoken to as 'you' ('I recommend that you...'). Questions and replies, suggestions and references to problems known to the students belong here. This style of presentation stimulates activity and implies reasoning, discussion for and against, referring to the students' previous experience and thus avoiding omissions in chains of thought. Revision tasks and self-checking exercises also belong to the simulated conversation".

In the above excerpt, among other points, Holmberg identifies two types of didactic conversation.

- i) real, and
- ii) simulated.

They can be represented diagrammatically as follows (See Figure 2.3):



**Fig. 2.3: Guided didactic conversation**

### Features of didactic conversation

According to Holmberg (1981), didactic conversation has the following features or characteristics:

- i) Easily accessible presentations of study matters; dear, somewhat colloquial language, in writing easily readable if the text is printed; moderate density of information.
- ii) Explicit advice and suggestions to the student as to what to do and what to avoid, where to pay particular attention and when ...
- iii) Invitation to an exchange of views, to questions, to judgements of what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected.
- iv) Attempts to involve the student emotionally so that he or she takes a personal interest in the subject and its problems.
- v) Personal style including the use of the personal and possessive pronouns.
- vi) Demarcation of changes of themes through explicit statements, typographical means or, in recorded, spoken communication, through a change of speakers, e.g. male followed by female, or through pauses (this is a characteristic of the guidance rather than of the conversation).

The above features of ‘guided didactic conversation’ suggest explicitly what the course designers and course writers should do in order to effect distance learning successfully.

Having thus presented the concept of ‘guided didactic conversation’ and also the implications thereof for planning and developing the course materials, Holmberg (1981) summarises his hypothesis as follows:

“The stronger the characteristics of guided didactic conversation, the stronger the students’ feelings of personal relationship between them and the supporting organisation. The stronger the students’ feelings that the supporting organisation is interested in making the study matter personally relevant to them, the greater their personal involvement. The stronger the students’ feelings of personal relations to the supporting organisation and of being personally involved with the study matter, the stronger the motivation and the more effective the learning.”

Thus, with the help of the concept of ‘guided didactic conversation’, Holmberg suggests what he thinks distance education is, what the nature of distance teaching materials should be, and finally what kind of distance teaching methodology will prove successful.

In 1995, Holmberg significantly broadened his theory of distance education. This comprehensive theory is divided into a number of parts encompassing the theory just stated previously and the belief that distance education serves diverse individual learners who cannot or do not want to make use of face-to-face teaching. Distance education thus promotes students’ independence and freedom of choice. Society benefits from distance education’s provision of, on the one hand, liberal study opportunities for individual learners, and, on the other, professional/occupational training. Distance education is an instrument for recurrent and lifelong learning and for free access to learning opportunities and equity. According to Holmberg, distance education is characterized by the following statements:

- All learning concerned with the acquisition of cognitive knowledge and cognitive skills, as well as affective learning and some psychomotor learning, is effectively provided for by distance education.
- Distance education is based on learning as an individual activity. Learning is guided and supported by non-contiguous means.
- Distance education is open to behaviorist, cognitive, constructivist, and other modes of learning.
- Personal relations, study pleasure, and empathy between students and those supporting them (tutors, counselors) are central to learning in distance education. Feelings of empathy and belongingness promote students’ motivation to learn, influencing learning favorably.
- While it is an effective mode of training, distance education runs the risk of leading to mere fact learning and reproduction of accepted ‘truths’. However, it can be organized and carried out in such a way that students are encouraged to search, criticize, and identify positions of their own.



Holmberg’s expanded theory represents not only a description of distance education but also explanatory power. It is useful to identify a general approach favorable to learning and to the teaching efforts conducive to learning.

**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”.

7) Why Holmberg called the conversation ‘guided’ and ‘didactic’?

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**2.4.6 Theory of Two-way Postal Communication**

John A. Baath of Sweden who worked at Hermods in Malmo is mainly associated with the concept of ‘two-way communication in correspondence / distance education’. However, we also shall briefly touch upon his insights into the models of distance education as well.

It should be stated at the very outset that Baath’s views do not differ from those of Holmberg in essence; the difference, if any, lies in specific emphasis which Baath places on “two-way communication” *vis-a-vis* the models of distance education materials. Baath accepts that correspondence/distance education has become a means of mass education by ‘industrialising education’ and also that distance study is essentially ‘individual study’. However, his experiences as a course writer, editor, tutor and course designer impressed upon him that “a correspondence tutor could stimulate his students to most remarkable improvements, by means of constructive criticism, encouragement, and personal involvement in the individual student’s learning problems” (Baath, 1980). He also notices that “there was a clear tendency to reduce the amount of postal two-way communication in the teaching system”. We shall elaborate on what we have presented in sub-section 4.4.5 above.

**Pedagogic significance of tutor-comments**

It is obvious that in correspondence /distance education, tutor’s comments pertain to assignments meant to be worked on by the distance learners. The suggestion is that for bringing about “most remarkable improvements” in learner performance, tutor-comments (stimulated by assignment based tasks) play a very significant role in distance education. Thus, tutor-comments constitute a highly desirable pedagogic component of distance education. But, tutor-comments do not find a place in the overall plan of the “industrialised” kind of academic support provided to the distance learner. Tutor-comments may come in only as a link in

a chain of two-way communication, which is started by the correspondence / distance institution through the course materials. If there is a provision for compulsory assignments to be worked through, the learner is obliged to provide the second link in the chain of two-way communication by working through the assignments and submitting them for assessment by the correspondence / distance tutor(s). The assessment made by the tutor(s) is the third link in the chain of two-way communication. The fourth link could be the questions and doubts raised by the learner(s) in response to the assessment made by the tutor(s). But, let us take a second look at the third link mentioned above.

Experience has shown (and this applies invariably to most cases, for example, in the Indian context of correspondence / distance education) that the only overt indicator of tutors having gone through the learner-response is a grade (on point-scale) or mark (per cent) put on top of the response sheets. Such a grade or mark may stimulate some communication or reaction on the part of the learner, but it cannot go far pedagogically, as in such a case, the tutor has functioned more like an ‘examiner’ than as a correspondence / distance tutor. His tutorial input, the actual third link in the chain of two-way communication, should consist of ‘constructive criticism, encouragement, etc.’, for it is comments and not mere grades / marks that improve learner performance.

Baath emphasises the pedagogic significance of tutor-comments which form the crucial link in the chain of two-way communication in correspondence / distance education. Secondly, his realisation is that, in spite of the pedagogic significance of assignments, etc., there is a tendency “to reduce the amount of postal two-way communication”. We may be inclined to believe that this is a dangerous tendency. It might be that alternatives will be found, as Baath did by way of building in “some kind of two-way communication within the material” in terms of self-check exercises, detailed model / specimen answers, etc., but the significant point that emerges from this discussion is that *two-way communication is needed* for improving learner performance.

Now we turn to yet another important point made by Baath.

### **Pre-enrolment counselling**

In his significant work on the analysis of distance education on the bases of some of the well-known teaching models (such as the ones presented by Skinner, Rothkopf, Ausubel, Bruner, Rogers, etc.). Baath suggests, among other things, that we could very broadly talk of two distance teaching models:

- i) the models which display stricter control of learning towards fixed (academic) goals, and
- ii) the models which display less control of learning towards fixed (academic) goals.

Having identified these two broad models, he finds that the former tends to focus on teaching/learning materials — making them self-sufficient in as many ways as they possibly can be — and relegate two-way communication between the learner and the tutor/institution to an insignificant position in the overall teaching/learning process, while as the latter assigns a significant role to two-way academic communication in their teaching/learning schemes. Without passing any value judgement on either of these models, Baath is pragmatic in suggesting that the

design of teaching/learning materials, of course, is important (as two-way communication can be built into them) but no less important is two-way communication, on its own merit, be it by mail, telephone or in a face-to-face situation. To these two prime factors responsible for the success of distance education, he adds one more, namely ‘pre-enrolment counselling’. He adds this factor as his analyses of learning strategies show that learners, especially adult learners, need help in:

- i) defining and identifying their learning goals,
- ii) selecting suitable materials to achieve those identified goals, and
- iii) resolving their academic difficulties and promoting or sustaining their motivation.

**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”.

8) How does the distance tutor operate to effect ‘two-way communication?’

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**2.4.7 Theory of Continuity of Concern**

In this sub-section we shall touch upon the view of David Sewart, who entered the area of distance education in 1973 at the British Open University. His experiences in tutorial services, made available at the regional and study centres of the University, have convinced him about the immense significance of these services to such an extent that he believes that the crux of distance teaching is a ‘continuity of concern for students learning at a distance’. The expression ‘continuity of concern’ proposes a human element in an otherwise “industrialised” form of education. In a sense, Sewart reinforces the view of Baath, but with greater emphasis. The strength of his conviction lies in the pragmatic approach he suggests. We shall discuss it below.

**Vital need for human support:** Sewart argues that distance education institutions / universities are essentially institutions of mass education, and a particular package of materials is served to hundreds of students, and in many cases to thousands of them. Can such a single package perform all the functions of a teacher (who in the worst situations has to adjust his/her reach to say about a hundred or more students) on the one hand, and cater to the vast variety of the needs and the idiosyncracies of distance learners on the other? Sewart’s answer to both the questions seems to be a clear ‘no’.

If a package of materials with such qualities is to be produced it will formidably be expensive, as it will have to display all the interactive processes which obtain between the teacher and each individual learner. The implication is that, however sophisticated the design and vast the reach of such materials may be, the learner body will always need additional human support which alone can match the infinite variety of problems that non-contiguous teaching/learning gives rise to. The distance teaching institutions will have to provide this advisory and tutor support through a human agency which alone can guarantee the 'continuity of concern for students learning at a distance'. The pre-planned package of materials is a constant. It needs human versatility to help the distance learners exploit this constant to satisfy an infinite variety of their needs and difficulties.

**Major issues and compromises:** The major issues that Sewart addresses to himself are:

- i) the lack of immediate feedback, and
- ii) near total absence of peer group interaction.

It is not as though other thinkers have not considered these issues, but they have not chosen to be so emphatic about their pedagogic significance as Sewart is. It is primarily on the bases of the attitudes towards the issues which Sewart has been emphatic about, that the educationists are divided into two camps:

- i) those who are not ready to recognise a system of education that is bereft of all important human element, crucial in any process of learning — lack of esteem for distance education is mainly a consequence of this attitude of suspicion; and
- ii) those who are all out for distance education, and would like to reduce the human element in distance education to the minimum.

Sewart rejects both the views. He is not with the former as he justifies distance education with three very strong arguments:

- i) Education should benefit from new communication technologies and exhibit their potential maximally. Distance education depends on and provides for the utilisation of such technologies.
- ii) Education has to be democratised, the left-outs have to be taken care of, steps have to be taken that no societies allow left-outs of any kind. Only distance education can meet this challenge.
- iii) Given the limited human, economic and spatial resources, the only viable mode of education is distance education.

Nor is he with the latter group, for he emphasises the role of the human element in distance education. As he characterises distance teaching / learning packages essentially by their constancy, he would like to provide for:

- i) the infinite variety of learner problems,
- ii) immediate feedback, and
- iii) peer group interaction.

To resolve all the three issues effectively, Sewart emphasises the introduction of the human element in distance education, whereby a continuity of concern for students learning at a distance can be maintained. It may be noticed that Sewart

is presenting a compromise between the two extreme views mentioned above. And compromises, in their wake to bring in additional problems, both theoretical and practical.

The theoretical problems raised by Sewart’s views pertain to the very basic notion of distance education. A heavy component of face-to-face teaching in distance education programmes might sound to be a contradiction in terms. And secondly, the provision for such extensive human support will falsify some of the economic theories about distance education. On the practical front, to establish and maintain a vast network of such human support he brings in immense operational complexities in the overall management of distance education. Sewart provides answers to these problems. He contends that face-to-face elements in distance education should be regarded as its legitimate constituents like all other media constituents, and any legitimate obligatory expenditure to effect such inclusion of human support, its operational complexities notwithstanding, should not be grudged against, as the overall cost, i.e., that of the package of materials and human support put together, will still be less than what the conventional system will incur for a given large number of learners.

**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”.

9) List the main issues raised by Sewart. What are his suggestions for resolving the issues?

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**2.4.8 Theory of Communication and Learner Control**

The next contribution to be discussed here explicitly places sustained real two-way communication at the core of the educational experience, regardless of the separation of teacher and student. While mediated communication is a defining characteristic of distance education and an important design concern, this framework proposed by Garrison and Baynton (1987) and updated by Garrison (1989, cited in Garrison 2000) did not redefine the essential nature of the teaching-learning transaction. According to him:

- The central concept is that educational transaction is based upon seeking understanding and knowledge through dialogue and debate.
- The learning process requires two-way communication between the learner and the teacher.



- Learner control is to replace the concept of independence or autonomy: the opportunity and ability to influence and direct a course of events cannot be established by only one party, but based on interrelationship between independence (self-directedness) and support.
- Primary focus in learning is on facilitation of educational transaction.
- Technology is required to support the educational transaction.
- Technology and DE is inseparable.

Garrison (1989) reflects the assumptions of this paradigmatic shift. This model of the educational transaction at a distance placed the concept of control at the center of the transaction. Control was defined as the opportunity and ability to influence the educational transaction. This was intended to replace the concept of independence (self-study), often a core element of distance education with a more comprehensive perspective of the educational transaction. Shared control was seen to be reflective of the transactional nature of an educational experience. Two-way communication is central to control and at variance with independence that has the effect of reducing the legitimate and worthwhile role of the teacher and, thereby, risking isolation.

The control model places within the macro-structural level of teacher, student and content the micro-level transactional elements of proficiency (ability and motivation), support (human and non-human resources), and independence (opportunity to choose). Independence necessitated by structural constraints reflects only one set of variables to be considered in a complex educational transaction. Consideration of these transactional elements will determine the appropriate balance of control which can only be assessed and constantly adjusted through sustained two-way communication.

#### **2.4.9 Theory of Re-integration of Teaching and Learning Acts**

According to Keegan (1986, 1990) distance education is not primarily characterised by interpersonal communication, but is instead characterised by the separation of the teaching acts in time and place from the learning acts. In this view he is consistent with Moore, who contrasts distance teaching and learning and contiguous teaching and learning situations. Keegan's basis for the distinction is the nature of the resulting communication. Keegan reasons that based on the industrial-like character of distance education which emphasises the separation of the student from the teaching institution, a theoretical justification for distance education is to be found in the reintegration of the teaching and learning acts. In this step, Keegan diverges from both Moore and Holmberg who seem to view separation as both an advantage and a challenge to the autonomous learner. Keegan states (See [http://www.prof2000.pt/users/ajlopes/AF22\\_EAD/teorias\\_ead/Teorias\\_Amundsen\\_English.htm](http://www.prof2000.pt/users/ajlopes/AF22_EAD/teorias_ead/Teorias_Amundsen_English.htm)):

“The inter-subjectivity of teacher and learner, in which learning from teaching occurs, has to be artificially recreated. Over space and time a distance system seeks to reconstruct the moment in which the teaching-learning interaction occurs. The linking of learning materials to learning is central to this process.” (Keegan, 1986).

Keegan argues that this learning link is a given in traditional education, because the learner is in an environment created to support learning (i.e., the school and/

or university). Keegan believes that for the distance student, the recreation of the link between teaching and learning must be accomplished through interpersonal communication which is deliberately planned. The theme of interpersonal communication is similar to that of Holmberg, but rather focuses directly on the teaching or the learner; Keegan's focus is on the learning act. Like Holmberg, Keegan also considers that printed instructional materials can be designed to include many of the characteristics of interpersonal communication and he, therefore, does not limit his notion of interpersonal communication to telephone tutorials, teleconferences, or other similar forms.

Keegan reasons that the more successfully the distance education programme manages reintegration, the lower the drop-out rate, the higher the quality of learning, and the higher the status of the institution. Some support has been found for these hypotheses (Amundsen and Bernard 1989). Thus, while separation of teaching acts in time and place from learning acts is central to Keegan's concept of distance education, successful distance education, he believes, requires the reintegration of the two acts. Possibly the emphasis on making learning experiences equivalent for learners would contribute to the reunification of teaching and learning as simultaneously occurring acts.

#### **2.4.10 Theory of Equivalency of Learning Experiences**

The impact of new telecommunications technologies on distance education is far-reaching. Real-time television systems, such as the Iowa Communications Network (Simonson and Schlosser 1995), permit learners and instructors to see and be seen, hear and be heard, in almost the same way as in the local classroom. Keegan (1995) suggested that electronically linking instructor and students at various locations creates a *virtual classroom*. He continued by saying that,

The theoretical analyses of virtual education, however, have not yet been addressed by the literature: Is virtual education (interactive, live televised instruction) a subset of distance education or to be regarded as a separate field of educational endeavor? (p.18)

Education at a distance should be built on the concept of equivalency of learning experiences. The more equivalent the learning experiences of distant learners are to those of local learners, the more equivalent will be the outcomes of the educational experiences for all learners. This approach to distance education advocates a design providing for a collection of equivalent learning experiences for distant and local learners, even though these experiences may be different for each student. The objective of the instructional designer of distance education is to provide for appropriate, equivalent learning experiences for each student.

Elaborating this theory, Simonson (1995) states that it should not be necessary for any group of learners to compensate for different, possibly lesser, instructional learning experiences. Students should have learning experiences that are tailored to the environment and situation in which they find themselves. Thus, those developing distance education systems should strive for equivalency in the learning experiences of all students, regardless of how they are linked to the resources or the instruction they require. There are several key elements to Equivalency Theory; mainly they are the concepts of equivalency, learning experiences, appropriate application, students, and outcomes.

- i) **Equivalency:** Central to this theoretical approach is the concept of equivalency. Local and distant learners have fundamentally different environments in which to learn. It is the responsibility of the distance educator to design learning events that provide experiences with equal value for learners. The experiences of the local learner and the distant learner should have equivalent value even though these experiences might be very different.
- ii) **Learning Experience:** Second in importance is the concept of learning experience. A learning experience is anything that happens to the student to promote learning, including what is observed, felt, heard, or done. It is likely that different students in various locations, learning at different times, may require a different mix of learning experiences. Some may need a greater amount of observing while others require a larger dosage of doing. The goal of instructional planning is to make the sum of experiences for each learner equivalent.
- iii) **Appropriate Application:** Learning experiences suitable to the needs of the individual learner and the learning situation should be available and that the availability of learning experiences should be proper and timely.
- iv) **Students:** Students should be defined by their enrollment in a course, not by their location. They necessarily seek institutionally-based education, sanctioned by a recognized and accredited organization.
- v) **Outcomes:** The outcomes of a learning experience are those which are obvious and measurable, and these are significant changes that occur cognitively and effectively in learners because of their participation in the course or unit. Outcomes consist of at least two categories: those that are instructor-determined and those determined by learners. *Instructor-determined* outcomes are usually stated as course goals and objectives and identify what learners should be able to accomplish after the learning experience that they could not accomplish prior to participating in it. *Learner-determined* outcomes are less specific, more personal, and relate to what the learner hopes to accomplish as a result of participation.

If teachers, learners, and the public in general identify learning at a distance as the equivalent of what they consider to be traditional learning, then distance learning will become mainstream. If equivalency is not what the public perceives, then distance education will continue to be peripheral to the field of education.

### 2.4.11 Evaluating Distance Education Theories

To conclude the protracted discussion on the theories of distance education, we must admit that we have not been exhaustive, and we never meant to be. However, the purpose of presenting the views of different thinkers to you was to acquaint you with the major lines of thought that seem to give direction to distance education today. As our purpose is limited, we haven't tried to evaluate each of these theories by arguing for and against them, nor have we tried to compare and/or contrast them with each other.

It may not be a mere accident that the European thinkers feel more concerned about the pedagogies of distance education, whereas the Americans feel concerned about the motivational aspects in distance education. Socio-cultural differences

may have a lot to contribute to such differing orientations. We will find occasions to see in what ways these theories are either already discernible, or may find use in your context of distance education. An environment in which technology, society, economics, politics, and approaches to learning are all in transition suggests that theories, definitions, and the practice of distance education will continue to be contested. This theme of change will both challenge and motivate distance educators and researchers as they strive to understand and develop effective ways to meet the needs of learners around the world.

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## 2.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have presented to you an overview of the concept of distance education, certain related terms in use, and the concept and scope of lifelong education. The basic purpose of providing this overview is that you should be able to not only explain and distinguish the above terms and concepts but also to read and understand further the materials on these concepts with more clarity. Further, we discussed different theories of distance education to understand the foundations on which it is based. While discussing different theories of distance education we highlighted the contributions of seminal thinkers such as Wedemeyer, Moore, Dohmen, Peters, Homberg, Baath, Sewart, Keegan, and others to the field of distance education. In the discourse, we laid due focus on the evolutionary character of distance education and the relevant theories starting from independent study to re-integration of teaching and learning acts. We have highlighted the diversity in the theories with a view to present to you a comprehensive picture of the theoretical status of distance education and the need for and scope of further theorizing on it.

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## 2.6 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’ QUESTIONS

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- 1)
  - i) Holmberg.
  - ii) ‘Independent study’, ‘learner autonomy and ‘self-study’. All these are aimed at promoting individualized learning.
- 2) In correspondence education there is organized instruction and education mainly through written or printed material sent by post to the learners. There may or may not be a provision for face-to-face contact. Distance education employs multimedia — print, audio, video, radio, television, telephone, computers, etc. — approach to teaching-learning, including fact-to-face contact.  

Open education is a philosophy that espouses openness in terms of relaxed entry qualifications, flexibility in choice of courses, learning according to learners pace and convenience of learning, use of multimedia for instruction, and so on. Distance education refers to a mode of education which may or may not be open.
- 3) Lifelong education is a broader concept and aims at education of all people of all ages and stages engaged in all walks of life. In essence it aims at paving the way towards a learning society, a society in which every individual is engaged in learning activities throughout the life. All concepts and terms – formal, non-formal, informal, correspondence, distance and open education, etc., — form part of lifelong education.

Implementation of lifelong education requires radical transformation of the very concept of education and complete overhaul of the educational system. It has sweeping implications for learners and their learning processes, teachers and the instructional methods, educational institutions and evaluation of lifelong learning.

- 4) An independent study system is claimed to have the potential to change the learner culture and teacher culture primarily because of the following two reasons:
  - i) In an independent study system, the learner has the freedom to start a programme, to go at his/her own pace and stop his/her learning activities whenever he/she wants to. That is to say, it is he/she who is responsible for his/her progress or failure. On the contrary, in a traditional system of education the learner is controlled by many variables — teacher, classroom situation, examination patterns, time schedule, etc.
  - ii) Learning in an independent study system can be made more and more relevant to individual needs and it is the learning activity which becomes more significant than the teaching effort. And so, the teacher has a completely different role to play in the teaching / learning process.
- 5) As far as learning ‘car driving’ is concerned the objectives are set by the learner himself/herself and not by any external agencies (you can compare it with any traditional teaching programme, in which the learning objectives are set by external agencies — material-designer, teacher, etc.), whereas methods, materials, and evaluation are determined by the instructor. Thus, the learner is autonomous (A) as far as his/her objectives are concerned, but non-autonomous (N) as far as the procedures of learning and the final evaluation are concerned. So, we label the programme as ‘ANN’.
- 6) Four features which are common to an open university and an industry are:
  - a) division of labour
  - b) mass production
  - c) systematisation
  - d) lay-out
- 7) The conversation is ‘guided’ and ‘didactic’ because the course developers guide the distance learners – primarily on academic and pedagogic issues – through easily readable and reasonable colloquial style of presentation.
- 8) A distance tutor helps effect two-way communication by using his/her comments as a tool. That is to say, instead of following the customary way of putting a mark or a grade on the top of the response sheets as an indicator of his/her having gone through them, a distance tutor writes constructive criticism and encouraging comments to help bring about ‘most remarkable improvements’ in learner performance.
- 9) The infinite variety of learner problems is due to:
  - a) absence of immediate feedback, and
  - b) absence of peer group interaction.

Sewart suggests that the problems can be resolved if ‘human-support’ constitutes a significant part in the system of distance education.



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## 2.8 UNIT END EXERCISES

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### 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) Define distance education. Trace the evolutionary trend, if any, in the definitions given by different distance educationists (1000 words).
- 2) List different terms related to distance education. Explain the similarities and differences between and among these terms and also vis-à-vis distance education (1000 words).

- 3) List different theories of distance education. Highlight their relative significance in explaining the practice of distance education (1000 words).



### Questions for Critical Reflection

- 1) Do you think there is an evolutionary trend in the theories presented in this unit? Justify your answer with reference to their essential elements.

### Activity



*Read Section 2.3 once again with a view to: i) identify and write down the similarities and main differences among different concepts; and ii) identify and note down any specific concept(s)/term(s) that you could not understand clearly. Discuss these points with your colleagues, academic counsellors and other resource persons in the opportunities you get at the study centre during your course of study to improve your understanding of the same.*

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## UNIT 3 INDIAN EXPERIENCES

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### Unit Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Education through Open and Distance Learning
  - 3.2.1 Democratisation of Education vis-a-vis DE Programmes
  - 3.2.2 Open University System
  - 3.2.3 Open Schooling
  - 3.2.4 Teacher Education
- 3.3 Problems and Challenges
  - 3.3.1 Dual Mode Universities
  - 3.3.2 Single Mode Universities
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.5 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions
- 3.6 References
- 3.7 Unit End Exercises

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### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

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As discussed in Unit-1, Open and Distance Education (ODE) system in India originated at the university level and moved towards school education, which, of course, is a general feature in the history of ODE internationally. But the inception of distance education (DE) through correspondence courses had dual purpose in India — one, diversion of the pressure groups of aspirants of higher education to correspondence education programmes, which is cost-effective; and two, democratization of higher education through enhanced equity and equality of opportunities. We have also dealt with these aspects in greater and gave due exposure to the recommendations and expressions of various educational bodies as well as of policy documents that provided proper grounds in this regard.

A global fact is that, because of the efforts for democratisation of education after the Second World War, DE as a system has expanded in almost all the countries of the world and passed through different stages over almost one century. Its concept and functions have been very much related to the development of communication technology in general and educational technology in particular. While we will focus on the global practices in Unit - 4, in the present unit you will be presented with detailed account of Indian experience of DE. In this context, before you read this unit further, we suggest you to revisit the detailed account of the policy perspectives given in Unit - 1, Section 1.3.

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### 3.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- understand Indian experience of ODE;
- depict scenario of ODE at national level; and
- analyse the issues, problems and challenges of ODE practice in India.



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## 3.2 EDUCATION THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

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We are aware that the constitution of Indian Union adopted democracy as the core of social system. A democratic system can survive in society through democratization of education system. As a principle it was emphasized that education in the country should adopt democratic approach to provide equal opportunities for of all including those who are aspirants for higher education. Because of many constraints involved at the level of Government in expanding the conventional educational system and the inherent limitations of the conventional system at all levels in democratizing education in general and higher education in particular remained an unfulfilled dream till date.

### 3.2.1 Democratisation of Education vis-a-vis DE Programmes

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 for democratization of education in India. Therefore, the policy of Government of India towards distance education has been consistently favourable since the beginning of the sixties. Distance education in India found its roots in the national efforts to identify and promote the alternative means to address the growing problems, demands and challenges of education with a view to democratize education at all levels. Section 1.3 of Unit-1 has provided you a clear picture of consistently favourable policy formulations and directions of the Government of India towards distance education since the beginning. In Section 1.5 of Unit-1, we have adequately dealt with democratization of education through distance education. In other words, it highlighted the role and significance of distance education in democratization of education at all levels of education. Further in sub-section 1.2.2 of Unit-1 we have presented you an overview of open and distance education in India.

Therefore, in the sub-sections to follow here, we will discuss in detail the open university system, open schooling and teacher education efforts through ODE.

### 3.2.2 Open University System

The introduction of open university system in the country has been linked with creation of open university in the UK in 1969, which proved to be a great success. You are aware (See Unit-1) that 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 organized 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 an open university. The working group, after having studied thoroughly the pattern of the UK Open University, and the possibility of creating a open university in India, had submitted its report in 1974, and recommended that:

*The Government of India should establish, as early as possible, an open university by an act of parliament. The university should have jurisdiction over the entire country so that, when it is fully developed any student, even in the remotest corner of the country, can have access to its instruction and degree.*

Subsequently, though a draft bill was prepared by the Union Government for the establishment of a National Open University the process was delayed. Meanwhile, the initiative of Government of Andhra Pradesh resulted in establishment of a state Open University (APOU) in 1982 which was later renamed as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU).

With the revival of the efforts by the Union Government, a national open university named after late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi came into existence on September 20, 1985. The main aims of IGNOU as highlighted in the preamble of the IGNOU Act, 1985, read as:

- introduction and promotion of open university and distance education systems in the educational pattern of the country; and
- co-ordination and determination of the standards in such systems.

In 1991, IGNOU established the Distance Education Council (DEC) as a statutory body for determination, promotion, coordination and maintenance of standards in the open university and the distance education system in India.

### **Present Status**

Encouraged by the success of BRAOU and IGNOU, other states like Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka other states have established open universities. Thus, since 1982 till date, there are 15 open universities in the country which have been established over a period of 35 years. These are:

*National Level:* Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi, India (1985).

*State Level:*

- 1) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, (BRAOU), Hyderabad, A.P. (1982).
- 2) Nalanda Open University, Patna, Bihar (1982).
- 3) Kota Open University (KOU), Kota, Rajasthan (1987).
- 4) Yashwant Rao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU), Nasik, Maharashtra (1989).
- 5) M. P. Bhoj Open University, Bhopal, M. P. (1992).
- 6) Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat - (1994).
- 7) Karnataka state Open University, Mysore, (1996).
- 8) Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Open University, Kolkata, West Bengal (1997)
- 9) U.P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Allahabad, U.P (1999).
- 10) Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu (2002)
- 11) Pt. Sundarlal sharma Open University (PSSOU), Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh (2004)

- 12) Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani (Nainital) (2005)
- 13) Krishna Kanta Handique State *Open University* (KKHSOU), Guwahati, Assam (2005).
- 14) Odisha State Open University (OSOU), Sambalpur, Odisha (2015).

The impact of IGNOU on open learning system in India is substantial. The Open University system occupies unique position in DE today because of its autonomous character in the field. The instructional system of the Open University has incorporated the use of self-instructional multi-media packages, facilities for intensive student support services and extensive use of modern information and communication technologies like Educational TV (telecast), Video films, teleconferencing, Video conferencing, Computer networking and so on.

IGNOU being the national university has the largest network of its Regional and Study Centres, among others, established for providing effective support services to the students enrolled for its large number of programmes. For example, by 2011 when IGNOU was celebrating its Silver Jubilee year its profile was as follows (See Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: IGNOU at a Glance**

Aspect	Number
Schools	21
Divisions	12
Chairs	5
Centres	8
Institutes	5
Regional Centres	67
Teachers and Academics	538
Administrative personnel	1,303
Learners Support Service Centres	3,252
North Eastern Educational Development Project (Regional Centres)	9
Learners support centres	552
Overseas Learners support service centres	70
Overseas Learners enrolment.	43,500
Academic Counsellors	48,000
Ph D Programmes	49
Academic programmes	511
Online Programmes	27
Community Colleges	258
On-campus programmes	26

Uploaded study materials (open sources)	95% (in total)
Active registered users repository (OER)	60,000
Students registered in 2011	8.6 lakhs
Students on rolls	2.9 million
Degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded (2011)	1.5 millions
Volumes of Course Materials	1,62,99,063.
Audio Video Programmes	3,718
Learners taken term end expatiations (2011-12)	28,73,147
Learners awarded Degrees (2011-12)	14,80,393
Available SMS alerts	All over the country
Free education for prisoners	4,110 (jails in India)

**Source:** 1) IGNOU Profile 2011. IGNOU, New Delhi, August 2011.  
2) *24th Convocation: Vice-chancellor’s Report*. IGNOU, September, 2011.

Other OUs (SOUs) have also established their networks of Regional Centres, Study Centres, etc in their respective states or geographical areas of jurisdiction. Thus, the open universities in India have established a wide network of Regional Centres and Study Centres.

In addition, these universities have adopted consortium approach under erstwhile Distance Education Council (DEC) of IGNOU (the pre-cursor of the present Distance Education Bureau under UGC since 2012), to share study materials, electronic media-based inputs, teleconferencing, and other facilities / resources at the university level. Unfortunately, the consortium approach has not taken proper shape and deep roots to make distance education more open and flexible to reach the maximum number of students to its fullest extent and in the best possible ways.

**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) How many open universities are there in India? Name them.

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### 3.2.3 Open Schooling

As stated in Unit-1 (Sub-section 1.2.2) introduction of DE at school level followed developments of DE at university level. The idea of starting DE at school stage was originated in 1964 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. By early 1970s the Boards of Secondary Education of different states and union territories started offering correspondence courses in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

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

The major objective of the NOS is to provide opportunities for continuing and development education to the interested learners, through courses and programmes of general education, life enrichment modules and vocational courses. It also aims at identifying and promoting standards of learning in DE systems and Open Schools which may be set up in different parts of the country.

The NOS offers a number of programmes at different levels, viz. Bridge Course (for those who have completed class V); Secondary Course, Senior Secondary Course, and Vocational and life enrichment courses for others and more courses for the specific priority groups. The NOS adopts print-based materials, audio-video materials and personal contact programmes as components of instruction. It has more than accredited institutions all over the country for providing various kinds of services, e.g., admission, conduct of personal contact programmes, guiding and counselling the students, distributing study materials and evaluation activities.

Unlike other DE institutions at school level which restrict their focus on secondary stage, the Andhra Pradesh Open School (APOS) focuses on elementary education. The APOS project intends to motivate and bring back to school the dropouts (from the formal stream, who dropped out because of various factors) and provide academic support to the boys and girls of the village as a whole. The APOS concentrates on village level operation of selected districts in the state. It provides learning packages of print and audio materials and facilities of instructor-guided activities in the village level centre on regular basis according to convenience of students.

The correspondence education programmes of other states aim at giving opportunity to secondary school dropouts (e.g. higher secondary in UP). They



follow the same syllabi as offered by respective state boards of secondary education. All the institutes use their respective print-based materials as principal medium of instruction. They have provision of assignments and personal contact programmes.

National Open School was subsequently renamed as the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). The Mission of NIOS is to provide education to all with special concern for girls and women, rural youth, working men and women, SCs and STs, differently-able persons and other disadvantaged persons who because of one or other reasons could not continue their education in the formal system of education. NIOS has taken special initiatives for imparting education to jail-inmates by setting up Study Centres in Jails all over India and granting them full fee exemption. NIOS operates through a network of Twenty Regional Centres, two Sub-Regional Centres, One Sub-Regional Cell and more than six thousand six hundred twenty Accredited Institutions (AIs) and Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs) popularity known as Study Centres in India, Nepal and Middle East Countries (NIOS Prospectus 2016-17, See [http://www.nos.org/media/documents/prospectus/AcadProspectus\\_2016\\_17.pdf](http://www.nos.org/media/documents/prospectus/AcadProspectus_2016_17.pdf)).

NIOS is one of the three National Boards; the other two Boards are: (i) Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE); and (ii) Council for Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE). NIOS acknowledges previous knowledge by allowing transfer of credits of up to two subjects passed from International, National and State Boards of Examination / State Open Schools with whom NIOS has entered into an agreement. By 2016 the NIOS is as follows (Ibid).

- The largest Open Schooling system in the world with cumulative enrolment of 2.78 million (for last 5 years).
- 3.30 million learners have been certified in the Secondary, Senior Secondary and the Vocational Education Courses since 1991.
- More than 552,000 learners were admitted during 2014-15 in various courses.
- Reaches out through a network of 20 Regional Centres, Two Sub Regional Centres and more than 6620 Study Centres (AIs/AVIs) spread all over the country and abroad.
- Imparts education through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Mode using a media-mix of self-instructional print materials, audio, video and supported by Personal Contact Programmes at AIs. These are further supplemented by Radio broadcast T.V. programmes and Mukta Vidya Vani (Audio streaming through internet on NIOS website).

### 3.2.4 Teacher Education

The Education Commission (1964-66) suggested offering of correspondence courses in Science and Technology and facilitating professionalisation of teachers in remote areas. During 1967 the first delegation of UGC was sent to the erstwhile USSR to study their system of correspondence courses. The delegation recommended adoption of such system on restricted scale for clearing the backlog of untrained teachers who are already in regular service and also for improving the level of education of trained teachers with varying qualifications. The National Policy on Education, 1968 had also highlighted such ideas stating: “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 agriculture, industrial and other workers” (Govt. of India, 1968).

On the basis of education commission recommendations and the UGC delegation report wider discussions took place. Subsequently, the NCERT started correspondence courses in 1967 to provide B.Ed. degrees to untrained teachers through four Regional Colleges of Education located at Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Mysore respectively. After words, the scenario changed in Regional Colleges of Education. There was heavy rush for B.Ed. offered through distance education by different open universities, and Directorates of Correspondence Courses / Distance Education of dual mode Universities. During 1995-96 as many as 13 universities were offering B.Ed. programmes through correspondence courses and 3 state open universities were offering B.Ed. programmes through distance education in respective states. The Universities included: Andhra, Annamalai, Bhopal, Berhampur, Kakatiya, Kashmir, Kurukshetra, Maharishi Dayanand, Madurai Kamraj, Mysore, Osmania, Shivaji, Sri Venkateswara, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University (Gujarat), YCM Open University (Maharashtra) and Kota Open University (Rajasthan). In 2000, at national level, IGNOU has made a headway to start B.Ed. programme for untrained in-service teachers.

As an outcome of National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) guidelines (1996) several universities, Correspondence Course Institutes / Directorates of Distance Education began offering B.Ed. programmes. During 1996-97, on the basis of recommendations of UGC, NCTE-DEC joint committee, improvements were made in B.Ed. through DE mode. Accordingly, the State Open Universities started their B.Ed. programmes as per the guidelines set by the University Grants Commission, NCTE and Distance Education Council (1997) in respective states. The UGC has also set norms for introducing B.Ed. through correspondence courses during 1997.

Besides B.Ed. programmes, M.Ed. programmes have also been offered through correspondence or distance education by some universities. These universities include: Andhra, Annamalai, Himachal Pradesh, Kurukshetra, Madurai Kamraj, Osmania, Punjab, Kota Open University and IGNOU. The institutions like IGNOU and the Central Institute of English and Foreign Language (CIEFL), Hyderabad have also offered programmes through DE for professional growth of University / College teachers and School teachers at different levels in the country. Certain States like Madhya Pradesh offered DE programmes for untrained in-service primary school teachers for certificate courses. The experiment of teleconferencing programmes of Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) in collaboration with IGNOU for in-service orientation of Primary School teachers during 1996 became a landmark in using DE for primary teacher training programme. As a part of District Primary Education Project the IGNOU has launched a nationwide project for continuous orientation of Primary School teachers in regional languages through teleconferencing mode.

By offering M.Ed., B.Ed., diploma and certificate programmes in teacher education for professional development and capacity building of teachers at different levels — pre-primary, primary, elementary, secondary, senior secondary

and higher levels — education system, IGNOU has become the major provider of teacher education programmes in India. Currently, it has launched its BEd (Revised) programme since July 2016, which is based on National Curriculum Framework, (NCF), 2005, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), 2009 and as per NCTE Regulations, 2014.

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### 3.3 PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

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As noticed above, open and distance education, no doubt, has contributed to addressing of certain problems and challenges facing education. However, ODE itself also suffers from varied problems and challenges cutting across its modes of delivery. Let us understand these in respect of dual mode and single mode universities.

#### 3.3.1 Dual Mode Universities

As you know, University of Delhi was the first one to introduce correspondence courses as a pilot project during 1962, 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).

Due to above developments, a number of universities introduced correspondence courses in different fields leading to degrees, diplomas and certificates. These universities cover all the zones of the country viz. East, West, North and South. As on March 2015, as approved by Distance Education Bureau (its pre-cursor being DEC till 2014) of UGC, there exist 210 dual mode universities / institutions (<http://www.university.careers360.com/articles/list-of-approved-distance-education-universities-in-india>), which have grown in their number during past forty years (1968-2015) to offer distance education programmes.

## Problems and Challenges

The DE units of these Universities / Institutes continue to function with dual system of education, i.e. offering face-to-face campus-based programmes and correspondence / DE programmes. As a result of growing competition, a few Institutions like Regional Colleges of Education had discontinued their programmes. In the case of Rajasthan and Karnataka the traditional universities, viz., Rajasthan, Udaipur and Mysore discontinued DE programmes in view of creation of State Open Universities.

A common major challenge pertaining to dual mode universities/institutions in India is that the DE Units in these universities lack complete autonomy in matters of policy planning, governance, management, curriculum development, learner support, quality assurance, application of ICT, etc. Further, their future challenge will be to sustain their distance education programmes in view of the ensuing or emerging competition among dual mode institutions on one hand and with the OUs in different states in India on the other.

Today, dual mode institutions and the dedicated distance education institutions continue to strive to fulfill their mission of expanding access to education for the disadvantaged groups.

### 3.3.2 Single Mode Universities

The Open University system occupies unique position in DE today because of its autonomous character in the field. The instructional system of the OUs uses self-instructional print materials as well as other multi-media packages, provides intensive and extensive student support services as are required and promotes wide-ranging applications of modern communication technologies like Educational TV telecast, Video films, teleconferencing, Video conferencing, and computer conferencing, computer networking, virtual universities and so on. Such instructional system is either missing or is not given due importance in dual mode institutions, which makes them different from open universities.

In Sub-section 3.2.2 above, we have discussed the growth of open universities in India. From that you know that beginning with the establishment of a state open university (BRAOU, Andhra Pradesh) in 1982 followed by IGNOU in 1985, till date, there are 15 open universities in the country. While these open universities continued as single mode universities, there was some exception with IGNOU, for it functioned as even a dual mode university during 2009-13 (offering campus-based face-to-face programmes along with its ODL programmes). You have already noticed its profile then in 2011. However, with subsequent developments at IGNOU, it again became single mode university offering programmes only through distance education mode and so continuing till date.

Nevertheless, ODE has played its historical role in contributing to the development of human resources, by way of enhancement of quality, equity and equality of higher education opportunities in India. During Eleventh Five year plan alone IGNOU, State Open Universities and DE Institutions have contributed an enrolment of 6.97 lakh, 3.03 lakh and 9.28 lakh respectively ([http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp\\_vol3.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/12th/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf)). Further, distance education enrolment constitutes 12.15% of the total enrolment in higher education, of which 45.39% are female students (Government of India, 2015).



## Problems and Challenges

Access alone is not enough. Many distance education writers and researchers have described the 'open door versus the revolving door' situation which occurs when institutions accept all students but do nothing to help them achieve success. This is not necessarily to support the 'value-added' concept of education, but rather a plea for the recognition that adults learning at a distance have special needs: planning, admission and registration assistance; financial assistance, especially for women reentering the academic world; access to necessary materials from the coordinating unit, bookstore, library and instructional media centre; accurate and timely information from one source; consistent and accurate academic counselling for program; and tutoring when the student needs help with the course materials, not at the convenience of the institution. ([http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00236B/WEB/UNI\\_03.HTM](http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00236B/WEB/UNI_03.HTM)). Thus, mere preparation and development of good quality of material is no guarantee for quality education by OUs. Support services such as delivery of course material to the learners, real-time direct feedback to the students, organization of counselling, use of multi-media support, conduct of examinations and timely publication of results continue to be the major challenge for all single mode universities, which follow print material as the major medium of instruction. All these will have determining impact on the students' retention rate, completion rate or students pass rate. A case study of IGNOU programmes by Lakshmi Reddy (2002) reveals that the average pass rate of students enrolled for different programmes over fifteen years is 8.85. In fact, there is a need to strengthen the implementation strategies for improvement in this front, by all single mode (open) universities.

Further, the future challenges of the ODL in general and that of IGNOU and SOUs in particular shall determine the future of the open and distance education system in India as a whole. It is often dependent on the policy focus and directions. The Government of India has accorded great importance to ODL in the Twelfth Plan, as evidenced from the high expectations of its share of contribution to education (See Table 1.5 of Unit 1).

With the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) at global level, India too is attempting to follow the suit. Of course, the efforts are on through SWAYAM, an indigenously developed IT platform, which is a programme initiated by Government of India and designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of Education Policy, viz., access, equity and quality. The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching learning resources to all, including the most disadvantaged. It seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy. The courses hosted on SWAYAM will be in 4 quadrants – (1) video lecture, (2) specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed (3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and (4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts. Steps have been taken to enrich the learning experience by using audio-video and multi-media and state of the art pedagogy / technology. In order to ensure best quality contents are produced and delivered, seven National Coordinators have been appointed: They are NPTEL for engineering, UGC for post-graduation education, CEC for



under-graduate education, NCERT & NIOS for school education, IGNOU for out of the school students and IIMB for management studies (<https://swayam.gov.in/About>).

You are now, perhaps, clear about the on-going efforts in open and distance learning which are expected to gradually move into open online learning in the future. But the issues and challenges of connectivity to the internet, its quality, flexibility and affordability vis-à-vis the programmes require greater attention from the perspective of the students.

While the use of local study centres may alleviate some problems, they have significant start up and running costs and generally cannot provide accommodation for many students at a time. If owning equipment is a necessary condition for participation, many disadvantaged people will be excluded on cost grounds. In such a situation whether the SWAYAM can really be massive in its reach will be big challenge to be addressed in future.

**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) What is the major future challenge of single mode and dual mode universities in India?

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**3.4 LET US SUM UP**

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This unit has acquainted you with Indian experience of ODE. You could see through how ODE institutions have expanded their presence and potential over the past five and a half decade in India. It also highlighted possible challenges, both present and future, to the single and dual mode institutions, in spite of bright future that ODE system has in the country.

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## 3.5 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’ QUESTIONS

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- 1) There are fifteen open universities in India. They are: Indira Gandhi National Open University, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (Hyderabad), Nalanda Open University, Kota Open University, Yashwant Rao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, M. P. Bhoj Open University, Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University, Karnataka state Open University, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Open University, U. P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Tamil Nadu Open University, Pt. Sundarlal Sharma Open University, Uttarakhand Open University, Krishna Kanta Handique State *Open University*, Odisha State Open University.
- 2) The major future challenge of single mode and dual mode universities in India is their sustainability through competition and collaboration for enhanced outreach and quality improvement in support services.

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## Suggested Readings

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## 3.7 UNIT END EXERCISES

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### 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) Discuss the contribution of Open University system to democratization of higher education in India. (1000 words).
- 2) What is the contribution of ODL to the school and teacher education in India? (1000 words).
- 3) What are the problems and challenges of single and dual mode universities in India? (1000 words).



## Questions for Critical Reflection

- 1) What do you think are the problems and challenges of school and teacher education through ODL in India? Try to formulate your suggestions for addressing them.

### Activity



*Write a critique of the role played by the regulatory body/bodies in respect of teacher education through distance mode in India.*

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## UNIT 4 GLOBAL PRACTICES

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### Unit Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Role of International Agencies
  - 4.2.1 International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)
  - 4.2.2 The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
- 4.3 Regional Associations/Bodies
  - 4.3.1 African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)
  - 4.3.2 Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU)
  - 4.3.3 Australian Council on Open, Distance and E-learning (ACODE)
  - 4.3.4 European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)
  - 4.3.5 European Distance E-Learning Network (EDEN)
  - 4.3.6 Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA)
  - 4.3.7 United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)
- 4.4 Accreditation Agencies
- 4.5 Regional Perspectives
  - 4.5.1 Africa
  - 4.5.2 The Americas
    - 4.5.2.1 North America
    - 4.5.2.2 South and Central America
    - 4.5.2.3 The Caribbean
  - 4.5.3 Asia
  - 4.5.4 Australia and the Pacific
  - 4.5.5 Europe
- 4.6 Mega Open Universities
- 4.7 Selected Significant Practices
  - 4.7.1 Course Team Approach (UKOU)
  - 4.7.2 Serving Remote Learners with Multiple Support Mechanisms (Athabasca)
  - 4.7.3 Innovative Courses (AIOU, YCMOU)
  - 4.7.4 On-Demand Publishing and Technology in Examination (University of Terbuka)
  - 4.7.5 Dual Mode Teaching (Deakin University and USQ)
  - 4.7.6 Teaching Science and Technology (IGNOU and OUSL)
- 4.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress' Questions
- 4.10 References
- 4.11 Unit End Exercises

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### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

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The onset of the twentieth century heralded a new era in global education system. A number of correspondence instruction schools were set up throughout Europe and in many other parts of the world. In England a number of private correspondence colleges were set up to coach students for various school and university examinations. In Russia (in fact, the former USSR as a whole), by the



early 1960s, correspondence study became the main form of study at the university level — more students studied through correspondence courses than through regular classroom instruction in colleges and universities. In Japan, correspondence courses became popular catering to over a million students. In Australia and New Zealand, correspondence instruction came to be used to teach children who had never been to a classroom. In the USA distance education played an important role in adult and continuing education. Distance education has gradually spread all over the world and became an important, inevitable and irreversible phenomenon of educational evolution.

The advancements in the field of ICT has led to the integration of innovative communication media resulting in new types of ODE institutes such as Universities of the Air, Tele-Universities, Open Universities, Virtual Universities and so on, of which some became mega open universities. Also, consequently, there has been growth of organizations/associations ODE institutions and their collaborations at national, international, regional and global levels. In this unit, we will therefore attempt to present you a glimpse of the regional perspectives in ODE with particular reference to Africa, Asia, Australia, the Pacific Region, Middle East, and the North, South and Central Americas.

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## 4.1 OBJECTIVES

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By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the role of international agencies/bodies and associations of ODE;
- appreciate the regional perspectives in global practices of ODE;
- know select open universities or ODE institutions in select countries in different countries/regions;
- identify the mega open universities in the world; and
- discuss some significant practices of select ODEIs.

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## 4.2 ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

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In this section an attempt is made to present to you a brief overview of the prominent international and regional bodies/agencies working in the field of ODE.

### 4.2.1 International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

The International Council for Correspondence Education (ICDE) was founded in 1938 in Canada, which has been renamed as International Council for Distance Education (ICDE), and later as the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). ICDE's Secretariat is in Oslo, Norway, which has been hosting it on a permanent basis since 1988. It is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and by its membership fees.

ICDE is the leading global membership organization for the ODE community, and is open to institutions, educational authorities, commercial actors, and individuals. Currently ICDE member network has 156 institutional members (including open Universities, amongst others); 90 individuals and 20 associate members (<http://www.icde.org/icde-members>).

ICDE is officially affiliated to UNESCO in category 'A' international non-governmental relations, and cooperates closely with the United Nations. It has consultative partner status with UNESCO and shares its key value of promoting universal right to education for all. Acting as a coordinating body, ICDE strives to promote knowledge of and improvement in open and distance education throughout the world. It also provides for its member institutions consultancies and advice at reduced costs. Further, it has close working relations with a number of international associations of ODE institutions across the world.

ICDE derives its position from the unique knowledge and experience of its members throughout the world. It promotes greater educational opportunity for all, sets the highest standards of educational provision, drives best practices, supports the development of new methodologies and use of new technologies. It provides opportunities for professional interaction, promotes intercultural cooperation and understanding, encourages and supports linguistic groups and networks at national, regional and, global levels.

ICDE's key activities include organization of its meetings, and conferences such as the biennial World Conference, the annual Standing Conference of Presidents, and regional conferences from time to time, at the initiative of the member institutions. The first World Conference of this Council was held in Victoria, B. C. in 1938. Though, for various practical reasons, it could not hold the subsequent World Conferences with regular periodicity, till 2015 it held 26 World Conferences. The 26th World Conference was hosted by University of South Africa (UNISA).

Since 1999, ICDE has sought to recognize outstanding achievement in open and distance education through the Prize of Excellence award. It has established various 'interest groups'. One such group, for example, is called the *ICDE Women's International Network*, which offers opportunities for women in open and distance education to meet and to deliberate on special issues, i.e., those with particular relevance for them.

ICDE publishes the online journal, *Open Praxis*, and maintains the ICDE website and monthly newsletter service as its chief information channels for members and other interested parties within ODE.

#### **4.2.2 The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)**

COL is an international organisation established by Commonwealth Governments in September 1988, following the Heads of Governments Meeting held in 1987. Its headquarters is in Vancouver and it is the only Commonwealth intergovernmental organisation created outside Britain.

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

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

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

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

Having discussed the role of global agencies like ICDE and COL, let us now focus our discussion on the role of some regional bodies/associations of ODE.

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### **4.3 REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/BODIES**

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With the growth of ODEs in different parts of the world, there has been the emergence of national and regional associations of ODE. In this section, we will present to you some prominent regional associations by taking them up for discussion in alphabetical order of their acronyms.

#### **4.3.1 African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)**

The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) was formally launched in January 2004 at Egerton University, Kenya. It is a unifying body of ODL providers in Africa. It is a continental educational organization comprising African universities and other higher education institutions which are committed to expanding access to quality education and training through ODL including e-learning. The mandate of the ACDE is primarily to promote research, policy and quality in open and distance learning to increase access to education and training in Africa. (<http://www.acdeafrika.org/about>).

#### **4.3.2 Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU)**

Founded in 1987, the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) is a non-profit organization of higher learning institutions that are primarily concerned with open and distance education. The objectives of the association are (<http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/~AAOUNet/main.html>):

- to widen the educational opportunities available to all the people of the region and to improve the cost-effectiveness of member institutions by exchanging management information, teaching materials and research;

- to help promote education by distance teaching systems, and develop its potentialities;
- to help promote professional and ethical standards amongst distance educators;
- to co-operate with official bodies and others directly or indirectly interested in education at a distance;
- to facilitate cooperation with other similar regional and international bodies in all the above objectives; and
- to do all other things incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives.

The AAOU membership consists of Full and Associate members, who share a common belief that the development of distance education can be obtained through friendship and close exchanges among institutions of open higher learning. It helps in enhancement of professional and academic networking and collaborations among individuals, groups, organisations and institutions who are members of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU). It also encourages inter- and intra-regional links with other similar organisations in the world.

The AAOU Annual Conference, hosted in turn by member institutions, is a stimulating forum for all those associated with open and distance learning in Asia, particularly academics, administrators and students. It provides a focal point for bringing everyone up to date on the issues, ideas and developments in the field of open distance learning.

#### **4.3.3 Australian Council on Open, Distance and E-learning (ACODE)**

The Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning (ACODE) is the peak Australasian organisation for universities engaged or interested in technology-enhanced learning and teaching. ACODE 's mission is to enhance policy and practice in open, distance, flexible and e-learning in Australasian higher education. ACODE seeks to influence policy and practice at institutional, national and international levels through (<http://www.acode.edu.au/>):

- disseminating and sharing knowledge and expertise;
- supporting professional development and providing networking opportunities;
- investigating, developing and evaluating new approaches;
- advising and influencing key bodies in higher education; and
- promoting best practices.

Institutional membership of it is open to universities in Australia, New Zealand and the south west Pacific region. ACODE is an Associate Member of the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE).

#### **4.3.4 European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)**

The European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) was established on 23 January 1987 by the principals of Europe's major distance

teaching institutions to foster co-operation among European organisations dedicated to higher education through distance teaching methodology. Members of the Association are non-profit institutions or non-profit consortia embracing independent higher education/teaching institutions and departments of universities/institutions which are responsible for distance (teaching) courses and research on distance education.

EADTU is Europe's leading institutional association for open and distance higher education, and is at the heart of the modernization agenda of European universities. Growing from its eleven founding members in ten European nations, EADTU now has a membership of fifteen institutions and fourteen national associations across 25 nations. Its membership covers over 200 universities and around 3 million students (<http://www.distancelearningportal.com/partners/eadtu>).

EADTU's mission is to empower and support its members by:

- developing and sustaining sector leadership at national and European level;
- fostering the development of open and flexible higher education in Europe;
- supporting the extension of learning opportunities and student mobility through networking and collaboration between institutions.

EADTU has a European coverage and is regarded as a key-partner of the European Commission as far as lifelong, open and flexible learning in distance higher education is concerned. It is committed to the creation of a European Learning Space in accordance with the Bologna Declaration and the ET2020 Strategy. EADTU defines itself through three critical features of European open and distance higher education:

- student-centered learning based on high quality online learning environments;
- openness to learners achieved through flexible, inclusive structures and methods that take higher education to students when and where they need it;
- networked education and mobility, where students can learn across national, sectoral and institutional boundaries.

The EADTU activities arise from a strong bottom-up approach, based on institutional needs, experienced by the universities or associations. EADTU and its members have a strong track record on:

- quality benchmarking for online and flexible education. See e.g., E-xcellence.
- open educational resources (OER) and MOOCs. See e.g. the OpenupEd on MOOCs.
- collaborative curricula and virtual mobility. See e.g. the Epics initiative on virtual mobility.

In addition, EADTU members offer their expertise concerning student-centered online education to the entire sector to assure that online teaching and learning in all European universities will reach the highest quality standards.



### 4.3.5 European Distance E-Learning Network (EDEN)

Originally founded as European Distance Education Network in the UK in 1991, it has been renamed as European Distance E-Learning Network in 2003. EDEN is the smart network for the professional community and a professional community for smart learning. Its aim is to foster developments in open, distance, flexible and e-learning (hereinafter distance and e-learning) providing a platform for all the regions and countries of Europe for co-operation and collaboration between institutions, networks, companies and other agencies in the field. The association also develops links with non-European associations and institutions. EDEN endeavours (<http://www.eden-online.org/about-us/>):

- to promote co-operation and collaboration between existing institutions and networks involved in providing or using distance and e-learning both in Europe and on a world-wide basis,
- to organise and support conferences, workshops and seminars to support professional development in the field of distance and e-learning in Europe,
- to facilitate and foster research and development in distance and e-learning,
- to make available information about current developments in distance and e-learning,
- to participate in world-wide international co-operation and collaboration, take part in projects promoting such activities and encourage and assist members in the elaboration of collaborative projects,
- to advise relevant national and international bodies, governmental and non-governmental, regarding education and training through distance and e-learning methods in Europe.

EDEN is the most comprehensive European open and distance learning association. With more than 200 institutional members and over 1200 members from universities, companies, national and professional distance and e-learning associations from 44 countries in the Network of Academics and Professionals (NAP), EDEN assists a wide range of institutions, networks and individuals to become involved in professional information and networking activities. It exists to share knowledge and improve understanding amongst professionals in distance and e-learning and to promote policy and practice across the whole of Europe and beyond. It does so through the organisation of acknowledged European conferences, its publications and information services, and by taking an active role in a wide range of important EU projects. EDEN also provides extensive secretarial support to the European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning (EURODL) (<http://www.openeducationeuropa.eu/en/institution/european-distance-and-e-learning-network>).

### 4.3.6 Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA)

The Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association (ASPESA) founded in 1974 is the forerunner of ODLAA (<https://odlaa.org/about/life-members/>). ODLAA is a non-profit professional association of educators, instructional designers, educational researchers, education consultants, and administrators from across Australia and overseas that is dedicated to advancement of research, practice, and support of education 'across time and space'. ODLA's aims are (<http://odlaa.org/about/who-we-are/>):

- to advance the research, practice and support of education across time and space;
- to continuously engage, support, and develop the learning community involved in education across time and space; and
- to become the learning community’s association of choice for those involved in education across time and space.

ODLAA connects professionals in order to share experiences and disseminate information with respect to open and distance learning. Its members come from all educational sectors plus commercial training providers and training units involved in management, administration, design, development, research and teaching in multiple modes that may best be described as ‘outside the traditional classroom’. ODLAA organizes periodical conferences and publishes Distance Education, a leading journal in the field of open and distance learning.

Unlike other regional associations of ODE, life membership in ODLAA cannot be purchased. It is conferred upon ODLAA members who have distinguished themselves by their service over an extensive period of time to the cause of open, distance and flexible learning in Australia. Nominations are brought forward by three members of the ODLAA community, considered by a panel, and decided at an annual general meeting. ODLAA currently has six life members.

#### 4.3.7 United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)

The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) was founded in 1987, on the premise of creating a powerful alliance to meet the burgeoning education and training needs of learning communities via new concepts of the fusion of communication technologies with learning in broad multidisciplinary applications. The learning communities that USDLA addresses are: pre K-12, higher education, continuing education, corporate training, military and government training, home schooling and telemedicine. USDLA focuses on national and international technology-based distance learning. Through its mission of supporting the development and application of distance learning USDLA also focuses on all legislation impacting the distance learning community and its varied constituencies (<https://www.usdla.org/about/history/>).

#### 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) i) Name two international agencies of ODE which are funded by government(s).

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- ii) List at least seven open and distance education/learning associations in the world.

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#### 4.4 ACCREDITATION AGENCIES

You are, perhaps, aware that accreditation is the process of benchmarking of academic quality of a higher education institution by an authorized/statutory accreditation body/agency. Quality of an educational institution means the quality of its teaching, learning and research. It includes infrastructure, human resources, curricula, admission and evaluation procedures and governance structure. Through the process of accreditation we are able to grade / rank an educational institution on the basis of certain quality indicators. Accreditation is therefore regarded as a higher education self-regulatory mechanism that plays a significant role in fostering public confidence in the educational enterprise of an institution. Since accreditation is mainly done through a self-evaluative exercise, it is an opportunity for the institution for critical self-analysis and review leading to qualitative improvement in its operations and offerings.

The assessment and accreditation is done by the government as well as private agencies, yet in most cases, governments have set up agencies to promote and check the quality and standards of education through assessment and accreditation of an institution. Generally committees are constituted to conduct accreditation's review process for making collective professional judgments. The concerned committee's responsibility is to provide an objective professional judgment to the Accreditation Body and to the institution. The committee also provides advice on other areas of educational improvement.

##### Global Models

ICDE Reports Series (Ossiannilsson, et al, 2015) covers the quality standard models with the intention to address the quality spectrum at macro, meso, and micro levels. The study reviewed more than forty quality standards models or guidelines from organizations and presents global overview of the existing relevant standards and guidelines for open, distance, flexible, and online education, including e-learning in all continents. It reviews international quality standard models and illustrates that there are models that require performance assessment of 20-30 items, others in excess of 100. The review indicates that concepts of quality can be applied at Macro (National / international), Meso (institutional) and Micro (individual practice) levels.

To provide you an idea of some accreditation agencies, experiences of the U.S, the U.K. and India are given below.

### *The U. S. experience*

Undoubtedly it is the United States that leads the way in its range of networks and associations for accreditation of educational institutions, and the variety of quality review and improvement processes that exist in distance learning.

The US Department of Education does not accredit educational institutions and/or programs. However, the Secretary of Education is required by law to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies that the Secretary determines to be reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training provided by the institutions of higher education and the higher education programs they accredit (<http://www.online-education.net/online-accreditation.html>). The United States has two routes to recognizing accrediting agencies — those directly recognized by the US Department of Education for federal financial aid purposes, as well as those recognized indirectly via a private organization called “The Council for Higher Education Accreditation” itself allied with the US Department of Education. From these two routes, there are literally hundreds of recognized accrediting organizations (many of which are recognized by both organizations).

Some of the most common accrediting agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education include (Ibid):

- MSA - Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- NASC - Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities
- NCA - Higher Learning Commission of North Central Region
- NEASC - New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- SACS - Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- WASC - Western Association of Schools and Colleges

These six agencies cover the major geographic regions within the United States.

Other widely recognized national accreditation agencies that accredit distance education programs and institutions include: National Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) and Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools (ACICS). Each agency has its own set of evaluation criteria for accrediting a program or institution. Thus, in the USA there are both Regional Accrediting as well as National Accrediting bodies like Distance Education and Training Council (DETC). The Regional agencies are not specialists in distance learning evaluation as DETC is. These agencies evaluate both distance education and “traditional” resident colleges and universities. However, DETC is more widely recognized national accrediting agency, which accredits distance education programs and Institutions. DETC has been specializing in distance learning accreditation for more than 80 years and is the only such specialized accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education (<http://www.online-education.net/online-accreditation.html>). The DETC was established in 1926 as the National Home Study Council (NHSC), a trade association for correspondence schools. Its formation was in response to a Carnegie Corporation study that found a lack of standards to ensure quality in correspondence schools and protect their students and the public from fraud. ([http://www.worldlibrary.org/articles/national\\_home\\_study\\_council](http://www.worldlibrary.org/articles/national_home_study_council)).

### *The U. K. Practice*

The Open and Distance Learning Quality Council (ODLQC), set up by the UK government in 1969, is the guardian of quality in open and distance learning' in the United Kingdom. The ODLQC follows a rigorous assessment of administrative and tutorial methods, educational materials and publicity measures of educational providers to ensure that all standards are met. Thus, accreditation in UK is based on the standards agreed by ODLQC as necessary to ensure good quality in ODL, whether by correspondence courses, e-learning, blended learning, home study or work-based learning. To achieve accreditation, a provider must submit to regular assessment by ODLQC, and show that the education or training offered meets the specified standards. The process normally takes between two and six months.

### *The Indian Experience*

In India the University Grants Commission (UGC), a statutory body set up by the central government in 1956, is responsible for the coordination, promotion and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations and research in the institutions of higher education in the country.

In 1987 the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) was set up by the Central Government to advise and support the development of technical education, mainly engineering, management, and pharmaceutical education in the country. In pursuance of the statutory authority vested in it, AICTE set up the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) in 1990 and it is mandatory for all technical Institutions in India to get accredited by NBA. Later, the UGC established an autonomous body namely the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 for accreditation of all non-technical institutions of higher education in the country that come under the purview of the UGC.

However, accreditation of ODL Institutions is not done by NAAC. Indira Gandhi National Open University, which was mandated to promote and maintain the standards of distance education in India, established Distance Education Council (DEC) in 1992. Since then, all open universities and other distance education institutions in the country have been seeking prior approval of DEC for offering programmes through distance mode. DEC had developed its own Scheme for Assessment and Accreditation of ODL institutions (DEC, 2009). According to the DEC Scheme an institution that has been in existence for at least five years is eligible to apply for accreditation. The institution has to undergo a rigorous process of self-evaluation for which it has to submit a comprehensive report. The report is examined by a team of experts who also visit the institution to evaluate and assess its strengths and weaknesses in order to recommend accreditation to the institution. Accreditation is accorded to an institution that meets standards, or satisfies criteria laid down for acceptable level of quality, as prescribed by the DEC. ODL Institutions are graded based on the various quality indicators laid down by the DEC in its Scheme for Assessment and Accreditation of ODL Institutions. But, since 2012 the situation has changed.

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 (the pre-cursor of Distance Education Bureau under UGC), which was the erstwhile regulator of Distance Education programmes, has been dissolved and all regulatory functions are being undertaken by the UGC through Distance Education Bureau (<http://www.ugc.ac.in/deb/>).

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## 4.5 REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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In this section, we will attempt to present an overview of the continental or regional perspective of the experience in open and distance education. For the purpose of convenience, we will take up the regions in the alphabetical order.

### 4.5.1 Africa

In most countries in the African region, the educational level of a majority of the people continues to be relatively low. As a result, some of the countries in this region decided to make primary education compulsory to improve the overall educational level of the people. But the colossal problem that they confronted was related to the training of teachers. Most of the school teachers were either under-trained or untrained. Correspondence education was considered the necessity for training the in-service teachers and for employing large number of properly trained teachers to cope with the programmes of future educational expansions.

The University of South Africa began offering its correspondence courses in 1946. However, it was only in the 1960s that many African countries started offering distance learning courses, mainly in the form of correspondence education. After, the first correspondence college was set up in Africa at Brazzaville in 1962, a number of countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Guyana, Ethiopia and Ghana organised distance education courses. The number of institutes using the distance education system gradually increased further and got multiplied over the period. This was a period when many African countries attained political independence and used distance education mainly for teacher upgrading and to extend formal education to out-of-school youth and adults. The philosophy of equal opportunity for all in mass education was one of the main considerations in the promotion of correspondence education in Africa. After the founding of the first correspondence college in Africa – the Centre d'Enseignement Supérieur in Brazzaville (Républic of the Congo) – in 1962, a number of similar institutions were established. Many countries in Africa increasingly realised the importance of correspondence education as a valuable contribution to the expansion of educational opportunities for all their citizens. Consequently, by 1972 there were 36 institutions providing education (in Africa) through correspondence teaching at various levels (Kabwasa and Kaunda, 1973, in Richard Siaciwena, 2000).

The African Association for Correspondence Education which works to coordinate the functions of the distance education institutions in the African region was initiated in 1973, but it became active only recently. Some countries were able to secure technical support from UNESCO and various other international organizations / institutions for developing self-instructional materials. The courses primarily comprise self-instructional print materials being supplemented by radio

and television programmes, audio-visual tapes, films, face-to-face sessions, vacation workshops, etc.

Zimbabwe got into distance education in a big way by establishing the Zimbabwe Distance (Correspondence) Education College in 1980. The Educational Resources Centre for refugees from South Africa and Zimbabwe adopted the distance teaching methodology in 1981 for preparing refugees for the government examinations. In order to cater to the increasing number of refugees, among others, from Ethiopia and other countries who arrived in the Eastern Region of Sudan, the Sudan Open Learning Unit was established in 1984. It was based on a needs survey conducted in 1982, and established with the help of the International Extension College, UK.

Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria have all set up university distance education programmes for teachers. Distance education units have been set up in Namibia, Swaziland, and Uganda, among others. But the numbers involved are relatively small and most universities offering only a narrow range of courses. Madagascar and Tanzania have set up open universities in 1992, to be followed by Zimbabwe and, more recently Nigeria. Currently, the University of South Africa dominates the field of distance education in Africa (Perraton, 2007).

### University of South Africa (UNISA)

The history of UNISA dates back to the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873. It was initially an examining and not a teaching university, with which some teaching colleges were affiliated. In 1946, the University was renamed the University of South Africa and moved to Pretoria. In January, 1964, the University of South Africa started giving distance education courses to off-campus students.

Offering study opportunities to more than 400,000 students from across South Africa, Africa and other parts of the world, UNISA offers a diverse choice of study fields at different levels, from certificate to doctorate degree. UNISA accounts for 12.8% of all degrees conferred by the country's 23 public universities and universities of technology (<http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/About>).

#### 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) What are the purposes intended to be served through organization of distance education courses in Africa?

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## 4.5.2 The Americas

Here, you may note that the USA is not America; America is rather a continent. The Americas, also collectively called America, encompass the totality of the continents of North America and South America. Let us look at distance education in the Americas.

### 4.5.2.1 North America

Distance education has greatly influenced the educational systems of North America, particularly the USA and Canada. North America has fairly large network of distance education institutions offering school and university level courses and also a wide variety of continuing education and non-credit courses. There has been a remarkable development of distance education in varied directions in these countries.

#### Canada

In Canada, correspondence education was used in 1889 to provide degree opportunities for rural teachers who were unable to attend McGill University on full-time basis. By 1912 the Universities of Saskatchewan and Alberta were offering off-campus self-study programmes for rural learners.

Canada has a number of correspondence schools which were set up mostly on account of shortage of school teachers. In 1921, correspondence education first started at primary school level and then at secondary level. Today most provinces continue to develop and offer k-12 distance education programming (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/distance-learning/>).

Although the first developments in distance learning were mainly print-based, Canada was an early adopter of new technologies for adult learning. In 1941 the CBC, the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the Federation of Agriculture together initiated Farm Radio Forum, for which series of radio broadcasts and materials for living room study groups were used. The 1960s brought increasing demand for further education and more universities began technology-based programs. This led to the development of an extensive number of audio- and then video-conferencing sites that were used for k-12 and adult education.

In the 1970s, with greater recognition of the possibilities of distance education, provincial governments moved to establish three institutions focused solely on distance education. In 1972, the Alberta government instituted Athabasca University (AU), which offered courses in arts and science and had an “open entry system”. AU relied on print course materials and student-tutor interaction via phone. In Québec, Télé-université was established to offer university credit and non-credit courses throughout the province. British Columbia established the Open Learning Institute (OLI) in 1978 to provide college, adult basic, technical, career, vocational and university education to students throughout the province (Ibid).

University of British Columbia (UBC) established the Open University Consortium in 1984 to facilitate the offering of degrees, diplomas, certificates, etc. The Consortium allows students to obtain degrees by choosing any courses

from the three universities of the Consortium and the Open Learning Agency. It has thus extended the concept and practice of credit transfer and introduced credit banking to B.C. Colleges and formed provincial consortia to share the costs of development and provision and aid innovation. The earliest, OntarioLearn (1995) has pooled resources from 24 colleges to become the largest college level course provider in North America. Others were Campus Manitoba (1998), BCcampus (2002) and eCampus Alberta (2003). (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/distance-learning/>).

Competition in distance and online education is growing among the nearly 100 public universities and university colleges across Canada. Most universities and colleges offer distance learning and blended learning options to their students. Recently, developments are that Universities moved to provide online learning. Open Educational Resources (OERs), and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

### **The United States of America (USA)**

The role of distance education in the USA is more extensive than in most other countries. The area in which distance education plays an important role in the USA is adult and continuing education. The fast growth of knowledge, emerging technologies, felt-need for 'continuing' or 'life-long' learning, among other things, led to the remarkable development of distance education in the USA. By the 1900s, the first department of correspondence teaching was established at the University of Chicago. However, the largest user of distance education is the US Federal Government, especially the Armed Forces.

***The United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI):*** It was established in 1942 in Madison, Wisconsin. It worked with University of Wisconsin and 70 other academic institutions to provide educational opportunities for thousands of members of the armed services, a mission of special significance during World War II and the post-war period. This allowed course work to be completed, through distance learning, during the service member's actual duty day. The Air Force was an early adopter of distance learning.

USAFI provided correspondence courses to more than 600,000 American servicemen and women during World War II. The institute also provided classroom instruction on army posts and aboard ship and even in theaters of operation throughout the war and during the occupation of Germany and Japan. The institute's program supplemented a massive, service-wide educational program necessitated by the high illiteracy and low skill rates of draftees. Limited to only a few weeks during each person's basic training, the educational effort had to turn illiterates into literates and then train them to be auto, truck and aircraft mechanics, bookkeepers, carpenters, medics and pharmacists' mates, quartermasters, signalmen, torpedomen and a host of other specialists. Even the most literate and often well educated draftees still needed some form of specialized education in engineering, meteorology, navigation, language translation and trauma medicine (<http://us-education.net/2292-united-states-armed-forces-institute.html>).

USAFI's work produced one of the most massive educational programs ever mounted by any nation in history. It included literacy courses at reception centers

across the United States and technical schools operated by the military at every base. In addition, the armed services established contractual arrangements with vocational schools, colleges and universities to provide service personnel with specialized training in foreign languages, engineering, medicine, dentistry, military government and other professional skills. (Ibid). It is thus a unique distance education organisation offering an extensive array of correspondence courses to enable the Armed Forces to acquire secondary and post-secondary, occupational and traditional education. The chief motive of the distance education programme offered by USAFI is to facilitate rehabilitation of the soldiers, sailors, and airmen after their retirement from active service.

***Extension Departments of the Universities and Independent Study Institutes:***

The extension departments of the universities and independent study institutes provide a wide range of vocational, technical and career-oriented courses, besides continuing education courses, to keep people up-to-date in their profession. The following 10 universities have well known correspondence institutions/directorates/departments: Brigham Young University; University of Missouri; University of Nebraska; Indiana University; Pennsylvania State University; Texas Technical University; University of Wisconsin; Louisiana State University; University of Minnesota; and University of California.

***Hadley School for the Blind:*** Founded in 1920 by William Hadley and Dr. E.V.L. Brown, the Hadley School for the Blind, in Winnetka, Illinois, offers courses free of charge to its blind and visually impaired students and their families, and affordable tuition to blindness professionals all over the world. The mission of the School is to promote independent living through lifelong, distance education programs for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, their families and blindness service providers. Today, Hadley School is the largest provider of distance education for people who are blind or visually impaired around the world, serving more than 10,000 students annually in all 50 states and in 100 countries (<http://www.hadley.edu/AboutHadley.asp>).

**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) Explain ‘learner autonomy’ provided by British Columbia.

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### 4.5.2.2 South and Central America

There is little information available in English on the practice of distance education in the South and Central America. Some countries in this region such as Costa Rica, Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil have made good progress in developing distance education. In this section, we give brief accounts of the distance education scenario in these countries.

#### **Brazil**

The first Brazilian university to develop distance education was the University of Brasilia with courses using the mail, personal meetings, and printed materials to teach the students. The Open University of Brazil was founded in the 1980's. In the 90s, the School of Education of the Federal University of Bahia started the optional DE course offered by the School of Education and the graduate alphabetization courses for teachers working in public school in distant locations in the State of Bahia (Freitas, 2005, See <http://www.davidpublisher.org/Public/uploads/Contribute/5658177481e2f.pdf>).

In 2006, the Brazil's Ministry of Education (MEC), created the open university system with the idea of putting together all institutions already offering courses through distance mode, without the need to open new institutions in the DE field. In this sense, Open University of Brazil (i.e. Universidade Aberta do Brasil, UAB) aims to bring public higher education to municipalities with no public colleges or whose colleges are insufficient to attend the demand UAB priorities are the initial training of teachers working with basic education who do not have college degree and the enhancement through continuing education of college-graduated teachers. UAB works through the integration and coordination of public universities committed to offer higher education to Brazilian municipalities and to meet the demand for training basic education teachers. For this, the system has established partnerships with federal, state, and municipal governments (Castro Neto et al., 2009, p.72, at <http://www.davidpublisher.org/Public/uploads/Contribute/5658177481e2f.pdf>).

In addition, there are universities offering distance education courses/programmes in Brazil, with Portuguese as the medium of instruction

#### **Costa Rica**

Costa Rica is one of the many developing countries where distance education is playing an increasingly important role in education. The most well-known distance education facility in Costa Rica is UNED (La Universidad Estatal a Distancia). It was established in 1977 to fulfill certain objectives: to educate rural populations and stifle the migration of youth to larger cities, and to educate persons in specific areas such as education and health. It is well regarded by employers and students. UNED developed a series of professionally oriented diploma and degree programmes comprising courses like general studies and professional studies in educational sciences, educational administration, business administration, public administration and banking, farm management and nursing, health services and child social services (<http://www1.american.edu/TED/costaricadl.htm>).

UNED also launched some extension courses such as environmental studies, teaching of geography, professional education, development of scientific interests and extension studies in health, family life, agriculture, crafts, etc. Moreover,

the university allows Free Studies Programmes under the scheme in which students can take any diploma or degree level programmes. Since 1980 the university has been collaborating with the Ministry of Public Education in developing course materials and training tutors for the Ministry.

### Venezuela

The government of Venezuela established Universidad Nacional Abierta (UNA) in 1977, on the principles of open education. The main aims and objectives of the university are:

- to train professionals in areas which are priorities for national development, and
- to offer educational opportunities to those who are unable to attend traditional higher education institutions.

It has one national centre in Caracas, with regional centres set up throughout the country. A Centre of Excellence in Distance Education has been established at UNA. It offers mostly formal academic programmes. But prior to admission to these programmes, the students are required to pass introductory courses which aim at orienting them to the practice of learning at a distance. After completing the introductory courses, the students can go in for their degree programmes which comprise general studies followed by professional studies. While the general studies provide an inter-disciplinary foundation to facilitate subsequent studies, the professional studies provide technical level short courses and full length professional courses leading to a degree in Administration, Education, Engineering, Mathematics, etc.

#### 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.) What is the marked difference between the distance education system of Venezuela and other countries of Central and South America, particularly Costa Rica?

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### 4.5.2.3 The Caribbean

The Caribbean is a region of the world that consists of the Caribbean Sea and all of the islands (some are independent countries while others are territories of other foreign countries).

The popular universities which offer programmes through open and distance education in the Caribbean include: The University of the West Indies (UWI) through its Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), Anton de Kom University of Suriname (AdeKUS), Université Quisqueya in Haiti (UniQ), The University of Guyana (UG) and The University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech). These universities were at very different levels of development and capacity in their ability to offer quality distance education (UNESCO, 2012, see <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002197/219711e.pdf>).

Although three countries have national distance education organizations, other countries in the region do not. To develop and support distance education in the region, a regional distance education network, the Caribbean Regional Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARADOL), was designed, publicized and developed in 2004 and launched in February 2005. Such national organizations will strengthen the operation of a regional organization such as the rekindled CARADOL (Ibid).

### 4.5.3 Asia

During past six decades there has been a phenomenal development of open and distance education in Asia. ODE has been recognised as a viable, effective, complementary or alternative system to the traditional one. Most of the countries in this region have established open universities. Due to limitations of space and purpose here, we shall take up for discussion distance education in only a few select countries, in alphabetical order.

#### Bangladesh

Being convinced of the relevance of distance education to the country's educational needs, Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE) was established in 1985 under the Ministry of Education, which replaced NIEMT. Some of the important programmes launched by the BIDE are:

- Bachelor's Education courses for in-service school teachers,
- Regular broadcasts and videos for school teachers,
- Support to primary teachers' training institutes and the national academy, and
- Primary education for pre-service and in-service training of primary school teachers.

The success of BIDE encouraged policy makers to take up a major plan for establishing an open university. Bangladesh Open University (BOU) thus became a reality in October 1992, and BIDE got merged into BOU, which is the only public institution in the country that imparts education through distance mode. It intends to provide opportunities of education to all classes of people and create efficient and skilled manpower by improving the quality of education.

The main objective of the university is to expand all levels of education in different dimensions in science, agriculture, humanities, social science, etc. by diversity of means including the use of digital technology. BOU thus provides not only higher education but also cover other educational and training needs for human resource development. It offers 26 formal programmes and 16 non-formal programmes, with student enrolment of 4,10,694 (<http://www.bou.edu.bd/>).

## China

China has a long tradition of correspondence education from the beginning of the twentieth century. Increasing population and growing demand for expanding the educational base of people, upgrading the skills of workers and broadening the awareness of Chinese people about the Cultural Revolution necessitated the establishment of correspondence education in China in dual mode universities. During 1960s, TV universities were set up in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang and some other cities in order to provide a convenient means for adult students to improve their education. Shanghai Television University (STVU) is an institution of adult higher education under the Shanghai municipality and is also one of the earliest radio and television universities in China. STVU has built co-operative relationships with open universities in Asia, Britain and the United States.

***China Central Radio & TV University (CCRTVU or CRTVU):*** CCRTVU/CRTVU is a dedicated distance education institution in China, which offers courses through multi-media — radio, TV, print, audio-visual materials and computer software. The CCRTVU together with 28 Provincial TV University (PRTVU) organisations was established on 6 February 1979. The system is run and operated at different levels, both central and local, on the basis of overall planning with the CCRTVU as its centre ([http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu/index.php/Open\\_University\\_of\\_China](http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.eu/index.php/Open_University_of_China)).

CCRTVU offers educational opportunities to workers all over China. Admission to this university is done mainly on the basis of an entrance test. Instruction is imparted chiefly through television, back-up written materials and face-to-face sessions. The university also offered degree programmes in science and technology, social sciences, etc. It changed its name in 2009 into the Open University of China (OUC).

***Open University of China (OUC):*** The OUC upholds the educational philosophy of “Openness, Responsibility, Quality, Diversity and Internationalization”. The university is rapidly expanding non-degree continuing education while continuing to develop degree continuing education, integrating modern technology with education to build an “overpass” for lifelong learning. It assigns equal weight to degree and non-degree education. At present, there are 3.59 million registered students, of which 1.05 million are undergraduates and 2.54 million are junior college students. Among them, there are about 200,000 rural students, 100,000 military personnel and 6,000 disabled students. The establishment of the OUC marks the start of a new journey in the history of RTVU system (<http://en.ouchn.edu.cn/index.php/about-v2/new-style-university>).

***Credit Bank:*** The OUC endeavors to promote lifelong learning for all. Accordingly, the university has established a credit bank system that includes functions like credit accreditation, credit transfer, and credit access. Every learner has his own lifelong learning portfolio. Learners can accumulate credits according to the credit accumulation rules that have been put in place. When they accumulate enough credits, they can apply for the corresponding certificates. The credit bank strives to provide a basis for the mutual recognition and transfer of credits between different educational and training institutions. Social members are encouraged to accumulate credits so that degree education and non-degree education can be linked up. By building this kind of “shortcut” to lifelong learning, the OUC is pushing forward the development of a lifelong learning system (Ibid).

**The Open University for Older Adults:** The Open University for Older Adults is sponsored by the OUC, and has been built jointly by the National Aging Working Committee Office, the China Association of Social Welfare (CASW) under the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Occupational Skill Testing Authority (OSTA) under the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. It aims to provide degree and non-degree education for older adults and professional staff in the pension services industry. It actively addresses the problems created by China's aging population by constantly meeting the diverse learning needs of the elderly; speeding up the training and cultivation of professional staff; promoting the formation of a lifelong education system and learning society; and help the elderly realize the maxim that "one is never too old to learn, never too old to enjoy happiness, never too old to be taken care of, and never too old to make a contribution" (<http://en.ouchn.edu.cn/index.php/the-open-university-for-older-adults>).

### 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

- 5) Point out one major difference between distance education system of China and that of other countries in Asia.

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### Hong Kong

Hong Kong has nearly 40 institutions, besides the Open University of Hong Kong (previously Open Learning Institute), which offer distance education courses in various subjects.

**The Open University of Hong Kong**, established in 1989 by the Hong Kong Government, is the only fully accredited and recognized university in Hong Kong to deliver its programmes mainly through distance learning. As a self-financing public institution under the aegis of the HKSAR Government's Education Bureau, the University's degrees and other qualifications are equal to those awarded by all other Hong Kong Government-established universities (<http://www.distancelearningportal.com/universities/10512/open-university-of-hong-kong.html>).

### India

Distance education in India has been dealt with in greater details in Units 1 and 3. We avoid repetition of the same here. You can revisit Units 1 and 3 to refresh your memory of the same.



## Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago which consists of over 18,000 islands, with severe inequality in educational provision from one region to the other. Those who live in smaller provinces and rural areas find it difficult to access quality education unless they are willing to move out. The country has more than 200 universities, far from enough to accommodate all registrants. (<https://vulcanpost.com/9791/future-distance-learning-indonesia/>).

From 1984 up to 1997, about 1800 private universities were established in every corner of Indonesia. Those private universities as well as the 86 public conventional universities, are now rushing into distance education, since they see it as financially rewarding to their organization and they consider “the operation of a distance education system relatively easy and simple”. (<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.582.596&rep=rep1&type=pdf>).

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is the popular Open University in Indonesia. We make here a brief mention of it.

**Universitas Terbuka (UT):** UT is an open university, established in 1984 to widen opportunity and access to university education for in-service teachers, working adults and recent high school graduates. In addition to relying on printed materials, UT also expanded its instruction in the form of radio and television broadcast, thus offering multimedia instructional materials. In 2006, UT enrolled more than 320,000 students residing in different parts of the country, with over 95% of them being working adults. Since its foundation, UT has enrolled over 1.2 million students and has produced over 600,000 alumni, working in various fields (<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED496534.pdf>).

UT offers ‘open entry’ to everyone who possesses the senior secondary school diploma. Students do not have to take any test or face any interview to enroll for the courses. The only exception to the ‘open entry’ rule is registration in the Faculty of Education. UT provides a range of degree courses taught at undergraduate and postgraduate level to students throughout Indonesia and worldwide. UT offers professional and academic programs that meet the genuine needs of national development. Subjects include management, accounting, teacher training, biology, and economics, among many others. (<https://www.learn4good.com/colleges/online-courses-universities-indonesia.htm>).

## Iran

In Iran the country’s 16 universities were closed after the 1979 revolution and were then reopened gradually between 1982 and 1983 under Islamic supervision. While the universities were closed, the Cultural Revolution Committee investigated professors and teachers and dismissed those who were believers in Marxism, liberalism, and other “imperialistic” ideologies. The universities reopened with Islamic curricula ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\\_in\\_Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Iran)).

**Payame Noor University (PNU):** PNU was established in 1988 as a unique ODL institution in the country after having integrated the University of Abureihane Birouni and Iran Free University. It was founded to meet the challenge of the staff shortage of schools and the pressure of numbers at the tertiary level. PNU

aims to meet the cultural, scientific, religious and linguistic needs of the people of Iran at the higher educational level. The degrees it awards are all recognized and have the same status as those of other state universities. PNU took its first intake in five degree programs at 28 study centers. Presently, PNU has 502 local study centers and campuses which are scattered throughout the country and administered by 31 provincial centers. It has also an Office of the Coordinating and Planning of the International Study Centers located in the university headquarters in Tehran. PNU has about 3,148 faculty members and 940,515 students (<http://pnu.ac.ir/portal/Home/Default.aspx?CategoryID=07bf5d3d-9bde-4f9a-ae79-61e5704dc4d9>).

### Israel

The Open University of Israel (OUI) was established in 1974 with the distinct mission of expanding access to higher education to all segments of Israeli society. The OUI achieves this vital goal by combining a unique open admissions policy and rigorous academic standards with a broad range of cutting-edge distance learning methods. It provides pre-academic vocational and adult education courses. Unlike other universities and colleges in Israel, no high school diploma or exams are required for admission. OUI provides flexibility in enrolment. Students do not need to apply to a particular degree program or structured course of study. They enroll on a course-by-course basis and work toward a degree at their own pace. *Flexible course-by-course enrollment opens higher education to anyone unable to attend traditional universities due to work or personal responsibilities.* OUI students include young adults who need to work full-time, soldiers on active duty, gifted high school students, professionals seeking higher degrees, ultra-Orthodox Haredi men and women, as well as Druze, Christians, and Muslim Arabs. (<http://afoui.org/about-the-open-university-of-israel/open-university-of-israel/>).

OUI's innovative teaching method is based on tutored independent studies. Students receive all course materials and course websites provide online access to mentors, classmates and additional resources. Students study at home and submit assignments online. They receive tutoring and interact with others in the course at any Study Center located throughout Israel. To ensure academic integrity, students take final exams in person at the study centers at a specified time (*Ibid*).

### Japan

In Japan, the first occurrence of distance education can be traced back to the "lecture notes" used in higher education in the late 19th century when no textbooks existed in Japanese. The only learning materials students could rely on were notes taken from the lectures given by professors. Waseda University, the Japan's premium private college, is well known for being the first one to implement this system. Those who could not come to Tokyo to take college courses studied in this mode and took exams to gain certification. This is considered to be the origin of "correspondence education" or distance education in Japan (Kumiko Aoki, 2012).

In 1950s, the distance education programs were primarily offered by existing on-campus universities and the credits earned through distance education programs were transferrable to the credits for on-campus programs. In 1978, the National Centre for Development of Broadcast Education was established as a

cooperative organisation of national universities under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. This was a planned step towards the establishment of the University of the Air of Japan (UAJ), Japan's first independent single-mode distance education institution. Currently there are four ways of teaching and learning that can be offered through distance education programs: (1) print material-based, (2) broadcasting-based, (3) face-to-face schooling, and (4) media-based (Ibid).

In 1998, graduate programs through distance education also began to be recognized officially. In 2003, doctoral programs through distance education were started to be recognized. In 2011, there were 217,236 undergraduate students seeking degrees under graduate distance education programs at a distance in 44 universities. These accounted for 7.5% of total higher education enrollees. Also, there were 8,241 graduate students seeking post-graduate degrees at a distance in 27 universities (Ibid).

***Open University of Japan:*** OIJ was established in 1981 and started its television and radio broadcast instruction in April 1985. It is the only distance education university in Japan that has been mandated by the government to use public airwaves to broadcast its instructional programs. The objectives and missions of OIJ were (Kumiko Aoki, 2012):

- a) to provide working people and housewives with a chance of lifelong university level education;
- b) to provide an innovative and flexible system of university level education open to high school graduates; and
- c) to co-operate with existing universities and make full use of the latest scientific knowledge and new educational technology in order to offer a system of higher education which matches contemporary needs.

The University began broadcasting nationwide via digital communications satellite in 1998. However, printed textbooks were the main study materials used for the courses. In addition, broadcast programs, face-to-face classes are offered at 57 local study centers and support offices around the country; at least one in every prefecture (Ibid).

In 2012, OIJ adopted Moodle (online learning management system) as learning platform. Furthermore, in 2013, it contributed to the establishment of JMOOC (Japan Massive Open Online Courses) and is playing a core role by offering several courses for JMOOC through its original platform. In the academic year of 2014, OIJ has started interactive online lectures in which students can actively participate. OIJ has grown to become the largest distance education institution in Japan. To date, over 1,400,000 people have studied at OIJ, with over 84,000 of them graduating with a degree ([http://www.ouj.ac.jp/eng/pdf/OIJ\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.ouj.ac.jp/eng/pdf/OIJ_Brochure.pdf)).

### **Korea (Republic of)**

Correspondence education in Korea began in the form of non-credit and non-degree correspondence courses. When conventional universities could not accommodate the ever-growing numbers of university aspirants, the Seoul National University established a Department of Correspondence courses in 1972, offering junior college level courses. In 1982, the Department was elevated to

the status of an independent university — the Korea Air and Correspondence University. This is presently known as the Korea National Open University (KNOU). The KNOU provides distance education to adults via television, radio (Educational Broadcasting System), CD-ROMs, Internet and video/cassette tapes. In the forty-three years of existence, it trained and graduated 600,000 plus talented alumni, who have had enormous impact on all facets of Korean society (<http://www.knou.ac.kr/engknou2/>).

KNOU is the first distance and lifelong educational institution of South Korea, and the largest educational institution in the country by enrollment. In 2014, more than 180,000 students enrolled including 700 postgraduate students. Since its foundation, more than 500,000 students have been enrolled, and 350,000 students graduated from the university ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea\\_National\\_Open\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea_National_Open_University)).

### Malaysia

In Malaysia, the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) established in 1971 at Penang took the initiative of organising off-campus academic programmes to provide opportunities for university education to adults, to democratise education and also to cope with the increasing demands for higher education. Printed modules are the main teaching materials in the Off-Campus Study Programme. In addition, multimedia self-instructional teaching materials in the form of video-tapes, audio-cassettes, audio-graphics and slides are also provided.

Dedicated units or centres were set up to co-ordinate the programs within the Universities. To further enhance the visibility of distance education in Malaysia, a consortium called METEOR was set up by 11 public universities in 1998. Based on the initiative of METEOR, UNITEM (Universiti Terbuka Malaysia) was established in 2001, and was later renamed as Open University Malaysia (OUM). ([http://library.oum.edu.my/repository/204/1/Open\\_distance\\_education\\_in\\_Malaysia.pdf](http://library.oum.edu.my/repository/204/1/Open_distance_education_in_Malaysia.pdf)).

### Pakistan

The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), established in May 1974, was initially named as the People's Open University, but renamed as Allama Iqbal Open University in 1977. The biggest university in the country with: an average student enrolment of more than 1.2 million per year. The University has introduced a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, Master's, M.Phil., and Doctoral programs. The University also offers basic functional courses for illiterates and semi-literates. It is the largest Teacher Education institution in Pakistan with average enrolment of above 400,000 students (<http://www.aiou.edu.pk/overview.asp>).

### The Philippines

The distance study system was launched in the Philippines in 1976 to reach 35,000 teachers spread over 7,100 islands in the archipelago. *A special feature of distance education in the Philippines is that curriculum materials are generally initiated by the 'consumers' and then revised and edited by experts.* Courses are developed according to their relevance to social needs and are generally application-oriented, e.g. nutrition, cottage industry, environmental planning, poultry and live-stock, vegetable production, fruit production, etc. The requisite number of credits earned by doing the courses leads to the award of a degree. No



learner fails in the distance education system of the Philippines, as it is a self-paced learning system in which the learner receives a final rating after completion of the package of self-learning modules. There is great emphasis on providing knowledge to teachers on problems of social importance so that others may be educated through them on those lines.

In the Philippines, there are other open universities as well. OUs offer degree, non-degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level, and certificate or diploma courses. (<http://education.okfn.org/open-education-philippines>):

### **Thailand**

The first university in Thailand that offered formal distance learning program was Ramkhamhaeng University (RU) in 1971. It offers programs through both distance and classroom-based learning.

Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) was established in 1978 to offer only distance learning programs. It aims at contributing to 'citizens' personal development; the expansion of educational opportunities, life-long recurrent education, teacher education and training, training of skilled manpower, economic development, national development, political and economic ideology and promotion of democracy. The university provides three kinds of courses — Bachelor's Degree Courses, Short-term Vocational Enrichment Courses, and Basic Rural Development Courses. Two marked features of the courses offered by this university are: i) provision of training resources for several Government agencies for personnel development, etc., and ii) new teaching programmes like agricultural extension and cooperatives, health, science, management, communication, arts, etc. STOU's revenue comes from its tuition fees, investment and the Government.

Established in 2002 as an international eLearning institution by the University Council of Assumption University, Graduate School of eLearning (GSeL) provides three masters degree programs and 2 doctoral degree programs by distance learning to students throughout Thailand and worldwide. GSeL provides distance education using the Internet as the core interface. The online graduate degree programs are supplemented by off-line eLearning, M-Learning, AV media, and limited face-to-face interactions. Distance learning makes it easy for students to study from any place at any time and at any pace, 24 hours a day (<https://www.learn4good.com/colleges/online-courses-universities-thailand.htm>).

### **Turkey**

Turkey officially the Republic of Turkey is a transcontinental country in Eurasia.

Distance education was started by private educational institutions (namely FONON and Limasollu Naci) for teaching English and as a public service, by governmental authorities in early 1950s (Cevat Geray, See [http://www.todaie.edu.tr/resimler/ekler/a4aa99822b6b77e\\_ek.pdf?dergi=Turkish%20Public%20Administration%20Annual](http://www.todaie.edu.tr/resimler/ekler/a4aa99822b6b77e_ek.pdf?dergi=Turkish%20Public%20Administration%20Annual)). First correspondence course was started, within higher education, by the Institute of Banking and Commerce, in the year 1954 (Karayalçın, 1957, in Cevat Geray, op.cit).

Eskişehir Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences, founded in 1958, is the foundation of *Anadolu University*. The Academy was replaced by Anadolu



University in 1982, which has gained a well-deserved place as a modern, dynamic and innovative institution among the largest universities not only in Turkey, but also in the world. MEB, in 1982, established its open distance education program at Anadolu University, which was supported, by Radio and Television Institution of Turkey (cited as TRT) made eligible to use its channels. Today, the total number of students of the three distance education faculties is over 2 million. The success in the development of this system has been taken as a model for many institutions in various countries (<https://www.anadolu.edu.tr/en/about-anadolu/institutional/anadolu-at-a-glance>).

### 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.

- 6) What is the special feature of distance education in the Philippines in terms of development of curricular materials? Give examples.

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#### 4.5.4 Australia and the Pacific

Australia and the Pacific include the continent of Australia and its Pacific neighbours, which are island groups called Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. These three groups of islands, Australia, and New Zealand together are also known as Oceania. With a small population widely scattered over vast areas, Australia found that distance education is a boon in meeting the educational needs of its society.

##### Australia

Early in the twentieth century, distance education became part and parcel of universities and other institutions of higher learning in Australia. World War II provided a further boost to development of distance education because of increasing demand for education from the American Armed Force personnel who were based in the region over the past few decades then.

Distance education at the university level follows the ‘integrated model’, i.e. common curriculum, common faculty, common examinations for both on- and off-campus students. The universities/institutes that offer distance education courses have a special division, unit, department or school which is responsible for organising these courses. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) through distance education is a new form of tertiary education available in Australia in colleges of external studies. Some of the well known universities/institutes providing distance education in Australia are: Deakin, New England, Murdoch,

Queensland, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education.

### **New Zealand**

In New Zealand, distance education was first introduced when the New Zealand Correspondence School (NZCS) was established in 1922. While the first radio broadcast for distance students was started by NZCS in 1931, the teachers started visiting the homes of distance students in 1935. There is a strong teacher guidance arrangement in place for all types of students — starting from pre-school to adult continuing education. Instructional materials include print materials, kits, assignments, audio and-video programmes, etc. Increasingly, telephone and audio-video tapes and letters are used by teachers to encourage and provide personalised support to students. CAL (Computer Assisted Learning) programmes are also being produced to individualise learning; and teachers maintain records of each student on the computer so as to review progress and arrange for extra support.

In addition, NZCS has been serving the needs of students in remote areas through packaged correspondence lessons, school broadcasts and television programmes. It has introduced advanced studies for teachers as well. Besides, a number of other organizations and the New Zealand Radio provide distance education courses.

Also, the Centre for University Extramural Studies at the Massey University, the Open Polytechnic, and the University of Otago provide distance education programmes. Besides print, the distance teaching institutions expose students to radio programmes, television through public TV network, video-letter, computer communication, and tele-conferencing.

New Zealand is known for a well developed system of distance education providing instruction at all levels. A noteworthy feature of distance education in this country is that most of the institutes work in collaboration and avoid aggressive competition. The New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute, the largest distance education institute in the Australian region offers a wide range of technical and vocational education at a distance. The Institute plays a vital role in development programmes in the Pacific area with regard to building up technical and vocational skills.

### **Papua New Guinea**

Papua New Guinea offers a vast scope for distance education to its diverse communities isolated, on account of various geographical factors, from one another and the outside world. In 1974, a Department of External Studies was established at the University of Papua New Guinea. In addition, there are eleven University Extension Centres. Along with the College of External Studies in Port Moresby, it has instituted varied distance education courses to meet the educational demands of the people.

The Advanced Diploma in Teaching was introduced in 1984 by the University at the Goroka Teachers' College campus as an in-service programme for practising provincial high school teachers and is available in the distance learning mode. The programme is a significant innovation for the education of teachers in the country. It has the potential to assist all provincial high school teachers to undertake their duties in a more professional and confident way.

## The Pacific Islands

Up to 1970, students in the Pacific Islands desirous of tertiary level education had to go to Australia or New Zealand. The establishment of the University of the South Pacific (USP) brought these facilities to the doorsteps of the people, through off-campus studies supported by a strong satellite network. It was established in 1968 in Suva, Fiji. Those students who cannot come to campus are able to begin their studies through one of the centres as part of USP's Extension scheme. By using various means of communication — course books, written assignments, audio tapes, the satellite USPNET — the university is able to bridge the distance between its campus and non-campus students.

### 4.5.5 Europe

Europe has seen rapid strides in the development of distance education during later half of the twentieth century, particularly in England, Germany, France, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands and Spain. Significant developments that took place in Europe during this period include the following.

- The systems approach and educational technology have greatly influenced the development of institutionalised distance education resulting in detailed analysis of educational objectives, target groups, judicious selection of various communication media, try-out procedures, and evaluation of courses/programmes, etc.
- Research in distance education is another important area in which some institutions in West Europe have made a significant contribution.
- Information and Resource Unit was established in 1978 to support the Open University Centre for International Cooperation and Services (OUCICS). The Unit ultimately became the United Nations University International Documentation Centre of Distance Learning.
- Funded by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and COL, the International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL), was established to provide data and information service in support of distance learning worldwide. ICDL is located at the Open University (UK) Institute of Educational Technology.

Let us now look at ODE in some select European countries.

#### England

The University of London was the first university to offer distance learning degrees, establishing its External Programme in 1828 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance\\_education#University\\_correspondence\\_courses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance_education#University_correspondence_courses)). For over 150 years the University of London has been delivering its qualifications via distance learning through the International Programmes. This allows students to combine studying with work and family commitments, without having to live in London. The standard of the award is exactly the same as that achieved by students who study face-to-face with the University of London ([http://www.london.ac.uk/distance\\_learning.html](http://www.london.ac.uk/distance_learning.html)).

The establishment of the *Open University* at Milton Keynes, in England in 1969 turned out to be a significant milestone in the development of distance education. The university aims to provide a second chance to adults who have not received higher education and fuller professional training and qualifications for those

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

The Open University's mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas (<http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/mission>):

- promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfill their potential.
- seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership.

This university has created a world-wide impact by producing effective course materials for all kinds of people, irrespective of age, sex, place of residence and formal qualifications. In fact, no educational qualifications are required for admission to undergraduate courses, but students must be at least 18 years old and residing in any European Community country (or in one of the certain other European countries in which it has agreed to register students). The normal minimum entrance requirement for postgraduates is identical to that which applies to the conventional universities in the UK. A wide variety of courses is offered by the Open University, and their respective components are similarly varied. The printed materials which form the core of the university's taught courses are supplemented by one or more of the following: audio cassettes, TV and radio programmes, field trips, summer schools, and weekend or day schools. Attendance in tutorial and counselling sessions available in the university's Study Centres is optional.

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

Besides the institutions mentioned above, there are other Universities and a large number of private correspondence institutions in England preparing external students for various public school / university examinations, and offering a variety of correspondence courses.

**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.

7) State the mission of the Open University, UK. Do you think it could realize its mission?

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## France

An education service by correspondence was created in France in 1939 to compensate for the disruption in the education system due to the war. During the Liberation (1944), its purpose was confirmed under the name of National Centre for Education by Correspondence (CNEPC). In 1953 it became the National Centre for Education by Correspondence, Radio and Television (CNEPCRT). The merging of the CNEPCRT and the National Pedagogical Institute (INP) in 1959 gave birth to the Distance Education Centre, the acronym of which, CNTE, remains in many people's memories. In 1979, CNTE became the National Centre for Education by Correspondence (CNEC), a national public institution with administrative duties and financial autonomy. Its task was to "provide and promote distance education, notably via the use of modern communication resources". CNEC became the National Centre for Distance Education (CNED, Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance) in 1986 (EACEA, 2011; See <https://estudandoeducacao.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/franc3a7a.pdf>).

CNED is a state institution under the authority of the Ministry of Education. It comprises eight different centres in France. It offers opportunities for joining distance higher education programmes, single courses and foundation courses at all levels, in France and abroad. It also offers a wide range of training courses. It is, in fact, the only public operator that provides lifelong education and training, from childhood to adulthood. CNED offers continuing vocational training courses as well for all types of people: people preparing for qualifying exams, job seekers, employees in traineeships, etc. (EACEA, 2011; See <https://estudandoeducacao.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/franc3a7a.pdf>).

In France, though university teaching at a distance was originally designed for initial training to upgrade teachers, the scope was widened in due course of time. Some universities have distance education centres (CTU, *Centre de Télé-Enseignement Universitaire*) offering distance courses in a variety of formats: correspondence, DVDs, radio and television. To participate, students must be enrolled in the university. By 1986, eighteen formal universities were renamed Radio Universities.

Since July 1st 2014, CNED has been operating a new French language distance education program called "Scolarité complémentaire internationale". The goal of this initiative is to create connections to the French language and culture for young expatriates or nationals and to facilitate potential studies within the French school system. This *reduced-scale program* allows students to pursue a less restrictive course of study than a complete distance schooling program – meaning a significantly reduced number of assignments for students to submit (<http://frenchlanguage.francecanadaculture.org/en/news/french-national-centre-distance-education-international-distance-education>).

## Germany

The then German Democratic Republic (GDR) entered a new stage of social development around 1976 when education was expected to be a productive phase in students lives and to play a positive role in social development. Special emphasis was laid on the education of working people by means of distance education and evening classes leading to a university or technical degree. Distance education was also used, for several years, to provide further education to



graduates of technical schools in the fields of agriculture, economics and technology. Approximately 40 per cent of technical school students were trained through distance education. Except for medicine, all other subjects available to on-campus students at the conventional universities were covered by distance education and evening colleges as well.

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

Considering the increasing demands of the people, the State and Federal governments realised the need for their involvement in the development of distance education. This resulted in the establishment of the German Institute of Distance Education (Deutsches Institute fur Fernstudien, DIFF) at Tübingen in 1966. Its aim is to optimise methods in continuing education, in particular for guided, media-supported self-study, which also plays a major role in distance education. DIFF cooperates in research and development with various providers of continuing education, for instance, with institutions of higher education and with industry and commerce.

The Fern Universität at Hagen, established in November 1974, offers degree and other courses to over 20,000 German-speaking students and has broken new grounds by instituting a distance education course namely *Essentials of Distance Education* for distance educators. Printed materials, tapes, video cassettes, computers, telephone, etc. are the media being used to disseminate information and the emphasis on face-to-face teaching has become relatively insignificant.

### **Italy**

In Italy, the Consorzio per l'Università a Distanza (CUD) was established in 1984 with the purpose of providing a distance university system for Italy. The first students were admitted in 1986. CUD is a consortium established under Italian law. Members include universities, multinational companies and government-related organisations. Teaching materials and student support services are organised by CUD on behalf of its university members. Audio and video cassettes and computer software supplement the print material. Material is provided to students at study centres, where regular computer access is available along with lectures, tutoring and counselling.

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

### **Netherlands**

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

The university offers courses in basic law, cultural sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, marketing, statistics and systems and their management. Students are enrolled for courses and not for a degree or diploma programme. However, through a combination of courses over a convenient period of time they can obtain a degree or diploma.

### **Norway**

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

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

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

### **Russia**

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

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

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

The Russia Open University (ROU), founded in October 1990, is both a scientific and an educational organization. The mission of the University is to carry out research, to design projects, and to implement scientific achievements. The primary purpose of ROU is to provide access to higher education to people of all ages who may wish to learn, for any reason whatsoever. At present, efforts are on to involve industry and the private sector to offer quality courses which can compete in the changed market driven economy.

### Sweden

In Sweden, the roots of distance education are at least 160 years old. An advertisement in a Swedish newspaper in 1833 touted the opportunity to study "Composition through the medium of the Post." In 1840, England's newly established penny post allowed Isaac Pitman to offer shorthand instruction via correspondence. Three years later, instruction was formalized with the founding of the Phonographic Correspondence Society, precursor of Sir Isaac Pitman's Correspondence College. In 1886, H. S. Hermod, of Sweden, began teaching English by correspondence. In 1898 he founded Hermod's, which became one of the world's largest and most influential distance-teaching organizations ([http://www.aect.org/pdf/DistED/CH\\_2.pdf](http://www.aect.org/pdf/DistED/CH_2.pdf)).

Being encouraged by the success of Hermods, a number of other schools came into existence. By 1966, Hermods became the largest distance teaching institution of the world with an enrolment of nearly 150,000 students. It continued to cater to the needs of thousands of correspondence students. But with the widening of access to all Swedish children to the official school system, greater emphasis on social aspects of education through learning together in groups and greater opportunities for adult education of the under-privileged sections of society, distance education suffered a setback in Sweden.

Swedish universities started distance education programmes for university level courses in 1968. The Swedish Association for Distance Education (SADE) was founded in 1984. Distance education at higher education level is an integrated, departmental activity mainly carried out on a small scale in a dual-mode structure in universities and colleges.

Distance education at the post-secondary level is now well established in Sweden. A ruling and statutory principle of Swedish higher education is that all institutions of higher education are to be organised so as to ensure a fair geographical and social distribution of educational opportunities and to further recurrent education. Post-secondary distance education is characterised by a highly decentralised system. Institutional structures, production and delivery systems vary from university to university. Each department engaged in distance education is independently responsible for the course or programme and for the media and methods used.

Distance education is dominated by separate courses, although full-length study programmes are also offered. For instance, Lund University has a selection of stand-alone courses and one full degree programme and a few master's degree programmes available through distance learning. A degree programme can combine traditional on campus courses and distance education courses. (<http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/international-admissions/distance-learning>).

## 4.6 MEGA OPEN UNIVERSITIES

In section 4.0, we have made a mention of mega universities. In this section you will understand what a mega university is.

The definition of a mega-university combines three criteria: distance teaching, higher education and size. Keeping these in view, Daniel (1996) defines a mega-university as “a distance-teaching institution with over 100,000 active students in degree-level courses (p.29). Accordingly he listed 11 institutions which met these criteria in 1996 (see Table 4.1).

Thereafter, over the years, many more have added to the list. Most of them are recent in their origin but have quickly become the largest universities not only in their respective national system of education but also at global level. We have already discussed these universities in the preceding section.

**Table 4.1: The Mega-Universities**

Country	Name of the Institution	Abbreviation	Year of Establishment
China	China TV University System	CTVU	1979
France	Centre National d'Enseignement a Distance	CNED	1939
India	Indira Gandhi National Open University	IGNOU	1985
Indonesia	Universitas Terbuka	UT	1984
Iran	Payame Noor University	PNU	1987
Korea	Korea National Open University	KNOU	1982 <sup>1</sup>
South Africa	University of South Africa	UNISA	1873 <sup>2</sup>
Spain	Universidad Nacional de Educacion	UNED	1972
Thailand	Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University	STOU	1978
Turkey	Anadolu University	AU	1982
United Kingdom	The Open University	UKOU	1969

**Notes:** 1) As the Korea Air and Correspondence University.

2) As the University of the Cape of Good Hope.

**Source:** John, S. Daniel. (1996). *Mega-Universities and Knowledge Media: Technology Strategies for Higher Education*. London: Routledge, p.30.

### 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.

8) Define ‘mega open university’. What are the criteria taken into account in defining it?

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## 4.7 SELECTED SIGNIFICANT PRACTICES

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ODE Institutions owe their success to some of their significant innovative practices, which have gradually increased their credibility, acceptance and efficiency. These practices may pertain to the nature of programmes and courses, the strategies of instruction, the design and development of courses, and/or the innovative use of media in teaching-learning processes including evaluation, among other things. In this section, we focus on significant practices of selected open universities.

### 4.7.1 Course Team Approach (UKOU)

In 1976, Sir Walter Perry, the Open University’s first Vice-chancellor, said in his reminiscences: “the concept of the course team is, I believe, the most important single contribution of the Open University to teaching practice at the tertiary level” (Perry, 1976: 91, cited in Martin Weller, 2002). The ‘course team’, in fact, comprises experts of various categories with different kinds and levels of expertise – course writers in different subject areas (academics, teachers and researchers), editors, educational technologists, media experts, graphic artist, production staff, etc. According to Tight (1985), course team means “a group of people, each with their own roles and responsibilities – central academic staff, course coordinators/managers, educational technologists, editors, staff tutors, BBC producers, liaison librarians, production staff, research assistants, laboratory technicians, etc — having the shared aim of producing a course on a given subject area with certain constraints of time and costs, and operating on a semi-democratic discussion and agreements”. Now many open universities, including IGNOU, follow this approach.

### 4.7.2 Serving Remote Learners with Multiple Support Mechanisms (Athabasca)

Originally established in 1970 as a traditional campus-based institution, Athabasca University has changed course in 1972 through a pilot project to test the concept of an open, distance university. AU serves students throughout Alberta, across Canada and around the world. AU’s academic, professional and support staff engage in professional service within the education system at local, provincial, national and international levels. The university encourages its members to serve



a wide range of communities through activities such as volunteerism, community-based research, involvement in local community organizations, and participation in virtual learning communities. During the 1980s, it established Satellite campuses to enable students to receive first-hand educational support services and to write invigilated examinations (<http://www.athabasca.ca/aboutau/documents/cip/2015-18.pdf>).

The first AU course, World Ecology, was offered in 1973, and AU's first Convocation, for two graduates, was held in 1977. During 2013-14, AU offered 879 courses (647 undergraduate, 232 graduate) in a broad range of degree, diploma and certificate programs and awarded 1,720 academic credentials, 836 at the graduate level and 884 at the undergraduate level (<http://www.athabasca.ca/aboutau/documents/cip/2015-18.pdf>).

The eText Initiative is intended to assist AU in improving online learning environment and providing a single access point for all course materials. Where eTexts are adopted, AU will not be providing textbooks at all (other than for accommodation). A link to the publisher web site will be embedded in the Moodle course, from which students may order the bound book if they wish (often at a discount). As an alternative, all eTexts are fully printable by students (<http://etext.athabasca.ca/>).

AU offers single sign-on facility to its students, i.e. the three systems of AU, viz. Moodle courses (Moodle LMS page), The Landing Social Networking Site and Mahara offer single sign-on. Once a student logs into one of the systems, he/she can easily access the others without typing in username and password again. The same can also be used to log-in to myAU portal, which is a web portal system that provides Athabasca University (AU) students with individualized web services and information. Mahara ePortfolios in the e-Lab offer a secure, easy and reliable way to the student to reflect on and record academic achievements, professional development, readiness for university work, ideas for course development and revision, and research progress (<http://cde.athabasca.ca/logins/>).

### 4.7.3 Innovative Courses (AIOU, YCMOU)

In addition to offering some conventional programmes, *Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU)*, established in May 1974, offers many non-conventional and innovative programmes and courses such as the following (<http://cemca.org.in/news/allama-iqbal-open-university-developed-flexible-curricula-skill-training#.WA30gNR95kh>).

- Basic functional courses for illiterates and semi-literates.
- Technical vocational courses in the fields like maintenance of tractor, auto vehicle, electric wiring and cultivation of vegetables at home (kitchen garden), etc.
- CYP-Diploma in “Youth in Development” offered semester-wise in collaboration with Commonwealth Youth Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat.
- M.Ed (Science Education), M.Ed (Special Education), M.A (Special Education), MEd (Distance and Non-Formal Education) M.A (Distance and Non-Formal Education), M.A (Educational Planning and Management) and Associate Degree in Education, among other programmes.

*Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU)*, established in 1989 has been striving to make higher, vocational, technical and role-based education available to large sections of the population including the disadvantaged groups. It has been endeavouring to provide innovative, flexible and open system of education to promote continuing, adult and extension education programmes. To promote acquisitions of knowledge in a rapidly developing and changing society and to continually offer opportunity of upgrading knowledge, training and skills in the context of innovations, research and discovery in all fields of human endeavor, it attempted to offer programmes appropriate for a learning society. Some of the important innovative programmes it offers include: B.Sc. Media Graphics and Animation, Role-based Degree Programmes such as B.B.A (Business Process Management), B.Sc. (Computer System Administration), B. Sc./ M.Sc. (Hotel & Tourism Management), B.Sc./M.Sc. in Food Processing & Preservation, B.Sc./M.Sc. (Hotel Management & Catering Operation).

#### **4.7.4 On-Demand Publishing and Technology in Examination (University of Terbuka)**

Universitas Terbuka (UT) is an ODE Institution founded in 1984 in Indonesia. Since its foundation, UT has enrolled over 1.4 million students and has produced over 700,000 alumni, working in various professional fields. UT has been able to deliver quality education throughout the Indonesian archipelago and overseas by the integration of appropriate technology into its learning system ([http://www.winne.com/country/sea/indonesia/2009/cr/cp/universitas\\_terbuka/](http://www.winne.com/country/sea/indonesia/2009/cr/cp/universitas_terbuka/)).

UT's innovation in the use of internet-based teaching and learning can be seen as a pioneering initiative in the Indonesian higher education sector, though a substantial student segment still does not have easy access to the internet. However, UT's experience in the use of internet in distance education might well illustrate the case wherein the use of the internet for teaching and learning at a distance has been continually enhanced and also demonstrated with an increasing trend of using online learning services by UT students.

Infrastructure development is aimed at giving active assistance in widening student academic service access, including an online system for registration, payment, and learning material ordering. Students who wish to purchase learning materials may use different available accesses, such as SMS, internet, call center, or through the application offered by Regional Office (RO)

Book publishing, Print-on-demand with digital technology is used as a way of printing items for a fixed cost per copy, regardless of the size of the order. POD has other business benefits besides lower costs (for small runs). Technical set-up is usually quicker than offset printing.

To provide students with a more flexible and secured examination process, UT has developed an internet-based examination system, referred to as online examination. For the online examination, a certain subset of items is uploaded to a different server that serves as a mirror of the item bank. Retrieval of items and construction of tests are directly processed through the server which can be directly accessed by the ROs. Examination items will be extracted directly from the server and the students can take the online examination in an RO or in a selected place under the supervision of an RO. To secure the availability of online

service and to reduce direct traffic to the main server, UT places three servers in three ROs as redundant servers functioning as data synchronization and backup ([http://www.winne.com/country/sea/indonesia/2009/cr/cp/universitas\\_terbuka/](http://www.winne.com/country/sea/indonesia/2009/cr/cp/universitas_terbuka/)).

#### 4.7.5 Dual Mode Teaching (Deakin University and USQ)

The integrated structure of teaching and support services at *Deakin University* is a legacy of the original university established in 1975. An ‘open campus’ was envisioned wherein all students, whether on campus or off, would use the same high quality learning resources and have opportunities for meaningful interaction with staff and peers (Jevons, 1982). Thus, on-campus students would not only attend classes (primarily of the tutorial variety) but they would also receive the study materials normally provided to distance learners. Off-campus students would receive these traditional distance learning resources and have access to residential schools, itinerant tutors or, later, audio teleconferences. While the open campus model was never applied in all programs of study and there was slippage to more traditional classes for on-campus students and also heavier reliance on learning resources for off-campus students, the concept remained firmly part of the culture. Importantly, it was extended to the organisation of academic support and administration, with each Division charged to provide equivalent, if not identical, services to all students, whatever their mode of study (Jocelyn Calvert, 2001).

Deakin has always served off-campus and on-campus students through the same administrative and support infrastructure; there has never been a separate unit responsible for the broad range of off-campus services. This form of organisation has had a certain benefit as the use of online technologies becomes ubiquitous. The multi-campus nature of the University is another important structural feature. There is a need to teach the same courses on different campuses and off campus, and to ensure the same coverage of topics and the same standards across campuses that previously were different institutions. This has encouraged the use of uniform learning resources and the rapid adoption of online communication in the University, for administrative purposes as well as teaching and learning (Jocelyn Calvert, 2001).

Established by the Australian Federal Government in 1967, to provide on-campus higher education opportunities primarily for residents of the Darling Downs region of Southern Queensland, the *University of Southern Queensland (USQ)* became a dual mode institution when it initiated distance education delivery in 1977.

USQ has delivered distance education while continuing with classroom-based teaching, hence the “dual mode” label. USQ is one of about 30 out of 36 universities in Australia that offer dual mode delivery (Taylor & Swannell, 1997; See <http://www.usq.edu.au/vc/icde.htm> mentioned at <http://ausweb.scu.edu.au/aw99/papers/mcdonald/paper.htm>). USQ is a dual-mode institution with “triple-option” teaching modes (on-campus, distance education, and online). It is currently the second largest distance education provider in Australia with almost 90 nationalities represented (Sankey, 2006, See <http://www.usq.edu.au/>).

### 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.

- 9) Explain how Deakin University provides uniform academic, administrative, learning and other support services to its on- and off-campus students.

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#### 4.7.6 Teaching Science and Technology (IGNOU and OUSL)

*Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)*, established in 1985 took up the challenge of imparting good quality theoretical and practical education in four science disciplines, namely, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Life Sciences. In 1991, IGNOU launched the Bachelor of Science Programme, one of its kind in the country involving teaching of theory and laboratory courses in science, through distance and open learning mode. The programme was initially designed to offer a B.Sc. (General) degree, but was subsequently upgraded so as to offer a B.Sc. (Major) degree in Botany, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and Zoology. The Master's programme in Mathematics with Applications in Computer Science [M.Sc. (MACS)] was launched in the year 2008. IGNOU also offers several niche programmes for professional and skill development such as the PG Diploma in Analytical Chemistry (PGDAC), Diploma in Aquaculture (DAQ), and Certificate Programme in Laboratory Techniques (CPLT). (<http://www.ignou.ac.in/ignou/aboutignou/school/sos/introduction>).

Diploma in Dairy Technology, Diploma in Fish Products Technology, Diploma in Meat Technology, Diploma in Value Added Products from Fruits and Vegetables, Diploma in Value-added Products from Cereals, Pulses and Oilseeds, Bachelor as well as Master of Computer Applications, Bachelor of Library and Information Science, BSc Nursing (Post-Basic), Post-Graduate Diploma in Food Safety and Quality Management, Post-Graduate Diploma in Geriatric Medicine, Post-Graduate Diploma in HIV Medicine, Post-Graduate Diploma in Hospital and Health Management, Certificate in Energy Technology and Management, Certificate in Information Technology, Certificate in Newborn & Infant Nursing, and Certificate in Sericulture are some other important programmes currently offered by IGNOU covering different areas of science and technology which have more of application or utility value. (<http://www.ignou.ac.in/ignou/aboutignou/school/>).

The *Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)* is the premier national University established in 1980. It offers Degree, Diploma, Certificate Programmes and other

courses through open and distance learning methodology. It has five Faculties: Natural Sciences, Engineering Technology, Humanities & Social Sciences, Education, and Health Sciences. The University serves its student population via a network of regional centres and study centres ([http://www.ou.ac.lk/home/images/Programmes/ Further Information/Bsc% 20programme% 20guide% 202015.pdf](http://www.ou.ac.lk/home/images/Programmes/Further%20Information/Bsc%20programme%20guide%202015.pdf)).

With a view to achieving excellence in providing lifelong learning opportunities in engineering and technology for all to meet industrial and social needs through open and distance learning, and to support research and scholarship by efficient and sustainable use of resources, Faculty of Engineering Technology offers a variety of study programmes leading to the awards of Certificates, Advanced Certificates, Higher Diplomas, Honors Bachelor Degrees, and Postgraduate Diplomas and Degrees encompassing many engineering and industrial specializations as needed by the industry in line with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework. Major honors degrees awarded by the Faculty are the Bachelor of Technology (Engineering), Bachelor of Industrial Studies, and Bachelor of Software Engineering. It also offers research programmes leading to the award of MPhil and PhD degrees ([http://www.ou.ac.lk/home/ index.php/ousl/faculties-institutes/engineering-technology](http://www.ou.ac.lk/home/index.php/ousl/faculties-institutes/engineering-technology)).

OUSL offers programmes leading to Nursing, Medical Laboratory Sciences and Pharmacy Degree qualifications. These programmes aim at developing competent personnel who are capable of assuming leadership positions, both in the academic and clinical sectors. It also offers Foundation Course for Engineering and Science Degrees. The Master of Science in Environmental Sciences [MSc in Env.Sc.] is a programme of study developed in recognition of the importance of environmental concerns in today's world. The programme aims at providing academic knowledge and training needed to tackle environmental problems through a multi-disciplinary approach. The M.Sc (Env.Sci) programme involves courses from four faculties (Natural Sciences, Engineering Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Education) of the OUSL. This represents the multi-disciplinary nature of the programme.

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## 4.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit, we have highlighted the role played by important national and international agencies and associations, the regional perspectives and global practices in open and distance education. We explained the concept of the mega open universities, and discussed significant practices of selected open universities. The Unit has also provided a comprehensive picture of the growing collaborations of open and distance education institutions/universities at national, regional, and international levels and strong international forums like the ICDE, COL, etc that encompass the major leading institutions and countries of the world. The whole gamut of the development of open distance education in various regions has helped us comprehend some of the emerging trends and also draw inferences regarding the future of this innovative teaching/learning system in the world at large.



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## 4.9 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

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- 1)
  - i)
    - a) International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE);
    - b) The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
  - ii) Important open and distance education/learning associations in the world.
    - African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)
    - Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU)
    - Australian Council on Open Distance and E-learning (ACODE)
    - European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)
    - European Distance E-Learning Network (EDEN)
    - Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA)
    - United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA)
- 2) Distance education courses have been organised in Africa with the purpose of:
  - improving the general educational standards of the people,
  - giving proper training to a vast number of in-service as well as prospective teachers, and
  - catering to the educational needs of refugees the disadvantaged.
- 3) In British Columbia, the distance education system does not restrict the students to choosing a particular combination of courses to obtain a degree. The option, more often than not, is left to the students themselves. The students, however, have to choose from among the courses given by the three Universities of Consortium and the Open Learning Agency.
- 4) In distance education system in Venezuela the students are required to go through the introductory courses in order to be admitted to formal academic courses. Such restrictions are usually minimal in most of the open universities. For example, those who join the open system study in Costa Rica can obtain a degree/diploma even without registering themselves for the courses.
- 5) Unlike many countries in Asia, electronic media is given primary importance in distance education in China. To put it more precisely, instruction is imparted chiefly through radio and television, and is supported by print materials and face-to-face contact programmes, whereas in other countries, the emphasis is primarily on the print medium, and the electronic media are normally used as supplementary or complementary to the print medium.
- 6) In the Philippines curricular materials are generally initiated by the 'consumers' and then revised and edited by experts. Courses are thus developed according to their relevance to social needs and are generally application-oriented, e.g. nutrition, cottage industry, environmental planning, poultry and live-stock, vegetable production, fruit production, etc.

- 7) The Open University's mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas and to:
- Promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfill their potential.
  - Seek to be a world leader in the design, content and delivery of supported open learning through academic research, pedagogic innovation and collaborative partnership.

The UKOU has created a world-wide impact by producing effective course materials for all kinds of people, irrespective of their age, sex, place of residence and formal qualifications. By acting as catalyst in promoting open and distance education across the globe, it could truly establish itself as world leader in distance education.

- 8) The definition of a mega-university combines three criteria: distance teaching, higher education and size. Daniel (1996) defines a mega-university as a distance-teaching institution with over 100,000 active students in degree-level courses.
- 9) The integrated structure of teaching and support services at Deakin University is its legacy. An 'open campus' was envisioned wherein all students, whether on campus or off, would use the same high quality learning resources and have opportunities for meaningful interaction with staff and peers. Thus, on-campus students would not only attend classes (primarily of the tutorial variety) but they would also receive the study materials normally provided to distance learners. Off-campus students would receive these traditional distance learning resources and have access to residential schools, itinerant tutors or, later, audio teleconferences.

Deakin University has always served off-campus and on-campus students through the same administrative, teaching and learning, and support infrastructure. The multi-campus nature of the university, need to teach the same courses on different campuses and off campus and necessity to ensure the same standards across campuses that previously were different institutions have been the driving forces that encouraged the use of uniform learning resources. There has been rapid adoption of online technologies / communication in the University for administrative purposes as well as teaching and learning.

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## 4.11 UNIT END EXERCISES

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### 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) Discuss the role of international agencies in ODE (500 words).
- 2) Write a comparative account of any two regional perspectives of the practices in ODE (1000 words).
- 3) Define mega-university. Name ten mega-universities along with their years of establishment.
- 4) Describe any five significant practices in ODE? Identify those practices with select ODE Institutions (1000 words).



## Questions for Critical Reflection

- 1) Can you identify any other significant practices which have not been covered under section 4.7? List such practices and the institutions that follow them.
- 2) Which one of the regions you studied in this Unit, you think, is the pioneer and leader in ODE? Justify your answer.

### Activity



*Try to identify and write below five significant practices, if any, other than those mentioned in Section 4.7 above.*

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