Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 The Problem
1.1 Background of the Problem

1.1.1 Importance of Distance Education

1.1.2 Theory of Distance Education

   i. Theories of Independence and Autonomy
   ii. Theory of Industrialization of Teaching
   iii. Theories of Communication And Diffusion
   iv. Equivalency Theory

1.1.3 Origin and Development of Distance Education

   1.1.3.1 International Perspective
   1.1.3.2 National Perspective
   1.1.3.3 West Bengal Perspectives

1.2 Emergence of the Problem

1.3 Conclusion
Chapter One
Introduction

1.0 The Problem
A Comparative Study of Distance Education at The Post-Graduate Level Between Dual-Mode And Uni-Mode Universities

1.1 Background of the Problem
Considerable claims are being formed for higher education as an engine of social, economic and political change throughout the world and distance education is being claimed for the expansion of higher education. Universities stand for democracy, nationalism, humanism, adventure of new ideas, tolerance, reason and truth. Higher education not only produce a number of national level leaders particularly in the field of politics, administration, trade, industries and agriculture but also generates and develops new knowledge and society.

Distance learning is an idea or approach to education which has experienced an explosive growth in the last few years. Distance education is an educational mode supplementary, complementary and alternative to conventional/traditional system of education, depending on the situation it is practiced. The term distance education means the type of education that is liable to be organized and imparted keeping cognition of the distance factor. Some observers mentioned that the magnitude of distance learning may someday eclipse that of the traditional learning environment. 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 condition on one hand and technological development on the other. Distance education today are equipped with variety of means and methods of education and training to make the education resources accessible to all those who want to have it as per their needs and convenience. Distance education institution in any country are established with the main objective to democratize education as a resource and provide every citizen, irrespective of sex, caste and creed, easy and affordable access to quality education. Present day distance learning is based on ideology of creating human capital. It has moved to another level all together with objective of creating substantial work force that can aid in raising the economy of a country to newer
heights. In India, distance education is providing through open universities and dual – mode universities i.e. universities which offer both on and off campus education. The universities which offer only on or off campus education are known as uni-mode universities.

1.1.1 Importance of Distance Education

For India’s magnitude and diversity, the conventional education system cannot meet the needs and demands of higher education in the country. The policy makers of India had therefore realized that the imperative need of distance education is to provide access to higher education to all those deprived section of society who could not avail of it earlier. Another important concern was the improvement of the quality of higher education. The policymakers realized that unless education is made open to the deprived, unless structural rigidities are removed from the educational system and unless it is integrated with the developments of communication technology, the country may not be able to make and headway in realizing the uphill task of educating the large section of the population with diverse educational and social needs.

About fifty years back, the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended that the opportunities for part-time education through programmes like evening colleges, and correspondence course, should be extended as widely as possible and should also include courses in science and technology (either at the degree or diploma level). Also make accessible higher education to those who desire to study further but are compelled, on economic grounds, to take up employment after school education. The First National Policy of Education (1968) highlighted that, “education through part time and correspondence courses should be given the same status as full time education.”

The founding fathers of Indian Five Year Plans visualized the need for increasing the opportunities for higher education outside the formal system. They have made a reference in the 1st Five Year Plan (1951) to facilitate private study through correspondence courses and radio talks organized as far as possible by the various Universities and also allowing students to take the various examinations privately (GOI, 1951, P.540).
In the Third Five year Plan (1961), the planners stated that:
“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, 1961, P. 589).

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 stressed that distance education is a significant medium for the development and promotion of higher education. In this context, for the development and promotion of distance learning, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), Government of India took the decision that in the VIIIth Five Year Plan every Indian State must set up a State Open University following the distance education pattern.

The report to UNESCO of the International Commission of Education for the Twenty first Century popularly known as Delore Commission, 1994 recommended diversification and improvement of distance education through the use of the new technologies.

Special Subject Group on Policy Framework for the Private Investment in Education, Health and Rural Development, Prime Minister’s Council on Trade and Industry, Govt. of India (Ambani and Birla, 2000) suggested to encourage the establishment of world class higher education facilities at every district head quarters and promote distance education as an alternative system of education on par with the formal system of education.

National Knowledge Commission (2006-2009) believes that a radical reform of the system of Open and Distance Education (ODE) is imperative to achieve the objectives of expansion, inclusion and excellence in higher education. It would not be possible to attain a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 15 per cent by 2015 without a massive expansion in ODE. In this endeavor, we must not forget that ODE is seen as inferior to conventional class-room learning. This perception and the reality both need change. We must realize that ODE is not simply a mode of educational delivery, but an integrated discipline engaged in the creation of knowledge. The Commission recommended the following reforms:

1. Create a national ICT Infrastructure for networking ODE Institutions.
2. Set up a National Education Foundation to develop web-based common open resources.
3. Establish a credit bank to effect transition to a course credit system.
4. Establish a National Education testing service for assessing ODE students.
5. Facilitate convergence with conventional Universities.
6. Set up a Research Foundation to support research activity in ODE.
7. Overhaul training programmes for educators.
8. Increase access for learners with special need.
9. Create a new standing committee for the regulation of ODE.
10. Develop a system for quality assessment.

Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) emphasizes more on covering backward regions and disadvantaged sections. The following observation (GOI, 2002) gives a glimpse of the main thrust:

The coverage of open Universities would, therefore need to be expanded to the backward regions, remote inaccessible tribal areas of the north east and some of the eastern states. During the Tenth Plan, IGNOU would set up open Universities in states where none exist at present, expand the activities of Gyan Darshan and Gyan Vani. The target is to extend the coverage of the open learning system to the backward regions, remote inaccessible areas of the northeast and low female literacy blocks in some eastern states. This document sets an ambitious target of about 40% of the total students in higher education to be enrolled in open and distance learning institutions by 2007.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) suggested increasing the percentage of each cohort going to higher education from the present 10% to 15% by the end of the plan. As per the Eleventh Five Year Plan, out of the total enrolment of learners in higher education, 7 million learners are enrolled with Open and Distance Education. By 2007, this count was estimated to reach 16 million. A sum of Rs.8, 116 crore had been assigned by the Government of India to promote distance education throughout the country. The open and distance learning (ODL) system has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic component of higher education infrastructure in India. It provides access to quality education to about 25% of the total population of learners in the higher education sector.
As per the Twelve Five Year Plan, the number of Distance Education Institutes has been growing at a healthy pace in the country (2011-12) almost 200 Institutes are approved for offering distance education programme.

Recognition accorded by the Distance Education Council to the universities/institutions for offering programmes through distance revised from time to time ensures quality and optional standards in the system.

In this back drop, there is an increasing demand for distance education at higher education level, for, the Indian system of distance education is the second largest in the world (Panda, Venkaiah, Garg and Puranik, 2006) and definite plans of action have contributed to this tremendous growth.

Through various policy and programme interventions, attempts have been made to promote Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system to facilitate the expansion of higher education sector for the fulfillment of aspirations of those who are deprived of pursuing it for whatever reason. As a result, the contribution of ODL to Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has risen to about 22%. But, a lot still remains to be done. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has set a goal to achieve 30% GER in higher education by the year 2020. As per the preliminary estimate prepared by the NUEPA, it would require an investment of about Rs.9.5 lakh crores. The physical infrastructure created for imparting conventional education largely remains idle after the official working hours. Keeping this infrastructure idle and going for establishing new ones in conventional mode, firstly, would be a difficult proposition due to lack of resources and secondly, it would also tantamount to avoidable wastage of scarce national resources. The Madhava Menon Committee (2010) recommends that “every conventional university and institution, including technical and professional ones, should be encouraged to switch over to a dual mode of imparting education by offering ODL programmes in additional to the conventional programmes so that the already available infrastructure can be used as study centers for holding counselling and practical instruction not only on holidays but on every day after the working hours. This will automatically increase the enrolment by 2-3 times. Starting ODL programme would require preparation of appropriate study material and appointment of coordinators and counsellors in appropriate numbers. A centrally sponsored scheme should be devised by the Distance Education Council.
(DEC) to share the cost involved to encourage the conventional universities and institutions to start ODL programmes without delay”

1.1.2 Theory of Distance Education

Although various forms of distance education have existed since the 1840s and attempts at theoretical explanations of distance education have been undertaken for decades by leading scholars in the field, the need for a theory of distance education has been largely unfulfilled until recently. Holmberg (1986) stated that theoretical considerations give distance educators a touchstone against which decisions can be made with confidence. As early as 1972, Moore expressed concern about the progress of distance education being hindered by lack of attention to what he called the 'macro factors'. Keegan (1995) reaffirmed the continued need for a theory of distance education by stating that a firmly based theory of distance education is one that can provide the touchstone against which, financial, educational, and social can be made with confidence. Theory would thus cease to be an ad hoc response to a set of conditions arising in crisis situations of problem-solving, characteristic of the field of education. In a general sense, theory is taken to mean a set of hypotheses logically related to one another for explaining and predicting occurrences.

In his landmark work, The Foundations of Distance Education Keegan (1986), had classified theories of distance education into three groups: theories of independence and autonomy, theories of industrialization of teaching, and theories of interaction and communication. Besides these three groups, a fourth category (equivalency theory) seeks to explain distance education through a synthesis of existing theories of communication and diffusion as well as philosophies of education. Each of these major categories is discussed in the following sections.

i. Theories of Independence and Autonomy

American Theory of Independent Study, Wedemeyer, a professor from the University of Wisconsin, considered the independence of the student as the essence of distance education (Keegan 1986). This was reflected in Wedemeyer's preference for the term "independent study" for distance education at the college or university level. Wedemeyer noted four common elements of every teaching-learning situation: a teacher, a learner or learners, a communication 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. Wedemeyer believed that the development of the student-teacher relationship was key factor to the success of distance education. Wedemeyer's approach is a classical and American application of correspondence study to distance education.

European Theory of Independent Study, Formulated in the early 1970s, Moore's theory of distance education is a classification method for distance education programs. For Moore (1994), distance education is composed of two elements, each of which can be measured. The first element is the provision for two-way communication (dialog); some systems or programs offer greater amounts of two-way communication than others. The second element is the extent to which a program is responsive to the needs of the individual learner (structure); some programs are very structured while others are more responsive to the needs and goals of the individual student. In the second part of his theory, Moore addresses learner autonomy. Moore classifies distance education programs as "autonomous" (learner-determined) or "non-autonomous" (teacher-determined).

ii. Theory of Industrialization of Teaching

After examining a research base that included an extensive analysis of the European distance teaching organizations of the 1960s, Peters (1988) proposed that distance education could be analyzed by comparison with the industrial production of goods. Peters stated that from many points of view, conventional, oral, group-based education was a pre-industrial form of education, implying that distance teaching could not have existed before the industrial era. Peters concluded that for distance teaching to be effective, the principle of division of labor is a critical element. In this theory of industrialization, the teaching process is gradually restructured through increased mechanization and automation. According to Peters, when decisions about the process of teaching and learning are made, the industrial structures characteristic of distance teaching should be taken into account. In 1995, Holmberg significantly broadened his theory of distance education. On one level, Holmberg's expanded theory represents a description of distance education. On a deeper level, it is a theory from which hypotheses are generated and that has explanatory power by identifying a
general approach favorable to learning and to the teaching efforts conducive to learning.

iii. Theories of Communication and Diffusion

Perraton's (1988) theory of distance education is composed of elements from existing theories of communication and diffusion as well as philosophies of education. It is expressed in the form of fourteen statements, or hypotheses. Perraton's fourteen statements characterize his theory, which is actually a synthesis of information drawn from many sources.

iv. Equivalency Theory

This approach to distance education advocates the designing a collection of equivalent learning experiences for distant and local learners, even though they 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. This theory is based on the definition of distance education as formal, institutionally-based educational activities where the learner and teacher are separated from one another, and where two-way interactive telecommunication systems are used to synchronously and asynchronously connect them for the sharing of video, voice, and data-based instruction. (Simonson 1995). There are several key elements to Equivalency Theory; they are the concepts of equivalency, learning experiences, appropriate application, students, and outcomes. The equivalency approach is uniquely American. It is based on core values held almost sacred in American education, such as the use of regular classroom teachers to facilitate the teaching and learning process, local control, small class size, rapport between teacher and learner, and personalized learning. Most importantly, equivalent distant learning relies heavily on the use of modem and powerful interactive telecommunications systems to be successful.

Evaluating Theories

Keegan (1986) suggested that the theoretician had to answer three questions before developing a theory of distance education: Is distance education an educational activity? Is distance education a form of conventional education? And is distance education possible, or is it a contradiction in terms? Central to Keegan's concept of distance education is the separation of teaching acts in time and place from learning
acts. 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. Equivalency theory should be evaluated by applying Keegan's criteria, as well as others, to determine if it is an approach to distance education that is appropriate.

**Summary of the theories**

The changing and diverse environment in which distance education is practiced has inhibited the development of a single theory upon which to base practice and research. A variety of theories have been proposed to describe traditional distance education. They include theories that emphasize independence and autonomy of the learner, industrialization of teaching, and interaction and communication. These classical theories emphasize the notion that distance education is a fundamentally different form of education. Recent emerging theories based on the capabilities of new interactive telecommunications-based audio and video systems suggest that distance education may not be a distinct field of education. Both the utilization of existing educational theory and the creation of equivalent experiences for the distant and local learner are emphasized. Classical distance education theorists need to address the changes to distance education facilitated by new technologies. Advocates of the new theories must consider the relationship of these to the traditional strengths of distance education. For example, the new theories' focus on face-to-face instruction eliminates the advantage of time independent learning that traditional theories of distance education value. The debate of these theoretical issues will only increase in the face of continued technological change.

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 (Wikipedia).
1.1.3 Origin and Development of Distance Education

1.1.3.1 International Perspective

Though the term distance education is a fairly recent one, yet the concept it expresses is not something new but rather an old one. Distance Education (DE) had its roots in the correspondence courses which simply mean study materials, usually lecture notes, sent by tutors to the students by post. In 1728, when an advertisement in the Boston Gazette (named) Cable Phillips, teacher of the new method of ‘Short Hand’ was seeking students for lessons to be sent weekly. Correspondence studies took shape in Bath, England, 1840 when Isac Pitman started offering his course in shorthand via the New Penny Post. The International Correspondence School, the oldest correspondence education institution of U.K. was established in 1880. A number of correspondence education institutions came up during the 20th century in U.K. These institutions mainly helped the external degree students who studied at home with the help of correspondence courses. However, for various reasons these institutions did not have equal status of affiliated college or a university.

With the establishment of Open University of U.K. in 1969 followed by establishment of Open Universities in different countries across the world, the distance education grew at a faster rate and assumed a gigantic position at international level.

American university level distance education began in 1874 at Illinois Wesleyan University where bachelor and graduate degrees could be obtained in absentia. The Chautauqua movement in about 1882 gave the popular push to correspondence education. In the United States, William Rainey Harper, first president of the University of Chicago, developed the concept of extended education, whereby the research university had satellite colleges of education in the wider community. In 1892 he also encouraged the concept of correspondence school courses to further promote education, an idea that was put into practice by Columbia University. Enrollment in the largest private for-profit school based in Scranton, Pennsylvania, the International Correspondence Schools grew explosively in the 1890s. Originally founded in 1888 to provide training for immigrant coal miners aiming to become state mine inspectors or foremen, it enrolled 2500 new students in 1894 and matriculated 72,000 new students in 1895. By 1906 total enrollments reached 900,000. The growth was due to sending out complete textbooks instead of
single lessons, and the use of 1200 aggressive in-person salesmen. There was a stark contrast in pedagogy.

Education was a high priority in the Progressive Era, as American high schools and colleges expanded greatly. For men who were older or were too busy with family responsibilities, night schools were opened, such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) school in Boston that became Northeastern University. Outside the big cities, private correspondence schools offered a flexible, narrowly focused solution. In 1916 efficiency was enhanced by the formation of the National Association of Corporation Schools.

Universities around the world used correspondence courses in the first half of the 20th century, especially to reach rural students. Australia with its vast distances was especially active; the University of Queensland established its Department of Correspondence Studies in 1911. In South Africa, the University of South Africa, formerly an examining and certification body, started to present distance education tuition in 1946. The International Conference for Correspondence Education held its first meeting in 1938. The goal was to provide individualized education for students, at low cost, by using pedagogy of testing, recording, classification, and differentiation.

The field of correspondence education continued to struggle for acceptance into the early 1950's. Fortunately, a flurry of research conducted on correspondence study during this period and, later in the decade, facilitated growth of this medium's knowledge base. The success of the University of Wisconsin's Correspondence Study Unit (UWCU) also fostered acceptance of correspondence education. In 1958, a UWCU report stated that the correspondence unit:

- "Offers nearly 450 courses in nearly 150 areas of learning
- Teaches 12,000 active students annually
- Gives personal instruction on more than 80,000 written assignments
- Cooperates with the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State to teach Immigration Law & Visa Operation to foreign service officers
- And contracts with the U.S. Armed Forces Institute to develop and teach 200 correspondence courses on the high school and university level".
In the late 1970s and early 1980s, cable and satellite television came into use. The advent of the Internet and digital applications in the 1990s, combined with the changing demographics of the distance education learner, added a whole new dimension to distance education. These new technologies bring educational opportunity to the non-traditional student, and the lure of economic prosperity to higher educational institutions.

1.1.3.2 National Perspective

In India, distance education (DE) system originated at the University level and moved towards school. This is of course, a general feature in the history of distance education internationally. In the Indian context, the inception of distance education through correspondence education programmes had dual purpose. First is to divert the pressure group of aspirants of higher education to correspondence education programmes which made it cost effective and second it is democratization of higher education. As it is already discussed that distance education in its earlier form of correspondence education started in the West in the middle of the 19th century, though distance education in India began almost a century later in the form of postal correspondence education. The origin of postal education in India however can be traced to the educational activities of commercial institutions. The International Correspondence School (ICS) and the British Institutes of Engineers and Technology (BIET) are the prominent institutes of postal courses, based in Bombay (now Mumbai), which appeared a variety of postal courses in area of engineering, management, architecture, interior decoration, dress making, journalism, beauty care, photography, cartooning, commercial arts, radio, transistor, refrigeration, among others (Chib, 1977).

At the time of Independence from the colonial rule in 1947, India did not have a comprehensive ‘National Policy of Education’. The only policy or development plan was ‘Post-War Educational Development in India: 1944-84’ – drawn by the-then British rules, though due to its narrow objectives it was not accepted by the Indian leaders. One such objectives of the Five Years Plan was its advocacy for selected system of secondary and higher education and limited provision for technical and vocational education. Independence brought with it hopes for radical reforms in education. People in general felt that transformation of education which the Indian
leaders pleaded for during the ‘freedom struggle’ should be initiated as early as possible. Specifically no plea was made for introduction of distance education as a component of new India’s education policy and programmes. But the general feelings were that the radical reorganization of the education system was one of the important national priorities. In the late 1950s, and the early 1960s, in the Independent India, the planners thought of correspondence education as a supplementary method to meet the growing demand for higher educational opportunities. The planning commission of the country in the Five Year Plan made the following observation: “with the expanding base at the elementary and secondary education, the demand for higher education has greatly increased over the past. The rapid expansion in the number of the universities and colleges in recent years has led to a number of problems. These have been reviewed in the report of the University Grants Commission for 1959-60. The Commission has stressed that if deterioration is to be avoided, increase in the number of students should be accompanied by corresponding expansion of physical and other teaching facilities for higher education, proposals for evening college, correspondence courses and the award of external degree are at present under consideration.”

It is true that the conventional education system alone cannot meet the needs and demands of higher education. The rate of expansion of higher education did not match with the rate of growth of economy. Meeting heavy expenses involved in establishment of University and Colleges for exorbitant number of needy students was a complex and difficult task in Indian system. The policy makers have therefore realized that the imperative need of distance education is to provide access to higher education to all those deprived sections of society who could not avail of it earlier. Perhaps it was in the early 1960s that the Planning Commission put forward a proposal of making use of correspondence education as a supplementary method to meet the growing demand for higher education. The then Union Minister of education justified diversion of student masses to correspondence courses as follows:

“We in India have to see that the maximum possible efforts are undertaken for the expansion and the improvement of educational facilities in the country, but this has to be done within the broad framework of our limited resources. The way out of this dilemma is through non-formal educational techniques which have been used in other
countries and have to be taught in this country in order to meet this rising demand for higher education.” As a follow-up, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), came with a resolution in its meeting held in January 1961, recommending that the detailed study of the correspondence courses be made by small committee before arriving at a decision to start them in the country. Consequently, the Ministry of Education constituted a committee under Dr. D. S. Kothari (then UGC Chairman). It recommended that a correspondence education course be started by the Delhi University although initially in the shape of a pilot project. The recommendation was accepted by the Central Government and as a result the Delhi University came up in 1962 with the first correspondence course of the country at the University level through the establishment of School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in its campus and the Delhi University further got its momentum at the hands of Education Commission 1964-66 and the UGC Committee on the Expansion of Correspondence Courses.

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 with the guidelines for correspondence 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)

In the light of the recommendations of the Education Commission 1964-66 and the UGC Committee on the expansion of correspondence courses, the UGC decided to extend the scheme of correspondence courses to other Universities. Punjab University, Patiala was the second university in the country which was allowed to set up a full fledged Directorate of Correspondence Course in 1968 with the offer of Pre-university and BA courses in English and Panjabi. The university was the first to offer Pre-university correspondence course with an enrolment of 2,400 students.

During the first decade of correspondence education (1962-72), the following 13 correspondence units at conventional universities were set up which offered different Graduate, Post-graduate and Certificate level courses.

By the end of the first decade (i.e.1972), correspondence education in India gained considerable recognition and acceptance. The findings and suggestions of various committees and delegations and the practices of CCIs motivated many educators to meet periodically to discuss the problems and prospects of correspondence education provided by the conventional universities their separate schools/institutes/directorate/departments. The Indian Association for Continuing Education (IACA) formed during this period, acted as a catalyst for periodic meeting of the (correspondence) educators to promote academic climate in favour of correspondence education. IACA’s first major contribution was the organization of the first national seminar on correspondence education at Mysore in October 1972 in collaboration with the Mysore University. Later, three more national seminars were held in 1976, 1979 and 1982 at Patiala, Chandigarh and Trivandrum respectively. The first national seminar was significant in terms of rich discussion and valuable recommendations. It created an opportunity for the representative of the participating universities to assess developments in the newly emerging sector of education and to develop a perspective for the coming years. The seminar envisaged the possibility that correspondence education could become an effective agent of change in regard to the quality of higher education at the first degree level and beyond. It further recommended that a Joint Committee of the UGC and the Inter-University Board
(now Association of Indian Universities) should guide the Universities in promoting correspondence education (Satyanarayan, 1995).

The UGC which had all along been concerned with the development and streamlining of the scheme of correspondence courses convened in October 1974 at Delhi a conference of the CCIs with a view to assess the functioning and to discuss their problems and make suggestions for their improvement. The observations and recommendations of the conference may be classified under five heads:

- Scope of correspondence education in India
- Preparation of reading materials
- Future of correspondence education and the role of the state
- Organizational and administrative set up in a directorate of correspondence courses
- Ancillary services such as radio talks, TV presentations, etc.

The UGC’s Standing Committee for Part-time and Own-time Education took stock of the deliberations of the conference and after detailed discussion evolved a set of guidelines for correspondence course which were approved by UGC in March 1975. The guideline helped some universities in giving serious thoughts to the quality aspects of their correspondence course, but by and large they were not taken seriously.

The 11th World conference of International council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) was held in November 1978 at New Delhi. Some of the CCIs participated in the Conference highlighted the need for strengthening of correspondence education. They reaffirmed the earlier proposal to establish a central organization to promote and strengthen correspondence education and to serve as a watch dog of the working of correspondence course of different universities in our country. In spite of the acceptance of the proposal by the UGC as early as in 1972 and the continuous demand by the CCIs, no central organization could be established for streamlining, strengthening and monitoring correspondence education until the establishment in 1985 of IGNOU which was given the additional role of coordinating and maintaining standard in distance education in the country.
The nomenclature of correspondence education got changed and upgraded to distance education, in spite of it long journey continued to be of poor quality like many other countries overseas. Before the emergence of open university system in the country, correspondence education was criticized by educationists and conventional university teachers for its ineffectiveness and inefficiency (IGNOU Project Report, 1985; Mulay, 1986; Ram Reddy, 1985; Satyanarayana, 1995; Prasad & Venkaiah, 2005).

In spite of several limitations, correspondence education continued to spread rapidly in the university system. Fast expansion, meager student support service and lack of innovativeness of flexibility in course structure caused alarm among educational planners, and intensified their desire to reform the system.

The original guidelines issued by the UGC in 1975 were later modified to conform to the changes in the expectations of the correspondence education system. The revised guidelines clearly stated:

“Distance educationist essentially based on the supply of instructional material but has to be supported and supplemented by personal contact programmes, students responses, library facilities, study centers, radio programs and audio-visual aid, etc. a well conceived programme of distance education can be effective and meaningful as regular day-time instruction in a college or a university department and every possible effort must be made to make it o effective”.

The UGC prescribed minimum standards of instruction for the grant of the first degree through non-formal distance education in the faculties of arts, humanities, social science, science and commerce. Some CCIs tried to follow the UGC guidelines which many failed to understand the spirit of new guidelines. By the time the idea of an open university was gaining ground, 34 dual mode universities were offering correspondence course, and the student enrolment in correspondence course was 6.6% of the total higher education enrolment (table 1.2).

**Open Universities in India**

In the course of time, universities felt the need of having an open system of learning in the field of higher education on the pattern of open schooling. As a result, there came a wave of establishing open universities in the country with a clear-cut agenda of providing correspondence courses (with a huge choice at their disposal) to all types of learning whoever opts for such courses. However, by the time the idea of an open
university was gaining momentum, 34 dual mode universities were offering correspondence courses. But no central organization (like the NIOS) could be established for streamlining, strengthening and monitoring university correspondence education in the country.

The introduction of Open University system in the country has been linked with creation of Open University in 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 co-operation 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 Open University. The working group had submitted its report in 1974, after having studied thoroughly the pattern of the Open University, UK and the possibility of creating an open university in India. The working group recommended that;

“The Government of India establishes, 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”.

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.

The debate at the national level on an open university also stimulated thinking on the subject in various states. In Andhra Pradesh, a proposal to start an open university was made in 1978, but no progress was made. The Osmania University made proposals for starting an open education college to strengthen distance education. The college was to have full autonomy but the degrees were to be awarded by the Osmania University (Reddy, 1984).

While these efforts were on, the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1982 decided to establish an open university to provide “access to higher education to the adult
population of the State, for upgrading their functional capacities and improving the quality of their life in the context of broader social and political objectives of equalization of educational opportunities and the emergence of a new concept of lifelong education’ (Government of Andhra Pradesh 1982). To give shape to this policy, the Government appointed a Committee and based on the committee’s report, established the Andhra Pradesh Open University on August 26, 1982 (now renamed as the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University – BRAOU).

This has been hailed as the opening of a new chapter in the history of education in the country. With the establishment of BRAOU, interest in the subject at the national level increased rapidly. With the publication of the document ‘Challenge of Education’ by the Ministry of Education in 1985, the public debate on education in India was focused in a critical and dynamic way. One of the major conclusion arrived at in the Challenge of Education, was that the formal system itself could never meet all the educational needs and demands of the country. Another was that all attempts should be made to use the most advanced technology available in full support of the educational objectives to be attained. These two considerations led to an increasing conviction of the need to establish a national distance learning institution of quality which should cater to the needs of higher education in India as a whole.

On January 5, 1985, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, announced that a National Open University was to be established and on September 20, 1985, the Indira Gandhi National Open University came into being by an Act of Parliament (IGNOU, 1985).

The Indira Gandhi National Open University was officially inaugurated in November 1985. The Act of Parliament establishing the University is explicit about its aims:

“The University shall endeavor through education, research, training and extension to play a positive role in the development of the country, and based on the rich heritage of the country, to promote and advance the culture of the people of India and its human resources” (IGNOU, 1985).

The Act goes on to specify that the university will, among other things. “Strengthen and diversify the degree, certificate and diploma courses related to the needs of employment and necessary for building the economy of the country and provide
access to higher education for large segments at the population and in particular the
disadvantaged groups such as those living in remote and rural areas including working
people, housewives and other adults who wish to upgrade or acquire knowledge
through studies in various fields” (IGNOU, 1985).

The Government of Maharashtra appointed a Committee with Dr. K.G. Deshmukh,
Vice-Chancellor, Amravati University, as the Chairman to examine the feasibility of
establishing an open university in the state. The committee which submitted its report
in early 1985, had not only strongly recommended the establishment of an open
university in the State but had also given a detailed blueprint.. The Yashwant Rao
Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) thus came into existence on 1 July
1989 through Act XX (1989) of the Maharashtra State Legislature. YCMOU is the
fourth State-level Open University in India, situated at Nashik near Mumbai
(YCMOU, 1994).

Before YCMOU came into existence, two more provincial government viz., those of
Rajasthan and of Bihar, had established, respectively, Kota Open University (1986)
announced its open university namely, the Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University,
in 1993; the Gujarat Government announced the setting up of Ambedkar Open
University in 1994; and Karnataka State the Karnataka Open University in 1994
(Manjulika and Reddy, 1996). Of late, the State Government of West Bengal and
Uttar Pradesh have also added Netaji Subhash Open University and U.P. Rajshree
Tandon Open University respectively. A few more State Governments are also
contemplating the establishment of their own State Open Universities.

Distance Education in India was regulated by the distance education council (DEC),
established under the IGNOU Act. 1985. One of the major roles of DEC was to
promote, coordinate and determine standards in the system. In pursuance of the
directions issued by the Ministry at Human Research Development, Department of
Higher Education, Government of India dated 29.12.2012; the regulatory functions
with regard to Distance Education Programme in higher education have 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.
1.1.3.3 West Bengal Perspectives

In West Bengal, Rabindra Bharati University, Vidyasagar University, Burdwan University, Jadavpur University, Kalyani University, North Bengal University has implemented distance education in different higher education courses. These are dual mode universities besides there are Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) and one regional centre of The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) which offers distance education in there different study centres.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (Hindi: इंどうしても राƭीय भुƭक विषवियालय), known as IGNOU, is a distance learning national university located in IGNOU road, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi, India. Named after former Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, the university was established in 1985 with a budget of 20 billion (20 billion Indian rupees), when the Parliament of India passed the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985 (IGNOU Act 1985). IGNOU is run by the central government of India.

IGNOU, the largest university in the world with over 4 million students, was founded to impart education by means of distance and open education, provide higher education opportunities particularly to the disadvantaged segments of society, encourage, coordinate and set standards for distance and open education in India and strengthen the human resources of India through education. Apart from teaching and research, extension and training form the mainstay of its academic activities. It also acts as a national resource centre, and serves to promote and maintain standards of distance education in India.IGNOU hosts the Secretariats of the SAARC Consortium on Open and Distance Learning (SACODiL) and the Global Mega Universities Network (GMUNET) initially supported by UNESCO.

IGNOU has started a decentralization process by setting up five zones, viz, North, South, East, West and North East. The first of the regional headquarters, catering to four southern states, Pondicherry, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep, is being set up in the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. IGNOU has many study centres in the State of West Bengal (District: Kolkata, North 24 Paraganas, South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Bankura, Howrah, Hooghly, Purulia, Burdwan, Nadia) Regional centre of IGNOU at Kolkata was established in the year of
Netaji Subhas Open University is the premier State Open University in India. The year 1997 was the birth centenary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Then the Chief Minister of West Bengal made an announcement at a State function that an Open University would be set up soon and dedicated to Netaji's hallowed memory. The Higher Education Minister, Government of West Bengal spearheaded the idea after his visit to the Open University in U.K. Under his instruction was set up a ten-member steering committee headed by Dr. Bhaskar Ray Chowdhury, the-then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. Following this, a State Act [W.B. Act (XIX) of 1997 and recognized by U.G.C.] was passed on the 20th August 1997 in favour of opening a University for imparting Distance Education. Netaji Subhas Open University was established by bifurcated Netaji Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) and in terms of the Act of West Bengal State Legislative Assembly and is housed in Historic building of Sri Sarat Chandra Bose, elder brother of Netaji. The University started functioning with effect from July 1998 Semester, only with the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Arts & Commerce to provide an opportunity of higher education in the vernacular medium to various disadvantaged groups of aspiring learners. It is the tenth Open University of the country and the ninth State Open University.

Professor Radharaman Chakraborty, the then Director of NIAS was appointed as the first Vice Chancellor of NSOU. An Advisory body, consisting of eminent educationists and senior administrators was constituted to plan and oversee the activity of the newly opened University. They executed the preliminary set-up necessary for the functioning of the Open University and from July 1998, 31 Study Centres started functioning under Netaji Subhas Open University with a Bachelor Degree Programme (BDP) in Arts & Commerce. Since January 1999 semester further 5 study centres were opened with Arts & Commerce Course under the BDP. The University started Bachelor’s Degree Programme in Science subjects from January, 2000 session. The Post Graduate Degree Programme in Science subject(Mathematics) and Arts Subjects (History and Social Work) were started in January,2002 and
January, 2004 session respectively. Rabindra Bharati University was founded on 8th May, 1962, under the Rabindra Bharati Act of Government of West Bengal, 1961, as a mark of tribute to the birth centenary of the great poet and visionary of the nation Rabindranath Tagore, is the third University to come into existence in the city of Kolkata.

As conceived by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, this temple of learning dedicated to the memory of the poet, has been endeavouring to justify to a great extent its existence as a center of higher learning for promoting, extending and disseminating Tagore's thoughts and ideas in various branches of Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Human Studies and related branches of knowledge.

In the year 2001, Rabindra Bharati University had been accredited and declared four star status by the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council). Apart from promoting Visual Arts and Performing Arts, this University is arranging for Higher study in Bengali, Hindi, English and Sanskrit literature and in disciplines like Economics, History, Political Science, Education, Library and Information Science, Social Environmental Study and Mathematics.

The veteran faculties have ensured training up to postgraduate level and thereby providing scope for pursuing Research in various branches of knowledge.

Directorate of Distance Education, a professionally managed Institution of Higher Learning under Rabindra Bharati University has started its journey in the academic session 2002-2003 obtaining its approval from the Higher Education Department Government of West Bengal Vide G.O. No. 803-Edn (U)/IU(RB)-09/2002, dated, 2nd July, 2002 and the courses offered are duly recognized by the School Education Dept. Govt. of West Bengal Vide G.O. No. 1158-SE(S)/6C-1/2003, dated, 9th September, 2003.

Directorate of Distance Education of Rabindra Bharati University is running in accordance with the guidelines of the Distance Education Council, New Delhi as a lighthouse to the learners who are otherwise deprived of higher education. Keeping in view the inconveniences of the outstation candidates, following the recommendation of DEC (Distance Education Council), thirty-two study centers’ have been opened in different corners of our state.
At present there are more than forty-five thousand students enrolled in twelve major degree courses in thirty-three Study Centres (including the main campus) spread at different corners of the State of West Bengal.

The Vidyasagar University was established on 29th September 1981 by an Act called the Vidyasagar University Act 1981 (West Bengal Act XVIII of 1981) after the name of Pandit Iswar Chandra Bandyopadhyay, known as Vidyasagar, the educationist and social worker of Bengal. The University Grants Commission accorded recognition to the University under 12 B on March 1, 1990. The total area of University Campuses in a semi-rural location is 182.75 acres (Main Campus 103.79, Residential Campus 35.00 and third plot measuring 43.97 acres). The Vidyasagar University is established with a mission to provide an answer to the needs of the region, ethnic, socio-cultural and geographical along with mainstream education. The University logo with the motto “Education, Knowledge, Progress” embodies the mission stated above. The University is an affiliating having its jurisdiction which shall not be extended beyond the limit of Midnapore District or any District which may be created in future out of any part thereof. Thirty colleges of Calcutta university within the District of Midnapore were initially deemed to have been affiliated to Vidyasagar University. Now the total number raised to 39 including three engineering Colleges - one Haldia Institute of Technology at Haldia, one College of Engineering & Management at Kolaghat and one MCKV Institute of Engineering at Liluah. Master of Social Work (MSW) Course of Vidyasagar school of Social work was given affiliation by the University. A number of Management Institutes (NSO) applied to the University seeking affiliation of various management Courses. The University in principle has also agreed to affiliate a Medical College which is going to be started soon at Midnapore town. The University Authority is also considering the proposal for introducing Postgraduate Courses at Undergraduate Colleges affiliated to the University. The teaching in the Postgraduate Departments is being offered in unconventional areas, research is being carried out in fields mostly unexplored, and extension and field action being geared to the fulfillment of the above mission. These courses are fully covered by the norms of the Distance Education Council. In fact the Council has offered some financial support for infrastructural development. A good number of Postgraduate students of this University were qualified for NET, GATE and SLET. Many candidates were admitted to the Ph.D. degrees of this University.
Some other scholars have submitted their theses for adjudication. Many candidates have registered theirs names for Ph.D. degree.

### 1.2 Emergence of the Problem

The open and distance learning system in India has emerged as an important mode for providing education to diverse section of society. India is always being quality conscious about education and has a huge backlog of adult illiterates, semiliterate and the educated unemployed, all in search of new knowledge and new skills including professional skills. ODL is an opportunity and has its genesis in this gap between demand and facilities for higher education.

According to the World Bank report, India has earned the distinction of having the world's second largest education system after China. The number of Distance Education Institutes has been growing at a healthy pace in the country. On 2011-12, almost 200 institutes are approved for offering distance learning programme. Now there are about 250 distance education institutions in the dual mode universities and institutions which are offering programmes through distance mode. The table given below reflects the year wise growth of ODL Institutions in the country.

#### Table 1.1: Growth of Distance Education Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dual- Mode Universities/Institutes</th>
<th>Single- Mode OUs</th>
<th>Total Distance Education Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Distance Education bureau, a bureau of University Grand Commission (UGC)

During the initial years the student enrolment increased slowly - from 1,112 students in 1962 to 29, 500 students in 1970-71. It increased during the next two decades to about 6 lakh in 1990-91. In 2000-01, there were about 14 lakh students studying through distance mode which further went up to about 18 lakh students in 2005-06.
The student enrolment further rose to about 37 lakh in the year 2009-10. Thus, with fresh enrolment in ODL programmes at approximately 40 lakh annually, the share of distance education in the GER is about 22-23%, which is significant.

Table 1.2: Student Enrolment in Distance Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conventional Universities/Colleges</th>
<th>CCl's/DDEs/Open Universities</th>
<th>Percentage Share Of DE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962-1963</td>
<td>7,52,095</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>753207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1976</td>
<td>24,26,109</td>
<td>64,210</td>
<td>2.578</td>
<td>2490319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1981</td>
<td>27,52,437</td>
<td>66,428</td>
<td>5.701</td>
<td>2918865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>36,06,029</td>
<td>3,55,091</td>
<td>8.964</td>
<td>3961120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>49,24,868</td>
<td>5,92,814</td>
<td>10.744</td>
<td>5517682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-1995</td>
<td>61,13,929</td>
<td>8,30,176</td>
<td>11.61</td>
<td>6917105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>65,74,005</td>
<td>10,03,000</td>
<td>13.237</td>
<td>7577005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>83,99,443</td>
<td>13,78,000</td>
<td>14.094</td>
<td>9777443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>110,28,020</td>
<td>18,33,524</td>
<td>14.256</td>
<td>12861544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>124,68,560</td>
<td>37,36,744</td>
<td>23.35</td>
<td>16000000(approx)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: growth of distance education, distance education council

Enrolment in distance education has grown at an annual rate of 11% in the last three decades and now student enrolment in distance education is 4.2 million.

Figure: 1.1

Student enrolment in distance education on million

CAGR stands for - Compound Annual Growth Rate
Distance Education Enrolment by Institutions (2011-12)

Source: Twelfth five year plan. Chapter on higher education, UGC report ‘Higher Education in India at a glance’ 2012.

From the above figure it has been observed that enrolment in Indira Gandhi National Open University covers 16.65%, 13 state Universities covers 25.7% and other 183 DEIs covers 57.7%.

Other DEIs have witnessed a rapid growth and account for the bulk share of enrolment. This DEI includes more than 40 private institutions. Recognition accorded by the Distance Education Council to the universities/institutions for offering programmes through distance revised from time to time ensures quality and optional standards in the system.

Some observers mention that the magnitude of distance learning may someday eclipse that of the traditional learning environment. 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 condition on one hand and technological development on the other.

Still, there are some areas which are the weaker section of distance education in India and which needs more attention and effort for the further development and progress of distance education in our country. The investigator pointed out such area and found
that very few studies have been conducted on objective, mission and vision, study material, instructional strategy, enrolment and evaluation of distance education in all over India and as well as in the world. In West Bengal, no research has been conducted on this area. Sukati C.W.S., Magagula, C.M., Esampally H C, Simelane, S. & Moses M. S (2010) and Chaudhary, N. Kumar, S and Shankar, G (2007) worked to compare face-to-face full-time and distance education modes. Sukati C.W.S., Magagula, Cisco M. Esampally Hamilton Chandraiah, Simelane, S. & Moses M. Sithole (2010) studied about Conventional Versus Distance Education. But these are not the comparison of dual mode and unimode universities of distance education. Research on study material, instructional strategy, enrolment and evaluation were conducted by many researchers but in West Bengal very little such work has been done. Most of the work has been conducted on IGNOU study centers, but other universities of West Bengal are neglected. So it is necessary to take clear insight into the objective, mission and vision, study material, instructional strategy, enrolment and evaluation of distance education in West Bengal. Thus the researcher has tried to compare those different aspects of uni mode and dual mode universities in West Bengal. The researcher has also conducted more in-depth study highlighting on the socio-economic back ground of distance education students and also the opinion of students, teacher and directors regarding distance education.

1.3 Conclusion

Chapter one is an introductory chapter. This chapter deals with the title, concept, historical and theoretical background of distance education in our country as well as in the world. It is very important to realize the growing demand of distance education to develop a knowledge-based society and to provide educational opportunity for every one. The next chapter deals with the review of related literature.