CHAPTER - IV

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• Title :-
   “A Study of factors governing Access and Equity in Open Distance Learning
   Programmes” - With special reference to the Distance Mode Institutions (DEIs) of
   Dual Mode Universities in Western Maharashtra.

• Objectives of the Study :-
  1. To explore the causes, how far Distance Education has actually made
     education accessible.
  2. To identify the factors governing access.
  3. To assess the degree of inequality, causes of inequality.
  4. To suggest the remedial measures for promoting inclusiveness.

• Hypothesis of the Study :-
On the basis of above objectives following hypothesis are formulated.
  1. There are causes which affect the accessibility in distance education.
  2. Access and Equity are co-related.
  3. There are factors governing access and equity in distance education.

• Assumptions of the study :-
  1. Access to higher education through distance mode is affected by different
     socio-economic factors.
  2. Equity in higher education depends on the access. Certain parameters like
     gender disparity, reservation policy, differently abled and minorities affect the
     equity in Distance Education.

• Variables included in the Present Study:-
   Any educational research contains two types of variables i.e. independent and
   dependent variables.
• **Independent variable** –
The variable, the effect of which is on another variable - dependent variables, that the researcher wants to study.

• **Dependent variable** –
The effect of a cause, or the consequence of an antecedent. (effect, consequence)

Experiment is a procedure undertaken for finding out the relationship between variables. An experiment is designed and carried out to establish the effects of one variable (independent) on another (dependent)

The present study includes following independent and dependent variables.

• **Independent variables**
  1. Religion/Caste
  2. Self Learning Material
  3. Socio-economic background of distance learner
  4. Educational Qualification of distance learner
  5. Geographical Distance
  6. Medium of instruction

• **Dependent variables**
  1. Accessibility and Equity

• **Scope and Limitations of the Present study :-**
  1. The study is limited to the learners in Distance Education in Western Maharashtra.
  2. The study is limited to dual mode universities in Western Maharashtra (Mumbai University, SNDT University, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth and Shivaji University)
  3. The present investigation is limited to a sample of 1000 learners who attended PCP’s in various centers of the dual mode Universities.
  4. The present study is limited to a few personal variables like gender, religion, caste, educational qualification, geographical distance, medium of instruction, socio-economic background of the distance learner.
  5. The present investigation is limited to know the factors affecting access and equity in Distance Education mode.
• **Research Method :-**

For the present study information from the distance learners was collected and further analysis was done. Especially the analysis consists of the results that derived on the basis of percentage.

Survey method helps to describe and analyze the correlation existing between dependent and independent variables involved in the study. Hence a questionnaire was prepared. This questionnaire was implemented to collect the data.

The present form of research study is essentially descriptive and correlative in nature.

• **Population :-**

1. The targeted population of this research was distance learners from dual mode universities in Western Maharashtra.

2. Sample Size :- The researcher has taken 1% i.e. 1000 distance learners from dual mode universities in Western Maharashtra.

3. Method of Sampling :- The researcher has chosen simple random sampling technique.

**Definitions of Operational Terms**

1. **Access :-**

Access is a catalytic process that enables interactions, contact and exchanges among individuals. Concept of access has various dimensions. Access indicates ability, the ability to accomplish a broad range of actions, from attaining physical presence to communicating and from acquiring to using. Access increases our ability to improve our current conditions and future prospects. Access allows individuals to participate in activities important to their well being e.g. individuals who have access to education and training can compete more effectively in different fields.

2. **Equity :-**

Connotes fairness and justice – a fair, just and equal opportunity given to everybody regardless of individual social constraints like caste, religion, gender and level of urbanization.
Equity in Education –

A primary and explicitly stated objective of education policy of a welfare state must be to ensure equality of opportunities by way of securing that all the citizens have access to the resources necessary.

The pursuit of equal life chances for all citizens. Educational policy assumes a strong emphasis on identical treatment of all students to greater individual autonomy and diversity. The aim of equity should be all individuals will complete the equivalent upper secondary school education and that all given the opportunity to pursue higher studies if they so desire.

The aim of education policy should be to eliminate performance anxiety among students and to inculcate in them a culture that promotes the desire to learn.

3. Higher Education –

Higher Education is considered as the apex of formal education. It is the education beyond school level. The objectives of higher education may range from primary objectives, such as employability, enhancing the earning potential, improve on life management skills, seeking and advancing knowledge and wisdom, research and experimentation to more serious objectives like attaining spiritual growth engaging institutes quest for the unknown, facilitating better lifestyle and developing scientific outlook.

4. Distance Education :-

Educating students staying in their own places of residence situated away from the central institution. In distance education students are not required to be present in the school or college or to remain in full time engagement in the institution. They can carry on education without upsetting their work. They are enrolled in the central institution, which is an Open University or Distance Education Institution of dual mode university. There is regular communication between the student and the teacher. Along with the study material is printed form that can be equated to lectures in conventional system, Radio, Television, Audio-tapes, Video-tapes, Computer lessons etc are also used for instructions. To make up for the deficiencies resulting from lack of face to face contact between the student and the teachers, periodical contact programmes are organized when the student and teachers meet at a place and spend a fortnight or so, in discussion, project work, practical etc, is also called as Distance
teaching.

5. **Distance Education Institute (DEI) :-**

The institutions that offer programmes of study through distance mode include single mode institution that offer programmes through distance mode only and correspondence course Institutions or Distance Education Centers of the dual Universities.

6. **Socio-economic status :-**

Socio-economic status is a study of individual position within the social relationship. It influences individual relationship with others. It includes prestige, influence and respect. It is also known as social class, social status or socio-economic background.

Generally it is a crude, global measure comprising rating on education, occupation, income of parents or self income, material, and cultural level of family.