INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System- An Emerging Trend and Reality in the field of Education

Among the few innovations in the field of education, distance education ranks very high. Its importance is being realised because of its usefulness and potentials for providing greater access to education and making education available, flexible and innovative. Over the last few decades the revolution in communications has opened out vast possibilities for widening, strengthening and deepening the educational system. Right to education has revolutionized thinking of the education planners and administrators. Distance education has come into the educational scene as one of the most potent strategies to fulfill the demands of the mass education as well as individualising it (Rana, 1994).

In a huge country like India where the fruits of development are not equally distributed, the importance of ODL system is tremendous. ODL system is being adopted throughout the world as an important tool to ensure access, equity and quality in the realm of higher education. ODL in its organized form is one of the path breaking innovations in the field of education of the Twentieth century. The period between “1960-1985” has witnessed remarkable growth of distance education all around the world (IGNOU, 2001). Over the past decades, there has been noticeable growth in distance education around the world. It is very much evident from the increasing enrolment in ODL institutions (Fozdar, Kumar and Kannan 2006). Reddy (2005) stated that among the few innovations in the field of education, distance education ranks very high. Distance education is that mode of education which frees the student from the necessity of travelling to a fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person in order to be trained. In this context, Rastogi (2007) said that distance education has provided openness to learning and students have a freedom to learn at own rate, pace and time. The growing population of a country demands a system of education which brings the education to the door steps of the learners. The need for such education which could be provided to an individual at his own place gave birth to the concept of ODL system. It has emerged in the developing countries to promote higher education and play a vital role in accommodating the aspirants, especially adult learners in getting accommodated in the higher education sector. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India is around 17% at present and this is well below the world average of 24%. It is opined that ODL system is the answer in the developing country like India to raise the GER in higher education and in this context ODL system gains much significance in the present scenario. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), functioning at the national level for almost three decades, made considerable progress and gives equity and access to those who could not join the formal mode of higher education (Kishore, 1998). ODL worldwide has been established as an effective and innovative alternative system of education. This system can fulfil the educational needs of different categories of society, school
dropouts, housewives, employed people who want to learn while earning some livelihood, people from rural areas and all these were denied access and opportunity for formal education due to geographical distances, socio-economic and cultural barriers (Pandit, 2008).

In the context of education for all, Sharma (1997) remarked that the ODL could be seen as an alternative and viable mode to cater to the educational needs of individuals who because of one or the other reason could not continue their education in the formal setup of education. The ODL is a new paradigm with some elements of shift such as:

- From classroom to anywhere.
- From teacher centric to learner centric.
- From teacher as an instructor to teacher as a facilitator.
- From mainly oral instructions to technology aided instructions.
- From fixed time to anytime learning.
- From you learn what we offer to we offer what you want to learn.
- From education as one time activity to education as lifelong activity.

1.1.1 Challenging Dimensions of ODL System to the The-Then Learning System

Tiwari (2010) stated that higher education occupies a significant position in education system of a nation. It stands at the apex of the entire educational system, and influences all other levels. In India, a significant increase in the number of colleges and universities has been found during the last five decades and Indian higher education occupies the second largest system of higher education in the world after America. It comprises 506 universities, 33 institutions of national importance, 5 institutions established under State Legislature Act and 31, 324 colleges (MHRD Annual Report, 2010-11). In spite of being one of the largest systems of higher education, it has failed to guarantee the students’ accessibility to higher education as per the need. In the recent past, the demand for higher education has increased enormously throughout the country because of massive awareness. But the system of higher education fails to accommodate this ever increasing demand. In spite of an impressive quantitative expansion, India lags behind developed nations and also some of the developing nations in regard to access to higher education. The enrolment ratio in higher education in developed countries like Canada is about 100%, USA (80%), France (50%) and UK (30%). Even the enrolment rate in developing countries like Egypt is 20%, Thailand 20%, Mexico 16%, Brazil 11% and Turkey 10%, India lags far behind all of them. It is estimated that only 7 percent (146.25 lakhs) of the age group received higher education. The picture is quite dismal as the available educational opportunities at the higher education stage are not accessible to many students especially belonging to groups who are disadvantaged because of various geographical, social, cultural, economic, and linguistic or gender limitations. Viewing the increasing demand of higher education, Indian higher education needs a serious make over. ODL provides a viable alternative mode with the objective to take education to the door steps of
the learner, enhancing social equity, and creating flexibility for lifelong learning (Koul, 2000). Rathore, Doubey and Singh (1999) stated that distance education in the form of correspondence education started with the following objectives:

- To provide an efficient and less expensive method of educational instruction at higher education level in the context of national development in India,
- To provide facilities to pursue higher education to all qualified and willing persons who have failed to join regular university courses due to personal and economic reasons or because of their inability to get admission to a regular college, and
- To provide opportunities of academic pursuits to educate citizens to improve their standard of knowledge and learning through correspondence instruction without disturbing their present employment.

ODL system is being adopted throughout the world as an important tool to ensure access, equity and quality in the field of education. In this system, the students are free to learn at their own pace and convenience while being away from the institution. This system came into existence with the basic objective to provide wider access to higher education as the conventional system was proving to be unable to cope with the ever-increasing demand (Sharma, 2002). ODL in recent times has thus emerged as an alternative mode for higher education all over the world especially in developing country like India. Presently, there are more than 13 open universities and 200 other institutions imparting distance education in India (Rana, 2011).

ODL system has revolutionised the present mode of education. The growing population of a country demands a system of education which can bring learning to the door step, so that the percentage of the population living in the remote areas, working in the offices and involved in business and agriculture may be benefited (Pandit, 2008). The women can also take advantage of this system even when they are leading a domestic life. In short, the percentage of the population which cannot be benefited by the conventional educational system can be benefited by the ODL system. The ODL system of education is a new phenomenon which helps people in achieving higher education without any formality of attending regular classes like that in the conventional educational system. The University which imparts distance learning can be considered as 'University without walls or boarder'. On the other hand conventional Universities are referred to as 'Universities within the walls'. The formal conventional type of education has created a number of barriers which debar those people from taking education who cannot afford to come to schools, colleges and universities because of various constraints. In such circumstances, the ODL system evolves to rescue these peoples. The increasing popularity of ODL system in abroad and in India is supportive of the fact that this system has helped people in attaining knowledge and skills towards achieving purposeful goal of life. It provides a second chance to those who were left out or dropouts of formal education system. The inadequacy of traditional system of education to cope with the ever increasing frontier of knowledge led to the emergence of distance education all over the world with setting up of different Centre for Correspondence Institutions (CCIs) and Open
Universities. In this context Srivastava (2006), stated that the distance education system of India has been one of the fastest growing educational systems in the world.

The ODL system can challenge the the-then learning system due to its viability, flexibility, cost-effectiveness and forward looking attitude. It could take education to the door steps of needy learners. During the last decades, the ODL system because of its utility, high productivity, greater flexibility in the schemes of studies and examination, cost effectiveness and innovative approach has gained popularity over the traditional system of education. The cost effectiveness might be called as the ‘Big Bang Theory’ of Distance education (Hawkridge, 1995). The programmes offered by ODL system are accessible for all learners irrespective of their location, age and formal qualification. Learners can choose their own combination of subjects and complete the courses at their own pace and places. In the developing country like India, the vast majority of the people live in rural areas and are largely pre-occupied with the struggle for survival including the need for basic skills, vocational skills, health, social and civic education. The strong multimedia facility of ODL system could make this group of citizens more functional and productive in their work as housewives, cooks, farmers, traders, teachers, technicians, nurses etc. All of these could help us to build a healthier, happier, more stable and informed, better cultured and self-reliant citizenry (Anjanappa, 1989). Srivastava and Reddy (1996) opined that with its horizontal mobility, distance education transcends the barriers of time, space, sex, creed, community and religion by breaking the myth of elitism in conventional higher education.

1.1.2 Origin and Growth of ODL System- A Stress of Time

Realising the limitation of the formal education and with a view to use the modern communication technology to spread education, a viable alternative was the need of the hour. The establishment of the Open University in the U.K., the first strong distance teaching University imparting higher education, provided the much needed impetus to educational planners and policy makers. Thus Open University system began with the founding of the U.K. Open University in 1969 (Gangappa and Chandraiah, 2004). Policy makers began to consider the desirability of establishing such a University in India to solve some of the problems faced by the educational system (Ansari, 2002).

Describing the importance of ODL system, Shive and Jegede (2001) stated that ODL in Asia and Pacific (AP) region is playing an increasingly significant role in national higher education system and becoming an important policy choice for most countries. The most distinctive feature is huge student population in ODL institutions. For example, at least seven ODL institutions in the AP region are mega universities (universities with over 100,000 active students in degree-level courses). AIOU (Pakistan), Anadolu (Turkey), CCRTVU (China), IGNOU (India), KNOU (Korea), STOU (Thailand), UT (Indonesia), and PNU (Iran) have more than 5.6 million active students all together as of 2004. Besides these well-known mega universities, quite a few distance teaching universities in the region have been established more recently and provided tertiary level education to those seeking
continuing education opportunities. With two thirds of the global population, the AP region is known to have over 500 million potential students for ODL institutions.

ODL has been catching up very fast in all countries of the world—whether developed or developing, socialist or capitalist and western or non-western (Kumar, 2006). In the advanced countries of the West, ODL is practiced in different forms for well over 150 years. But, distance education in India is not so old; it is for a little over forty years only. Distance education in its earlier form of correspondence education started in the West in the middle of the 19th century, though in India, it had begun almost a century later in the form of postal correspondence education. The International Correspondence Schools (ICS) and the British Institutes are the prominent institutions of postal courses started in Bombay, which offered a variety of postal courses in areas of engineering, management, architecture, interior decoration, dress making, journalism, beauty care, photography, cartooning, commercial arts etc. (Chib, 1977). Distance education in India, in formalized form, has its genesis in a recommendation of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), made in 1961, that a detailed study of correspondence courses be made. A committee was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S.Kothari to examine the matter recommended for starting of correspondence courses because of their flexibility, economic viability and innovativeness. The University Grants Commission (UGC) decided to encourage part-time education, and the University of Delhi was asked to undertake a pilot project by instituting correspondence courses. Accordingly the University established its School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in the year 1962 (Singh, Mullick and Choudhury, 1994). The Education Commission appointed by the Govt. of India in 1964, to advise on the adoption of general principles and policies for the development of education in all its aspects, strongly advocated the promotion of correspondence education. In its report (Govt. of India, 1966) it recommended that “opportunities for part-time education through evening colleges and own-time education through programs like correspondence courses should be extended as widely as possible and these programs should include courses of science and technology.”

Punjabi University, Patiala was the second University in India to launch correspondence courses through its Directorate of Correspondence Courses (DCC) in 1968, and it was the first University to introduce regional medium of instructions. In subsequent years number of CCIs increased rapidly. As on date, India has more than 180 CCIs/ DDE attached to conventional Universities (Srivastava, 2014). During the first decade of correspondence education (1962-72), the following 13 correspondence units of conventional universities were set up which offered different Post Graduate, Under Graduate, Diploma and Certificate programmes to cater to the needs of lacs of learners (Anand,1985):

**Correspondence Course Institutions in India (CCIs) during the First Decade (1962-72)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the CCIs</th>
<th>Name of the Conventional Universities</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education</td>
<td>University of Delhi</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By the end of the sixties the idea of starting an Open University in India was felt by the Govt. of India. A working group constituted in 1971 under the chairmanship of Shri G. Parthasarthy recommended that the Govt. of India should establish an Open University so that students from the remotest parts of the country could have access to education and obtain degrees equivalent to those awarded by Universities located in urban areas. Significantly the group also made a specific recommendation regarding the preparation of reading materials of high standards keeping in view the requirements of the students not having the benefits of teachers (Govt. of India, 1975). As a result in 1982, the UGC pointed out the need to establish a national University. While the Central Govt. deliberated over the issue, the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh appointed in 1982 an expert committee to consider the matter, and in the same year the first Indian Open University, the Andhra Pradesh Open University, at Hyderabad was established. It was subsequently redesignated as the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU). The encouraging start of the Andhra Pradesh Open University gave an impetus to the idea of having an Open Learning system for the country. It led to the establishment to the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) at New Delhi in 1985. Subsequently, other Open Universities were established in the states of Bihar (1987), Rajasthan (1987), Maharashtra (1989), Madhya Pradesh (1992), Gujrat (1994), Karnataka (1996), West Bengal (1997), Uttar Pradesh (1999), Tamilnadu (2002), Chhattisgarh (2005), Uttaranchal (2006) and Assam (2006). Here below are given the data regarding the Open Universities of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Open Universities</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh Open University</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indira Gandhi National Open University</td>
<td>New Delhi</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nalanda Open University</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yashwant Rao Chavan Maharashtra Open University</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University</td>
<td>Gujrat</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus with the establishment of Correspondence Course Institutes and Open Universities, India has grown both in magnitude and direction of ODL system. At present there are 13 State Open Universities and 1 National Open University, and more than 180 Correspondence Institutes/ Directorates of Distance Education attached to the conventional Universities. It has been reported in 2009-10, the University system alone provided instructions through ODL system to nearly 37,36,744 students at various levels of higher education. It implies nearly 23% of the total enrollment in the universities is accounted by distance education (Mouli, 2014).

1.1.3 Intervention of ODL System in Different Stages of Education

The Indian constitution provides for equal educational opportunities for all. In this regard, Kumar (1999) stated that at all levels of education, achievement of the goals envisaged in terms of overall coverage, equitable distribution and quality of education, is still a long way off. The disparities in participation rates between male and female, rural and urban areas are especially high and significant at the higher education level. In such a situation ODL system evolved as a solution of this problem of inequality and plays a prominent role in human resource development (Kumar, 1996). India has the distinction of having introduced distance education, in the form of correspondence education, nearly four decades back at the tertiary level and three and half decades back at the secondary level.

In view of the increased demand for higher education, many Universities were not in a position to provide quality education. A scheme of correspondence education was included in the Third Five Year Plan (1960-65) and an expert committee was formed in 1961 to work out the details. The committee recommended the scheme of correspondence education, which started in one of the Universities, as it offered more flexibility. Delhi University was the first to establish the Directorate of Correspondence Education in 1962 by admitting 1,112 students for Bachelor Degree in Arts. Correspondence education was further augmented and reinforced by the Education Commission (1964-66) when it recommended for the expansion of correspondence studies to cover higher education as widely as possible. This recommendation was largely guided by cost considerations as correspondence education was supposed to reduce the capital cost of expanding higher education and possibly bring the recurrent cost down to a manageable level. As a direct consequence, a few more Universities opened correspondence education departments during the sixties. However, the system started taking firm root only in the mid-seventies with phenomenal growth in the number of distance institutions as well as number of students (Dutt, 1988). Further, a breakthrough in distance
education in India at tertiary level occurred as a result of the establishment of Andhra Pradesh State Open University (1982) and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in 1985. Later a few state level Open Universities also appeared. India today has the second largest distance education system in the world, both in terms of number of institutions and number of students in the system.

Distance education at the school level is vastly different from that at the university level. Although, as in the university system, distance education entered into the school system through correspondence education in 1965, the focus, the need and the approach were quite different. Unlike distance education at the higher level, it was neither demand-driven nor planned as an alternative to improve educational participation. In fact, the genesis of distance education at the school level can be traced to the problem of dismal performance of private candidates in secondary school examination. Secondary education in India is characterized by low participation, low transition and high failure rates. The idea to start correspondence courses at the secondary level originated in 1964 when the Conference of Boards of Secondary Education in India recommended that the Boards of Secondary Education should consider starting correspondence education courses to improve the academic standards of private students. In other words, correspondence education was just a means to coach the private candidates to improve their academic performance. As a result, the Board of Secondary Education of Madhya Pradesh took the initiative to begin correspondence courses to provide coaching for secondary school students in 1965. Bakliwal (1988) stated that during 1968, Delhi Patrachar Vidyalaya (Correspondence school) came into existence. The Board of Secondary Education of Rajasthan (1968), Orissa (1977) and Uttar Pradesh were the other institutions that started offering correspondence education for private candidates. The correspondence institutes in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh were established primarily to provide coaching to private candidates who were sitting for secondary and senior secondary level examinations. In the state of Rajasthan, it was made mandatory for all private students taking senior secondary examinations to register in a correspondence course. In the states of Orissa, a correspondence course was started to provide coaching to non-matriculate teachers to take matriculation examination privately. All these correspondence institutions followed the same syllabus, curriculum and examination patterns as prescribed by the respective state boards. However, all the institutions prepared the correspondence lessons based on the curriculum exclusively for the private students. Besides, providing learning materials, a few personal contact programs were also organized by all the correspondence institutions except Madhya Pradesh.

A breakthrough in distance education in general, and at a secondary level in particular, was achieved during the year 1979 with the establishment of the Open School Project. There are many factors that have contributed to the evolution of the idea of Open School in India. Post independent India is marked by the paradox of a growth of education in terms of increase in enrolment ratio and number of institutions, at the same time as an increase in inequality reflected in lack of access to many. Many underprivileged communities and underdeveloped localities are still far away from the educational opportunities. This led to the reformulation of
educational strategy and priorities. Out of this understanding emerged the idea of supplementing formal education with alternative education. One such alternative considered was distance education. A working group was appointed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to examine the feasibility of the Open School. The working group recommended that an Open School should be set up at the secondary level to cater to the educational needs of the 14+ age group. Finally, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) prepared a blueprint for establishment of Open School as a project, and the Ministry of Education accepted the proposal. Thus the Open School project was established by CBSE during 1979. The concept of Open School at the secondary level was a bid and bold departure from, and a considerable advance over, the concept of correspondence education. The aim was to liberate the system from its ingrained rigidities and orthodoxy (Dewal, 1994).

As a consequence of the National Policy recommendations, coupled with the emerging success of the CBSE Open School Project, the National Open School (NOS) was established in 1989 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, amalgamating the Open School Project of CBSE. In 1990, the Government of India authorized the National Open School to conduct examinations and act as the certifying authority at the secondary and senior secondary levels. As a result, NOS has assumed the function of a Board of Examinations. It was the first time in the country that a distance education institution at secondary level was given autonomy and authorized to conduct examinations for certification (Sujatha, 1989). The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) formerly known as National Open School (NOS) was established in November, 1989 as an autonomous organization in pursuance of National Policy on Education 1986 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India with a mission to provide relevant, continuing and holistic education up to pre-degree level through ODL system; to contribute to the universalization of school education; and to cater to the educational needs of the prioritized target groups for equity and social justice. NIOS is providing a number of vocational, life enrichment and community oriented courses besides general and academic courses at secondary and senior secondary level. It also offers elementary level courses through its Open Basic Education Programs (OBE).

### 1.1.4 Intervention of ODL System in Different Areas of Education

Education is a catalyst of social change and spread of education in a society is the foundation of success in countries that are latecomers to development. Higher education plays the role of leadership in the society. Singh and Paliwal (2012) are of the view that ODL is playing an important role in providing higher education to those who are unable to be part of the conventional system. The main objective of ODL system is to reach the unreached and provide education at the doorstep of the learners and according to their convenience. The movement of open education has the potential to address the barriers of higher education and introduce several alternatives for the underprivileged who aspire to complete higher education. ODL system has really opened new window of opportunities for those who desire for
further studies. In a way it has helped numerous professionals, dropouts, housewives, etc. to accomplish their unfinished dreams, the whole purpose of providing distance education is to provide cost-effective, quality education to large sections of our populations including those living in remote and far flung areas. Distance learning caters to the educational needs of the target groups through the open of learning and provides facility to study according to their own pace and convenience. The ODL system provides opportunities not only to the young students but also to those from the older age groups. The main reason for increasing interest in distance education lies in the need for continuing education in today’s competitive world (Sharma and Goswami, 2014).

There has been noticeable growth in distance education around the world over the past decades. This is very much evident from the emergence of mega universities all over the world like IGNOU, which have over 3 million students in India and other countries through 21 Schools of Studies and a network of 67 regional centres, around 2,667 learner support centres and 29 overseas partner institutions. The university offers about 228 certificate, diploma, degree and doctoral programs, with a strength of nearly 810 faculty members and 574 academic staff at the headquarters and regional centres and about 33,212 academic counselors from conventional institutions of higher learning, professional organizations, and industry among others (IGNOU Profile, 2013). ODL system as a viable alternative has evolved in different areas has evolved in different areas and disciplines from humanities and social sciences to technical and vocational courses. Presently, ODL institutions are not only imparting education as an alternative to the formal system i.e. education in conventional courses/programs, but also different skill development programs such as vocational and continuing education, teacher education and even in high technology based education (Bourne, Harris and Mayadas, 2005). Various academic programs ranging from Humanities to Professional courses are imparted through different modes of ODL system. Both short term and long term programs are delivered through distance mode. In this regard, Panda, Venkaiah, Garg and Puranik (2006) stated that ODL becomes popular in the areas like science, engineering, paramedical, management, home science, law and numerous vocational fields. A wide variety of degree (Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral), diploma and certificate programs are offered by ODL system all over the world. Among all these programs, some of the theory based courses are – B.A, B.Com, M.A, M.Com, PGDHE, PGDDE, BSW, MSW etc.; and some of the practical based courses are – B.Ed. M.Ed. MCA, MBA, B.Sc. M.Sc. etc. ODL institutions offer different need based courses like Engineering, Agriculture, Nursing, Medicine, Vocational Training etc. Most of these programs are innovative in nature and developed keeping in view the learners’ need and interests. The main objectives of the courses are certification, improvement of learners’ skills, development of professional qualification, self-development and empowerment of learners’ etc.

ODL system becomes very popular in the area of teacher education also. This is the area where distance education has been used extensively to provide pre-service teacher education, upgrading of academic qualification, in-service continuing
professional development in subject content areas and instructional methods (Perraton, 2003; UNESCO, 2001; and UNESCO, 2002).

ODL universities are providing opportunity of lifelong learning through learner-centred education system. Learners unable to continue their study in the conventional on campus education system, can enjoy some sort of flexibility in ODL universities to restart and recontinue their education (Ahmmod, 2004). Rapid advancements in technology have further encouraged ODL institutions to offer programmes for improving skill needed for the work force working in industries and research labs who can contribute in the growing economy of their country. The ODL system has great potential to reach to un-reached and even marginalised and excluded groups.

1.1.5 ODL System – A Way to Achieve Universalization of Education

Today, education in India stands at the crossroads. Neither normal linear expansion nor the existing pace and nature of improvement can meet the needs of the situation. In the Indian way of thinking, a human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource, which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness, and care, coupled with dynamism. India's political and social life is passing through a phase, which poses the danger of erosion to long-accepted values. The goals of secularism, socialism, democracy and professional ethics are coming under increasing strain. The rural areas, with poor infrastructure and social services, will not get the benefit of trained and educated youth, unless rural-urban disparities are reduced and determined measures are taken to promote diversification and dispersal of employment opportunities. Life in the coming decades is likely to bring new tensions together with unprecedented opportunities. To enable the people to benefit in the new environment will require new designs of human resource development. The coming generations should have the ability to internationalize new ideas constantly and creatively. All these imply better education. Besides, a variety of new challenges and social needs make it imperative for the Government to formulate and implement a new Education Policy for the country. Nothing short of this will meet the situation. In nutshell, the targets set in the policy could not be achieved without making distance education an integral part of the overall educational system.

ODL is considered very effective for a country like India, where literacy and education levels are low. India tried its level best to provide free and compulsory education to all its citizens but it could not achieve its target till today. It becomes a tough job to provide higher education with its limited resources. In this context, distance education has emerged as a viable and effective option to a large section of youth having no access to the conventional universities. It has immense relevance, particularly in a country like India, where pursuing education is a pricey affair. Education through distance mode indicates democratization of higher education with an aim to provide cost effective and relevant education to large sections of our population including those living in remote and far-flung areas.
(Ahmed, 2005). In India the Open Distance Learning System mainly focuses on solving the basic problem of providing equal access to higher education (Ramana, 2008). This system has become increasingly significant mode in almost all countries of the world as it widens the horizons of education, opens new frontiers of knowledge and democratizes the teaching learning process (Mohanty, 2002). Thus, Distance Education system came into existence with a popular slogan “Education at your door step” literally brought higher education closer to the people. The system of distance education has the potential to fulfill the enormous responsibility of universalization and democratization of education as it holds the promise of checking the falling standards at reasonable costs, making the optimum use of media and technology and providing education relevant to the needs of the country. In this regard Srinivasacharyulu and Ramaiah (1994) stated that the emergence of distance education in the educational scenario has helped a lot to democratize the higher education in the countries of the third world. Learners from varied groups including rural and tribal areas, physically-challenged, jail inmates and rehabilitation houses, government and non-government sectors, parents and home-makers, the employers have been beneficiaries of the ODL programs. Open University like IGNOU has put special focus on women, socially and economically disadvantaged groups, the north-east region, and other tribal and low literacy areas of the country (Nayantara, 2010). The growing population of a country demands a system of education which brings the education to the doorsteps of the needy learners (Selvam, 1999). Distance education system is the only system which made it possible by including all groups of people particularly the disadvantage groups. Therefore, this mode of education is increasing popularity among the new generation learners. By removing barriers to education (Muganda, 2002) ODL opens up the possibilities of social justice in higher education in terms of access, relevance, flexibility, lifelong learning opportunities and democratization of knowledge.

For faster growth of the economy of a country human capital should be available along with physical capital. That is why, improving and expanding education are essential ingredients of any national development policy. However, developing countries fail to offer education to all sections of people in society through conventional on-campus system of education due to lack of infrastructural facilities and also some constraints embodied in it. ODL system can play an important role to make-up this gap. It is a cost-effective way of mass education. On the other hand, especially in the developing countries, students who cannot go to school due to insolvent economic condition of the parents can have education by earning by themselves. So, ODL systems have proven themselves a way for people to gain education, which would otherwise, not possible (Dekkers, 2000). However, when comparing with conventional forms of education the provision of distance education requires considerably greater planning, infrastructure costs and more complex student and administrative support systems (Lockwood, 1995; and Rumble, 1986).
1.1.6 ODL System for Creating a Developing Society

Historically Indian society is a hierarchical society and its knowledge base has always been elitist. Whether it is caste based system or the colonial education system, access to knowledge has primarily been the privileged of the few. In ancient India, access to learning was restricted to a few belonging to high castes in the social hierarchy and the low born were entirely deprived off educational opportunities. No specific efforts were made to provide any kind of education to the lower classes (Chandrashekharan, 1994). Creation of an environment which is conducive to the cultural, economic and social development of people has become a major challenge for developing countries like India. The progress of human civilization is determined largely by the level of education people have (Ahmed, 2005). Education has been one of the most important concerns of the human society since the dawn of human civilization. It has always been an instrument for promoting the survival and ascent of the human species. It is considered as a powerful tool for human resource development and social change. It is regarded as a facilitator for growth and development of society. So education should be for each and every one to see and understand the world. But if we look back into the history of India, education was never in reach of its entire people. Unequal access to education has been rampant in India. Over the generations one section of the society were enjoyed the fruits of education and remaining majority of Indian communities particularly marginalized sections like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Religious Minorities, Women and Physically Challenged were denied the opportunity (Hemalatha, 1992). Several developing countries have recognized the role of education in nation building and made extensive provisions for educational facilities to the people by setting up formal educational institutions of all types. Despite tremendous growth in the number of educational institutions, the demand has far exceeded the availability of educational provisions. Because of population explosion and limited financial resources of the state the formal system is unable to meet the needs of all the learners. Developing countries are now realising that education is the key to their development though they are yet to be able to invest the major chunk of their resources on education. The low percentage of adult population in higher education in India indicates the need for doubling the efforts to bring the people into higher education fold. In a country like India, with highly varied geographical terrain, population density, availability of technology, access to school education and socio economic background, no single model of learning package, delivery system and monitoring mechanism can be successful in making higher education accessible everywhere and everyone which would democratize higher education (Gujral and Kumar, 2004). To meet the growing demand of higher education and for educating the masses the distance education system has been emerged as most popular method of teaching by taking education to the doorsteps of the learners. In this regard, Goswami (2013) stated that the changing social, economic, political and educational needs of the nations have made the administrators and policy framers to move away from conventional practices of education and have led to the emergence of the distance education all over the world. Yasmin (2010) opined that
the students, especially those who cannot get the chance/opportunity to enroll in regular course, could be able to ripe optimum benefit of higher education if ODL programs are flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of learners regardless of who they are, where, when and what they want to study. While on one hand, the ODL as a system might thrive for providing equitable access and opportunity to higher education, on the other, it also needs to meet the challenges to overcome barriers to higher education and creating opportunities for participation in the knowledge development cycle. Distance Education has the potentiality and capacity to provide general education and professional education useful for the application of the latest technology in the new millennium in all sectors of the development and face the force of globalization, deregulation, privatization and fast socio-economic changes through continuous education in latest developments to personnel engaged in these areas provided to maintain distance education system perfect, practical and operational (Goel and Goel, 2000). Education through distance mode indicates universalization and democratization of higher education with an aim to provide cost-effective and relevant education to large sections of our population including those living in remote and far-flung areas. ODL has potentials to contribute to social justice in higher education including the capacity to widen provision; to provide equitable educational opportunities; to increase opportunities of provision and recognition of lifelong learning; and to contribute significantly towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development (Muganda, 2002).

In this context, ODL system has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic component of higher education infrastructure in the country (Hegde, 2008). Clare, (2008) stated that ODL system is poised for an important role in the emerging scenario in our country. As a force contributing to socio-economic development, ODL is fast becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the main stream of educational system in both developed and developing countries (Sharma and Choudhury, 2008). There are as many as 3.6 million students under ODL system, accountability for 25% of the student population in higher education (Pani, Satpathy and Mishra, 2009). In India ODL has proved to be an effective tool to impart education for disadvantaged groups, to the neo-literate class of society, to people living in remote or rural areas, and to section of society which could not avail them of conventional education.

1.2.0 A Focus on the Conceptual Framework of ODL System

Distance learning concept is introduced in the country with a view to democratize education, so that it covers large segments of population, vocations and professions. The primary emphasis is on innovation, flexibility and cost effectiveness. It aims at the dissemination of learning and acquiring knowledge through distance education mode including the use of any communication technology to provide opportunities for higher education. It provides easy access to education to different sections of society, especially to those with seemingly geographical isolation and difficulty, and caters to the educational needs of the target groups through the open systems of learning. The ODL institutions aim at providing support and facilitate quality learning process to distance learners through
interactive activities. Over the past decades, there has been a noticeable growth in
distance education around the world. This is very much evident from the increasing
enrolment in Open Distance Learning (ODL) institutions (Cavanaugh, 2005). ODL
institutions are not only imparting education as an alternative to the formal system
i.e. education in conventional courses/programs, but also in areas such as
vocational and technical, and continuing education, teacher education and even in
high technology based education (UNESCO, 2002; and Bourne, Harris and
Mayadas, 2005).

Takwale (1988) opined that ODL system is oriented to the current and the possible
future changes in human societies. It maintains its legitimate components of its
educational strategy on one hand and on the other hand, it aims at rationalizing their
uses for optimal results. Emergence of distance education is described by Henry
Dieuzeide as the “Copernican Revolution”, changing the centre of gravity from
teacher centered mentality to the student centered approach.

There is no one meaning of the term distance education. It is known by a
bewildering variety of nomenclature. In Australia, it is known as the “External
System”. This description is not appreciated very much because it carries vibes of
the old London external system which usually provides examination but not teaching
(Jevon, 1983). Unofficially, it is known as off-campus study. In some countries, the
term correspondence education is widely used. But, it has been replaced by the
term “Independent Study” in North-America. “Home Study” is sometimes used to
describe correspondence programmes of private schools both in North-America
and Europe. In France, it is known as “tele enseignement”; in Germany, it is described
as “Fernunterricht” (Rumble and Keegan, 1982). “Extramural” refers to distance
education in Newzeland. These terms have come in vogue because of the historical
circumstances in various countries. They have some characteristics of their own,
most of which are similar to distance education. For instance, separation of the
students from the teacher is a common characteristic of all of them. In India we have
been using three terms i.e. “External Appearance”, “Correspondence Education”,
and “Distance Education” (Sharma and Choudhury, 2008). In “External
Appearance”, a University permits a student to take the examination as a private
candidate, if he passes, he is given the degree. The University does not take any
responsibility to impart education to the students. Correspondence education has
been quite popular in this country. Lastly, Correspondence education has
designated themselves as Distance Education and Open University system (Reddy,
1983).

The most comprehensive general definition of Distance Education is first proposed
by Keegan in 1980 and modified in 1986. Keegan (1986) identifies the following
seven principal characteristics of distance education:

- Separation of teacher and the students
- The influence of an educational organization
- The use of technical media
- The provision of two way communication
- The absence of group learning
- Participation in most of industrialized form of education
- The privatisation of learning (in that learning occurs away from the group), (Rumble, 1986).

Later, Rumble (1997) defined ODL system comprising at least of three sub-systems:
- the regulatory sub-system: such as human resources, purchase, finance, equipment and building;
- the material sub-system: such as production and distribution of learning material;
- the students support system: such as to enrol students, collection of fees, allocation of study and exam centre.

ODL system is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom. It has been described as a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both (Honeyman and Miller, 1993). It is that type of learning in which the student and the instructor are separated by physical distance (Washlstrom, Williams and Shea, 2003). In the open and distance learning system there is a distance between the learners and the education provider. NCERT (2007) has mentioned “Distance Education and Open learning is a new system in the revolution of education with a potential to bring about a major revolution in instruction and training using multimedia technology so as to take educational opportunities to places and people hitherto unreached, surpassing social, economic and geographical barriers for attaining the objectives of relevance, equity and excellence”.

An even more concise definition is that distance education is characterized by its focus on open access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners (UNESCO, 2002). Distance education has some specific characteristics, which separate it from the traditional system of education and provide it with unique feature as parallel to formal education such as there is no direct interaction or face-to-face activity between teacher and students but compensated by contact or counseling sessions (CS). There is two-way communication between teacher and student, which is facilitated by the organizing institutions. The institution develops self-instructional material (SIM) with the help of subject experts and specialists. Here, this communication between teacher and students can be termed as indirect interaction, which takes place generally through mails and can be supplemented by the electronic media also. But the media either print or electronic is necessary for communication. The third characteristic feature of distance education is either contact sessions or counseling sessions aimed to solve the queries of learners generated after studying the SIM. The topics to be discussed in counseling sessions are neither prescheduled nor pre-declared. In Open University system, the learners can contact at their study centers for any information.
regarding Self Instructional Material (SIM), Home Assignment (HA), Counselling Session (CS) and examination etc.

As the concept is used all through the world, it got different terms like distance education, correspondence education, home study, independent study, external study, off-campus study, open learning, open education etc., but their use and meaning denote more or less the same. But the most important terms used are distance education and open learning which jointly call Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

Distance education refers to the mode of education where the interacting learner and teacher are separated by space and time. It includes open learning, flexible learning and distributed learning. Though in some countries distance learning and open learning are used for different functions, but the modern system of education uses these two terms jointly to refer to the same and unified concept ODL with more and more flexibility principle. The basic principle in both the cases remains the same. The main philosophy that governs the system is learners’ flexibility and democratization of education. Open and Distance learning emphasizes giving learners’ choices about:

- medium or media, whether print, on-line, television, or video;
- place of study, whether at home, in the workplace, or on campus;
- pace of study, whether closely paced or unstructured;
- support mechanisms, whether tutors on demand, audio conferences, or computer assisted learning.

The above definitions clarify that the concept of distance education is basically a democratic concept. Distance education implies the provision of educational opportunity for the learners from a distance through the use of multiple media such as self-learning materials, audio-video programmes and short-term personal contact programmes (Khan, 2005). The system of distance education has the potential to fulfill the enormous responsibility of universalization and democratization of education.
1.2.1 Understanding the Highlighted Features of ODL System

Distance Education provides access to higher education to a large segment of society. The need for distance education can be attributed to the information explosion, to an increasing population, and to its cost effectiveness. The conventional system of education has not been able to cope with the increasing demand for education. The open and distance learning mode has several advantages and has become quite popular due to several factors. Through distance education it is possible to serve large sections of society who are not able to continue to study in regular conventional institutions for various kinds of reasons. Distance education provides access to higher education to adults who are willing to learn on their own, at their own pace. There are certain factors which characterize distance education (Trivedi and Gupta, 2010). These are-

- built-in flexibility,
- learner autonomy,
- democratization of education,
- use of modern technology in course delivery mechanism,
- absence of peer learning group,
- separation between the learner and the teacher, and
- the heterogeneity of the learners.

Mohakud, Mahapatra and Behera (2012) stated that the main characteristics of ODL are open access, flexibility, self-pacing, learner centeredness, self-learning and having a target group. The specific characteristics of ODL system are discussed under the following four heads:

Open Access

The term open access implies a lack of:

- formal entry requirements;
- prerequisite credentials;
- an entrance examination;
- an age bar; and
- caste restriction.

Flexible Learning

The term flexible learning emphasizes the creation of environments for learning having the following characteristics:

- convergence of open and distance learning methods, media, and classroom strategies; learner-centered philosophy;
- recognition of diversity in learning styles and learners’ needs;
- diversified curriculum;
- unlimited enrolment;
- recognition of the importance of equity in curriculum and pedagogy;
- use of a variety of learning resources and media;
- fostering of lifelong learning habits and skills in learners and staff; and
- flexible examination system.

Time and Place Continuum
Open and distance learning programmes fall somewhere along two continua: the continuum of time and the continuum of place. Most open and distance learning providers use a combination of the four scenarios as given below:

**Same Place and Same Time**
Classroom teaching, face-to-face tutorials and seminars, workshops, and residential schools. Example: Open Learning Institute, Charles Sturt University in Australia, for an example of an institution that relies on residential schools to provide interaction between learners and tutors is being challenged.

**Same Place but Different Time**
Learning Resource Centers, that learners visit at their leisure. Example: Open Access College in Australia for an example of an institution that has a number of resource centers.

**Different Place but Same Time**
Audio conferences and video conferences; television with one-way video, two-way audio; radio with listener–response capability; and telephone tutorials. Example: Indira Gandhi National Open University for an example of an institution that is using audio conferencing and television with one-way video and two-way audio.

**Different Place and Different Time**
Home study, computer conferencing, tutorial support by e-mail, and fax communication. Example: Wide variety of ways to make learning materials available for this kind of independent study.

**Target Group**
Distance education has a target group of its own and it meets such needs and challenges which are not catered to by the formal classroom system (Koul, 2000). The target group includes women and girls, scheduled casts and scheduled tribes, people of rural and remote areas, functionally non-literate, disabled children, long term unemployed, out of work youth, refugees, immigrants and non-nationals and working persons.

### 1.2.2 Understanding the Different Modes of ODL System
ODL system is provided through different institutional modes. They may be: single mode ODL institution and dual mode ODL institution. The university/institution which is solely devoted to teaching at a distance is regarded as single mode ODL institution. On the other hand, the university/institution which offers a distance education programme in addition to traditional classroom teaching is regarded as dual mode ODL institution. ODL is provided through both single and dual mode institutions at the university level and school level too. At the university level, ODL is provided through open universities and Centre for Correspondence/Distance education of Conventional Universities; and at the school level, ODL is provided through open schools and Centre for Correspondence/Distance education of Conventional School Boards. With the rapid development, at present, India has 13 State Open University (SOU) and one National Open University the IGNOU and about 12 Open Schools including National Institutes of Open Schooling (NIOS) at New Delhi. Besides these, India has almost 180 Correspondence Course Institutes.
In addition to the fact that IGNOU has its jurisdiction in the whole country, it has also established study centres in 46 foreign countries (IGNOU, 2009).

**MODES OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM**

The distinction between single-mode and dual-mode ODL organisations is a classical one (Holmberg, 1981). Institutions which conform to single mode ODL system provides only distance teaching, usually to part-time students. The curriculum, the media used to teach, student support and accreditation are designed in an integrated way to suit students studying at a distance. The staffs are totally committed to distance students and have no conflict of loyalties between on-campus and off-campus students. The staffs are also strongly motivated to develop and enhance distance education methods and are free from the demands of face-to-face teaching. They normally have the freedom to devise programs for new target groups and to explore the full potential of new teaching methods. There are generally no on-campus student activities, though there may be a regional network of study centres where students and tutors meet. These institutions tend to have high setting-up costs, and all their costs are attributed to their distance teaching operation.

There are many single mode institutions in different parts of the world – some well-known examples are the Indira Gandhi National Open University in India (IGNOU), the Open University in the United Kingdom (UKOU) and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), Thailand.

**Functions of Single mode institution**-
- set up to offer programmes of study at a distance;
- some face-to-face interaction involved, but often optional;
- teaching and learning process ‘mediated’ in some way
  - by print, including correspondence;
  - by audio, including radio (one-way, two-way), cassettes, telephone, or audio conferences;
  - by video, including television (one-way, two-way), cassettes, or video conferences; and
  - by computer, including computer-based training, e-mail, computer conferencing, or World Wide Web;

Dual mode institution offers a distance education programme in addition to traditional classroom teaching. Institutions which are described as dual mode
universities generally teach both full-time students on campus and part-time students at a distance. These institutions tended to use their distance learning stream mostly for non-degree programmes such as adult and continuing education, while the more prestigious graduate and post-graduate programmes are taught in the conventional, classroom mode. School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education, University of Delhi; Directorate of Correspondence Courses, Punjabi University; and Institute of Distance and Open Learning, Gauhati University are examples of dual mode ODL institution.

**Functions of Dual mode institution**

- offers two modes:
  - one using traditional classroom-based methods; and
  - one using distance methods;
- may also offer the same course in both modes, with common examinations;
- regards the two types of learners as distinct: on-campus and external; and
- may or may not allow ‘cross-over’ registrations.

**1.2.3 Understanding the Different Problem Areas of ODL System**

Distance education is a learner centred education. The major difference between a conventional student and a distance learner is that the conventional learner is compelled to complete the course in the stipulated time while the distance learner can do so at his/her own pace and convenience. Distance education or learning at a distance has become increasingly significant mode of education as it provides independence of time and space to education. Day to day distance education is becoming popular mode of education among new generation learners as it opens opportunities for those who missed the ‘bus’ due to one or other reason (Villi, 1999). Though distance education system is growing rapidly, but in reality it suffers a lot of hurdles which needs analysis and review for putting the distance educational system on smooth lines. As distance education is learner centred, therefore, the problems faced by it need to be analysed. Students enroll themselves in distance education institution in order to fulfill their unique needs through distance education. All these students are relatively independent and they have various roles in society. The students of open learning are highly motivated on the one hand and they face a lot of problems in their choice of being a student of the open learning institution on the other hand. Due to the problems, the distance learners may become dissatisfied, frustrated and confused which lead to drop out from the system. Therefore, to solve all these problems of learners, we have to find out causes of all these problems, and then only we can put distance education on sound line. Problems and barriers encountered by the learners fall into several distinct areas like costs and motivations, feedback and teacher contact, student support services, alienation and isolation, lack of experience and training etc.

Distance learners feel more insecure about learning in comparison to the as usual learners (Knapper, 1998). The insecurities are founded in personal and school related issues such as financial cost of study, disruption of family life, perceived irrelevance of their studies and lack of support from employers. Distance learners are independent and also lonely. They are independent to the extent that they need
not attend the classes at regular timings and do not depend on the oral instruction of the teacher. These learners are separated from the institution as well as their peer groups. They cannot get immediate clarification for doubts and queries regarding their studies (Srivastava, Reddy and Fulzele, 1996). Without motivation no learning is possible but there is nobody to motivate the learners of distance education. These pressures often result in higher dropout rates than among traditional students (Sweet, 1986).

Another area of concern for the distance learner is the perceived lack of feedback or contact with the teacher. As there is not daily or weekly face to face contact with teacher, learners get a lot of trouble in self-evaluation. Keegan (1986) believes that the separation of student and teacher imposed by distance removes a vital ‘link’ of communication between these two parties. The link must be restored through overt institutional efforts so that the teaching-learning transaction may be ‘reintegrated’ (Keegan, 1986, p. 120). Tinto (1975) stated that Keegan hypothesized those students who did not received adequate reintegation measures such as electronic or telephone communication, would be less likely to experience complete academic and social integration into institutional life. Such students would be more likely to dropout (Sheets, 1992).

Another area of concern for distance learners is the lack of support and services such as providing tutors, academic planners and schedulers, and technical assistance. Support should not be overlooked when planning distance programs. Students need tutors and academic planners to help them to complete their courses on time. Planners from Washington State University (WSU) believed that success in attracting, serving and retaining students will hinge more on excellent student support services than on any technology issues (Oaks, 1996).

Another problem area is the feeling of alienation and isolation reported by distance learners. All kinds of students want to be part of a large school community and not simply a member of a correspondence course. Geographical isolation has been identified as one of the major problems for distance learners. In addition to the practical problems of contacting academic and administrative staff, obtaining study materials and borrowing library books, distance students suffer from the disadvantage of being unable to interact with other students and are often denied the perception that they belong to a scholarly community. This may lead to feeling of inadequate and insecurity and a lack of confidence in their own abilities (Wood, 1996).

Another problem area of students is the lack of student training, particularly in case of technical issues. Most of the learners are not well versed in the uses of technology such as computers and internet. Using the information relating to electronic media is a major problem for non-technical students. If distance learning is to be successful, technical barriers must be made a non-issue.

Although distance learning is not new, it has not received respect in the academic community because of the seriousness of the problems presented above. The dramatic growth of the learner population is making distance learning an
increasingly popular mode of education in almost all countries of the world. Close scrutiny of the problems in distance education will help to identify and overcome problems of distance education (Galusha, 2004).

1.2.4 Learning Process and Learning Success- Two Major Areas of Problem and Discussion of ODL System

Distance education is flexible alternative system of education which endeavors to redistribute teaching in space and time; promotes assisted self-learning and helps the individual to choose his path more freely in a more flexible framework (Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura, Lopes, Petrovsky, Rahnema and Ward, 1972). Learning process plays the most important role in ODL system as the learners are separated from the teachers physically. Therefore, the learning process is vital for success of any ODL programme. It is recognized as the effective component of ODL system. In an ODL environment, the emphasis is more on learning part of the learner than on teaching part of the teacher as it is learner centered system. Emphasizing on learning process, Gujral and Kumar (2006) remarked that the degree to which ODL system can succeed as a self-study system will obviously depend on the learning packages. More self-instructional the learning packages, easier it is for the student to learn.

The whole educational process seems to be paralyzed without a strong and effective support service system/ learning process in ODL system. Student support system lies in the heart of any ODL activities. It is important for an ODL institution to offer opportunities for its students to be connected with the institution and thus to develop valuable learning experience. Typical forms of student services in recent ODL include: face-to-face and/or online tutoring and counselling, telephone or email services, digital libraries, and mentoring. With the development of ICT, ODL institutions are able to offer individualized and interactive student services faster and easier than ever.

In a conventional learning situation, interpersonal interactions are usually defined as teacher/student, student/teacher and student/student relationships, and depicted in a triangular pattern. In the entire distance learning mode, direct contacts of this kind are rare. Students, prone to be affected by unsolved scientific or pedagogic difficulties in their learning process, by discouragement and demoralisation or by doubts that they are following the right path in the process of knowledge acquisition, should not be forced to work in isolation. Student support mechanisms are designed to overcome these difficulties. By creating opportunities for contact between students and the teaching system, questions can be asked and answered, advice provided and moral support given whenever needed. Mail and telephone have been used as means for these interactions, as well as study centres are provided where students can meet teachers and tutors at mutually arranged times. The problematic point of the ODL environment is how to get learners motivated to the learning process and to make active use of each others skills and knowledge. Mikropoulos (2000) in his study revealed that efficient and pedagogically sound use of ODL environment required overall control of the learning process.
Achieving learning success by learners is the ultimate goal of any ODL system. Therefore, student support services should be strengthened to improve the quality of the learning outcome. In higher education students’ approaches to learning are strongly related to the quality of their learning outcome (Biswas, 2001). As ODL system is a self-study system, therefore, in ODL situation students view different strategies for improving their learning. Distance learners need to develop some study habit, study skills, reading habits etc. so that they can cope with any kind of instructional materials which definitely result in improved performance. Therefore, the learning process should be a qualitative one which can increase the rate of learning success. The different factors which lead to low success rate in ODL system should be identified first and only then all the problems can be curtailed.

1.3.0 Need for Studying the Learning Process of an Educational System

In the whole educational system, learning process plays the first and foremost role. In general, learning process refers to the way/means/mechanisms of learning. Learning process is an interactive communicative process where communication is necessary between the teacher and the learner. The educational process cannot be succeeded without a proper and effective teaching learning process. Rather we can say that an educational system become paralyzed without a quality learning process. Therefore, it can be viewed that learning process is the backbone of an educational system. Without a best and qualitative learning process we never hope for best learning outcome. It can produce a real product. It is the heart of the learning success. It is the foundation stone for the development of the masses as well as the nation.

Learning process is the central point of any educational system. An educational system cannot be succeeded without a good and suitable learning process. Learning process should function properly and it should be according to the needs of the learners to enhance their motivation, performance and learning outcome. It should be planned in a systematic manner so that learners can achieve their goal. Learners have to take responsibility for their own learning, and they should have complete faith on their teachers. If students construct their own learning and this takes place inside the students' brains, where teachers cannot reach, then the real learning can only be managed by the students. All teachers must have to create an environment which is encouraging and supportive of students engaging in the appropriate and necessary mental activity. We can do this by providing the pieces and specifications of what the students must become able to do as a result of modifying their cognitive structures, and set up or suggest activities that students can use to achieve these changes or intended learning outcomes (Wareen, 2004).

To make learning process more effective, learning environments should be redesigned to include a variety of learning activities and opportunities shown to foster achievement of the desired learning outcomes. Additionally, instructors should provide evidence of student learning by assessing students' understanding and their demonstration of desired results (Hersh, 2007).
1.3.1 Learning Process: The Heart of ODL System

The popularity and attractiveness of any educational system depend upon the quality and design of its learning process. Learning process provides the foundation for development of individual as well as the nation. Learning process is the heart of an educational system. An effective educational system cannot be operated without the existence of a good learning process. Learning process is interactive and involves the interactive communication between the teacher and the learner. Learners need a suitable learning process to enhance their motivation, participation, performance and success. Therefore, learning process should be according to the needs and demands of the learners. As active participants in the learning process, students affect the manner in which they deal with the material to be learned. Learners must have a sense of ownership of the learning goals (Savery and Duffy, 1995). They must be both willing and able to receive instructional messages. Since distance education is 'learner centered', the institutions of distance education mainly focus their attention on every strategy and practice that promote quality and excellence in relation to the intuitional performance on the one hand and enhancement of satisfaction of their stakeholders concerned on the other. Quality Assurance has been defined in the literature of distance education as continuing, active and integrative process for maintaining and enhancing quality. Singh and Paliwal (2012) stated that the distance education system is more learner-oriented and the learner is an active participant in the pedagogical (teaching and learning) process. Therefore, learning process plays a key role in ODL system. It is the heart of the ODL system without which it cannot function properly.

ODL system has emerged as a new innovative system of education in the 21st century, not only in the technologically advanced societies but also in the developing and less developed parts of the world where a majority of the human population awaits the first dawn of education (Panda, Satyanarayana and Sharma, 1996). In late 1800s, it was thought that use of a formal instructional method in which the instructor and the learner were not present at the same place and at the same time was possible through distance learning. This process of distance learning started with the use of letter between instructor and the learner continued with radio in 1930s and television in 1950s as a means of instruction, in parallel with the technological development. Then in early days of 1990s interactive television was introduced as a means to send the information to the distance learner, right after the use of closed circuit television, microwave transmission, video recording and satellite transmission. With the introduction of electronic revolution in 1980s, personal computers and CD ROM, internet and w.w.w, educational content in mid 1990s allowed the transmission of knowledge to the student more flexibly and rapidly. Thus, it became easier to the learners from different geographical regions to communicate to the other learners and the instructors synchronously and asynchronously and have quicker access for the knowledge. The wireless revolution brought about by the expansion of devices such as laptop, mobile phone, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) in late 1990s made distance learning process independent from time and place (Castro, Lopez Rey, Perez Molina, Colmenar, Mora, Yevens, Carpio and Daniel, 2001; Mehrotra, Hollister and Mcgahey, 2001; Lever Duffy,
McDonald and Mizell, 2003; Saba, 2003; Harper, Chen and Yen, 2004). New technologies have enormous possibilities and potential to serve the distance learners. The time has come for collaborative effort to establish multilateral cooperation to further strengthen and consolidate the distance education system. Open and Distance Education has been foregoing a head in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions (Rao, 2009).

Although ODL system is one of the most efficient and appropriate ways of education in the developing countries, the great concern yet attracts the attention of the distance educators is the quality of the ODL programmes. Still the institutions are struggling with quality issues of their programmes. Sometimes, ODL institutions are pinched as low-grade graduate-producing factories, quality graduates are not coming of this system, though as a system ODL system must not be accused in this way. The main criticism may come with the implementation of the ODL system. In reality, a number of factors are concerned for improper implementation of distance education system in the developing countries. The most important of them may be its learning process.

1.3.2 What may be the Best Practices of Learning Process under ODL System?

The open and distance learning system is now an inseparable part of our education system as it covers a large number of people for imparting education. ODL institutions employ a variety of approaches in the teaching-learning process, especially designed to meet the needs of the ever-changing global scenario. Jung (2005) stated that ODL practices are changing. New fields of study have been emerged, policies revised, a quality culture emerged, student services improved, new ICT-based delivery modes explored, and a variety of collaborative relationships developed. Quality Instructional design is more accessible to the learners by offering a lot of flexibility in place and pace of learning and selection of courses. Learners will be exposed and provided with a holistic curriculum, which prepares them for the competitive employment market besides ensuring lifelong learning. ODL has witnessed significant importance in national policies of human resource Development. Enrolments in Open Universities have increased fast and it is expected that ODL would take up substantial share of the planned expansion of higher education. Open Learning has an important role to play by exploring new frontiers and developments in Open and Distance Education. The prominent users of this mode are worldwide in general and Asian region in particular. The growth of the ODL system in India and throughout the world has been phenomenal, particularly during the last two decades, rapid changes have taken place in the practice of Open Distance Education, mainly driven by changes in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The revolution in ICT coupled with the social demand for education for all and the need for lifelong and continuing education have resulted in the new vistas of open learning for knowledge society (Rao, 2010).

Gupte (2009) said that ODL has come of age and with the new technological advances, several innovations are being made. Online courses, e-learning and the
use of computers, teleconferencing via satellite mode and Edusat have revolutionized the concept of distance education.

Koul and Ramanujan (1989) stated that the distance teaching system adopts various means in order to practise distance education successfully. There are four major devices or components, which primarily contribute to the functioning of distance education system. They are:

- Electronic media or multimedia.
- Self-instructional materials.
- Two way communication and
- Student Support Services

The number of new technologies introduced into ODL over the last ten years or so has expanded rapidly. These technologies now include:

- print (mechanical and electronic publishing);
- radio (one-way, interactive, and two-way);
- audio cassettes;
- telephone teaching, including audio conferencing;
- television (broadcast, satellite, and cable);
- video cassettes;
- video conferencing;
- computer-mediated communication;
- computer-based learning; and
- multimedia.

Distance Education may be categorised in four generations as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Technologies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>End of 19\textsuperscript{th}-beginning of 20\textsuperscript{th} century</td>
<td>Correspondence learning</td>
<td>Printed materials, customised books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Early 1970</td>
<td>Teleconference (Radio and T.V.)</td>
<td>Correspondence Radio, T.V., Audio-taps, Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Early 1980</td>
<td>One way video two way audio</td>
<td>Communication networks (Satellites), Audio, Video, CD-ROM, Bulletin Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>communication, Real time interaction, Two way video conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>1996 onwards</td>
<td>Interaction &amp; collaboration, Shift from instructor led to learner centred approach, student-student interaction</td>
<td>Telecommunications, Internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Passerine and Granger (2000)

While printed materials have been the most dominant mode of delivery in distance education, the variety of communication media such as radio, television, audio and video cassettes, audio and video conferencing, computer mediated instruction etc. are becoming increasingly popular in the ODL institutions. A few ODL institutions have developed infrastructure, while some others are in the process of creating requisite facilities for online and web-based learning. IGNOU as a trendsetter has
already shown the way (Ansari, 2002). Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are thus playing a major role in reaching large number of learners and reducing costs of education. A number of distance education institutions, particularly the open universities in the developed countries use the new communication technology in a big way. Most of the ODL institutions are in the process of offering different support services like online admission, availability of study materials both in printed and web format, pre-entry counselling, online counseling/ internet based counseling, student assignment response sheet, extra-curricular activities for personality development, sophisticated library services, virtual laboratories, placement cell etc. for the maximum development of students. Moreover, computer based learning, web based learning, mobile based learning etc. are the best practices adopted by most of the ODL institutions all over the world.

1.4.0 Success in Learning: The Key Objective of any Learning System

Success in learning is the prime concern of every educational system of a nation. It has become the integral part of the whole educational system. Learning success usually refers to the favorable outcome of the learning process. Generally learning success is measured in terms of the attainment/achievement/performance of the learner in learning system. Today’s global knowledge- based economy demands cent percent success in learning from the learners of each and every educational institution. Therefore, achieving learning success is the ultimate goal of each and every educational institution. To achieve success in a learning system, learners need all kind of support from their teachers and educational institutions. Learning success serves valuable purposes for both instructors and learners. It helps the learners to actively participate in the learning process so that maximum development can be possible. It provides learners with appropriate, focused and timely feedback to promote learning, keeps them informed regarding the progress they are making and helps them to determine the extent to which they achieved the outcomes of the course as a whole (Mehrotra, Hollister, and Gahey, 2001). For instructors/teachers, the goal of learning success works as a tool to improve their methods and techniques of teaching and competency level. The goal of learning success can deepen instructors/teachers understanding of how students learn more effectively and helps to identify learners’ difficulties and strategies for successful learning. The success of any learning system depends largely on the satisfaction of its learners, not only in terms of quality of the academic support but also up to what extent the learners are empowered during the learning process. For enhancing/improving the learning success of the learners, the learning system must be systematically planned, scientifically managed and suitably designed to meet the ever growing needs and demands of the learners. It largely depends upon a well-managed/organized learning system which can facilitate the learners’ expectations and can motivate them. If the success level of an educational system could not be improved, the educational system could certainly be failed in contributing meaningfully in the development of individuals, society as well as the nation and the key objectives of education system will not be achieved.
The basic premise of the whole education system is that the curriculum is designed so that the learning activities and assessment tasks are aligned with the learning outcomes that are intended in the course. This means that the system is consistent. The following figure states about the intended learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and the assessment methods.

Source: Biggs (1999): Teaching for Quality Learning at University

1.4.1 Learning Success under ODL System: An Area of Remark and Discussion

Learning success has become a primary focus of every educational institution and is an area of national concern. The successful mastery of academic content, once viewed entirely as the learners’ responsibility, is now considered a shared responsibility between three major players: the student, the instructor, and the educational institution. Learning in distance education environments requires unique strategies that may be initiated by the instructor, the institution, and/or the learners themselves (Major and Levenburg, 1997). Learning success mainly depends upon a well organized learning process because it is the heart of every educational process especially in an ODL environment. In an ODL system, learning process plays the major role as learners are physically separated from the teacher. All activities involved in facilitating the learning process of ODL institutions are termed as student support services. Student support services cover a wide range of functions, starting from producing the learning materials and making them available to students upto arranging contact programs and conducting examinations (Koul and Ramanujam, 1989). Learners need various kinds of support to enhance their performance and success (Sim, Atan and Idrus, 2006). The support services bridges the gap of isolation and injects the touch of teacher hood to the distance learners. In an ODL system, learning process should be designed in such a way so that it can minimize the negative effects of isolation; it can help the learners to achieve desired goals, it can help to solve the learning problems of the learners, it can help the learners to develop autonomy and independence among them, and it can also help the learners to improve their performance/learning success.

In an ODL situation, students use different strategies for their learning. Some students achieve good results; some do not (Biswa, 2001). In this context, Woodley (2004) stated that student attrition has been a longstanding problem of ODL institutions. Low success rate in distance learning may be attributed to the factor that there is no restriction in admission in majority of programs offered through distance mode, whereas in conventional system admission is restricted. It may also
be pointed out that distance learners in most of the cases are not aware of their responsibility as learners and many of them have opted for distance learning after a long gap and hence lack the required skills. This has resulted in demotivating many of them and may be a cause of a large number of dropouts (Srivastava and Basu, 2010). Therefore, to solve these problems learning process should function properly and the administrators and policy makers must adopt some bold steps to make learning process qualitative and effective one. Sansanwal (1988) viewed that students enrolled in distance education institutions are matured and have better language competence and improved mental abilities. Such students are capable of learning on their own, if suitable instructional techniques are employed.

To enhance the performance of the learners in ODL system, the administrator and policymakers must have to strengthen the learning process. Learning process plays the most important role in determining students’ success in ODL system. Effective distance education programs cannot be well operated without the existence of a strong learner support system (Sim, Atan and Idrus, 2006). It is recognized as an integral component in ODL system. As learners are the focal point of distance learning system, therefore to ensure good quality learner support is the main concern of this system. Satisfaction of the learners with the support services can definitely enhance their performance in ODL environment. Learners require various kind of support to increase their participation, performance, success, satisfaction and the pleasure when undertaking distance education programs.

The ultimate goal of any education system is to achieve the success in the system. Similarly, the ultimate goal of ODL system is to achieve the success in the ODL system. The success in ODL system is highly tied with the success of the learners of ODL system since learners remain in the centre of ODL system. Therefore, the whole process of ODL system should be directed towards the success of its learners.

1.4.2 What may be the Strategies for Improving Learning Success under ODL System

Learning performance or outcome remains at the centre place of a learning system. The performance/ achievement of the learners in ODL system depends largely on the instructional system/learning process of the ODL system. To make the ODL programme more effective and purposeful, the learning process should be improved which will definitely enhance the learning success. Following are some strategies to improve the learning success under ODL system.

- The ODL institutions must have to provide qualitative learning materials/study materials to the learners so that maximum learning can be possible. Effective planning in designing and development of learning materials with the help of experts available within and outside the institution should be the first step of the ODL institutions. As distance learning is a self-study system, therefore, the study materials should be prepared in such a way so that it can take the place of a teacher/counselor and should be delivered in time so that the learners cannot face any difficulty during their
study. Each ODL institution should ensure proper training to teachers for developing the self-learning materials.

- Besides study materials, supplementary materials like reference books, guide books etc. and diagnostic materials must be provided to the learners by the ODL institutions for improving the performance of the learners which will definitely increase the learning success.

- In an ODL system learners have to compulsorily submit the assignments in time. Assignments should be prepared in such a way that the learners can develop their reading and writing skills through assignments. Assignments should be properly checked and evaluated by the tutors and returned to the learners in time so that the learners can rectify their mistakes which will definitely result in improved learning success.

- The ODL institutions must have to conduct the counseling session in a phased manner. The duration of the counseling session should be increased. ODL institutions should plan, design and conduct intensive counselling and practical contact sessions as per need and convenience of the learners. For practical based courses, practical sessions should be arranged regularly and laboratories must be equipped with sophisticated laboratory equipment.

- For improving the learning success under ODL system, the ODL institutions should organise training programmes, seminars, workshops and conferences from time to time for enhancing the quality of the counselors. The institutions should try to motivate counsellors to develop and use innovative strategies of counselling rather than sticking to the traditional teaching methods to maximize the students’ learning which will lead to learning success.

- The PCP classes should be organised regularly by the ODL institutions. The standard and quality of the PCP classes should be high so that attendance of the learners in PCP classes can be secured. In order to make the PCP classes interactive and interesting audio visual aids should be used by the academic counsellors.

- In most of the ODL institutions, the outside faculties/experts are hired for curriculum preparation, counselling sessions, laboratory practicals etc. But the outside faculties are not available as and when required by the learners. Therefore, the ODL institutions should appoint permanent faculties to solve the problems of learners for improving their performance.

- Hands on experience/training should be provided to the learners enroled in skill development programmes of ODL system. Manuals should be developed for all practical based programmes so that the practical component is systematically transacted to the learners.

- The ODL institutions should provide ICT facilities along with the other facilities. The latest developments in communication technology should be
introduced in the learning process to improve the learning success under ODL system. But in most of the ODL institutions application of technology is primarily confined to admission, sharing of general information and results. The potentialities of ICT are to be utilized by each and every ODL institutions to meet the diversified needs of the learners.

- The study centres need to be strengthened and upgraded from information centres to academic support centres for improving the learning success under ODL system.

In order to improve the learning success under ODL system, the learning process should be really effective, qualitative and efficient one. It would be necessary to give a good deal of thought to plan and organise the learning process in a systematic way. Therefore, the educationists, policy makers, administrators and stakeholders of ODL system should take some initiatives to strengthen the learning process under ODL system which will definitely enhance/improve learning success. It is also necessary for ODL institutions to create students’ alumni and arrange meetings between their students and the alumni, felicitate successful students who are achievers, arrange induction programme for new entrants and develop mechanisms for obtaining feedback from the learners covering all aspects including courseware, learner support services, evaluation methodology, teaching learning methodology etc. (Srivastava and Basu, 2010).

1.5.0 Research Questions
On the basis of the above literature review, the researcher formulated the research questions of the present study as follows:

Q.1: What is the learning process of the learners under different modes of ODL system?
Q.2: What is the learning success of the learners under different modes of ODL system?
Q.3: What is the enrolment of the learners under different modes of ODL system?
Q.4: What is the dropout of the learners under different modes of ODL system?
Q.5: What is the study skill of the learners of ODL system?
Q.6: What is the problems of learning of the learners of ODL system?
Q.7: What is the attitude of the learners of ODL system towards ODL system?

1.6.0 Rationale of the Study
Distance education occupies an important place in our country’s educational set-up. It has emerged as an important form of education in the last few decades. In the present century, distance mode of education is seen as an alternative and viable mode to cater to educational needs of the learners (Khan, 2005). Distance education is an innovative, effective, non-traditional and unorthodox system of education in the modern times. Hegde(2008) stated that the open and distance learning system has emerged as a vibrant and dynamic component of higher education infrastructure in the country. Pradeep(2009) viewed that distance education is regarded internationally as
a viable and cost effective way of providing individualized instruction. Knowledge is the basis of development of human resources. So, education should be for each and every one to see and understand the world. Distance learning system has emerged as a flexible and effective education system without much compulsoriness and rigidities, which fulfill the people’s desire for attaining knowledge. In this regard, Pandit (2008) stated that ‘learner friendly’ approaches in terms of access, prior knowledge, place and pace of study, instructional system responding to the learning styles of learners’ made distance education system popular and acceptable by the learners of the 21st century.

Distance education is that mode of education which frees the students from the necessity of travelling to a fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person in order to be trained. In this context, Rastogi (2007) stated that distance education has provided openness to learning and students have a freedom to learn at own rate, pace and time. The ODL system provides learner centered education at their doorsteps with in-built flexibility (Sharma, 1995). The growing population of a country demands a system of education, which brings education to the doorsteps of learners. In this regard, Selvam (1999) said that distance learning system has revolutionized the present mode of education.

Distance education is a new stage of evolution, which can transport knowledge to people rather than transport people to the world of knowledge (KulandaiSwami, 1993). This is the era of techno-scientific revolution where the magnitude of knowledge is expanding exponentially, when the demand of students is growing increasingly with varied student population, the higher education demands top priority. The emerging new and specific needs of the people today cannot be met fully satisfactorily through the conventional mode of teaching-learning. It has neither the capacities nor the resources to meet the needs of the growing number of students (Goel and Goel, 1997). In this context, distance education is an effective alternative to the formal education, which has immense significance to create knowledge or learning society in general and developing society in particular. In this regard, Mohanty (2002) stated that distance education system has become increasingly significant mode in almost all countries of the world as it widens the horizons of education, opens new frontiers of knowledge and democratizes the teaching-learning process. The International Commission on education has also strongly supported distance education system in adoption of learning as a process of human growth towards fulfillments in individual as well as member of many groups in the society.

Distance education is becoming popular mode of education day by day among the new generation learners as it is flexible and covers all categories of people particularly the disadvantage group. In this context, Villi (1999) stated that distance education opens opportunities for those who have missed the ‘bus’ due to one or other reason. This system can fulfill the
educational needs of all categories of society like school dropout, housewives, employed, people who want to learn while earning some livelihood, people from rural and urban areas etc. Sahoo (1985) said that the students preferred distance education because of – (a) acquiring higher education specialization in a particular field, to broaden outlook and a good use of leisure time, (b) economic factors, (c) lack of adequate time, mental maturity, higher cost of formal education, non-existence of college in their locality. As distance education is open for all groups, therefore, distance education is the first choice of new generation. Now a days several countries of the world like USA, USSR, UK, Spain, Japan, Korea, Canada, China, India etc. practice distance education (Taylor, 1986). For millions of those people who wants to stand upon their own feet very early in life and struggle for survival, distance education is a way to them.

Distance education is that type of learning system in which the student and the instructor are separated by physical distance (Washlstrom, Williams, and Shea, 2003). Physical separation is the main criteria of distance learning system. The distance education is essentially a self-study system (Gujral and Kumar, 2006). In the open and distance learning system there is a distance between the learners and the education provider. In this regard Udayani (2006) stated that as the ODL system is off campus, there is no possibility of face-to-face interaction between teacher and the taught as in the case of conventional system of education. In the open and distance learning system the learner gets an opportunity to interact with the counselor once in a week if he or she attends the weekend counseling sessions. Dohmen (1977) defines distance education as a systematically organized form of self-study in which student counseling, 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. Dohmen emphasizes the two aspects of distance education; these are self-study and the use of media for educational communication. Peters (1971) defines distance education “as a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalized by the application of division of labour and organizational principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media, especially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching materials which makes it possible to instruct great members of students at the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialized form of teaching and learning”. Peter’s definition lays emphasis on the use of technical media and mass education as well as a specific ethos which relates distance education to the nature of the industrial society. Keegan (1986) has attempted to synthesize most of the definitions and draws the following important characteristics of open and distance education-
• 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 organization both in planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; this distinguishes it from private study and teach-yourself programmes.

• the use of technical media-print, audio, video or computer unites teacher and learner and carries the content of the course.

• the provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate a dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education.

• the quasi-permanent absence of a leaning 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 socialization purposes.

The above characteristics enumerated by Keegan are basic concepts of distance education. Keegan (1986) stated that distance education institutes have two distinct characteristics academic and industrial. The ‘academic’ represents the development and preparation of course materials whereas ‘industrial’ refers to production and distribution of these materials.

The above definitions clarify that the concept of distance education is basically a democratic concept. Open and Distance education implies the provision of educational opportunity for the learners from a distance through the use of multiple media such as self-learning materials, audio-video programs and short-term personal contact programs (Khan, 2005). ODL system has provided openness in learning and the students have a freedom to learn at their own rate, pace and time. The system of distance education has the potential to fulfill the enormous responsibility of universalization and democratization of education as it holds the promise of checking the falling standards at reasonable costs, making the optimum use of media and technology and providing education relevant to the needs of the country. The major objectives of distance education are-

• to provide an alternative cost effective non-formal channel for higher education.

• to supplement the conventional university system and to reduce the pressure on it.

• to democratize higher education by providing access to large segments of the population in particular the disadvantaged groups such as those living in remote and rural areas, including working people, women and other adults who wish to acquire and upgrade their knowledge and skills.
• to provide a second chance at education for those who have had to discontinue their formal education or could not join regular colleges/universities.
• to provide a means for continuing and lifelong education for enriching the lives of the people.
• to provide an innovative system of university education which is both flexible and open in terms of methods and pace of learning, combination of courses, eligibility for enrollment, age of entry, conduct of examination and operation of the programmes with a view to promoting learning and encouraging excellence in new fields of knowledge (IGNOU Act, 1985; APOU Act, 1982; KOU Act, 1987; IGNOU project report, 1985; UGC annual report, 1981-82).

The popularity and attractiveness of any educational system depends upon the quality and design of its learning process. It provides the foundation for development of individual as well as nation. Learning process is the heart of an educational system. An effective educational system cannot be operated without the existence of a good learning process. Learning process is interactive and involves the interactive communication between the teacher and the learner. Learners need a suitable learning process to enhance their motivation, participation, performance and success. Therefore, learning process should be according to the needs and demands of the learners. As active participants in the learning process, students affect the manner in which they deal with the material to be learned. Learners must have a sense of ownership of the learning goals (Savery and Duffy, 1995). They must be both willing and able to receive instructional messages.

Learning success plays a pivotal role in an educational setting. It largely depends upon the quality of the learning process. The success rate of any system largely depends on the satisfaction of its learners, not only in terms of the quality of the academic support but also in the point that up to what extent the learners are empowered during the learning process. Therefore, learning process should be sound so that it can enhance the motivation of the learners. Learning success of a system can be measured not only in terms of its learning process but also with the satisfaction of its assessment process.

Thus the learning process and learning success are the integral part of an educational system. The quality of any educational system depends largely on its learning process and learning success. In Open and Distance Learning system also these learning process and success play a pivotal role. Open and Distance Learning system is a self-instructional system. The flexible and innovative characteristics of the ODL system allow for meeting the educational requirements of heterogeneous groups of learners at low costs. ODL institutions are therefore offering all types and levels of courses for self-motivated students through independent study programs. Effective distance education programmes cannot be operated without the existence of a good learner support system. As the distance students are lonely, therefore, the learning process should be according to the needs, demands and satisfaction of the
learners. The success of ODL system largely depends on the satisfaction of its learners. The basic desire of every learner joining an educational programme is to learn something new and benefit from the efforts put-in. This means experiencing success is very essential in future endeavors of one’s life. When the Open University System began with the paradigm shift from ‘Teacher Centric’ education to ‘Learner Centric’ was effected, much progress has been seen in enrolment into this system of study. However, even these systems are not able to show significance figures in ‘successful rate’ in completion of a programme (Sudhindra, 2005).

Assessing student performance is a problem area in distance learning process. It is a commonly held belief that distance students perform more poorly in assessment than do internal students because of the additional pressures and burdens of distance study (Galusha, 2004). However, a study of the results of 67 science subjects at California State University (CSU) over a six-year period showed conclusively that there was no difference between distance and internal students in the proportions of students in each grade category (Harden, Barnard, and Donnan, 1994). However, objective testing does not reward soon enough for adequate reinforcement. Since one key to a successful learning campaign is positive reinforcement, testing methods must be developed to interactively test distance students. All these discussions clearly state that learning process and learning success are regarded as the key point of an educational system including open and distance learning system.

Distance learning is relatively a new form of education from the point of view of the time it appeared. In the early stage, distance education is known as correspondence education. With the increase in demand for higher education and the emergence of a system of awarding university degrees to private students, it has been realized that correspondence education can help in expanding and equalizing educational opportunities (Srivastava and Reddy, 1996). The idea of correspondence course emerged for the first time in the meeting of CABE held on January 16-17, 1961 realizing the needs and requirements of the society and the arising challenges due to globalization and liberalization policies (Shah, 2008). The follow up committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari. The Expert Committee recommended the institution of correspondence course in view of the greater flexibility, economic viability and the innovative method of imparting education through well prepared, pre-tested and constantly revised course materials. In 1962, the University of Delhi started the school of correspondence courses and continuing education. This correspondence mode of education allows the learners to study at their place of work or living. Correspondence institutes supplied learning materials to students through different delivery modes like postal service, media facilities (Radio & Television) etc. Many working adults and those who cannot go for regular school / college/ university education take advantage of the correspondence system of education. However, the correspondence mode of education suffered from a lot of drawbacks such as the learning materials in print were mostly in the form of text books which hardly help the students, the restrictions imposed on the students by the formal education system were not overcome by the correspondence education except that it allowed its students to learn outside the four walls of a classroom and
the potential of the mass-media was hardly used for educational purposes. The correspondence institutions did not care much for the effectiveness of their instructional materials. Correspondence education essentially remained conventional due to its structural rigidities (Koul and Ramanujam, 1989). In this context correspondence education takes its new birth as distance education. In 1982 at its 26th conference, the International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) changed its name to International Council for Distance Education (ICDE). In 1975 a committee headed by Dr. G. Parthasarathi the then Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi strongly favored the setting up of a National Open University. Surveying the scenario in higher education in India, the committee observed that the resources available for higher education to cope with such a tremendous expansion were comparatively limited, and were leading to the lowering of standards and other undesirable results. The committee was firmly of the view that it was necessary to start an Open University not only to meet the current pressures on the system but also to impart quality education Srivastava and Reddy, 1996). In 1982 the first Open University was established in the state of Andhra Pradesh with Prof. G. Ram Reddy as its first Vice-Chancellor. Looking into the success of Andhra University, the Govt. of India has established IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) at New Delhi in 1985. This University has been charged with the dual responsibility of providing opportunities for higher education to large segments of the population, particularly those for whom access to the formal system is difficult or impossible, and also for developing the Open University and distance education systems in the country and to coordinate and determine standards in such system (Singh, 1992). With the rapid development at present, India has 13 State Open University (SOUs) and one National Open University the IGNOU and about 12 Open Schools including National Institutes of Open Schooling (NIOS) at New Delhi. Besides these, India has almost 119 Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs) (Hegde, 2008). Open Universities are very popular mode among the new generation learners. The different components like electronic media, self-instructional materials, two-way communication and student support services make these universities as the first choice of the learners.

The National Policy on Education, 1986, emphasized the role of Open University and distance education in the process of democratization of education in the country. The Open Universities aim at transcending the limitations of traditional universities in terms of their administrative structure, curricular framework, support services, jurisdiction and mode of evaluation. The main objectives of an open university as laid down in the National Policy on Education (1986) are:

- To reverse the tide of admission in formal institutions.
- To offer education to people in their own homes and at their own jobs
- To enable the students to earn while they learn.
- To provide counseling and guidance to people
- To take education to the remotest villages, through radio, television and correspondence courses (GOI, 1986).

There is a rapid growth in the student enrolment in the country. ODL system is fast becoming the mainstream in the higher education due to its flexibility and
accessibility. During the 10th plan the ODL system grew at the rate of 20% in enrolment. There are as many as 3.6 million students under ODL system, accountability for 25% of the student population in higher education (Pani, Satpathy, and Mishra, 2009). Various academic programmes ranging from Humanities to Professional courses are imparted through different modes of ODL system. Effective support services in the form of study materials, personal contact programmes, counseling sessions, multimedia instructions and different communication technologies etc. are the commonly used medium/media for these academic programmes. The ODL system runs with the following facilities which are called as the Pillars of distance education. They are -

(a) Study centers
(b) Study materials popularly known as lecture scripts
(c) Students assignments, i.e. Response sheets
(d) Personal guidance: casual visits by the students to meet the faculty
(e) Personal Contact Programmes
(f) Audio-visual aids

Pillars of Distance Education

A network of study centre is of vital importance to distance education institutes for providing useful support to learners in their learning pursuits. Study centers are the places where distance students get the basic support. A study centre is usually located within a college or school and it should be within reasonable distance for the students to visit from their homes or places of work. Sudalaimuthu and Malliga (2008) stated that study centre is a part of an overall system of support for learners, it is pivot around which the entire student support services revolve and these are the ambassadors for the open and distance learning institutes in dealing with learners. They are responsible for providing information relating to programmes available, counseling, admission schedule, learning materials, conduct of Personal Contact Programmes and providing library facilities and scheduling examination. Thus these centers have an indispensable place in the distance
education system. Effective functioning of study centers helps the distance learners in more than one way. The learners get not only assistance to complete their academic programmes but also inspiration from their counselor and fellow students to learn without getting frustrated because of isolation (Evans, 1994).

The main duty of study centre is to deliver the study materials to the learners at intervals of about 4-6 weeks. Course materials in print as well as the audio-video programmes are specially prepared by the university to suit the needs of distance learners. Each package will contain a sequence of correspondence and other materials, accompanied by study notes, private exercise and self-administered test which the student can take to help satisfy himself and also included a set of written home assignments which the student will be expected to return within a specified time period. The print materials are self-instructional i.e. the lessons are written in such a way that students can read and comprehend them without the help of a teacher.

Printed materials initiated with submission of assignment responses, their evaluation by tutors giving constructive suggestions forms a two-way non-contiguous communication channel in distance education (Rathore, 1991). This non-contiguous two-way communication forms the backbone of efficiency in teaching and learning in distance education. Every distance teaching institutes sends a set of assignments along with the course materials. Although the course materials are in the self-instructional format, there should be some means of feedback from the students. Unless the institutions get the feedback it won’t be in a position to assess the learning of the students as well as the effectiveness of the instructional materials.

Personal contact programmes are considered as a significant academic input in the ODL system, where the learners learn at their own pace and time (Anand, 1985). Mullick (1987) stated that PCPs has been introducing for removing the difficulties of distance learners who have no access or could not clarify their doubts completely by using the new technologies. PCPs have been introduced for the convenience of learners. PCPs are necessary to clarify the doubts and to meet the requirements of compulsory submission of assignments. Besides academic aspects, related difficulties, problems and other important points are also discussed.

The main educational techniques used by distance institutes are printed materials and short-period (5 to 10 days) contact programmes with students. Sometimes this material is an excellent piece of work but quite often the materials presented in the lessons do not follow the techniques of self-learning modules (Srivastava and Reddy, 1996). The system hardly uses new educational technologies (UGC, 1990). Printed text has been the main source of information for long, both for teachers and students (Gujral and Kumar, 2006). But distance education wants to break the barriers of the four walls of the classroom and it has to make use of the print medium as well as the other media to impart education. The growth of distance education, to a
great extent, depends on the growth of media-technology. It should always be kept in mind that “neither among themselves nor in relation to the printed word, the electronic technologies are mutually exclusive” rather “each one of them makes a contribution of its own, quite distinct from the others” (Bhatnagar, 1997). Pradeep (2009) stated that distance education uses all forms of technology from print to computer, this range includes radio, television, audio-video conferencing, computer aided instruction, e-learning or on-line learning through internet etc. The emerging Information Technology has revolutionized the entire communication system and has transformed the whole human society into a global village (Brindley, Walti, and Zawacki-Richter, 2004). The audio-video programmes, produced by the joint efforts of academics and media persons of the university render additional help to the students by explaining or illustrating the difficult points and complex concepts in the subjects. An effective combination of the media and the printed materials aim to provide the students what a good classroom teacher could do for them if they were students of a conventional university. Kurhade (2009) stated that the technologies used in ODL are broadly divided into two groups: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous technology is used in distance education lessons in which learning is occurring in different places but at the same time and asynchronous technology is used in lessons on which learning is occurring in different places but also at different times.

**Synchronous technologies are**
- a) Telephone
- b) Video conferencing
- c) Web conferencing etc.

**Asynchronous technologies are**
- a) Audio & Video cassettes
- b) E-mail
- c) Message Board Forums
- d) Print materials
- e) Voice mail/Fax etc.

More so than traditional students, distance learners are more likely to have insecurities about learning (Knapper, 1988). These insecurities are in the area of costs and motivation, feedback and teacher contact, student support services, alienation and isolation, lack of experience and training etc. These problems need
analysis and review for raising the standard of distance learning system. With these problems there is a danger of the system becoming stereotyped leading to inertia and learning success cannot be improved with these problems. If the success level could not be improved, the ODL system certainly be failed in contributing meaningfully in the development of individuals, society as well as the nation and the soul objectives of education will be ruined.

Though a few studies have been conducted in the area of growth and development, curriculum, instructional process, media and technology, learners and learning, evaluation system of distance education, but hardly any study has been conducted to examine the learning process and learning success under different modes of ODL system. Therefore, the researcher is interested to study the learning process and learning success under different modes of ODL system comparatively.

1.7.0 Statement of the Problem
The problem of the present study can be stated as “Learning Process and Learning Success under Different Modes of Open and Distance Learning System: A Comparative Study”

1.8.0 Operational Definitions of the Terms used
Open and Distance Learning System: Conceptually Open and Distance Learning system is defined as a learning system, which is open /flexible to the learner and here the learner is provided the learning from a distance. The contact between the learner and the teacher/ preceptor/ academic guide under the open and distance learning system is less in comparison to contact under conventional educational system, and in this system many alternative support services are provided to the learner in order to meet his/her multiple needs required for his/her fullest development. This Open and Distance Learning is popularly called as ODL system by its stake holders. In the present study, Open and Distance Learning system refers to the learning system provided by the open and distance learning institutes like open universities, centre for correspondence/ distance education of conventional universities, institute of open schools and centre for correspondence /distance education of conventional school boards.

Modes of Open and Distance Learning System: Open and distance learning are provided through different institutional modes. Present study will cover two categories / modes of open and distance learning system as given below:

- Open Universities
- Centre for Correspondence/ Distance Education of Conventional universities

Learning Process of Open and Distance Learning System: In general, learning process refers to the way /means/ mechanism of learning. Learning process of open and distance learning system refers to the means/mechanism/ techniques of learning covered by Open and distance learning system. In this study, the term ‘learning process’ is used comprehensively and includes many parameters relating
to learning. In this study learning process of distance education covers the parameters like:

i. Admission procedure,
ii. Course offered,
iii. Providing of curriculum and study materials,
iv. Learner support services, and
v. Examination and certificates.

**Learning Success of Open and Distance Learning System**: Learning success means the success in learning or in other words favorable outcome of the learning process. Generally learning success is measured in terms of the performance / achievement of the learner. In this study, the learning success of Open and Distance Learning System is understood in terms of performance/ achievement of the learners in Open and Distance Learning System.

1.9.0 **Objectives of the study**

The followings are the objectives of the present study:

1. To compare the learning process of the learners under different modes of ODL system.
2. To compare the learning success of the learners under different modes of ODL system.
3. To compare the enrolment of the learners under different modes of ODL system.
4. To compare the dropout of the learners under different modes of ODL system.
5. To compare the study skill of the learners of ODL system.
6. To compare the problems of learning of the learners of ODL system.
7. To compare the attitude of the learners of ODL system towards ODL system.

1.10.0 **Hypotheses of the study**

The hypotheses of the study are:

1. There exists no significant difference in learning success of the learners under different modes of ODL system (to meet 2nd objective).
2. There exists no significant difference in the enrolment of learners under different modes of ODL system (to meet 3rd objective).
3. There exists no significant difference in the dropout of learners under different modes of ODL system (to meet 4th objective)
4. There exists no significant difference among the learners of ODL system with regard to their study skills (to meet 5th objective)
5. There exists no significant difference among the learners of ODL system with regard to their problems of learning under different modes of ODL system (to meet 6th objective)
6. There exists no significant difference among the learners of ODL system with regard to their attitude towards ODL system (to meet 7th objective).

1.11.0 **Delimitation of the study**
The study is delimited to the following points:

1. The study is delimited to the university level institutions considered under Open and Distance Learning system.
2. The study is delimited to the two categories of institutional modes of Open and Distance Learning system like-
   a) Open universities
   b) Center for correspondence / distance education of conventional universities.
3. The sampling area of the study is delimited to the institutes of Open and Distance Learning situated in eastern and north-eastern part of the country (i.e. Assam, West Bengal and Orissa).

*******************************************************************************
******************
***********