CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Contextualizing the Study

1.1 A brief elucidation of the topic

This research study is an attempt to deliberate on pedagogical issues relating to the course delivery of English Language Teaching (ELT) training programmes offered through distance mode in India. The thesis reports on insights gained from two important concepts in the discipline of ELT: teacher education and distance mode of course delivery. However, these two concepts are too broad in their scope to be studied in their entirety in a modest study such as this. This thesis limits itself to the examination of one pertinent aspect of ELT training courses through distance mode: the effectiveness of the pedagogical aspects of course delivery.

The term ‘course delivery’ is often used in a general sense in the context of distance education to refer to the delivery of education or instruction at a distance as opposed to face-to-face education or instructions. For the purpose of this study, ‘course delivery’ is used as a term that comprises the following elements:

- The materials that are used to deliver the courses: Study materials in any distance education programme have important contributions towards the effectiveness of the programme, because in the physical absence of the teacher, most of the instructions are delivered through the study materials. The materials may be in the form of print, audio, video or online materials. This study will examine the materials that are in use in the selected programmes of study.
• The ways different pedagogical elements (technological/face-to-face/distance) are incorporated during the process of delivery of the courses: The interactions that happen in a distance education programme may be provided through technology or any other media.

• The methodology by which the courses are delivered: This aspect of course delivery considers what kind of pedagogical strategies have been employed to ‘train effectively’ through the previous two elements. This aspect is of particular relevance to the selected programmes as they are all distance pedagogy programmes. In pedagogy-based distance programmes, aspects such as practice teaching, teaching-methodology based assignments, classroom-based topics and discussions relating to pedagogy are specifically incorporated.

For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to first consider what ‘distance education’ implies. The term ‘Distance Education’ is often used interchangeably with Open Education. Open Education, in theory, is characterized by absence of restrictions in age and qualification, number of attempts in examinations, subject combination, time of admission, etc. It might practically not be possible to make a programme completely open, and it is actually a matter of degree to which a programme can be open. The level of openness is expected to be higher in case of a distance education programme due to its flexibility and potential than in a regular education programme. This thesis uses the term Distance Education, and not Open Education, to refer to all programmes offered to distance mode irrespective of the degree of openness.

1.2 The rationale

Keeping in mind the high demand for trained teachers of English and the increasing popularity of distance education, a systematic and timely study of ELT programmes in India that are on
offer through distance mode needs to be conducted. Such an exercise will help us see how, and to what extent, the programmes have catered to pre- and in-service English language teachers’ needs. The different elements relating to the effectiveness of existing programmes, such as the target groups, delivery, impact (who has benefited, how and how far they have benefited), need to be examined more closely with regard to their pedagogical effectiveness, i.e. effectiveness of the course delivery in terms of methodology, materials and other media. An examination of the effectiveness of the programmes will hopefully give important insights into the process of designing effective programmes in ELT through distance mode.

1.3 The objectives

The objectives of this study are

a) to identify factors relating to the effectiveness of course delivery in ELT through distance mode in a sample set of institutions across India by

   i. studying the content and methodology of these courses

   ii. considering the perceptions of students/learners and teachers/counsellors towards ‘effectiveness’

b) to give recommendations towards effective course design and delivery of ELT programmes through distance mode

1.4 The research questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study.

   i. Why do course takers choose to study ELT through distance mode?

   ii. How far and in what ways do the course materials contribute to self-learning?

   iii. How far do the assignments engage the learners in self-learning and reflection?
iv. How effective are the contact and counselling programme in fulfilling learners’ needs?

v. What kind of interaction do the other modes of instruction promote in the selected programmes?

1.5 The context

In this section we discuss the context of the study – i.e. the issues which led to the interest in taking up research into this area. Developments in the Indian education system leading to increasing demand for teacher education along with the growing popularity of distance education have implications for the present study. The following sections elaborate these issues.

1.5.1 Developments in the Indian education system affecting English language teacher education

In continuous efforts to address the changing needs of learners in order to improve the Indian education system, different initiatives have been taken at both policy and curricular levels. Such initiatives have had implications for English language teaching and teacher training in India. The following is a discussion on how some factors have led to increasing demands of English language teacher training in India.

1.5.1.1 Vast number of untrained teachers

In an initiative to bring all children under the umbrella of the education system, the government of India introduced the Right to Education Act on April 1, 2010, under which all children from six to fourteen years of age in India are entitled to free and compulsory education, making education a fundamental right of every child. However, on the first anniversary of the Act, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, in a report on the status of implementation of the Act, admitted that 8.1 million children in the age group six-14
still remained out of school and that there was a shortfall of 508,000 teachers country-wide. Thus an educational system already falling short in the number of teachers was faced with a stiffer challenge to enable the provisions of this Act to make a positive impact on the education scenario of the country.

As part of the implementation of the Right to Education Act, the government started the process of recruiting a large number of teachers in schools in some states of India through a Teacher Eligibility Test (TET). Though TET qualified teachers have been appointed on the basis of their academic qualifications and their performance in an entrance examination, very few teachers of English have actually received training to teach English. Thus this new group of teachers have joined the already existing groups of untrained or semi-trained in-service teachers making the number of untrained teachers even larger.

This concern has also been highlighted in the British Council commissioned study conducted by David Graddol (2010: 94):

> India does not have sufficient English proficient teachers to deliver the programmes now being embarked on. This is a familiar challenge faced by most countries in the world which aspire to provide English to all their children, but in India the scale of the problem is greater…. … The 11th Five-Year Plan aspired to ‘universally introduce English in Class 3 onwards’. In practice, several states have gone further and are now attempting to introduce English in Class 1. It is doubtful that teachers at lower primary level will be able to do this successfully.

Considering these issues, education policies and practice have now begun the process of training teachers both at a large scale and in an intensive way to meet the needs of English language teacher education at scale.

1.5.1.2 Changing Curricula

The need for a fresh look at teacher education in India has also been impacted by curricular changes. Along with other subjects, the English curriculum has undergone periodic changes
throughout India to make it more inclusive and need-oriented. In several states, as also in the researcher’s home state Assam, curricular and policy changes in the teaching of English have widened the gap between the number of students that need to be taught English, and the corresponding number of trained English teachers. At the time when this research study began, at the policy level, several state governments began the teaching of English at the primary level. At the curricular level, new textbooks were introduced, and the syllabus was modified to allow for the changing needs for English. In states like Assam, these changes resulted in the adoption of the English textbooks developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi in 2010 for state government schools. The different textbooks made different methodological demands, and also required greater proficiency in English teachers. All of these changes increased the demand for trained English teachers.

1.5.1.3 Need for continuing professional development

The issue of continuing professional development (CPD) is one of the most deliberated issues at present in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Teachers need to regularly upgrade their skills for their own professional development; teachers have to mould themselves to meet new demands of the curriculum, contemporary needs of the students, and changing technologies. They need to be updated on professional skills time and again during their professional life. Teachers who are aware of the need for their own professional development might themselves want to receive training at any point of their life. Regular mode of education does not always allow them to do this, because they are unable to fit repeated cycles of training into their existing schedules and teaching duties. In such circumstances, teachers have to look for alternatives which will allow them to receive training and carry out teaching duties simultaneously.
All these three issues – a vast number of untrained teachers, changing curricula and the need for continuing professional development – point towards a need for training both pre-service and in-service teachers of English at a large scale. Such a large scale and need-based training is possible when training through distance mode complements regular modes of study. Many educational institutions are now considering distance education as an option to scale up teacher education initiatives in India.

1.5.2 Distance education as an option to scale up teacher education initiatives in India

At present, English language teacher education courses in India are being offered only by a select few institutions and agencies. These courses lead to educational qualifications like MA in English Language Teaching, PG Diploma in English Language Teaching, PG Certificate in English Language Teaching, and B.Ed., English. Besides these, in-service teacher training courses are offered by the Central and State governments through English Language Teaching Institutes (ELTIs), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA), non-governmental education agencies such as British Council and the Regional English Language Office (RELO), American Embassy, for teachers of English in India. Some of these are delivered through conventional face to face modes, and a few in distance mode. However, these programmes are not enough if the demand for training of teachers in English is considered:

There are an estimated 57 lakh (5.7 million) teacher posts at primary and upper primary levels, of which 5.23 lakh posts are vacant and now with a reduction in the teacher to student ratio of 1:30 means that there is a requirement of approximately 5.10 lakh additional teachers to meet the PTRs that means nearly 10.33 lakh teachers need to be recruited in India and many more will require further training and professional development. There is a need to undertake training for 5.48 lakh ‘untrained’ teachers at primary; 2.25 lakh at upper primary level.

(India One Million project website, 2011)
The issue of meeting the learning and training needs of teachers according to contemporary societal needs have also been deliberated upon in several global forums. In the World Education Forum meet (2000), for example, as reported in the Dakar Framework of Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, countries like India committed themselves to ensuring that the learning needs of all adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes, and to achieve this through equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. Against the backdrop of these commitments along with the issues discussed in the previous sections, the distance mode of education has been increasingly seen as the most viable option to make training accessible to all sections of pre-service or in-service teachers.

The distance mode of education has not yet been fully exploited for the purpose of teacher education in India, whereas it can be a viable and robust solution for many challenges in the present situation. As stated by Daniel (2011: 7),

*Teacher education often ignores the development of distance learning enhanced by ICTs and Open Educational Resources although distance learning is the only way to conduct classroom-focused continuous professional development. Today distance learning cannot be ignored because it provides the only way of addressing the two central requirements of teacher education just identified: the emphasis on continuing professional development and the focus on the teacher in the classroom.*

Technology enhanced distance learning might be a possible option in face of the developments discussed in Section 1.2.1. If delivered effectively, it can give an opportunity for continuous professional development to the large number of novice teachers recruited to meet immediate demands and also the already existing untrained teachers, without affecting the classroom duties. At the same time, it can help aspiring teachers to equip themselves with the appropriate methodology to teach English as per the changing demands without affecting their personal and academic lives.
However, there have been many apprehensions among educators regarding the quality of learning in distance education. Such apprehensions are, of course, not recent and not limited to Indian context only. Even as early as 1969, Iain Macleod, MP, UK termed the idea of having a university for distance education - The Open University (UK) - as ‘blithering nonsense’. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Education Secretary (UK) in 1970 wondered how advocates of distance education could justify spending a lot of money to ‘satisfy the hobbies of housewives’.

Other educators like Nissenbaum & Walker (1998) and Trinkle (1999) were worried that technology would cheapen traditional education and destroy the special relationships between instructors and their students. They mentioned research evidence that suggested that some distance courses are ‘impersonal, superficial, misdirected, and potentially dehumanizing and depressing, and that they disrupt the interactions that create a learning community’. (Rovai 2003: 110) Rovai, however, tries to set the record straight by stating that

*substantial research evidence exists suggesting that the course-delivery medium is rarely the determining factor for a variety of educational outcomes, including student satisfaction, perceptions, and learning (e.g., Russell, 1999), and that strong feelings of community can be developed in distant learning environments (e.g., Rovai, 2001)*

Similar attitudes towards distance education have been seen in India, where distance education programmes are sometimes considered second-rate as compared to regular face-to-face programmes. However, the University Grants Commission has declared the equivalence of degrees awarded by open and distance learning institutions at par with conventional institutions. Moreover, the distance education system has already attained wide acceptance in India as discussed in the following section. Within a short period, the distance education system has attracted quite a large number of people. The All India Survey of Higher
Education 2011-12 (Provisional) published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (2013) says that distance enrolment constitutes 12.5 per cent of the total enrolment in higher education. The following discussion reflects the fast growth of distance education in India.

1.5.3 Growth of distance education in India

Though distance education in India is a relatively recent development in post-independence period, it has seen significant growth over the time. In India, the beginnings of distance education at the tertiary level started when Delhi University started under graduate (UG) courses in 1962 in the form of correspondence education. As this initiative turned out to be successful, the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended expansion of correspondence education in the country and accordingly, the University Grants Commission formulated guidelines for universities for offering correspondence education. The Punjabi University, Patiala was the next Indian university to set up a directorate of correspondence course. Many other institutions started correspondence studies after this. The establishment of the Andhra Pradesh Open University (later renamed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University), was another important milestone in distance education in India. This was followed by the establishment of several other open universities in India including a central Open University, namely Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) (1985).

The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system in India is now available through a central university, state open universities and institutions and universities offering distance education in conventional dual mode universities. The number of Open Universities has increased from four during the Eighth Plan to fourteen in the Tenth Plan period. There has also been a remarkable growth in the number of dual mode universities offering programmes through distance mode, as the table below shows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dual Mode Universities/Institutions</th>
<th>Single Mode OUs</th>
<th>Total Distance Education Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.1: Single and dual mode universities in India**

(Source: http://ugc.ac.in/deb/pdf/growthDEB.pdf)

These statistics make it clear that the distance education system, which is considered as a viable alternative for people who cannot access regular education, has been widely accepted in the country. As stated in the *Assessment & Accreditation of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Institutions, Handbook*, (2009: 2) published by Distance Education Council, IGNOU, ‘The inherent flexibility and affordability of the system coupled with applications of new technologies has made ODL move centre stage in the educational scenario.’

This ever increasing popularity of distance education in countries like India vouches for the importance of this mode of education in the context of changing needs. People of certain sections of society, such as in-service teachers, people with family responsibilities, etc. may not be able to avail regular modes of education. But since there is a high demand of educated human resources, it is very important to make education accessible to all irrespective of any background. Distance education is considered to have potential to meet this need. These are
only a few factors among many others that have contributed to the increasing popularity of distance mode of education. However, the growing number of course-takers through distance mode has created the challenge of keeping the balance between quantity of population (number of learners) and quality of education.

1.5.4 ELT programmes through distance mode in India

Though it has been several decades since India ventured into the distance education system, not many long-term or consistent efforts as far as teacher training in English language teaching is concerned have been found.

Through an Internet search conducted in January, 2011 to find out about English language teacher training courses through distance mode in India, a number of programmes were identified. Many of them were short-term (three-month or six months long) courses. The following table present a list of such short-term courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Indira Gandhi National Open University</td>
<td>Certificate in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (CTE)</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regional Institute of English, Bangalore</td>
<td>Secondary School Teacher Development Programme</td>
<td>(30 days distance and 90 days face-to-face)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tamilnadu Open University</td>
<td>Certificate in Teaching in English</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Karnataka State Open University</td>
<td>Certificate in Teaching in English</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regional Institute of English, Chandigarh</td>
<td>PG Certificate in the Teaching of English</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2: Short term ELT programmes in India
Seven institutions were found offering ELT through distance mode in post graduate degree and diploma levels which were of one year or more than one year duration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Year of inception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Centre of Distance Education, Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad</td>
<td>MA in ELT</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata</td>
<td>MA in ELT</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PG Diploma in English Language Teaching</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Annamalai University</td>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Not available*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Osmania University</td>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vinayaka Missions University, Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Not available*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regional Institute of English, South India, Bangalore</td>
<td>PG Diploma in ELT</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Not available*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>EFL University, Hyderabad</td>
<td>PG Diploma in Teaching of English</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PG Certificate in Teaching of English</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Date of inception was not available

Table 1.3: Longer duration ELT programmes in India
The home websites of the above institutions reveal that all these courses have been recognized by the then Distance Education Council. As an institution, only one of them (Netaji Subhas Open University) is single mode, i.e. open university, while others are dual mode. The dual-mode universities operationalize the distance education programmes through a separate unit or centre along with other regular programmes. The years of inception show that some of the programmes are decades old, while some are quite recent.

The above discussion shows that due to various factors, distance education is gradually gaining its popularity as a way to deliver English language teacher training. It is evident from the years of inception of the long-term programmes that except two programmes, the other programmes are relatively new developments. Considering the growing popularity of distance education and the need for large-scale training of English language teachers, more numbers of programmes are likely to come up in the near future. In this context, a study is needed to examine the factors relating to the efficacy of the existing programmes so that the insights gained from such a study can help the existing as well future programmes in effective delivery.

This study was also motivated by the researcher’s personal experience as a lecturer in a distance education institute namely the Institute of Distance Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh, India. The researcher was actively involved in course delivery of many programmes run by the Institute and had first-hand experience of facing the challenges in the process. To give an example, even after having an excellent set of study materials, the Certificate Course in English for Communication was not running properly. While trying to explore the reasons why a distance course may not succeed even when it has been well designed, the researcher reasoned that the success of distance programme may be intimately related to an effective course delivery mechanism. This modest, but first-hand practical experience in distance education urged the researcher to study the existing distance
education practices in the researcher’s subject at post graduation - ELT. During this period, the researcher realized that an exploration of current practices of delivering ELT though distance mode in India in order to identify the factors crucial for effectiveness of such programmes can go a long way in improving the English language teacher education in India.

In the next section, we discuss the methodology that was adopted to investigate the issues described above. This is followed by a section on the chapterization of the thesis.

1.6 Methodology for the study

The methodology of this study included the following steps:

1. Collection of background information
2. Literature review
3. Designing of research instruments
4. Trying out research instruments
5. Field study
6. Data analysis and recommendations

1.6.1 Collection of background information

Once the area of study was decided upon, a preliminary survey was carried out to collect information about the existing ELT programmes available through distance mode in India. Information was collected on the programme providers, the instructional design (face-to-face contact and counselling programme, types of materials used, media etc) and the contact details of both programme providers and course takers, mainly by surfing the Internet. Most of the information was gathered from the home websites of the respective institutions. Wherever needed, email and phones were used to collect details of the programmes from the course providers. However, such attempts to collect information often yielded little result since many of the emails went unanswered.
1.6.2 Literature review

In the next step, I consulted various books, journals and other academic publications on the following areas:

a) Distance education theories

b) Distance education pedagogy

c) Teacher education through distance mode, and

d) English language teacher education through distance mode

Though I could find very few comprehensive studies or evaluative works on English language teacher education through distance mode, the existing literature review helped to identify the various tools and theoretical models that have been used to examine modes of course delivery of ELT programmes through distance mode. The major areas on which information was collected include:

- course materials
- the practicum component
- students’ and teachers’/counsellors’ perceptions
- use of technology
- assessment procedures such as assignments, etc.

The purpose of this step was to find out the existing gap in the area chosen for study and to formulate criteria for analysing the effectiveness of ELT programmes through distance mode.

1.6.3 Designing of research instruments

In the first step, the research questions were formulated. In order to gather information on the issues laid out in the research questions, a set of tools was designed, which included questionnaires to collect data from different stakeholders related to the selected programmes of study and information sheets.
1.6.4 Trying out research instruments

The next step of the methodology involved trying out the research instruments in one of the chosen institutions (Netaji Subhas Open University) to test the efficacy of the research tools. The trial brought out many new insights, and necessitated modification of the research tools to elicit relevant data from the subjects. For example, a few of the queries in the questionnaires created confusion among the respondents because there was a mismatch in the terminology used by respondents to refer to components of their programme, and those used in the questionnaires. The modified questions were later incorporated in the questionnaires used for the field study.

1.6.5 Field study

After suitable modifications to the research instruments were made, the next step involved field visits to the selected institutions (Please see Section 3.4 for the list of selected institutions) to collect relevant information and data from different stakeholders (teachers/counsellors, students/learners, administrators and course writers) on the parameters of effectiveness of course delivery. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and documents available in the offices.

1.6.6 Data analysis and recommendations

After collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, the data were analysed within a framework for effective course delivery and appropriate conclusions were drawn.

In the final step, based on the findings, the researcher tried to formulate suggestions/recommendations for effective design and delivery of distance teacher training programmes in English Language Teaching.

1.7 Chapterization

Below is a brief description of the chapters of the thesis.
Chapter 1: Introduction: Contextualizing the Study

The present chapter contextualizes the study in the current scenario of English language teaching with special reference to India. It attempts to present the rationale behind the study and outlines the methodology followed to investigate the selected programmes. This chapter also presents the scope of the study.

Chapter 2: Teacher Education through Distance Mode and Efficacy of Course Delivery: A Literature Review

This chapter documents and critically examines studies on issues related to distance education theories, teacher education through distance mode and distance English language teacher education. The chapter throws light on different perspectives regarding quality issues, course delivery mechanisms etc., and also discusses some documents and models used in the present study.

Chapter 3: The Selected Programmes of Study: An Overview

This chapter presents a profile of the syllabi (where available) or curricula and kinds of materials (books, audio, video, audio-visual materials) used by the selected programmes of study. This chapter is expected to give some general information about different interventions used in the selected programmes of study. This background information is expected to help in understanding the insights presented in the later chapters.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Procedures

This chapter presents the methodology and procedure used for collecting and analysing the data. Besides giving an account of the nature and scope of the research and the subjects, it includes an explanation of the data collection instruments and the revisions that they went through in the process of the research. It also presents the framework used for analysing data
in the present study. The operational definitions of terms used in the discussion of the study have also been presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Presentation of Data: Subjective and Objective Determinants of Efficacy

This chapter presents a discussion of the data collected during the fieldwork. Since data included both subjective (stakeholders’ perceptions/opinions) and objective (examination of instructional tools), the chapter devotes one section for each of them. These data form the basis for interpretation in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Interpretation of Data: Implications on Effectiveness of Course Delivery

Following the thread from the previous chapter, Chapter 6 attempts to analyse the data within a framework for critically examining the course delivery mechanisms and comment on the significance of the findings in the effectiveness of the course delivery of the selected programmes.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: Recommendations and Future Directions

The concluding chapter situates the course delivery systems of the selected programmes in the context of the developments distance education pedagogy. Then it goes on to give some recommendations on the basis of the findings of the study. The chapter concludes by stating the limitations of the study and by articulating future directions for research in the area.

1.8 Defining the scope of the study

This study is based on data collected by the researcher from four institutions in India offering ELT programmes through distance mode. The following four points define the scope of the study.
First, this particular study limits itself to an investigation of issues related to pedagogic effectiveness rather than factors like cost-effectiveness or demographic factors, and draws conclusions accordingly.

Second, this study does not control or manipulate any activities in the course delivery of the selected programmes of study. Rather than using any intervention in the selected programmes, it explores the course delivery mechanisms as they are provided by the institutions.

Third, this study does not examine the effectiveness of the programmes by comparing them to their counterparts in regular education. It considers the components of the ELT programmes offered through distance mode only, without comparing them to regular programmes.

Fourth, the study, being an extensive study, does not aim to offer conclusive judgements about the effectiveness of the selected programmes of study. It identifies factors relating to the efficacy of the programmes on the basis of stakeholders’ perceptions and an objective analysis of course delivery mechanisms. In short, it analyses the academic rather than administrative aspects of course delivery to study effectiveness, and aims to identify factors having pedagogical significance for effective course delivery.

Fourth, because the study is about course delivery, it excludes the final evaluation or assessment from its scope. It does not use the term-end examination or results to comment on the effectiveness of the programmes.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter attempts to set the context for discussion on the efficacy of course delivery of distance ELT programmes of study in India. It starts with a brief introduction to the topic and proceeds to throw some light on some developments in the field of English language teacher
training and of distance education in the context of India. After setting the background, it
tries to give an outline (the rationale, objectives, research questions, methodology and
chapterization) of the study. The chapter concludes by defining the scope of the study.