CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN
OF THE STUDY
1. INTRODUCTION

Education today is identified among the basic needs essential for an individual's survival just as 'food, clothing and shelter'. The need for education has been recognized in all the parts of the country and among all the sections of society. Particularly, the higher education has always been recognized, though with varying degrees of conviction, as a vital element for individual's self-fulfilment and the development of the society. In developing countries, education has an additional role in changing the mindset and thinking of a person, in removing ignorance, superstitions, exploitations, social injustice etc. and to infuse the scientific temper among the masses. It has to provide the environment for social and cultural innovation. According to Sushma Berlia, the objectives of higher education may range from primary objectives, such as employability, enhancing the earning potential, seeking and advancing knowledge and wisdom, research and experimentation to more serious secondary objectives like attaining mental and spiritual growth, engaging in quest for the unknown, facilitating better life style and developing scientific outlook. Development of any country depends on the quantity and quality of its manpower resources responding to the challenging demands of that society. Higher Education represents an important form of investment by providing and enhancing the skills, knowledge and attributes needed by high level professional, technical and managerial workers.

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The percentage of people in higher education and the programmes/skills imparted through higher education relevant to socio economic requirements decide the development. In this regard, India's higher education system is one of the largest systems of higher education in the commonwealth countries and the second largest in the world. According to V.C. Kulandai Swamy², in the developed countries like Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Japan, etc., the percentage of people in higher education is between 50% and 85%. India is yet to cross the eleven percent in the field of higher education. In this connection, we have to increase the higher education enrollment. The demand for higher education is on the rise.

According to Akhilesh Chandra Pandey³, more and more students are opting for professional and vocational programmes. In India, there is a conventional system (Regular stream of students from colleges) being followed in 415 Universities and Deemed Universities (which are now treated as Universities) and more than 20676 Colleges which are not able to meet the demand for higher education. Further, the need for training and re-training is also increasing with the growth of knowledge society. In this regard, the distance education is an alternative solution for higher education enrollment.

² Reconstruction of Higher Education in India – ICFAI (2005), Page No 212
³ University News-July 07-13, 2008-Dieing Temples of Learning: Revive with Branch Identity, Page No.23
RELATIONSHIP OF DISTANCE EDUCATION TO OTHER FORMS OF INDIRECT EDUCATION.

CHART NO 1.1.1

Source: Adapted from Distance Education-International Perspectives-Edited by David Sewart, Desmond Keegan and Boje Holmberg – St Martin’s Press, New Delhi (2003)
Modes of Education:-

There are two types of Education. One is the conventional system and the other non-conventional system. The later means the Distance Education. According to Darshana Sharma⁴, There is no one meaning for the term 'Distance Education'. It is known by a variety of names, viz. ‘Correspondence Education’, ‘Home Study’, Independent Study’, ‘External Study’, ‘Off-Campus Study’, ‘Open Learning’, ‘Open Education’, etc., In India, we have been using the three terms i.e., ‘External Appearance’ (Private Appearance), ‘Correspondence Education’ and ‘Distance Education’. The Distance Education is more suitable to meet the requirements of such students who are unable to pursue their education through regular mode. The Distance Education has become an integral part of higher education globally. It is an effective tool for the provision of education to a heterogeneous group of learners as well as an alternative channel of democratization of education all over the world.

Classification of Distance Education:-

Institutions offering Distance Education in India can be broadly classified as under:

1. **Conventional Correspondence or Distance Mode Institutions** which are located in Conventional Universities, in order to expand access to learners.

2. **Open Universities** which have come into existence in response to the need for designing new structures as a solution to the shortcomings of the conventional systems.

⁴ University News April 02-08, 2007, Promoting National Development through Distance in Education: Scope, Initiative and Challenges, Page No.10
3. Virtual Universities which have come up as an extension of open universities and provide on-line mode of education to overcome structural limitations of open universities.

4. International Institutions which are taken up by foreign education providers in India with domestic collaborations thus reaching out to international students.

Origin of Distance Education

In 1840, Sir Issac Pitman, the English inventor of shorthand, came up with an ingenious idea for delivering instruction to a potentially limitless audience: correspondence courses by mail. Pitman's concept was so hot that within a few years he was corresponding with a legion of far-flung learners. Within a few decades, regular, and in some cases, extensive programmes were available in the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and Japan (Diane Matthews 1999). By the 1900s, the first department of correspondence teaching was established in the University of Chicago. In Australia, the University of Queensland established a Department of External Studies in 1911. Before 1969, distance learning had developed into an important sector of higher education in quite a few countries.

The founding of United Kingdom’s Open University (OU) in 1969 marked a significant development of the second phase of distance learning, with its mixed-media approach to teaching. The OU sent learning materials to students by mail. Materials included carefully constructed texts and audio and video materials. These were supplemented with conventional broadcast through radio and television.
Growth

In the two decades following the opening of the British Open University in 1969, four open universities were established in Europe, and more than 20 were established in countries around the world. In Canada, some 19 conventional universities were active in distance learning. Slowly distance education spread to various countries like Russia, Hungary, The Czech and Slovak Republics, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemember, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, etc. The majority of higher education institutions in the United States of America have distance learning programmes.

Open and Distance Learning in India

The Distance Education is not a new concept for India. According to Romesh Verma it has its origin in the Pandava period enshrined in Mahabharata, where the great guru Dronacharya's disciple "Ekalaiva" had acquired the knowledge and skills without the physical presence of teacher (Guru Dronacharya).

Utilising Indian rationale, the foreign thinkers tried to explore the potentials of distance education society. In the beginning, distance education was viewed as an anomaly compared to the traditional campus education. At present, it is commercialised. Distance Education as a system de-emphasises teaching but encourages learning to make a learner truly autonomous. In this regard, Michael G Moore (1985) states that distance education is "the family of instructional

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5 University News October 20-26, 2008, P.No.19, Competencies of Distance Professionals
methods in which the teaching behaviours, including those in continuous situation would be performed in learner’s premises, so that communication between teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronics, mechanical or other means”.

At the time of independence, higher education in India was accessible only to the upper class of the society. There were 19 conventional universities and 420 affiliated colleges all over the country. Immediately after independence, the University Education Commission (1948-1949) recommended that in a well-planned educational system, opportunities should be provided at every level to students for the exercise of their reflective powers, artistic abilities and practical work. Within a few years, the rapid expansion of primary and secondary education, and the need for higher degrees among middle and upper-middle classes to apply for suitable jobs acted as strong forces for expansion of higher education in India. By 1960, the number of universities had increased up to 45 and the number of affiliated colleges rose up to 1222. Enrolment in colleges and universities increased from about 180,000 during 1947 to 890,000 during 1960 (Sahoo 1985). The then government apprehended that quantitative expansion of conventional Colleges and Universities would lead to dilution of standards in higher education. It was also observed that the conventional classroom based higher education had its limitations. It couldn't increase the accessibility of higher education to a larger section of people. These limitations paved the way for alternative systems. In this context, the Planning Commission of India (1960) had made a significant observation in the Third Five Year Plan that proposals for evening colleges, correspondence courses and award of
external degrees were under consideration. The matter was referred to the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). The CABE in its 28th meeting (January 16-17, 1961) suggested further detailed studies by a small committee. Consequently, The Ministry of Education constituted an expert committee in March 1961 under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari, the then Chairman of the UGC to look into the proposal in detail and make recommendations. The Committee, consisting of 10 members from different organizations like Ministry of Education, UGC and different universities in India, studied the proposal in detail and recommended the introduction of correspondence course at University level leading to a degree or equivalent qualification. The Committee made suggestions with regard to the nature of courses to be introduced, instructional processes, use of media and so on. Further, it recommended that Arts and Commerce courses should be introduced first through correspondence education system followed by science subjects.

It was necessary to associate experienced teachers and top ranking scholars in the preparation of course materials to maintain educational standards. The new system should be more flexible in terms of admission and duration of study. There should be personal contact (through tutorials) between the teacher and the taught.

The Committee had observed that a large number of aspirants could be educated through correspondence courses as competently as those at the universities and affiliated colleges. It also suggested that the University of Delhi should run correspondence courses in the first instance.

The University of Delhi agreed to the proposal of the expert committee and appointed a sub-committee to prepare a programme of action of
correspondence courses. The sub-committee recommended the introduction of various courses like English, Economics, Modern Indian Languages, Mathematics, History, Political Science and Commerce. Following the recommendations, the University established the School of Correspondence courses and Continuing Education in 1962 as a pilot project.

THE KOTHARI COMMISSION (1964-66)

The Kothari Commission\(^6\) gave importance to correspondence education with the following words.

"There must also be a method of taking education to millions who depend upon their own effort to study whenever they can find time to do so. We consider that correspondence or home study courses provide the right answer for these situations."

"The correspondence or home study course is a well tried and tested technique. There is hardly any ground for apprehension that correspondence courses are an inferior form of education than what is given in regular schools and colleges."

Home Study Method:-

"The home study method\(^7\) no doubt lacks the inspiring contact with the teacher. But inspiring teachers are rare, and in correspondence study, the adult has a strong motivation to learn. The method also establishes a personal and private relationship with the teacher which encourages discussion and understanding through written communication thereby ensuring relevancy and precision.

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The mere fact that the major effort to learn has to be made by the student himself in the correspondence method and that he is required to do a variety of exercises and tests in writing, which are guided and supervised, substantially support the education value of the method”.

The commission gave the following suggestions for effective correspondence programmes.

a) Teachers and students should meet occasionally in programmes consisting of lectures, seminars and group discussions.
b) The science students should have access to laboratory and workshop during week ends or during vacation time.
c) There can be study groups among correspondence students of a locality.
d) Wherever possible, the correspondence students can be attached to nearby colleges for facilities of library, extension lectures, educational films, etc.
e) Experimentation should be undertaken with principles of programmed learning
f) Correspondence courses should be supported by radio and television
g) Correspondence courses should provide continuing education facilities to workers, for cultural and aesthetic development.
h) The Ministry of Education in Collaboration with other ministries should establish a National Council of Home Studies.

Streamlining the introduction of Correspondence Courses at the University level

The Education Commission of India (1964-66) supported the idea of introducing correspondence courses at the university level. It was optimistic about the role of correspondence education in general disciplines and suggested that it should also include courses in science, technology and vocational fields. The Commission justified the relevance of correspondence education as a system of taking education
to the doorsteps of those who were motivated to study either at home or at their place of work and recommended that correspondence courses should be introduced at the university level on a large scale. This idea was highlighted in the National Policy of Education (1968). It was also suggested that education through correspondence should be given the same status as full-time or conventional system of education. The Planning Commission in its Fourth Five Year Plan (1966-71) recommended the expansion of higher education through correspondence courses, evening colleges and part-time classes.

In 1967, the UGC appointed a Committee to streamline the introduction of correspondence courses at the university level. The Government of India sent three delegations to the USSR during 1967 to 1971 to study the system of correspondence courses in that country. In line with the suggestions given by these delegations, the UGC formulated a set of guidelines to improve the system of correspondence education in India.

By this time, the pilot project of the University of Delhi elicited good response from the students. Panjabi University, Patiala set up a full-fledged Directorate of Correspondence Courses in 1968. A number of other Universities like Meerut (1969), Jamia Milia Islamia (1970), Mysore (1970), Madera Kumara (1971), Punjab (1971), Bombay (1971), Himachal Pradesh (1971) Venkateshwara (1972), Andhra (1972) etc. established institutes of correspondence courses. All the institutes had received a good response from the prospective learners. This had encouraged UGC to take further steps for strengthening correspondence education at the university level. The establishment of Open University in UK (1969) also
drew attention of the UGC policy makers. They started to think of strengthening Correspondence Education through the Open University system in our country.

The significance of open learning system in the national development is self explanatory in the paragraph given below:

"Non-formal education and open learning systems would be encouraged at all levels. These programmes are envisaged for providing a network of learning opportunities to those who cannot or do not avail of the facilities of the formal system for one reason or the other. They would also provide opportunities for recurrent and life-long education and constitute a major means of promoting great equity" (Vibha Joshi\textsuperscript{8})

\textbf{Proposals for an Open University}

In 1970 (International Education Year), the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the UGC and the Indian National Commission for cooperation with UNESCO, organized a seminar on "Open University". The seminar recommended the establishment of an open university in India on an experimental basis. The Government of India appointed eight member working group on Open University in 1974. The leading role was given to G.Parthasarathi, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The working group recommended establishing an Open University by an act of parliament as early as possible. The University should have jurisdiction over the entire country so that, when it is fully developed, any student even in the remotest

\textsuperscript{8} University News, November 15-21, 2004, P.No. 121, Role of Open Universities in the Community Development
corner of the country can have access to its instruction and degrees (Working Group Report, 1974). The working group suggested several measures to be followed in instructional and management processes of the Open University which include: admission procedure, age relaxation, preparation of reading materials, setting up of core group scholars in different fields, setting up of study centres, vehicle of curricular programmes, and live contact with teachers, and so on. On the basis of the recommendations of the working group, the Union Government prepared a draft bill for the establishment of a National Open University, but due to some reasons the progress was delayed.

Further Growth

During 1970s several other Universities/Institutes in the country established their Directorate of Correspondence courses. Some of them are: Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (1973), Patna University (1974), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (1974), Barkatullah University (1975), Utkal University (1976), Kurukshetra University (1976), Kashmir University (1976), University of Jammu (1976), Osmania University (1977), Allahabad University (1978), SNDT Women's University (1979) and Annamalai University (1979).

Two other institutions viz., National Staff College for Educational Planners and Administrators (presently named as National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) introduced special courses for educational administrators and teachers respectively during 1979.

The growth of Correspondence Course Institutes continued through the 1980s. During the 1970s, 19 correspondence course institutes were established throughout
the country, and in 1980s 17 such institutes came into existence. Some of these institutes are: University of Calicut (1981), University of Madras (1981), University of Poona (1983), Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (1985), M.D. University - Rohtak (1988), and so on.

First State Open University

Though the progress of National Open University was delayed, the State of Andhra Pradesh came up with the first state Open University in the country on August 26, 1982, through an Act of the Andhra Pradesh state legislature. Presently it is named as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. The headquarters of this University is situated at Jublee Hills, Hyderabad. It has 137 study centres spread all over the state. The main objective of this University was to provide educational opportunities to those learners who could not take advantage of higher learning in conventional Universities. The University offers both short term and long-term programmes. The areas include Master degree programmes, Professional programmes, Bachelor's degree programmes, research programmes and so on. The academic package of this University consists of various media like print, audio and visual materials and contact sessions. The University also uses radio programmes and arranges the practical for science courses.
National Open University

In 1985 the Union Government made a policy statement for the establishment of a National Open University. A Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Education to chalk out the plan of action of the National Open University. On the basis of the report of the Committee, the Union Government introduced a Bill in the Parliament. In August 1985, both the Houses of the Parliament passed the Bill. Subsequently, the National Open University came into existence on September 20th, 1985. It was named after the late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (established by the Act of Parliament) is responsible for introducing and promoting distance education at the University level, and for coordinating, determining and maintaining standards in such systems functioning in the country.

Other State Open Universities

The establishment of IGNOU has proved to be a significant milestone in the development of open and distance education in India. Seeing its success more state Open Universities came into existence within 15 years of IGNOU's establishment. These are: Kota Open University (1987), Nalanda Open University (1987), Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (1989), Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University (1992), Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar Open University (1994), Karnataka State Open University (1996), Netaji Subhas Open University (1997), and Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University (1999), Etc.,
Present Status

The Indian Distance Education System at present comprises 14 Open Universities including Indira Gandhi Open University and more than 130 dual mode University distance education centres, catering to about 28 percent of the total enrollment in higher education in the country. These Institutions are offering to more than 6 million students, more than 500 academic programmes and 4000 courses (www.ugc.ac.in). IGNOU alone has launched more than 120 programmes consisting of more than 1000 courses (IGNOU Profile, 2007). The CCIs are generally part of conventional Universities set up by Central or State Governments. They generally follow the courses and syllabi of the parent institutions. The students of these institutes study the same course and are awarded the same degree as those of the regular students. In many CCIs printed materials are presented in modular forms. Some have started transforming their materials into self-learning print materials as used by the IGNOU and some other state Open Universities. Most of the courses offered are of general type. Very few are professional courses. IGNOU and some other state Open Universities like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University and Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University have launched several technical and professional programmes/courses.

These Open Universities have adopted a multimedia approach for teaching/learning by developing self-learning printed materials, providing facilities for face-to-face counseling in study centres, broadcasting and telecasting TV lessons through different radio and television channels and providing facilities for practical for science courses and so on.
Some newly established state Open Universities like Netaji Subhash Open University have not lagged behind. They have started developing self-learning materials on 6 science courses (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Botany, Zoology and Geography) with an intention to launch these courses during the next academic session. They have already launched courses in the Bachelor of Arts and Commerce programmes. They are heading towards a strong student support services as well.

A steady increase in student enrolment has been observed in almost all the Open Universities in the Country. IGNOU as a National Open University has been using communication technology in a grand scale. Taking other Open Universities and CCIs/Directorates of Distance Education into consideration, IGNOU is heading for a networking in the near future.

**Distance Education Council**:–

The Distance Education Council fully controls the Distance Education in India. It was established in 1991 and it started functioning in 1992-93.

IGNOU has two main functions:

(i) To offer various academic programmes that lead to certificate, diploma and degree courses and  
(ii) To function as an apex body for distance education in the country.

In order to perform the second function, IGNOU has set up the Distance Education Council (DEC) in 1991 under section 25 of IGNOU Act 1985. The major roles assigned to DEC are:

- Promotion of open and distance education systems in the country
- Coordination of Open and Distance education activities
- Maintenance of standards in distance education institutions, and
- Providing financial and technical support to other State Open Universities and distance education institutions in the country.
Objectives of Distance Education:-

The distance education mode was started with specific objectives to be achieved which are:-

- To provide a system of student-centered, self paced learning.
- To provide a flexible, diversified and open system of education.
- To develop by providing wider access to higher education to persons of all ages and particularly to working persons and economically and otherwise handicapped, and persons residing in remote areas.
- To provide means of upgrading the skills and qualifications, and
- To develop education as a lifelong activity so that the individual can refresh and update his knowledge in an existing discipline or to acquire knowledge in new areas.

Introduction of job oriented programmes:

Almost all Universities (80% of them) in India have a Department of Distance Education or a Directorate of Distance Education. Once upon a time, the Distance Educational Institutions offered only the traditional courses. At Present, the number of job oriented courses has enhanced. Some of the programmes offered by these Universities are: Computer Programmes, Management Programmes, Engineering Programmes, Medical Programmes, Library Science Programmes, Programmes in Electronics, Law related Programmes, Horticulture Programmes, Tourism Studies Programmes, Mushroom Cultivation Programmes, Yoga & Meditation Programmes, Agri-related Programmes, Music Programmes, Health Science Programmes, Double Degree Programmes, Lateral Entry Programmes, Journalism Programmes, Desk-top Publishing and so on.
Table No 1.1
Details of Student Enrollment in ODL and Conventional Educational System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conventional Educational System</th>
<th>Open &amp; Distance Learning System</th>
<th>ODL System as percentage of total enrollment Higher Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>1370261</td>
<td>8577</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>2752437</td>
<td>166428</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>4.99 Million</td>
<td>0.56 Million</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>7.73 Million</td>
<td>1.58 Million</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>9.2 Million</td>
<td>2 Million</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>10.3 Million</td>
<td>2.30 Million</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>12.86 Million</td>
<td>3.6 Million</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report of UGC & DEC Database

In the above table, year after year, the student’s enrollment has increased. In future, higher education share may extend up to 40%. The increasing enrollment in distance education during the past couple of decades both in India and elsewhere in the world, has led to think that on-campus formal education can be progressively replaced by distance education. The supporters of this view assume that the distance mode of educational delivery would substantially reduce the public expenditure on higher education as it has the potential for much larger reach than face-to-face (F2F) classroom interactions.
Table No 1.2
Institutional Growth of Distance Education in India:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>OU</th>
<th>CCIs</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962-81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Correspondence era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-85</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>Transition to open era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Consolidation of open era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-07</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Expansion of ODL system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report of UGC - DEC Database

Merits of Distance and Open University Education:

The Distance Education and Open University system have the following advantages for the students.

a) De-saturation of formal Colleges, Universities and other Institutions,

b) Updating of knowledge and skills,

c) Filling up gaps in learning at any stage of instruction;

d) Education is local (at home) but recognition is global

e) Promoting self-learning;

f) Developing life long learning skills;

g) Coverage of a large number of students at a time;

h) Opportunity for students to learn at any place;

i) Opportunity for students to appear for examinations only when they are ready e.g., an M.A. course may be completed in parts in a number of years

j) Use of varieties of methods of delivery including multimedia channels;

k) Non- insistence on previous entry qualifications for a course;

l) Education at a low cost and thereby reducing the financial burden of the State;
m) Encouragement to women to learn;

n) Reaching different parts of the country, at a time, through distance education techniques;

o) Influencing traditional Universities and other institutions of learning in improving their strategies;

p) Non-requirement of huge area of land and large buildings for instructional purposes;

q) Better utilization of available material and human resources;

r) Taking away students from 'Parallel Colleges' and tutorial institutions.

s) Students can spend their time effectively for studies without affecting the normal life.

t) Easy time management to fulfill family, social and work obligation,

u) Distance Education builds self discipline and self confidence naturally.

v) It helps to elevate, promote and enrich the knowledge of individuals and builds an enduring personality which can face challenges independently.

w) Multiple qualifications can be obtained simultaneously, and many more practical reasons which have motivated millions world wide to take up distance education.

x) Exposure and Experience of Technology in Education: E-Learning, Satellite Education, etc.,

y) There is no need for original certificates, to join this distance education course and just Xerox copies are enough.
Problems of Distance Education:-

The major problems of distance education are as follows:-

The first one is problems faced by the students, the second one is problems faced by the faculty members, third one is University Organisation and the fourth and the last one is Parent's problem.

1. Students' Problems:

Low motivation, very little teacher contact and feedback, inadequate student support service, feeling of isolation and lack of experience in continuing the programmes, etc.

2. Faculty Problems:

Lack of training in development of self instructional material, inadequate knowledge of technological services, inadequate faculty recruitment, improper support to the learners, untrained faculty, etc.

3. Organisational Problems:

a) Managerial support in the form of funding the programmes, organizing the counseling schedule, providing information, monitoring of assignments, dispatching of results and grade cards, etc.,

b) Technology/Infrastructural considerations like telecommunication facilities, e-mail and internet facilities, courseware and educational CD’s, films, etc.,

4. Parents’ Problem:

a) Some parents are not interested to allow their wards to pursue higher education.

b) They are dependent upon the 100 percent finance from their wards

c) Illiterate parents are not motivating their wards.

d) Awareness about higher education is very low in the rural/hill stations.
The important aims of Distance Education:-

Educational systems marketing techniques are dependent upon the Student Support Services such as the nature of programmes, academic model, administrative model, curriculum development, instruction material, instructional process and evaluation process. The details are as follows:-

1. Programmes/ Courses
   - Nature of human beings to be produced
   - Types of academic programmes to be organized
   - Social and Educational Justice
   - Educational need of the disadvantaged groups
   - Cost effectiveness
   - Colossal demands of higher education

2. Academic Model
   - Accessibility
   - Flexibility
   - Convenience of learners
   - Students’ support services
   - Academic support
   - Innovativeness

3. Administrative model
   - Infrastructure
   - Coordination between academic and supportive staff
   - Concern for students’ problems
   - Attitude and awareness about educational issues
   - Staffing Pattern
   - Commitment for high standards
4. Curriculum Development

- Teaching learning strategy
- Learning experiences for all-round development
- Coverage of physical, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions
- Advancement of knowledge and its applications for the betterment of the society
- Emphasis on academic integration
- Content development for different types of programmes

5. Instruction Material

- Self Learning Materials
- Assignments
- Audio – Visual Aids
- Use of latest information and communication technology
- Emphasis on self learning

6. Instructional Process

- Effective transaction of course content
- Rich and user friendly learning sources
- Use of multi-channels learning system
- Pro-active participation of motivated learners
- Strong network of students’ support services

7. Evaluation Process

- Comprehensive and continuous assessment
- Formative role of evaluation
- Transparency in examinations
- Proper and also functional feedback system
- Time bound schedule of examinations
Internationalization of Educational Market:-

Marketing Mix for Higher Education: - Marketing is an on going system. It is much more than selling and advertising. It does not operate when something special is needed from the public at a given moment. Educational Marketing is the need of the hour, particularly, the distance education mode. It is planned as a systematic two way process of communication between an educational institution and its internal and external members designed to build goodwill, understanding and support for that organization. Today’s world is highly competitive. Education, like most ‘pure’ services is an intangible dominant service. In the education marketing also, Darwin’s principle holds good even today because it is only the fittest that would survive. Thus, the motivation for applying the marketing concept in any organisation is not just to increase profit, but to achieve high level of customer satisfaction and to enhance the perceived value of services and products.

Appropriate marketing strategies need to be evolved towards the challenges of marketing distance education programmes. Assessment of the marketing strategies to be adopted by the Distance Education Institutes and the application of Seven elements of marketing mix such as, Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Process, Physical evidence and People for effective marketing of distance education programs is of prime concern.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No 1.3</th>
<th>SERVICE MARKETING MIX FOR THE DISTANCE EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product</strong></td>
<td>Courses offered, quality &amp; quantity of syllabus, packaging of lessons, delivery of lessons, providing service, post course service, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place</strong></td>
<td>Location of the study centres/information centres, transportation, banking facilities, post/courier facilities, intermediaries, channel type, coverage, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion</strong></td>
<td>Advertising, media types, publicity, public relations, incentives to the study/ information centres, staff training, service promotion, student satisfaction, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Price</strong></td>
<td>Price of the course fees, discounts to the students, remittance of fees, flexibility, value of the course, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td>Course motivation to the students, team work, recruitment of staff, research, feedback from the students, relaxation of eligibility norms, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical evidence</strong></td>
<td>Facilities to the students, reports, announcement of seminar and examination date intimation, providing student service packages, implementation of new technological devices, result announcement through internet, student grievances cell, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td>Motivation and encouragement of the student’s community, implementation of policies and procedures, satisfaction of the students, helping the students through creation of placement cell, tie up with the companies, formation of new study centres in backward, rural area, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement of the Problem

The success of an organization depends upon the way it satisfies the customers. A vital role is to be performed by the organizations, to fulfill the requirements of the customers. Any sort of dissatisfaction may lead to the loss of customers and hence, now-a-days, most of the organizations concentrate in providing world class services to the customers.

Almost all the universities realize wholeheartedly the importance of quality education and its marketing, due to the competition.

Based on the issues stated above, the following questions are probed:

- How do the demographic factors influence the satisfaction of the service utilizers, i.e. faculties, students, and their parents?
- To what extent the students and their parents are aware of the various services provided by the Universities?
- What is the satisfaction level of the existing students and faculties towards the various facilities provided by the Universities?
- What augmented services do the existing students and faculties expect from the Universities?
- What are the current problems faced by the students & faculty members?

Objectives of the study:

The following are the objectives of the study

1. To identify the needs of Distance Education Learners.
2. To elicit the opinion of faculty members handling classes in the distance mode.
3. To evaluate problems faced by different groups of students pursuing education through distance education mode.
4. To analyze the opinion about the distance education courses from the parents.
5. To offer suggestions for improvement of the distance education curriculum.
Area of the Study:

In Tamil Nadu State, the Namakkal District is at the centre of the State. It is bounded on the North by Salem District, on the East by Attur Taluk of Salem District, Perambalur and Trichy District, on the South by Karur District and on the West by Erode District. In recent times, it has also made its mark as a major centre for high school and higher secondary school education. More and more reputed Schools and Colleges such as Primary Schools, High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools, Engineering Colleges, Arts & Science Colleges, Polytechnic Colleges, Dental Colleges, Nursing Colleges, Pharmacy Colleges, Physiotherapy and Ayurvedic Colleges etc are available in Namakkal District. The second Veterinary College in the State is located at Namakkal.

As per the 2001 Census of Tamil Nadu, the percentage of population of Namakkal District is just 2.32 percent (Share from the Tamil Nadu Population). But, more and more educational institutions have been started particularly, the Higher Educational Institutions. At Present, In Namakkal District9 19 Arts & Science Colleges, 10 Engineering Colleges, 1 Veterinary College, 6 Pharmacy Colleges, 35 B.Ed., Colleges and 10 Polytechnic Colleges are functioning.

In Tamil Nadu, There are more than 10 Universities which offer distance education programmes.

Three major providers of distance education in Namakkal District in Tamil Nadu State on the basis of enrollment of students are the following.

1. Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamilnadu.
2. Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram, Tamilnadu.
3. Periyar University, Salem, Tamilnadu

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FRONT VIEW OF ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI, TAMILNADU, INDIA
ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI

The Alagappa University accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is located at Karaikudi, Sivaganga District in Tamil Nadu, India and is accessible from Madurai and Tiruchiappalli Airports within two hours. The University is located in a sprawling 440 acre green and lush area. This University has emerged from the galaxy of institutions initially founded by the great philanthropist and educationist Dr. RM. Alagappa Chettiar.

The Alagappa University was brought into existence by a special Act of the Government of Tamil Nadu in May 1985 with the objective of fostering research, development and dissemination of knowledge in various branches of learning. The Alagappa University is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India. The university has 15 Departments, 3 Centres and 2 Constituent Colleges on its campus. 23 Affiliated Colleges located in the districts of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram are part of the University.

The University offers education through Regular, Week-end, Distance and Collaborative modes. The Distance Education Directorate offers a variety of programmes to the student community spread across the country and in selected foreign countries. Through all modes of education, the University caters to the needs of the student community of around 1,00,000 (2007-08).

The University’s motto is “Excellence in Action” and the University keeps before it the vision of excellence in all spheres of its action.
Vision

- Excellence in all spheres of education

Mission

- Internationalization of Indian Higher Education
- Empowering the stakeholders with High Quality Education

Objectives

- Providing instruction and training in such branches of learning as it may determine
- Fostering research for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge
- Transforming the Society through transfer of knowledge by way of Extension activities.

ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI -DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Directorate of Distance Education was established in the University in 1992. The Directorate offers Under Graduate and Post Graduate Programmes in the disciplines of management, computer application, science, education and languages.

The Directorate offers various innovative, job-oriented and socially relevant academic programmes in the field of Arts, Science, Information Technology, Education and Management. It has an excellent network of more than 187 study centers for providing effective service to the student community.

The Directorate of Distance Education programmes are also offered in South-East Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia; and in Middle-East Countries, viz., Bahrain, Qatar, Dubai, and Sri Lanka. The programmes are well received in India and abroad. This University is offering (2008-09) 16 Under Graduate Programmes, 25 Post Graduate Programmes, 7 Post Graduate Diploma Programmes, and 2 Certificate Programmes.
Salient Features

- Sector-specific and Job-oriented programmes
- Modern up-to-date Curriculum
- Bilingual programme in Tamil and Hindi
- Standard Study Material
- Moderate fee structure
- Lateral Entry for diploma holders in the related degree programmes
- Wide network of study centers
- Effective Personal Contact Programme
- Adequate hands-on training for Computer Practical
- Examination Centres at convenient places
- Fixed Examination Schedule
- Examination conducted twice in a year
- Quick declaration of results

The Directorate is planning to adopt the e-technologies in order to modernize the learning process so that the students can have direct access to internet facilities. With the proposed campus wide networking, it would be possible to organize learning with the satellite facilities. This would help the university to update its instructional modes and open new vistas of e-learning for the students.
FRONT VIEW OF ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY, ANNAMALAI NAGAR, CHIDAMBARAM, TAMILNADU, INDIA

ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY
ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY, ANNAMALAI NAGAR

The Annamalai University accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council [NAAC] is located at Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram Taluk, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu State in India.

The Annamalai University is a unitary, teaching and residential university. It was founded by the munificence of the farsighted and noble hearted philanthropist and patron of letters the late Honourable Dr.Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Kt, LL.D., D.Lлит. of Chettinad, He started several Colleges and ultimately the University in 1929.

This University today is spread over on an extensive Campus of about eight hundred and thirty acres. During the last seventy eight years the University has grown rapidly and consolidated its position as a unitary and residential University with Forty Nine Departments of Study and over 2500 members as teaching staff on its role.

ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY - DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

The Directorate of Distance Education established in 1979 offers four hundred and one different programmes of study. It is credited with the largest enrolment in India and is well equipped with computer and other infrastructure, adequate teaching faculty and administrative set-up of its own, study centers, computer training centers, etc., to serve its students' clientele in their best interest at their door steps.
Objectives of the Directorate of Distance Education

The Directorate has set the following objectives:-

1) Teacher Education and Training.
2) Transition from conventional higher education system.
3) Accommodation of those who could not get entry into the conventional system.
4) Provision of equal educational opportunity
5) Expansion of Educational opportunity.
6) Training of Skilled man power
7) Personal Development.
8) Lifelong recurrent education

It has also the unique distinction of offering first in India, Postgraduate Degree Programmes in Applied Psychology, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Bio-Informatics and Law through Distance Education mode. The Directorate of Distance Education is also offering the Programmes on Fashion Design, Interior Design, Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Retail Management, Twinning, Health Science, Commonwealth Youth, Yoga, Music, Fire and Safety, Pharmacy and Taxation.

SALIENT FEATURES

The following are the salient features of this University.

1) Scholarship is available for SC/ST Students whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 100000 and unemployed. (As per G.O.MS. No. 73, Dt. 14.07.2004)
2) 3% of seats are reserved for persons with disabilities.
3) The Annamalai University- IT Programme – Technical Collaboration with HMH Education Consultants India (P) Ltd.,
4) 24 hour helpline
5) CYP-HRD Diploma in Youth Development Work
6) Collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, the UK.
7) Two Diploma Certificates, One from Annamalai University, and the other from London Secretariat.
8) All Programmes (including Post-facto approval prior to 2007) are approved by the Distance Education Council, New Delhi
9) Students presently studying in UG/PG programmes in the recognized Universities/Colleges in India are eligible to join any UG/PG Programme concurrently.
10) 100% Course Approval of Distance education Council which is mandatory for employment in Government Jobs.
11) A fully automated Computerised Telephonic Answering Service regarding information about the institution, Programmes offered by the Institution, Students’ Results and Marks, Tuition fees, Arrears, Exam related enquiries along with other details that too in various languages such as Tamil, English, Hindi and Telugu.
12) Apart from the above, it has also got a grievance register facility, where students can record their grievances and will be answered by the Institution later and the service is available round the clock.
13) Introduction of 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th Standard in distance mode.
14) The Directorate is introducing B.Ed Programmes through distance education mode from the year 2008-09 with the approval of National Council for Teacher Education, New Delhi.
15) Fee Concessions to blind Students
16) Facilities are available at the study centres such as Library, Audio, Lecture Cassettes, Video Lecture Cassettes, Previous Year Question Banks, Printed Lesson Units, Spot Admissions and Spot Supply of Study Materials.
17) 54 permanent study centers in Tamil Nadu and also 22 Study Centers in other States in India.
Overseas Centres

HMH (H. Mohammad Hanifa) International Education Consultants Pvt. Ltd, Singapore is the brain child of an Indian resident of Singapore. He has been engaged in trade over decades and has made his fortune in trade. Over the years he has seen ethnic Indians residing in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand and other neighbouring countries trying to acquire higher educational qualification at a huge cost to better their status in their professions and in the society. And he has found also that campus centred face to face instruction is being progressively priced and out of reach for all common middle class aspirants in the countries of Southeast Asia. The attempts by Educational Institutions in that region to prove an effective substitute in the form of distance education programmes of the US, UK, Australian and Canadian Universities are beyond the reach of those who aspire for higher education as they are obliged to spend at least one semester on the respective campuses of the Universities to qualify for their degrees and diplomas.

The large hearted Non-resident Indian trader of Singapore felt that something must be done to make things easier for those who have great thirst for knowledge and are eager to better their prospects through education. He is a south Indian and his home is not far from the Temple of Knowledge founded by Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad. He decided that it was best that he took on himself the spread of the distance education programmes of Annamalai University, not only to these parts of Asia but all over the globe.

The Pro-chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and the other authorities have been satisfied with the caliber of professionals in the service of the HMH International
Education Consultants Pvt Ltd, Singapore and the infrastructure they have in place to deliver distance education programmes at the university level.

They are also impressed by the earnestness of the founder of the HMH International Education Consultants Pvt Ltd, Singapore and the means he has at his disposal for the stupendous task of delivering the distance education programmes of the Annamalai University.

Hence the request of the founder of the HMH International Education Consultants Pvt Ltd, Singapore found ready welcome at Annamalainagar and from the academic year 2000-2001 HMH International Education Consultants Pvt Ltd, Singapore will be the sole coordinator of all the distance education programmes of Annamalai University in all countries of the Old and the New World other than India.
FRONT VIEW OF PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, SALEM, TAMILNADU, INDIA
PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, SALEM

History:

The Periyar University is situated on the Bangalore National Highways (NH – 7), 10 kms from the Salem Town, Near Omalur, Salem District, Tamil Nadu, India, and easily connected by road and rail. The University campus occupies an area of 100 acres accommodating the administrative and department buildings.

The Periyar University was established by an Act of the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1997. The University is named after a renowned social reformer popularly called “Thanthai Periyar” E.V.Ramasamy. The University thus established had its origin with the three departments (Commerce, Geology and Mathematics) of Postgraduate extension centers of Madras University functioning at Salem at that time. The University Grants Commissions, New Delhi bestowed the 2f status on 09.10.1998 and 12(B) status on 17.05.2005 to the Periyar University. The University is certified accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The University covers the area comprising the Districts of Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri. At present, there are 50 Arts and Science Colleges and 97 Education (B.Ed., & M.Ed) Colleges which are affiliated to Periyar University.

Vision

"Wisdom makes the world" is the vision of the Periyar University, as enshrined in the logo. This is based on the philosophy of “Thanthai Periyar” in whose name the University has been established and it means that man becomes man only through acquiring knowledge. This vision aims at spreading knowledge and quality
education far and wide. The mission of the University is to spread knowledge to reach the youth of economically, educationally and socially weaker sections.

This mission is achieved through the Departments of study and research of the University and its affiliated Colleges. The future of the nation is in the hands of the youth to make this country self-reliant and self-sufficient and the youth has to be trained educationally. The enlightenment of knowledge and quality education given to the youth will be helpful to achieve this target. In the direction of nation building process, this University aims to uplift the Society through education to attain self-reliance.

PERIYAR UNIVERSITY - PERIYAR INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (PRIDE)

The Periyar University has established a Directorate for Distance Education namely, PERIYAR INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (PRIDE) during 2001-2002. The main agenda of the PRIDE is to provide higher education to all those desiring and deserving.

The open learning system is a unique and challenging mode of education offered at the University level. This system provides ample opportunities for those who desire to have University Education at their place of work or residence. The method is popularly known as Distance Education.

Distance Education is perhaps the only way to meet the increasing demand for higher education especially in a developing country like India. Distance Education programmes are specially designed for:

1) Students who discontinue their formal education owing to pecuniary or other circumstances.
2) Students residing in the geographically remote areas.

3) Employed persons who cannot pursue their study as fulltime students

4) Individuals who wish to pursue learning for knowledge sake.

The Periyar Institute of Distance Education (PRIDE) came into being to achieve the following objectives.

1. Democratizing Higher Education by taking it to the doorsteps of the learners.

2. Providing access to high quality education to all those who seek it, irrespective of age, region or formal qualifications.

3. Offering need-based academic programmes by giving professional and vocational orientation to the courses.

4. Promoting and developing distance education in India.

5. Relaxed entry regulations.

6. Providing opportunities to study according to one’s own pace and convenience.

7. Providing opportunity to study from one’s own chosen place.

Important Features

1) More than 490 Study Centres throughout the world: Tamil Nadu and Puducherry 222, Other States in India 260 and Overseas 8.

2) Proposals of introduction of Dual-Degree programme [One from Conventional University and the other from Non-Conventional University]

3) Fee concession available for SC/ST Candidates (As per the Government Norms)
Scope of the Study

Namakkal District is well known for its poultry and Dairy Industries. In this District a large number of natives are in agricultural profession, while some are working in the Lorry Body building, Transport, Egg Production, Rig Industry or Textile Industries. In India, more than 75% Lorry body building occurs in Namakkal District. Namakkal district is taken into consideration for the purpose of this study since it is a semi urban area where heterogeneous population is found.

Research Methodology:

The methodology of research indicates the general pattern of organizing the procedure for gathering valid and reliable data for the purpose of investigation (Kothari 1996).

The methodology of this study includes the description of research design, sample size, sampling techniques, development and description of tool, data collection procedure and method of analysis.

The validity of a research programme depends on the systematic method of collecting the data and analyzing them methodologically. The present study aims at extensive use of both primary and secondary data. For collecting the primary data, field survey technique was used in the study area. i.e., Namakkal District. First-hand information pertaining to awareness, satisfaction, expectations accrued and problems in marketing distance education in the study area were collected from faculties, students and their parents.

Secondary data for the study have been collected from the offices of the Concerned Universities; Annual Reports, Educational Journals, English and Tamil Dailies, Websites., etc., Students from Under Graduate Degree, Post Graduate Degree, Diploma, Post Graduate Diploma, M.Phil Degree., levels were selected.
Sampling:

A random sampling technique was applied to collect the data from various distance education study centers of Namakkal District as the Namakkal District consists of 4 taluks and 29 study centers (4 Study centers for the Alagappa University, 1 Study centre for the Annamalai University and the rest 24 study centers for the Periyar University). Totally 1400 responses (The Alagappa University 460, The Annamalai University 450 and the Periyar University 490) were collected in a proportionate random sampling method. Out of 1400 questionnaires only 1352 were identified as complete questionnaires. Among the 1352 responses, 1336 questionnaires were found usable and identified as suitable for the purpose of analysis. Hence the exact sample size of the study is 1336.

Pilot Study and Pre-Testing:

At the point of inception a pilot study was planned and pre-tested with a well defined questionnaire. The main aim of the pilot duty was to check the feasibility and reliability of the questionnaire which was used as a main tool of analysis. After pre-testing, necessary modifications were made to fit them in the track of the present study.

Questionnaire Design

The research entirely depends both on the primary and the secondary data. The primary data was collected through a well framed questionnaire comprising optional type and on the Likert's 5 point scale. The questionnaire was divided into 2 major subdivisions namely demographic details and service details. The first part consists of optional type questions to ascertain the details of demographic background of faculty members, students and parents of Namakkal District.

The second part completely deals with various elements of services rendered by the Universities. The respondents of concerned Universities offered the responses through Likert's 5 point scale ranging from highly satisfied to not known.
Statistical Tools:

For the purpose of statistical Analysis, the collected data were codified, classified, and then tabulated. Statistical tools for descriptive analysis like percentage, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics like chi-square test, analysis of variance and students’ t test were used. The multivariate techniques of Discriminant function analysis and non parametric test also were used in this study.

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis also termed as percentage analysis was performed for each question contained in the questionnaire mainly to ascertain the personal profile of the details of the respondents under each category. Diagrams and charts were mainly used for clear understanding of the data collected in pictorial form. Pie-charts and bar charts were used for this purpose.

After converting the qualitative information into a quantitative one using a five point scale, the descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score were obtained from the respondents on various issues to determine the level of satisfaction.

Chi-Square analysis

The Chi-square analysis was used to test the significance of association between the personal profile factors and the level of satisfaction towards the university preferred and the opinion about the services provided by the universities. All the tests were carried out at 5% level of significance.

Non parametric analysis

Friedman non parametric test was used to identify the factor which was more influencing the respondent towards a particular attitude. Friedman’s non parametric technique was used in ranking the reasons for the selection of a particular university, and the reason for joining the distance education etc. In order to ascertain the priority of the different university on various issues, the respondents were asked to rank the factors for this purpose.
ANOVA & t test

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t test were used to draw inferences whether the samples had been drawn from population having the same mean. This technique was used to investigate the level of satisfaction among the faculties which significantly differed with respect to personal profile factors.

Discriminant Function Analysis

The objective of discriminant function analysis is to predict an object's likelihood of belonging to a particular group based on several independent variables. It provides a predictive equation, measures the relative importance of each variable and is also a measure of the ability of the equation to predict actual class-groups (two or more) concerning the dependent variable. Discriminant analysis attempts to find how respondents differ regarding the factors influencing the level of satisfaction. Do factors like University, Availability of Study materials, sufficient study materials, Intimation about seminar classes, Satisfaction with the eligibility, Opinion about University Syllabus, Worth of Syllabus; Satisfaction of valuation, Utilization of technical devises, Opinion about the class environment and Students interest in seminar differ? In general, what are all the variables which significantly discriminate the respondents of one group (Low level of satisfaction) from the other groups (Medium and High) is answered by discriminant function analysis.
Hypothesis

The following specific hypotheses are assumed to answer the research questions posed in the section. Though the study is exploratory and the analysis covers almost all possible outcomes of the research, certain important aspects are justified to assume the following hypotheses.

- Level of satisfaction is independent of personal profile factors
- Respondents do not have equal preference for all the factors relating to the preference of universities
- There is no discrimination between the respondents relating to the satisfaction level towards the universities
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores with respect to demographic variables.

Period of Study

The present study was conducted during the period 2002 to 2007.

Limitations of the Study:

The following are the limitations of this study.

1. The area of the study is restricted to Namakkal District in the state of Tamilnadu. Hence, the conclusion arrived at may lack universal application.

2. In Namakkal District, 10 Universities are offering distance education Programme. In this study only 3 leading universities are taken into consideration for the sake of convenience.

3. The questionnaires have been distributed for a restricted number of students, faculty members and the parents.
Chapter Scheme:

The study was designed to have 6 chapters.

- The first chapter titled “Introduction and Design of the study” deals with a brief introduction of Distance Higher education, Statement of the problem, Objectives of the study, methodology consisting of data collection, sampling techniques, tools used and the limitations of the study.

- The second chapter entitled “Review of literature” covers the earlier studies regarding the performance and the functioning of distance education.

- The third chapter deals with the analysis of opinion of Students who have joined in the programmes of the three Universities.

- The fourth chapter deals with the analysis of opinion of Faculty Members regarding various courses provided by the Universities.

- The fifth chapter analyses the views of the Parents of Students who have joined in the courses of the three Universities.

- Suggestions and conclusions are given in the sixth chapter.