

## CHAPTER 3

### DISTANCE EDUCATION: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

While the general higher education sector seethes under trouble, Distance Education has made a positive impact. Today, it has emerged as unique system of education that can spread hope for those who had no dreams. Distance Education, as a layman may understand, is the learning process where the learner and the taught are separated, by time and space. A noble attempt at enriching the masses Distance Education has emerged as an innovative form of education.

In an era where we are talking of Open Educational Resources and Mega Universities in the context of Distance Education (DE), it is astonishing to notice that DE had a humble beginning in the nontraditional efforts of some individuals. Though the prospective aims of establishing this form of education has changed over the centuries, yet the basic intention of closing the “social gap” in higher education has remained intact.

In its initial years of emergence, it was marked with tags of ‘heroism’<sup>1</sup>. Gradually, it earned a bad name; it was often criticized as “education for the idiots”. However, with the passage of time, Distance Education earned its fair share of name and reputation as the most sought after form of education by students, and working people alike all over the world. It is what Fred Jevons calls, “A bewildering nomenclature”.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Sumner, Jennifer (2000). “*Serving the System: a critical history of distance education*” in Open Learning, Volume 15, Number (3). Accessed on June 27, 2011 from [pages.towson.edu/bsadera/istc717/modules05/module8/3888263.pdf](http://pages.towson.edu/bsadera/istc717/modules05/module8/3888263.pdf)
  2. Reddy, G. Ram. (1988) *Distance Education: What, Why and How?* in B.N. Koul, Bakhshish Singh and M.M. Ansari (Eds.) Studies in Distance Education, Association of Indian Universities and Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, p. 18

### 3.2. DEFINING THE TERMINOLOGY:

Known by different names in different countries, some of the terms used for distance education are: *Correspondence Education* in UK, External Studies or “*Off-campus*” is the term used in Australia, *Tele-enseignement* in France, *Fernstudium/ Fernunterricht* in Germany, *Educacion a distancain* Spanish, *teleducacao* in Portugese etc.<sup>3</sup>. In New Zealand distance education is known as “Extra-Mural”<sup>4</sup>. In 1926 the directors of the correspondence schools came together to form a new association named the National Home Study Council.<sup>5</sup>

Correspondence Education was defined by The UNESCO Volume Terminology of Adult Education as education conducted by postal services with the teacher and learner being unavailable to each other. Teaching is done by written or tape recorded materials through written or taped exercises to the teacher, who corrects them and returns them to the learner with criticisms and advice<sup>6</sup>. External studies implies instructions offered outside the main campus, via multi-media.<sup>7</sup>

Another term used is Independent Study which is defined by C. Wedemeyer as consisting of various forms of teaching or learning arrangements in which teachers and learners carry out their essential tasks and responsibilities apart from one another communicating in a variety of ways for the purpose of freeing internal learners from inappropriate class pacing or patterns of providing external learners with

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3. İşman, Dr. Aytakin, Dr. Murat Barkan and Dr. UğurDemiray (Eds.), *Online Distance Education Book*, [Available Online] Accessed from <http://www.tojet.net/e-book/ebook.htm> on 12-10-11
  4. Reddy, G. Ram. (1988) Distance Education: What, Why and How? in B.N. Koul, Bakhshish Singh and M.M. Ansari (Eds.) *Studies in Distance Education*, Association of Indian Universities and Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, p. 12
  5. İşman, Dr. Aytakin, Dr. Murat Barkan and Dr. UğurDemiray (Eds.), Op. cit.
  6. Ibid
  7. An Introduction to Open and Distance Learning, *The Commonwealth of Learning*, accessed from [www.col.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/ODLIntro.pdf](http://www.col.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/ODLIntro.pdf) on 3/7/2012

opportunities to continue learning in their own environment and in developing of all learners the capacity to carry on a self-directed learning.<sup>8</sup>

Distance education is any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner, with the effect that all or most of the communication between teachers and learners is through an artificial medium, either electronic or print. By definition, in distance education the normal or principal means of communication is through technology. The form of learning where the decision in regard to the learning process is taken by the learner and outside the four walls of a classroom, and with the help of technology, is known as distance education.<sup>9</sup>

Michael Moore defines it as: “the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviours are executed apart from the learning behaviours including those that in a contiguous situation would be performed in the learner’s presence, so that communication between the teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical or other devices”.<sup>10</sup>

According to Otto Peters DE is “a method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalized by the application of division of labour and organizational principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media, especially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching material which makes it possible to instruct the great number of students at the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialized form of teaching and learning”.<sup>11</sup>

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8. İşman, Dr. Aytakin, Dr. Murat Barkan and Dr. UğurDemiray(eds.). Op. cit.
  9. Moore, Michael M. & Alan Tait (Eds.) *Open and Distance Learning: Trends, Policy and Strategy Considerations* (2002). UNESCO, France, p. 22
  10. Keegan, Desmond (1990). *Foundations of Distance Education*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, London, p. 37
  11. Takwale, Ram (1988). *Dimensions and Extensions of Distance and Open Educational Systems* in B.N. Koul, Bakhshish Singh and M.M. Ansari (Eds) *Studies in Distance Education*, Association of Indian Universities and Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, p. 31  
 ----- Keegan, Desmond (1990). *Foundations of Distance Education*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, London, p. 37

Desmond Keegan defines DE through the following characteristics<sup>12</sup>:

- Quasi permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the learning process
- Influence of an educational organization in preparing the learning materials and providing support service to the learners
- Use of technical media to unite the teacher and the learner and carry the content of the course
- The provision of two way communication between the learner and the teacher to facilitate the process of dialogue
- The quasi permanent absence of learner so that people are taught as individuals rather than group with occasional meetings for socialization and didactic purposes

According to Borje Holmberg, Distance Education “covers the various forms of study at all levels, which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in the lecture rooms or in the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organization”<sup>13</sup>.

In the words of Perry and Rumble (1987), DE is a system wherein “the learner and the teacher are not face to face. In order for two-way communication to take place between them, a medium such as print, radio, or the telephone has to be used”.<sup>14</sup> Rumble (1997) re-defined open and distance learning system as:<sup>15</sup>

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12. Ram Reddy, G. (1988) *Distance Education: What, Why and How?* in B.N. Koul, Bakhshish Singh and M.M. Ansari (Eds) *Studies in Distance Education*, Association of Indian Universities and Indra Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, p 13
  13. Keegan, Desmond (1990). *Foundations of Distance Education*, 2nd Edition, Routledge, London, p. 38
  14. *STRIDE HANDBOOK, IGNOU*. Available Online, Accessed on 3/7/2012 from <http://webserver.ignou.ac.in/institute/handbook11/Section-1.pdf>
  15. Ibid

(a) the regulatory sub-system: such as human resources, purchase, finance, equipment and building;

(b) the material sub-system: such as production and distribution of learning material;

(c) the students support system: such as to enroll students, collection of fees, allocation of study and exam centre.

Hillary Perraton, defined DE as an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by some removed in space and/or time from the learners<sup>16</sup>.

However, in recent times, the use of distance education has been more often overlapped by the use of the term open learning. Though they are often used as interchangeable terms, they are not compatible in real sense. The difference has been given by Rumble and Harry who have provided four aspects of Open Learning: (i) Learners will not be debarred from admission to programmes on account of their qualifications; (ii) Learning would be based at home, (iii) New methods of teaching and (iv) Ideas.<sup>17</sup>

Open in open learning thus means that learners will be admitted without the need to fulfill the qualification criteria, at a place and time chosen by the learner himself. It means that the learner becomes the decision maker in the open Learning system.

Defining the term Open Learning is shrouded with an air of vagueness, as many consider it a philosophy rather than a pedagogic method. Open Learning, according to Bates (2005) was more an educational policy<sup>18</sup>.

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16. Schlosser, Lee A. & Michael Simonson (2010). *Distance Education: Definition and Glossary of Terms*, 3rd edition, Information Age Publication, p. 3

17. Reddy, G. Ram. (1988). Op. cit. p 13

18. Bates, A.W. (Tony) (2005). *Technology, E-Learning and Distance Education*, 2nd edition, Routledge, New York, p. 5

“Open” in Open Learning, means the removal of any signs of barriers that disallows a person to pursue education.

The sharp distinction between Distance Learning and Open Learning is that Open Learning may have the characteristics of distance learning, but not vice versa<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, E-Learning or Online Learning is also not the same as Distance Education, as because Open Learning is dependent on technology as is e-learning/online learning.

Today, the latest versions of distance education have come up in the form of E-learning, Virtual Learning, and Virtual University. In short, E-learning means, “online access to learning resources, anywhere and anytime”<sup>20</sup>. It only signifies the growing use of technology in the field of distance education.

These attempts have an inherent aim to make education “borderless’. Yet, it is not without criticisms for creating a divide, very well known as the “digital divide”. The profuse use of technology has led many to remain at the peripheries due to the lack of access to technology. Thus, these groups of people remain cut off from the mainstream block that make the most of technology and live a better life.

### **3.3. LOCATING DISTANCE EDUCATION IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT:**

While looking into the emergence of Distance Education in the historical context, it is often shrouded in a lot of myth, assumptions and stories. Sewart, as reported by Keegan, traces the origin of correspondence to “as far as the epistles of St. Paul”, while some like Willis track down the history of correspondence education to “the itinerant wanderers who spread information by word of mouth”.<sup>21</sup>

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19. Ibid

20. Holmes, Bryan and John Gardner (2006). *E-Learning: Concepts and Practice*, Sage, London, p. 14

21. Sumner Jennifer (2000). *Serving the System: A Critical History of Distance Education*, in *Open Learning*, 15(3). [Available Online] Accessed on 23/6/2012 from <http://pages.towson.edu/bsadera/istc717/modules05/module8/3888263.pdf>

The earliest initiatives taken in the field of correspondence form of education was by the non- conventional efforts of some individuals. The Lyceum Movement was one such movement which gave a fresh start to the correspondence mode of education. It is said to have been imported from England to America, by Joshua Holbrook, who started it in 1826.<sup>22</sup>

The movement was successful for a time and it is said that it grew out of the Summer Sunday School Institutes, held by the Methodist Episcopal Church<sup>23</sup>. It was a type of community education, where lectures were presented to the community by well-known teachers, preachers, lecturers<sup>24</sup>. The lectures ranged from literature to politics to religion. It was an educative platform for the laymen.

The Lyceum Movement was launched to cater to the interest of the working class population, who were elated at the opportunity provided by the movement to enjoy polling rights<sup>25</sup>.

The movement was successful because of the following reasons - (1) there was no obligation on the part of the people involved in it, to pay for it<sup>26</sup>.(2) the movement was not interrupted by the wealthy sections of the society, as it did not threaten their position<sup>27</sup>.

And though the Lyceum Movement died within a century yet its impact was felt all the same. It spread the spirit of liberty and rationalism overpowered

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22. Gibson, Chere Campbell (2008). *From Chautauqua to Correspondence to Computers: Non Formal Education in Transition* in International Handbook of Distance Education (Eds.) by Terry Evans, Margaret Haughey and David Murphy, Emerald, UK, p. 260

23. Ibid., p 261

24. Ibid., p 29

25. Simpson, Cheryl M (2009). Op.cit. p 26

26. Ibid., p. 31

27. Ibid, p 30

superstitions, with people started seeking a higher culture<sup>28</sup>. The Civil War brought the end of the Lyceum Movement because its goals had been attained.

At that same time, Anna Eliot Ticknor's "Society to Encourage Studies at Home" was also offering educational opportunities to women of all classes<sup>29</sup>.

It was founded in 1873 and the courses were prepared on the basis of tests and readings<sup>30</sup>.

The Chautauqua Movement soon followed the Lyceum Movement and it proved to have a deep impact. Founded in 1874<sup>31</sup>, by Lewis Miller and John Heyl Vincent it played a primary role in the history of Distance Learning as because it was the first to offer programmes in correspondence in America<sup>32</sup>.

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28. Powell, E. P. (1895) *The Rise and Decline of the New England Lyceum* in *The New England Magazine* Volume 0017 Issue 6 [pp. 730-739], Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Library. [Available Online] Accessed from <http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=newe;idno=newe0017-6> on July 9, 2012

29. Gibson, Chere Campbell (2008). Op. cit. p 261

30. Powell, E. P. (1895) *The Rise and Decline of the New England Lyceum* in *The New England Magazine* Volume 0017 Issue 6 [pp. 730-739], Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Library., p. 1007

\_\_\_\_\_ Holmberg, Borje (1995) *The Evolution of the Character and Practice of Distance Education* in *Open Learning*, Accessed from <http://www.c3l.uni-oldenburg.de/cde/found/holmbg95.htm> and retrieved on 5-04-13

31. What was Chautauqua? In *Travelling Culture: Circuit Chautauqua in the Twentieth century*. [Available Online] Accessed from <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/traveling-culture/essay.htm> on July 9, 2012

32. Daniel, Sir John and Professor Asha Kanwar (2008). *Open Universities: Past, Present and Future*, Keynote Address at the World Open University Presidents' Summit, Bangkok [Available Online]. Accessed from <http://www.col.org/resources/speeches/2008presentations/Pages/2008-09-08.aspx> on 13/07/12



The “brown tents” that were pitched found many listeners. The ‘assemblies’ as they were called, brought in many eloquent speakers and the people were both entertained as well as informed.

It came to an end during the period of Depression. Both the Lyceum and Chautauqua Movements gave an immense impetus for the development of the correspondence education. It prepared the common people for a mass education.

It was in 1837, that Isaac Pitman, a professional phonographer from Bath, England started the shorthand course in correspondence mode<sup>33</sup>. He is rightfully called the first modern correspondence educator. The introduction of the *Penny Post* in 1840 only made it more popular<sup>34</sup>.

In 1856, Charles Toussaint and Gustav Langenscheidt started teaching language in Berlin by correspondence<sup>35</sup>. Thomas J. Forster, the publisher of *Shenandoah Herald*, offered correspondence course for miners in 1891<sup>36</sup>. In 1901, the American Institute of Banking formed the correspondence School of Banking<sup>37</sup>. At the same time, The United Typothetae of America offered a training programme for apprentice and journeyman printers<sup>38</sup>.

Though there have been many phases of development after the first attempt at correspondence education since the time of Pitman, yet the basic correspondence model has remained intact. The University Extension programme only gave it a firm footing. The Report of the

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33. Daniel, Sir John and Professor Asha Kanwar (2008). Op. cit.

34. Ibid

35. Schlosser, Lee Ayers and, Michael R. Simonson (2010). *Distance Education: Definition and Glossary of Terms*, 3rd edition, IAP, p. 7

36. Wadhwa, Shalini (2000). *Modern Methods of Teaching Adult Education*, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, p. 257

37. Ibid

38. Howard, Caroline, Karen D. Schenk, Lorraine Justice, Judith Boettcher, Gary A. Berg, Patricia L. Rogers (2009). *Encyclopedia of Distance Learning: Vol. I*, Idea Group Inc (IGI), Hershey, USA, p. 1007

1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Correspondence Education defined the extension programme as “a system of class instruction beyond college walls”<sup>39</sup>. Extension programmes were meant for providing non-residential study to those who could not afford to pay for higher education.

In 1888 the University and School Extension Society appeared for providing training to teachers through home study, class work, lectures, travelling libraries and examinations. In 1891 it got legislative support<sup>40</sup>. At the time when Anna Ticknor was offering instruction to women, Wesleyan University in Illinois began offering non-residential instruction to prepare for examinations. But due to criticisms it was shut down<sup>41</sup>.

The earliest attempt for a University extension programme was by the University of Chicago under the visionary William Rainey Harper, who was also the first president of the University. When it was opened in 1892, the University extension division was created. It was “modelled on the British programme and on the American Chautauqua movement”<sup>42</sup>.

In 1938, the ICCE (International Council for Correspondence Education) was established with the object of providing equal learning opportunity<sup>43</sup>. The individual effort of Michael Young helped in the growth of DE in UK as he was the man behind the establishment the National Extension College in 1963, the Open College of Arts in 1986, and the Open School in 1989<sup>44</sup>. The Hermodas emerged as the most popular distance education

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39. Simpson, Cheryl M (2009). Op.cit.

40. Simpson, Cheryl M (2009). Op.cit.

41. Ibid, p. 35-36

42. University of Chicago, [Available Online] Accessed from <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1289.html> on 10/07/12

43. *Open and Distance Education* (2002). STRIDE Handbook, IGNOU, New Delhi. p.36

44. Ibid., p 30

institutions in Sweden<sup>45</sup>. In 1911, the University of Queensland(Australia) started correspondence education at the University level<sup>46</sup>.

Under the leadership of the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Distance Education formally got an independent identity with the establishment of an Open University in 1969<sup>47</sup>. The first Open University however was the University of South Africa (UNISA). Established as The University of the Cape of Good Hope, it changed its name to University of South Africa in 1916<sup>48</sup>.

It was in the year 1946, that the University authorities decided to experiment with the correspondence method of education and thus on September 15, 1946 a division of External Studies was created, thus making it the predecessor of UKOU<sup>49</sup>.

Thus, a beginning was made and soon Universities around the globe were offering courses through distance education. There was no looking back. With the advent of technology, distance education underwent a dramatic change.

Before the establishment of the Open University of UK, there were many attempts in offering correspondence education by educational

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45. Ibid., p 31

46. Kapur, Vijay (2002). Distance Education in India and the U.S.-the Cultural Dimensions in Indian Journal of Open Learning, 11(2), IGNOU, India, p. 185. [Available Online] Accessed from [http://cemca.org/disted/Kapur\\_Vijay\\_0253.pdf](http://cemca.org/disted/Kapur_Vijay_0253.pdf) on 10/07/12

47. Kapur, Vijay (2002). Op.cit.

48. [Available Online]. Accessed from <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=20555> on 13/07/12

49. Daniel, Sir John and Professor Asha Kanwar (2008). Op. cit. -----The Official UNISA website [Available Online]. Accessed from <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=20555> on 13/7/12

Institutions. In England, it was the Skerry's College (1880), Folks Wynch (1884), and the International Correspondence College (1894)<sup>50</sup>.

Thus, a beginning was made and soon Universities around the globe were offering courses through distance education. There was no looking back. With the advent of technology, distance education underwent a dramatic change.

The emergence of correspondence education or postal course was largely linked to employment opportunities. The courses were meant not for attaining a general education or a degree. Rather they fulfilled the purpose of religious needs and provided vocational training of the laymen and workers, etc. With industrialization, a majority of the people were engaged in large factories and industries. There was a huge demand for skilled labourer's and the number of which was not high. Hence, in order to train the laymen, institutes sprang up to teach the workers the required skill for employment.

When correspondence education found takers in large numbers, the external system of education set in. Many Institutions sprang up providing the opportunity of getting higher education and a degree. These Universities were mere examining bodies and allowed the students to sit for an exam in lieu of a lump sum amount and on the successful completion of the test the students were awarded degree, certificate, etc.

Till this phase there was no systematic structure of distance education and not many could give a proper definition, but with the establishment of UK Open University, distance education got a definite structure in the pedagogic arena. Today, there are many Distance Education Institutes, and Open Universities in all the countries of the world, only emphasizing the fact that education has always been and continues to be the driving agent of change and development.

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50. STRIDE Handbook (2002). Op. cit. p 29

In the transition from correspondence model to the Open and Distance Learning system, the role of International Organizations cannot be denied. With the rapid growth of correspondence education all over, the need was felt for a forum that could provide it a strong platform to advocate its cause.

In 1982, the term ‘correspondence education’ was changed to Distance Education and the Council was henceforth came to be known as the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE).<sup>51</sup> The change in the name was meant to give recognition to the growing system of distance education.

It focused on the directional change of distance education from school education to adult education and higher education<sup>52</sup>. Established in 1988, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is another such international organization that has evolved in the past years as a pillar of strength for the growth of distance education<sup>53</sup>. It has worked for the “promotion and development of distance education” around the globe<sup>54</sup>.

Distance Education has indeed made a long journey from postal course to the digital era of virtual classroom, virtual University, video conferencing, etc. The University of London in 1858, allowed the students who could not attend formal colleges, to sit for exams and get degrees under the External System<sup>55</sup>.

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51. STRIDE Handbook (2002). IGNOU, New Delhi. p. 36

52. Sewart, David (2003). *Sixty Five years of ICDE* in Open Praxis, Vol. 1. [Available Online] Accessed from <http://www.icde.org/filestore/About/SixtyfiveyearsofICDEbyDavidSewart.pdf> on 14/07/12

53. STRIDE Handbook, Op. cit. p. 37

54. Dhanarajan, Gajaraj (2003). *Open and Distance Learning: Innovations in 1990s: The Commonwealth of Learning*, in LalageBown (ed.) Education in the Commonwealth: the first 40 years From Oxford to Halifax and Beyond, The Commonwealth Secretariat, London, p. 149

55. Daniel, Sir John et al, op. cit., [Available Online] Accessed from <http://www.col.org/resources/speeches/2008presentations/Pages/2008-09-08.aspx> on 13/07/12

### **3.4. DISTANCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: THE RISE OF A PHENOMENON:**

Distance Education had caught attention worldwide and India was not to be left out. The attempt for DE was made in the same time as the movement for UK Open University had taken place, in the 1960s. The time could not have been better. Hardly had two decades passed since India got independence and there were a lot of issues that had to be looked at and a plan was needed to work out an effective strategy. India was trying to strengthen herself from the roots and thus the two areas on which the authorities then gave their ultimate attention were- industrialization and higher education.

While some trace Distance Education to the epistles of St. Paul, in India it can be traced back to the time of Ekalavya. The story of Ekalavya and his achievement is an example of a form of education what we know it today as "Distance Education". Ekalavya was a boy from a poor caste and even though he dreamt of acquiring the best knowledge of archery from the famed guru, yet he was rejected because of his caste. So, he created an image of the guru with clay mud and started practicing. One day while he was practicing, he heard the sound of the barking of a dog and he lost his concentration. In order to shut the mouth of the dog, he shot the dog with his arrows. Guru Dronacharya was amazed to see the skill of the archer and he at once called upon Ekalavya. On asking as to who was the master under whom he had trained, Ekalavya showed him the clay model of the Guru himself. The rest of the story is known to all.

It is interesting to note that despite the absence of a teacher, the learner acquired the skill due to his hard work, dedication and perseverance. The whole principle on which the distance education rests has been totally depicted in the story. Thus, learning through distance mode was not unknown in India history.

Distance Education as an external study was not unfamiliar either. Though G. Ram Reddy would not consider this form of education as Distance Education, yet it cannot be denied that Distance Education succeeded external study system to become what it is today. Private appearances did prevail in India, only to be wiped off by correspondence education. The reason behind introducing correspondence education in India was provided by the then Education Minister, Shri K L Shrimali<sup>56</sup>-

1. To provide a less expensive and yet an efficient system of education in the context of national development in India
2. To offer educational opportunities for the less fortunate
3. To offer the educated Indians academic paths for improvement

Alternative education had been a top priority of the Government which is noticed from the onset of the Five Year Plans. The First Five Year Plan provided for private study with the help of correspondence courses, radiotalks offered by the Universities across the country. It also allowed the students to take private examinations.<sup>57</sup>

It was during the Third Year Plan (1960-65) that the country saw a boom in the demand of higher education, which the traditional universities failed to absorb. With a stagnant economy, the Government was finding it hard to deal with the crisis and hence considered the widening of the non-formal of education in order to meet the national demand of a democratic form of education, in which no one was denied access to education. Hence, this Plan proposed for evening colleges and awarding of external degrees for the students pursuing private studies or correspondence courses.<sup>58</sup>

In the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) held in 1961, it was decided that a Committee should be appointed to

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56. Rathore, HCS (1993). *Management of Distance Education in India*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, p. 3

57. Sharma, Shaloo (2002). *History and Development of Higher Education in India*, Vol. I, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, p.223

58. Ibid., p 224

make a detailed study of correspondence courses and hence an expert committee was appointed under Dr. R.S. Kothari<sup>59</sup>. The important recommendations made by the Expert Committee are given below.<sup>60</sup>

- correspondence leading to degree or equivalent qualifications should be administered by Universities only (para7)
- For the present, correspondence courses should be confined to a first University degree (para8)
- For part of the course there should be personal contact between teacher and taught, “contact” classes being organized on a tutorial in preference to a lecture basis (para 9)
- To maintain educational standards, it is necessary to associate top ranking scholars and teachers with the preparation of the courses and the selection of the textbooks. Some arrangements should be made to organize work by staff so as to ensure continuing improvement in the quality of work (para 10),
- The correspondence method is susceptible of use in both science and the humanities. However, for the present in view of organizational difficulties; the Committee recommends that the course should be started only in the faculties of Arts and Commerce. Science should be incorporated as early as possible (Para 11 and 15)
- For a first degree, correspondence courses should normally take longer than for a degree at a regular college, say, four years instead of the usual three. Outstanding students may, however, be able to compress this into a period of three years. Flexibility in all matters

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59. Menon, Prof. N R Madhava (2011). *Report of the Committee to Suggest Measures to Regulate the Standards of Education Being Imparted through Distance Mode*, Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD), New Delhi, Accessed on 10-10-12 from [http://learnos.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/madhava\\_menon\\_committee\\_on\\_odl.pdf](http://learnos.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/madhava_menon_committee_on_odl.pdf)

60. Moonis, Raza and Malhotra, Nirmal (1991). *Higher Education in India: A Comprehensive Bibliography*, Concept, New Delhi, p. 164



relating to the application of the system of varying needs is strongly recommended (para12)

- Fees for the students applying for these courses should be reasonable high in the first year but should be progressively lower in the second and third year and perhaps, if this is possible, be eliminated altogether in the fourth year.(Para13),
- Two supplementary aids(a)Refresher course and (b) use of radio and TV are recommended in order to raise the standard in spoken language and to correct a too easy reliance on the written word. (para14), (viii)Correspondence course should run in the first instance by one University, i.e., theUniversity of Delhi, and the subjects to be included in the course as well as the details of administration should be as suggested by the Working Group (Para 15 and 18 and Appendix).
- It is important to ensure that the scheme is administered so as to achieve economy. This will be possible in virtue to the fact that items of expenditure normal at regular colleges can be eliminated under the correspondence system, and also if an adequate number of students is provided for so as to reap the benefits of large scale organization (Para4, 16, 17 and 18)<sup>61</sup>.

The Kothari Committee of 1961 pointed that correspondence education, is a step designed to expand and equilibize educational opportunity as it aimed at providing additional opportunities for several thousand students who wished to continue their education and the persons who had been denied these facilities and were in full-time employment or were for other reasons prevented from availing themselves of facilities at college.<sup>62</sup>

A decade later a working group committee was appointed under G Parthasarthy who was then the Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University. The higher education sector had been hit by crisis. During this time the UK Open University had been established and the Government

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61. Raza and Malhotra (1991). Op. cit.

62. Sharma (2002), op. cit. p. 224

was keen on following the British footsteps in order to come out of the problem in higher education. Hence the Government asked the Committee to make a study on the various aspects involved in establishing an Open University in India.

Parthasarthy was of the opinion that an Open University which would provide higher education in part time or whole time basis would be the most effective solution for the problem. He commented that “The University should have jurisdiction over the entire country so that when it is fully developed, any student can have access to its instructions and degrees”. Thus the Group vehemently supported the establishment of an Open University by the Government.<sup>63</sup>

Accordingly, the UGC started planning to boost for part time and own time education while the Delhi University established its own School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in 1962, as a pilot project<sup>64</sup>. The correspondence course in Delhi was launched for B.A. and B.Com courses<sup>65</sup>.

In 1963, The Punjabi University, Patiala, introduced pre- University and B.A. level correspondence courses<sup>66</sup>. Correspondence Education was soon introduced in Rajasthan (1968), Mysore (1969), Meerut (1969)<sup>67</sup>. It soon caught the attention of the people and the Government and the non-traditional method of learning was found feasible in an economy like India, there was full support for its continuance. The Kothari Commission remarked on the prospects, “Good Correspondence Courses in thoughtfully identified fields of service will create demand for themselves

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63. Ibid, p. 226

64. Powar, K.B. (2002). *Indian Higher Education: A Conglomerate of Concepts, Facts and Practices*, Concept, New Delhi, p. 281

65. Mohanty, Jagannath (2009). *Education in India: Encyclopaedia of education, Culture and Children's Literature-1*, Deep & Deep, New Delhi, p.111

66. Mohanty, Jagannath (2009). Op. cit.

67. Sharma (2002), op. cit. p. 226

and can help participation by the people in introducing better methods of production".<sup>68</sup>

The National Policy of 1968 recommended that "part time education and correspondence courses should be developed on a large scale at the University stage. Such facilities should also be developed for secondary school students, for teaches and for agricultural, industrial and other workers. Education through part-time and correspondence courses should be given the same status as full time education".<sup>69</sup> The Fourth Plan anticipated that out of the total enrolment of 1 million students, 0.15 million students would be provided by correspondence, evening colleges and part time classes.<sup>70</sup>

Thus suggestions for vocalizing secondary education, limiting the number of regular students at the university and meeting the demands of higher education through correspondence were made. Thus the plan<sup>71</sup> mentioned that the effort should be to meet 50% of the demand for additional facilities in regular institutions, 20% through evening colleges, 20% through correspondence courses and 10% through the private study.

For a decade or more henceforth, correspondence education continued through the CCIs (Correspondence Course Institutes). The CCIs were mostly under the Universities which functioned under Directorates created for the specific purpose. The table below highlights the emergence of correspondence education in India.

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68. Prasanth, J.K., D.B. Rao and G.S.Rao (2000). *Open University-Student Support Services*, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi. p. 3
69. Sharma, Shaloo (2002). Op. cit., p. 7.
70. Mohanty (2009). Op.cit.  
-----National Policy on Education, p. 44. Accessed from [http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NPE-1986.pdf](http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NPE-1986.pdf) on 12-06-12
71. Sharma (2002). Op. cit. p 8

**Fig. 10 CCIs (Correspondence Course Institutes) in India 1980-1983**

Sl.no.	University	Year	Duration	Student enrolment		
				1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
1.	Delhi University	1962	3yr	2488	2920	4695
2.	Punjabi University	1967*	1yr	991	718	397
3.	Patna University	1968	2yr	208	766	504
4.	Meerut University	1969	2yr	350	543	NA
5.	Mysore University	1969	3yr	7962	8790	9104
6.	Punjab University	1971-72	1yr	1170	1037	1007
7.	Himachal Pradesh University	1971-72	3yr	1431	1436	
8.	Andhra University	1972-73	3yr	4620	7336	1028
9.	Sri Venkateswara University	1972-73	3yr	231	227	178
10.	CIEFL Hyderabad	1973	1yr	490	528	NA
11.	Bhopal University	1975	3yrs	2200	1925	NA
12.	Utkal University	1975	2yr	598	803	NA
13.	Madurai Kamaraj University	1976	3yr	8808	11253	12266
14.	Kashmir University	1976	3yr	333	197	186
15.	Rajasthan University	1976*		565	448	259
16.	Kerala University	1977	2yr	1480	1363	1086
17.	Osmania University	1977-78	3y	225	553	745
18.	SNDT Women's University	1978-79	2yr	5329	5309	6087
19.	Allahabad University	1978-79	2yr	256	403	603
20.	Annamalai University	1979	3yr	177	361	430
21.	Bombay University	1979	1yr	699	844	1016

22.	Udaipur University	1979-80	3yr	213	347	369
23.	Total			<b>147754</b>	<b>142408</b>	<b>134199</b>

Source<sup>72</sup>: Sharma (2002), pp. 17-20

The Delhi University in offering correspondence course had outlined its objective as:

- To provide less expensive education at the higher level
- To extend the benefits of educational facilities to all those who had missed the opportunity to acquire knowledge skill and training for social and economic reasons<sup>73</sup>.

The success of Delhi University School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education, brought hope as enrolment grew and many new Institutes for correspondence class grew up. Most of the learners who enrolled themselves into correspondence class were over age, lacked funds and qualifications, belonged to a rural background etc<sup>74</sup>. There were cases of high dropouts, no submission of assignments, and low attendance in PCPs (Personal Contact Programmes).<sup>75</sup>

### 3.5. IDEA OF AN OPEN UNIVERSITY:

The CCIs were performing quite well, as the research studies suggest<sup>76</sup>. However, it had its own drawbacks. Some of the shortcomings of these institutions were<sup>77</sup>:

- Lack of proper staff development programme

72. Shaloo Sharma (2002). Op.cit. p. 17-20

73. J.L. Sardana (edited) 2002, *Library and Information Studies in Retrospect and Prospect: Essays in Honour of Prof. D.R. Kalia*, Vol. 1, Concept, New Delhi. p. 272

74. Yadav, Rama Shankar and B.N. Mandal (eds.) (2007). *Global Encyclopaedia of Islamic Mystics and Mysticism*, Volume 1, Global Vision Publishing House, New Delhi, 2007, p. 326

75. Yadav, Rama Shankar et. al (2007). Op. cit.

76. Ibid., Ibid., p 326

77. Powar, K. B. (2002). Op. cit. p 283

- Poor quality of course material
- Lack of student services

Within a short time, correspondence education under the CCIs earned a bad reputation amongst the common people as well as within the academic circles. Correspondence education began to be linked with low quality education mostly preferred by the dull students, who could never qualify for traditional courses due to their in capabilities. The academic world was as disturbed as the Government and it was felt that a change was needed. Since, there was still a big gap in access to higher education, it was decided that correspondence education would continue but in a bigger scale. The Government now wanted further expansion. This was their chance and opportunity.

Thus, the quest for a mission began. A mission, that would change the perspectives of the onlookers, the critiques for once and for all. The idea of an Open University surged the surface. Though India got its first Open University in 1982, the groundwork for it had started way back in 1970s. In a Report (1975) submitted by the Working Group under the chairmanship of Mr. G Parthasarthy, appointed on the basis of a seminar held under Prof. D.S. Kothari, it was recommended that a National Open University be established but nothing worked out. The plan fizzled out<sup>78</sup>. However, it was not given up in certain quarters.

Shri Bhavanam Venkatram was the Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh had faith in the concept of Open University and Andhra Pradesh came up with its first Open University, at the state level<sup>79</sup>. The Andhra Pradesh Open University was established in 1982 and Prof. Ram Reddy was made its first Vice Chancellor<sup>80</sup>.

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78. Prasanth, J.K., D.B. Rao and Garima Rao (2000). Open University, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi. p. 10

79. Ibid., p.11

80. Ibid

In 1992, APOU became Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU).<sup>81</sup>

Though an Open University had been established, the idea of an Open University on a national level was still distant.

The work of an Open University was suggested by Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao (Education Minister) in a seminar organized in 1970 as:

“.....It must cover not only the comparatively limited number of university students, but should cover much larger number of students who drop out from the school at various points, the neo-literates, and eventually all adults who desire to avail these programmes of continuing education... The new interesting programmes of instruction, based on modern science-oriented educational technology for students of higher education studying in the Open University should be made available to this much larger body of population which remains outside the so-called university system”.<sup>82</sup>

In 1985, with Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister, there was hope. In his speech, he announced the creation of a national open university<sup>83</sup>. He included it in his new educational policy, thus giving a political leverage.

It did not take long after that. The Indira Gandhi National Open University Bill was passed in the same year and IGNOU was established. Prof. G. Ram Reddy was appointed as the founding VC.

Thus, in 1985 India saw the establishment of a National Open University. As, Dixit mentions, “IGNOU is leading a silent revolution in the higher education system of the country”.<sup>84</sup>

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81. Ibid., p 12

82. Prasanth, J.K., D.B. Rao and GarimaRao (2000). Op. cit. p 10

83. Ibid.

The establishment of Open University brought a change in the higher education sector. Many new Open Universities and Distance Education Institutes slowly started to come up. At present, there are 13 Open Universities and 1 National Open University.

The table below throws light on the status of the SOUs (State Open Universities) in India.

The only State Open University of Assam, KKHSOU, came up in 2006 and joined the growing lists of Open Universities.

**Fig. 11 State Open Universities in India**

<b>Year of Establishment</b>	<b>Name of the SOUs</b>
1982	BRAOU (Dr. BhimRaoAmbedkar Open University)
1987	VMOU (VardhamanMahaveer Open University)
1987	NOU (Nalanda Open University)
1989	YCMOU (YashwantraoChavan Maharashtra Open University)
1991	MPBOU (Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University)
1994	BAOU (BabsahebAmbedkar Open University)
1996	KSOU (Karnataka State Open University)
1997	NSOU (NetajiSubhash Open University)
1998	UPRTOU (U P RajarshiTandon Open University)
2002	TNOU (Tamil Nadu Open University)
2005	PSSOU (Pt. Sunder Lal Sharma Open University)
2005	UOU (Uttarakhand Open University)
2006	KKHSOU (Krishna KantaHandiqui State Open University)

Source<sup>85</sup>: DEC website, [www.dec.ac.in](http://www.dec.ac.in)

84. Syed, Mahbur (2009). *Methods and Applications for Advancing Distance Education Technologies: International Issues and Solutions*, Information Science Reference, Hershey PA, p. 218

85. DEC website "Home Page" ([www.dec.ac.in](http://www.dec.ac.in)). Accessed on 12-09-12



Besides the Open Universities, there are the dual mode Universities which offer both conventional programmes as well as distance education course. The lists are given below:

**Fig. 12 Status of Distance Education (2010): An Indian Scenario**

Sl. No.	State	No. of DEIs/ CCIs
1	Andhra Pradesh	18
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1
3	Assam	4
4	Bihar	5
5	Chhattisgarh	4
6	New Delhi	10
7	Gujarat	5
8	Haryana	8
9	Himachal Pradesh	1
10	Jammu and Kashmir	2
11	Karnataka	12
12	Kerala	4
13	Madhya Pradesh	9
14	Maharashtra	24
15	Meghalaya	2
16	Mizoram	1
17	Nagaland	1
18	Orissa	6
19	Pondicherry	1
20	Punjab	6
21	Rajasthan	10
22	Sikkim	3
23	Tamil Nadu	29
24	Tripura	2
25	Uttar Pradesh	16
26	Uttarakhand	6
27	West Bengal	7

Source<sup>86</sup>: [www.dec.ac.in](http://www.dec.ac.in)

While looking at the figures above, it must be noticed that Distance Education has been in high demand in South India as compared to the rest of the country. It is also interesting to note that there are variations in

86. DEC website, [www.dec.ac.in](http://www.dec.ac.in)

distance education institutes in India. While South India score very high on the scale, the North East is lagging far behind.

However, distance education enrolment trend has shown an overall upward swing and of the total higher education enrolment, the ODL system constitutes 22%. According to the Distance Education Council (DEC) report of 2009-10, women enrolment in distance education institutions across the country was 43%<sup>87</sup>. Since, 1990s the number of distance education institutions have increased and so has the enrolment of the learners.

### **3.6. DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ASSAM**

Prior to 1947, higher education in Assam did not progress much. Cotton College was the only one premier college during the time of independence. Higher education was accessible to those who had the luxury to afford it, particularly the affluent class of the Assamese society. Knowledge as a power was concentrated at a few pockets. Post-Independence the scenario has reversed. The numbers of higher education institutions have increased though problem of access and equity still continue. With the growth of towns and population, it was becoming difficult to meet the demands of all. The University of Gauhati and Dibrugarh could not fulfill the dreams of all the students. Though the enrolment rate was running high every year, equally the number of people denied education was also increasing. A need was felt for experimenting but it took a lot of time to decide if the state and its people were really ready for it.

Distance Education in North East India began with the initiative of IGNOU in NEHU (North Eastern Hill University) in 1986. Prior to it, Distance Education in the form of external study did take place. That can be termed as the earliest attempt at Distance Education, but, it is to be noted that,

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87. Annual Report 2010-11, MHRD. [Available Online]. Accessed on 2/09/12 from [http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/AR2010-11\\_Part2.pdf](http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/AR2010-11_Part2.pdf)

while the entire country was establishing Correspondence Institutes, there was no such attempt in the North East or in Assam.

**Fig. 13 Regional Distribution of Distance Education (1986-87):**

Region & States	Conventional Institutions	Distance Education System	Share of Distance Education in the Total (%)
North (Delhi, Haryana, U.P., H.P. Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan)	10,51,173	66,379	5.9
South (Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka)	9,38,877	2,66,606	22
East (Assam, Bihar, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, West Bengal, Orissa, Tripura, Sikkim)	7,27,170	3,814	0.5
Central & Western Region (Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat)	9,64,650	22,098	2.2
Total	36,81,870	3,57,791	8.9

Source: Mohanty, Jagannath<sup>88</sup> (2007), pg. 267

The share of Distance Education is the lowest in the Eastern Region, and the share of .5% was due to the enrolment in Bihar and West Bengal. In an article by Ruddar Datt (1991), even in 1989-90, the Eastern share of enrolment in distance education system amounted to 2.7%, most of which are from institutions located in Bihar and Orissa<sup>89</sup>.

Thus, Assam was far behind the rest of the states in the matter of distance education, which only meant that the elitist model of higher education continued till the mid-1980s.

### **3.7. CONCEPTUALIZING DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY SETTING:**

Formal system of education has been for long been given legitimacy but in India; we know that non-traditional education has equally enjoyed a space in the society. Formal educational institutes (College, Universities etc.) have been considered as the sites of development of a class of educated

88. Mohanty, Jagannath (2007). *Adult and Non Formal Education*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, p. 267

89. Bhatnagar, S. (1997). *Distance Education: A System under Stress*, Concept, New Delhi, p. 34

and cultured man. The handful of fortunate ones who could avail the opportunity of higher education in such institutions were what Bourdeiu and Passer on have termed as “cultural capital”<sup>90</sup> and David Blunkett refers to as “intellectual capital”.<sup>91</sup> These selected few were destined to pass on the culture and traits to the less unfortunate ones, thus making them the guardian of the society and following the “downward filtration theory”.

Higher Education is important for the social and economic development of an individual as well as the nation. It opens the door of opportunities and optimistic changes that leads towards progress. The formal education system remains the benchmark for all, as it is seen not just as an educational institution but more dynamic with its cultural and social environment. Colleges, Universities as settings for the individual development, has been credited for long times across generations. The problems were deep rooted in the social system of the Indian society itself. Inequality scores high in India and is manifested in varied forms. The clubbing of some people in different categories has continued since the early times and people have been categorised according to their economic and social standing.

While the elite section in society has access to most pleasures and luxuries that are available the non-privileged fight for their basic needs. In such a situation, education is considered a luxury which can be availed of by only a limited section of the society. Higher Education in India continues to suffer from the crisis of stratification and this has raised many questions. While the elite pursue higher degrees and professional courses in recognized institutions, the not so fortunate ones are left aimless and directionless. The emphasis on IITs and IIMs is one such dimension to the problem of stratification in higher education. The benefit of education is

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90. Cultural Capital (n.d.). [Available online] Accessed on 31-08-12 from [http://www.nd.edu/~olizardo/papers/cultural\\_capital.pdf](http://www.nd.edu/~olizardo/papers/cultural_capital.pdf)

91. Ferlong, Andy & Fred Cartmel (2009). *Higher Education and Social Justice*, Open University Press, Berkshire, England, p. 8

confined to a particular section who absolutely believed that the “downward filtration theory” would work and knowledge would pass down the lower section of the society. But, this has not happened. Therefore, there was an urgent need to look for an alternative system.

Society has a role to play in the shaping of the educational system as opined by Friere who said that education is shaped by the society in the interest of those with power<sup>92</sup>. Similarly Dewey said that “the greatest educational power, the greatest force in shaping the dispositions and attitudes of individuals in the social medium in which they live”<sup>93</sup>.

The growing demand for higher education is an important reason for the rise of distance education. The aim of acquiring education has also changed with passing times and so has the choices of students which have undergone a definite change. Learning is no longer associated with gaining knowledge, but rather acquiring a “degree”.

Earlier, people had the eagerness to learn so as to be a scholar. But with new economic policy shifts, the students are looking for courses in order to find decent jobs. These have led to the growth of many institutes, mainly under private initiatives. The dangerous trend of rapid demand for education has led many to use education for business purpose. Many of such institutions established for making money have been blacklisted by UGC and other regulating bodies. The pressure is very high in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and post 1991, for the demand for higher and quality education. Another problem that cropped in the higher education sector was the gradual elimination of the Centre and State Government from public funding in higher education. The link of public finance with education outcomes is given below<sup>94</sup>:

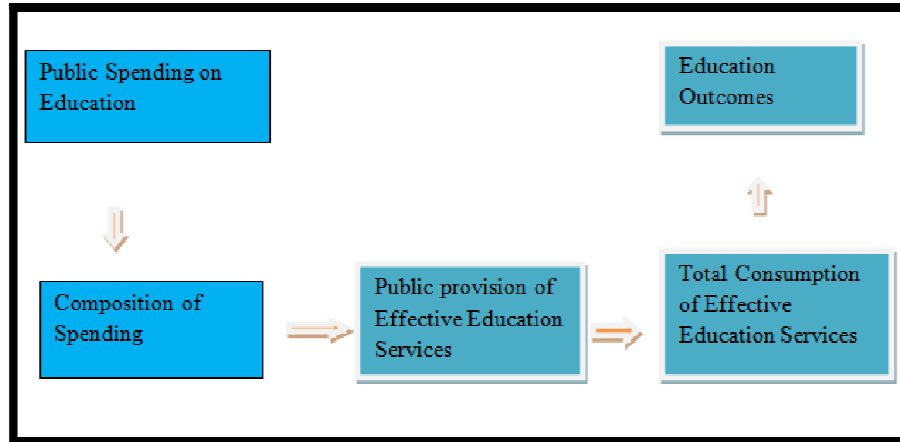
#### **Fig.14 Linking Public Finance to Education**

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92. Monchinsky, Tony (2010). *Education in Hope: Critical Pedagogies and the Ethic of Care*, Peter Land Publication Inc, New York, p.1

93. Ibid

94. Kundu, Protiva (2011). *Incidence of Public Expenditure on Education: Viewing through a Gender Lens*. Accessed on 2-09-12 from <http://www.cdedse.org/ws2011/papers/protiva.pdf>



During the British period the emphasis on higher education was not encouraging enough, as there were very few Universities and colleges.

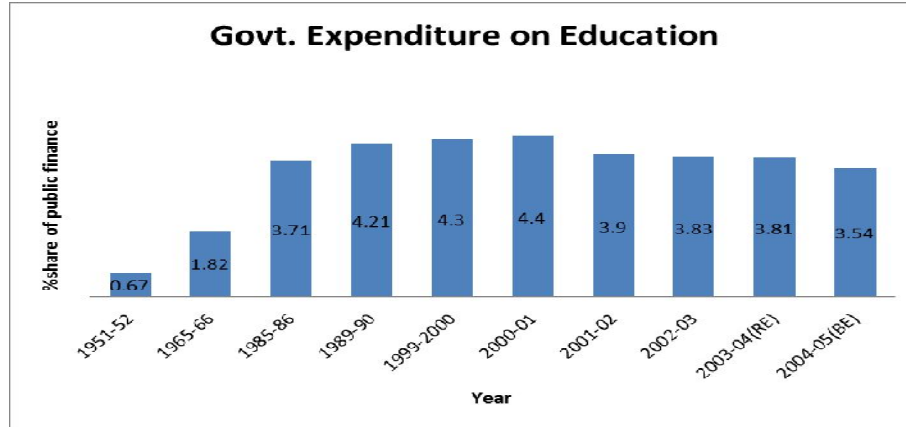
Most of these institutions were established at the provincial level; today we would term them as metropolitan areas. After independence, it was believed that expansion of higher education would help in the development of Indian economy and hence, higher education got much priority at the cost of primary and secondary education. The result was the establishment of Universities and Colleges all over the country

Education has been a state responsibility but its inclusion in the “Concurrent List” in 1976, made education a joint responsibility<sup>95</sup>. The Government cannot shy away from its duties towards its people but the market economy that was introduced post 1990s has led to the crisis in the education sector. The share of the central Government expenditure in Education is given below<sup>96</sup>:

**Fig. 15 Public Finance of Higher Education (1951-2005)**

95. De, Anuradha and Tanuka Endow (2008). Public Expenditure on Education in India: Recent Trends and Outcomes, Research Consortium on Education Outcomes and Poverty, Working Paper. [Available online] Accessed on 2-09-12 from <http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/WP18-ADfin.pdf>

96. Tilak, J.B.G. (2006). *On Allocating 6 percent of GDP to Education*, in Economic and Political Weekly., 41(7), pg. 613-618



Source: Tilak (2006)

# RE: Revised Estimate \*\* BE: Budget Estimate

The above table shows the expenditure of the Government on education sector in general. Post-Independence, the focus of the Government was on higher education and hence higher education under social sector was funded generously.

This continued for a long time, until it was declared that higher education was not a “merit’ good and slowly the Government started gradually withdrawing from any interference in the higher education sector. This has made matters come worse, as private institutes have come up which means that education will be accessed by those who have the ability to afford it. Sharp decline in Government funding has only added fuel to the fire. Higher and Technical Education seems to suffer a lot with the new adjustments that have been made in the policy level. The public expenditure on higher and technical education is discussed below<sup>97</sup>:

**Fig. 16 Public Expenditure on Higher Education as % of GNP and Union Budget**

97. Prakash, Ved (2007). *Trends in Growth and Financing of Higher Education in India*, in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(31) pg. 3249-3258

Year	Public Expenditure as %age of GNP	Public Expenditure as %age of budget
1990-91	0.61	2.09
1991-92	0.56	1.91
1992-93	0.55	1.90
1993-94	0.54	1.89
1994-95	0.52	1.87
1995-96	0.49	1.80
1996-97	0.47	1.74
1997-98	0.47	1.75
1998-99	0.52	1.86
1999-2000	0.61	2.09
2000-01	0.62	2.29
2001-02	0.52	1.72
2002-03	0.52	1.72
2003-04 RE	0.50	1.63
2004-05 BE	0.46	1.60

Source: Prakash, Ved (2007).

Over the years, expenditure on higher education has reached a low mark. Distance Education was economically viable and needed less investment on the part of the Government and thus, it was supported by them.

The demographic features of the states are also responsible for the rise of distance education. Therise in population since independence has opened crisis in the social service sector. All of a sudden the demand for education grew in high numbers swiftly. The number of educational institutions were insufficient and at the same time and inadequate. A widespread expansion of education to meet the needs of the people was felt at the policy level. The Government had to work on alternative system of education for solving the problem. Distance Education could provide access to a large section of people and its benefits could be reaped specially by the disadvantaged class of the population.

Distance Education has grown rapidly and it would be appropriate in this context to say that, it is no longer considered as a supplementary form of educationto the traditional mode. It has established itself as a distinct system of education within the higher education sector, and one which has



full potential of becoming at par with the traditional system of education. The growth of Distance Education is also a fascinating trend.

Post 1990, the economic policy took a drastic turn and global trends began setting in. Market policy shaped all the policies and decisions. The impact of globalization was felt in all spheres. Higher Education got a jolt as it paved the path for privatization. It meant that education was no longer to be a 'public good'. Education became corporatized and eased the Government of its responsibility.

Thus, higher education institutions were built by private investors who levied high fees and thus placing restraint on accessing such education. This happened mostly in case of technical and science teaching institutes. Social science was left far behind and so were the aspirations of a large mass. This resulted in a spurt in the expansion of distance education and post 1990s, the number of DE Institutes rapidly increased.

The dynamism of distance education lies in the fact that besides traditional courses, vocational courses as well as professional courses are also offered which has attracted many students to it. The trend report suggests that the demand for professional courses have grown up.

The use of technology has also resulted in the growth of distance education. Information and Communication technology has made strong roots in distance education and now learners sitting anywhere round the globe can have access to education. Information and Communication Technology in distance education has led to connectivity and networking for learning process and all barriers are now broken.

The use of internet, radio, mobile phones have brought more learners towards the distance education fold. Audio-visual and multimedia use in distance education has broadened the horizons and learning seems to be just at our fingertips. The Open Universities and the DE Institutes in India are all equipped with the ICT tools and personnel. The use of satellite

channels, multimedia studios to produce audio-visual educational programmes are common features in the distance education scenario of the country.

### **3.8. SUMMARY:**

The demand for distance education has grown over the past few decades. This has been due to the transformation of the local economy to a global one allowing privatization to set in, resulting in the deprivation of social goods and benefits by the major portion of the population. Education is one such sector which has been hit hard.

As they say, “necessity is the mother of all invention” and hence it was the same in the field of Distance Education. The crisis in the higher education sector in the post-independence period resulted in the emergence of DE as a viable alternative. Some five decades down the line, Distance Education today has become an important feature of higher education.

At the national level, Distance Education has undergone transformation from a correspondence model to a more flexible system of Open Learning. This transformation has occurred in light of the new technologies that have been integrated within the educational system. The creative use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in distance education has resulted in giving a definitive shape to the correspondence system of education highlighting a paradigm shift within.