

CHAPTER - I

Introduction

Since independence, higher education has been getting a fresh momentum in the country. From social point of view, much is expected of higher education in preparing the manpower need for different sectors of development. The citizens always look for attainment of individual progress by joining the system. This is reflected in the aspirations of the people for enrichment of social prestige, achievement of high rate of mobility, attainment of economic gains and improvement of individual's knowledge and skills over several aspects of daily life. While intending to cater to the development needs of the society and of individuals, the higher education system aspires for practising democratic norms. As a first step, it is expected that the system must be accessible to an optimum level of those citizens who are capable of pursuing higher studies. In this context, the University Education Commission (1948 - 49) remarked, "In a well planned educational system opportunities will be provided at every level to the pupils for the exercise of their reflective powers, artistic abilities and practical work." Further, the Commission opined that "our system must provide for every young person education to the extent that he can profit from it....." These ideas acted as influential factors in expansion of higher education in the country.

Moreover, the pressure on higher education has been increasing due to rising social aspirations of the masses. Keeping in view the popular demand for higher education, the political forces of different regions have played a major role in enhancement of facilities for higher education in different parts of the country. As a result, during post independence period, a tremendous increase was marked in terms

of establishment of substantial number of higher education institutions in different states. In the initial stage, i.e., after a decade and a half of the independence, the number of universities in India became more than twice their number at the time of independence i.e., 20 in 1947 to 45 during 1960. Simultaneously, the number of affiliated colleges also rose up to 1,222 during 1960 from 420 during 1947. The enrolment was enhanced from 1.8 lakhs during 1947 to 8.9 lakhs during 1960. Especially, from such rate of expansion in enrolment, a very high enrolment was predicted for the coming decades. Taking into consideration the factor of increasing rate of enrolment in higher education, it could be guessed that the massive entrance would augment the administrative as well as financial burden of the system. It could also be surmised that this factor would come in the way of maintenance of academic standard of formal streams of higher education. Hence, to avoid increasing administrative and financial burdens, and to maintain academic standards of the formal system, it was thought appropriate to divert the overflow of entrance through creation of alternative channels of higher education.

Moreover, owing to certain inherent limitations, the formal system can not act as a viable means for higher studies of those who are capable enough to study but belonged to the regions far away from the institutions, lacked motivation to continue with formal stream, belonged to upper age group, took employment at the end of schooling, found the formal system expensive and thus discontinued for one or other reasons and could not take up the opportunity to pursue education as youngsters etc. These limitations marked in the formal system paved the way for encouragement of parallel streams of higher education. In these contexts, during 1960, the Planning Commission of India had pointed out, "In addition to provision in the plan for expansion of facilities for higher education, proposals for evening colleges, correspondence courses and the award of external degrees are at present under consideration." (Planning Commission 1960-65).

On the basis of observation made by the Planning Commission (1960-65) the matter of creation of alternative channels of higher education was brought to the consideration of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). In its' 28th meeting (1961) a resolution was passed for opening the avenue of correspondence education at university level. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education, Government of India constituted an expert committee (1961) constituting ten members from different organisations such as UGC, Ministry of Education and some selected universities. The committee perceived that the lack of Indian experience in the use of correspondence method demanded caution and the need to proceed slowly so as to ensure that in the absence of regular classroom contact between the teachers and the taught inherent in this method, it would still be possible to create and maintain high educational standards. In its' recommendations, the expert committee highlighted several issues pertinent to correspondence education such as flexibility in the system, institutions of correspondence education and universities, instructional process, teachers, introduction of courses from Arts, Commerce, Science and Technology fields, duration of courses etc. The committee during its deliberations suggested that as a pilot project of correspondence education may be introduced at the university of Delhi.

Creation of Correspondence Institute (1962) :

The university of Delhi agreed to the proposal made by the Expert Committee on Correspondence Education. As a result, during 1962 it came out with its school of correspondence courses and continuing education. In the initial stage the institute restricted its' programme to Arts Courses at undergraduate level.

Recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) :

The success that university of Delhi achieved in opening the correspondence institute seems to have encouraged the Education Commission (1964-66) to recommend in favour of correspondence education in the country. The Education Commission has recommended : "The opportunities for part time education through programmes like evening colleges and for own time education through programmes like correspondence courses should be extended as widely as possible and should also include courses in science and technology (either at the degree or diploma level). They will help to reduce the capital costs of expanding higher education and cutdown even the recurring costs to a substantial extent, especially as enrolments grow. They are the only means to provide higher education to those who desire to study further but are compelled on economic grounds, to take up employment at the end of the school stage. There need be no fear that they will lead to a deterioration of standards, especially if due care is taken to maintain personal contacts with the students receiving correspondence education by organising academic programmes during vacations and holidays. In fact, it would be correct to say that, by and large the standards in such courses tend to be better because of the more intensive motivation of the students. We suggest that by 1986 atleast a third of the total enrolment in higher education could with advantage be provided through a system of correspondence courses and evening colleges. We also suggest that the UGC should establish a standing committee on part-time education."

Further, the problem of higher rate of expansion was placed before the Planning Commission (1966). The Commission had estimated a further growth of 0.50 million in enrolment of higher education during the fourth plan period i.e., 1966-71. While discouraging the proposal of opening sub-standard

affiliated colleges, the Planning Commission suggested for extending the facilities of correspondence education to 0.05 million students during this period.

First delegation to the USSR (1967) :

Since India was in the preparation stage for expansion of correspondence education and did not have sufficient expertise on correspondence system of education, the UGC sent its' first delegation to USSR during 1967 to study the scheme of correspondence education in that country. In its' recommendation, the delegation had mostly highlighted expansion of correspondence education for teacher training programme. The Committee had opined that "the system of correspondence courses for teacher training can be profitably adopted in our country, but it should be restricted in its' scope. It should be utilised only for the purpose of clearing the backlog of untrained teachers in regular service - this system could also be used to enable our trained teachers with varying qualifications to improve their level of education and to advance to higher grades to profession". (UGC 1967). This view might have influenced the decision of Regional Colleges of Education (RCE) to open summer-cum-correspondence education programme for college teachers. During, 1967-68, all four RCEs viz., Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Mysore had introduced such programme at B.Ed. level.

Guide-lines set by UGC for Extension of Correspondence Courses (1967):

Following the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) and the Planning Commission (1966) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) appointed a Committee in 1967, to consider the question of extension of correspondence courses to other universities. For the first time, in the country, the UGC specified broad objectives of correspondence

education and rendered guidelines for introduction of correspondence courses at university level. Regarding the objectives the UGC specifies:

"The objectives of correspondence education is to provide an alternative method of education to enable a large number of persons with necessary aptitude to acquire further knowledge and improve their professional competence. Correspondence courses are thus intended to cater for (a) Students who had to discontinue their formal education owing to pecuniary and other circumstances; (b) students in geographically remote areas; (c) students who had to discontinue education because of lack of aptitude and motivation but who may later on become motivated; (d) students who cannot find a seat or do not wish to join a regular college or university department although they have the necessary qualifications to pursue higher education; and (e) individuals who look upon education as a life-time activity and may either like to refresh their knowledge in an existing discipline or to acquire knowledge in a new area."

Regarding opening of the courses the Committee recommended that :

- correspondence courses be started only by universities which have well-established teaching departments noted for their high standards.
- Correspondence courses at the undergraduate level should be introduced by only one university in a state except when a university proposes to introduce correspondence courses in a new faculty at the undergraduate level or when the university already offering correspondence courses reaches the optimum size (say an enrolment of 10,000) or for other valid reasons.
- Correspondence Courses can be tried out at different levels and in different subjects in the humanities,

social sciences, sciences and some of the professional areas like law, social work, library training, engineering and technology etc. and, therefore, facilities should be as diversified as possible.

The second delegation to USSR (1968) :

The second delegation to USSR was sent during 1968, to study overall system of correspondence education in that country in detail. As its major observation, the delegation noted that from the structural point of view correspondence courses in India compared favourably with such courses in Russia. Further the delegation suggested that, in India, the correspondence courses should be run on academic rather than commercial lines, they should cover new courses and levels of education from science, foreign languages and professional fields in keeping with social demand for such courses and where necessary restrictions may be put for admitting in-service people only.

Growth of Correspondence Institutions (1968 to 1971) :

The recommendations and observations of above committees, especially the expert committee of UGC (1967) paved the way for the introduction of correspondence courses in other universities. During 1968 and 1969, four universities instituted directorates of correspondence courses viz., Punjabi (1968), Rajasthan (1968), Mysore (1969) and Meerut (1969). Except Rajasthan, other three universities had provision for Arts courses at undergraduate level. The Rajasthan university, for the first time in the country was started with correspondence courses for Commerce at undergraduate and Arts at post graduate levels (See Appendix I). The year 1971 was marked with a high rate of expansion of correspondence education institutions. The universities starting correspondence courses during that year were Madurai Kamraj, Himachal Pradesh, Panjab, Bombay, Jammia Millia, and Panjab Agriculture. These universities as well as the other old ones having correspondence courses

introduced varieties of courses from different fields like Arts, Commerce, Education and Agriculture, of course, mostly at undergraduate level.

The third delegation to the USSR (1971) :

A third delegation was sent by the UGC to USSR during 1971. The delegation had done an exhaustive analysis of the system of correspondence education in USSR keeping in view the prospects of this system in India. The delegation stated its candid views on several aspects of correspondence education in India. The aspects covered were, 1. need for expansion of courses, 2. need for diversification of courses, 3. schooling through correspondence, 4. education for adults and neo-literates, 5. expansion and development of correspondence institutes, 6. radio talks and television programmes, 7. use of other audio visual aids, 8. library facilities, 9. students' homes for correspondence students, 10. teachers, 11. incentives to the target group students, 12. printing units, 13. evaluation units, 14. development of correspondence institutes as nuclei for the open university. Also, the delegation recommended for establishment of a national institute of correspondence education to co-ordinate and improve the performances of correspondence institutions in the country. The idea was subjected to the consideration of the UGC. During 1972, the UGC had formed a Planning Committee in this respect. However, no follow up was made on this matter.

Seminars and Conferences at National Level (1972 to 1978) :

Alongwith the UGC, keenness was shown by Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and the Centre of Educational Technology (CET) of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for organisation of national level seminars and conferences on correspondence education. These organisations had highlighted on both academic as well as practical problems of correspondence system of education in the country. During

1972 to 1978 there had been two national level seminars, one during October 1972 at Mysore and the other during October 1976 at Patiala, one national conference of directors of correspondence courses during October 1974 in New Delhi and four regional seminars during 1978 in different places of the country. The major themes for discussion in the above seminars concentrated round improvement of present practices of the correspondence education system in the country. The observations made by the conference of directors were especially of great significance from the point of view of improvement of organisation and governance of the system. Major focus of discussions in such conferences were on:

- (1) Scope of correspondence education in India;
- (2) Preparation of reading materials;
- (3) Financing of correspondence education and the role of the state;
- (4) Organisational and administrative set up including lessons, students' response sheets, personal contact programmes and research centre;
- (5) Ancillary services such as radio talks, television, etc.

It seems that the views reflected in the directors' conferences had drawn the attention of the UGC to consider several issues and to come out with the policy and pattern for the development of correspondence courses at post graduate level in the universities during the fifth plan period. While modifying the norms and guidelines for introduction of correspondence courses, especially at post graduate level, the UGC opined that correspondence courses at post graduate levels should be started only in those universities which have experience of running undergraduate courses properly for atleast three years. Further, the UGC stated about the norms regarding the status and working conditions of teachers of correspondence system (See. Appendix II).

Recent growth of Correspondence Education Institutions
(1972 to 1982) :

During the period of 1972-79, 16 more universities viz., Sri Venkateswara (1972), Andhra (1972), CIEFL (1972), Patna (1974), Utkal (1975), Bhopal (1975), Kashmir (1976), Jammu (1976), Kurukshetra (1976), Kerala (1977), Osmania (1977), SNTW Womens (1978), Allahbad (1978), Pantnagar Agriculture (1978), Annamalai (1979) and Udaipur (1979) introduced several correspondence courses at undergraduate and post graduate levels. Emergence of such institution could give wider representation to different parts of the country, except north eastern part, to have alternative channel of higher education. During this period, other two institutions, National Staff College for Educational Planners and Administrators now National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) at New Delhi (1978), and AIU (1979) introduced special correspondence courses for university and college level administrators and teachers respectively (See Appendix I). While no other university came up with the conventional model of correspondence education in the country during early eighties, a new university, Andhra Pradesh Open University, was established during the year 1982 exclusively for distance education purposes. In general it has adopted the autonomous structure of the Open University of the U.K.

An overview of enrolment in Correspondence
Institutions :

During its existence in the last two decades i.e., 1962-1982, a high growth rate could be marked in enrolment, and introduction of varieties of general and professional courses in 33 institutions, the number of courses mostly at undergraduate level were introduced for the award of B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc. degrees. During 1982-83 there were 23 institutions offering B.A. courses; 17 institutions offering

B.Com. courses and 1 institution offering B.Sc. courses. At post graduate level consistent progress was also marked during these years. During 1982-83 there were 11 institutions having M.A. courses, 6 institutions having M.Com. courses and 2 institutions having M.Sc. courses. Moreover, at professional level some courses like B.Ed., M.Ed., LL.B. and other degree and diploma courses gained good position in selected institutions. From the point of view of enrolment in the above stated courses, there was an increase of around 140 times during 1982-83 as compared to that of 1962. In the year 1982-83, the enrolment in correspondence courses had risen to 1.5 lakhs i.e., around 5 per cent of the total enrolment in the universities in India. The order of enrolment in several correspondence courses during that year was B.A., B.Com., M.A., M.Com., B.Ed., M.Ed., M.Sc., B.Sc., LL.B., B.GL, and other certificate and diploma courses. During the past two decades, while the Arts courses, in general, have shown a decreasing rate of growth, the situations were reverse for the rest of the courses covering commerce, education, law and science fields. However, both at undergraduate and post graduate levels, Arts courses in total enrolled the highest number of students. Also, at Post graduate level, M.Com. and M.Ed. courses enrolled a considerable proportion of correspondence students. When the trend in enrolment in different faculties at university level is studied, it could be found that only Arts, Commerce and Education faculties got more prominence in correspondence institutions. While at total university level other faculties viz., Engineering and Technology, Medicine and Veterinary Science retained sizable number of students no initiative has been taken in the country to offer any of these fields at correspondence level. (The statistics regarding enrolment in different courses of different institutions has been presented yearwise basis in Appendix III).

Certain issues related to correspondence education and background for the present study :

In the context of development of correspondence system at higher education stage, certain issues may be brought to light. First, as the system has been functioning in the country for a considerable period of time, a number of questions have been raised about the potentiality of the system with regard to several aspects. Such questions may be related to the extent to which the system has been successful in meeting the educational needs of target group learners, sustaining the students' motivation to continue with their studies till completion and avoiding wastage. Further, from the point of view of instructional aspects, several questions may be identified as to the extent to which the system brings improvement in its' own instructional processes, maintains academic standards in the specific subjects/disciplines, especially in comparison to the formal stream, and deals satisfactorily with certain courses which insists on practical experiences of specific skills and knowledge. With regard to utility of the system, other questions may be raised about the matching of its' products with manpower requirements and cost-effectiveness. Further, if in one or other respect/s the system has not achieved the success, it may be worthwhile to raise questions regarding probable limitations of the system with regard to its' different aspects.

Second, as a means of open learning, the functioning of correspondence system depends on better utilization of instructional strategies. In other words, it banks on production of better quality of learning materials; use of wide range of media emphasising varieties of learning opportunities and better organisation of face to face teaching leading towards group interaction among learners themselves and with the instructors. Keeping in view these aspects of instructional system, several questions can be raised. What should be the appropriate criteria for selection of learning materials? How to evolve different mechanism for preparation of high standard learning

materials with available resources? What should be the appropriate nature of media with special reference to the nature of subject matter to be taught, instructional objectives to be attained, background of learners and availability of materials and media to the learners? How to facilitate flexible teaching learning environments by which learners' participation in instructional processes can be enhanced?

Third, effectiveness of correspondence system, also rests on several organisational and management factors, such as the structure of organisation, efficiency of personnel involved in teaching and non-teaching activities, co-ordination among different components of the organisation, a cohesive environment for administration, etc. In this regard, several questions are very often raised: What can be the suitable model of organisation in the present situation and how to evolve them; what measures can be taken for professional growth of the personnel involved in teaching and administrative activities; how to develop better mechanism of co-ordination and maintenance of independent status of correspondence institutions with regard to several respects, etc.

Fourth, from the point of view of bringing about improvement in the instructional system, certain decisions may rest on sound understanding of interrelationships that exist among different underlying variables. In other words, to facilitate decision-making in organisation of instructional processes certain theoretical questions may be raised in the present context of functioning of the system. What are the human and non-human factors that contribute to the functioning of the system? How are the instructional systems organised with special reference to different components of instruction? How do the students, teachers and other personnels interact with the system? How does the institution respond to several instructional needs arising in the process of instruction? How are the instructional processes linked with the outcomes?

The present study makes a headway to resolve some of the issues. However, some earlier efforts have been made through other research studies to highlight some of the basic questions stated above and to find out suitable answers for them. These studies, conducted so far, concentrated on exploration of base line facts regarding the trend of growth of the system in the country; learners' background; instructional patterns of different institutions; several problems faced by students, teachers and administrators; their opinion on the system; learners' achievement etc. The contributions of such exploratory studies have been marked with regard to getting a sound footing for further investigations on different intense issues related to the system. The present study takes an advanced step over the extensive studies conducted so far.

The major thrusts of the present study are an answering several pertinent questions with regard to organisation and management of an instructional system; background and motivation of learners', rate of completion of courses; the nature of instruction with respect to different components; the nature of evaluation processes; relationship of correspondence system and regular system in respect of planning of courses, terms and conditions of courses, management of instructional processes, conduct of examinations; student outcome, etc., which may act as indices of study of effectiveness of the system as a whole.

While aiming at the solution of several issues related to above aspects of correspondence system, the present study has, also, made a breakthrough in terms of approaches followed in the investigation. As stated above, the studies conducted so far on correspondence system were mostly of status survey type. Some of them (Dutt 1976, 1977¹ and 1978²; Singh 1978; Biswal 1979; and Pandey 1979) intended to generalise facts on certain specific aspects of the system at national level. Due to the inherent limitations of the nomothetic approaches followed in these studies, certain surface level facts could be explored, of course, in piecemeal forms. On the other hand, some other studies (Sashi,

1972; Bhusan and Sharma 1976; Panda 1980; and Pillai and Mohan 1983) which were conducted at institutional level had concentrated on certain problems without taking into consideration the context in which they occurred. As a result, very little could be expected from their findings for deeper understanding of the functioning of the system and solution of several crucial problems faced therein. Considering the limitations of approaches followed in the earlier studies, serious attention has been paid in searching for a distinct approach which might be illuminative in nature, so that various pertinent questions related to the system could be answered.

With regard to methodological aspects of the studies of correspondence system, the following concerns were raised:

- (1) It could be highlighted that every system functions in the context of a particular environmental set up. The interaction of several internal and external forces in a given set up results in the functioning of the system. Thus, several crucial problems related to the functioning of the system needed to be resolved through intensive study of different aspects of the system in the context of specific net work.
- (2) One of the major tasks was to take corrective steps in bringing about improvement of the system. It needed adoption of a clinical approach in understanding the processes of functioning of a given system on the whole. Further, it could be assumed that a comprehensive portrayal of the process aspects of the system would be of use in diagnosing the problematic issues and arriving at appropriate solutions of them. In other words, in the process of answering several complicated questions, it was necessary for conducting intensive investigation of only one institution.

However, such investigation can be seen with an element of doubt. One may not be sure whether the investigation carried out on one institution can be relevant with regard to other correspondence institutions in the country. In this context, it was thought

that the study of a stable institution which might be functioning in the country over a considerable period of time; with multifarious nature of courses in different faculties and stages; with wider representation of different groups of students in terms of demographic, professional and socio-economic backgrounds; and having some commonalities in the organisational pattern, with other institutions in general might reflect on several issues. It might be enhancing the understanding of the system at national level, too. Further, eventhough the system under investigation would be treated as unique in many respects, there could be several common concerns of the institution under study which could be observed in other institutions. In this respect, the experiences of one institution under investigation might be referred to by other institutions for improvement of the programmes. The Himachal Pradesh University, having correspondence courses since the year 1971-72, was considered to be one of the institutions in the country to satisfy the above prerequisites and thus, identified as the institution for investigation.

Title of the Study :

The title of the present study reads as "A Study of Correspondence Education in an Indian University".

Objectives of the Study :

The objectives with which the investigation has been carried out read as follows:

- (1) To conduct a study of growth and development of correspondence education at the H.P. University from 1971 to 1981.
- (2) To conduct an intensive study of correspondence education system with regard to:
 - i) Infrastructural arrangements -
structure of organisation; functions of staff and physical facilities;

- ii) Students -
enrolment in different courses; background of students at entrance stage, students who continue with the courses till completion and those who dropped out of the course before completion; the factors that prompted students to enrol and continue with the courses, and the reasons of dropouts;
 - iii) Instructional and evaluation processes -
orientation; courses of studies; lessonscripts; personal contact programmes; library studies; assignments; other forms of evaluation; and other media of instruction.
 - iv) Outcome of the courses -
students' achievement in examinations; other benefits accrued by the products due to their joining in the correspondence courses.
 - v) Costs -
different components of institutional costs; and private costs.
- (3) To evaluate the existing system of correspondence education with regard to above stated aspects against the following criteria :
- i) a rational model of an effective system of correspondence education;
 - ii) comparability with the alternative system viz., the regular system of higher education with regard to enrolment policy, background of learners, teachers, instructional process, evaluation process, private costs of students, and achievement of students;
 - iii) perceptions of the participants of the system viz., present students, dropouts, students who completed the courses, teaching staff and persons holding responsibilities for governance of the system.

The subsequent chapters attempt to provide the details of the present investigation.

Chapter 2, attempts to review the related studies. It provides the rationale as well as the background on which the present study has been conducted.

Chapter 3, includes the design of the study. It gives clear idea about the nature of data collected for the study, the sources of data, the instruments used for data collection, sampling and data collection procedures, and procedures of analysis of data.

Chapter 4, attempts to analyse and interpret the data keeping in view different objectives of the study. There are seven sections in the chapter:

- (1) Genesis of the institution, organisation, physical facilities, courses offered and enrolment policy;
- (2) Students;
- (3) Teachers;
- (4) Instructional and Evaluation Processes;
- (5) Outcome of the system;
- (6) Improvement of courses and introduction of new courses;
and
- (7) Finance.

Chapter 5, concludes the study taking into account the presentation made in the preceding chapter.

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