

CHAPTER - II

Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents the review of studies conducted so far on correspondence system of instruction at university stage. Such an attempt has been made to develop an overall idea about the nature and findings of the previous studies and to arrive at a rationale for the present study. In this context, attempt has been made to classify the studies on the aspects covered by the present study and to analyse their findings in qualitative form. Also, there has been an effort to highlight the methods and procedures adopted in the concerned studies with the availability of limited information regarding them. In the process of justifying the need for the present study and the methods adopted therein, the available studies at global level have been referred to. However, while doing the review the studies conducted abroad and in India have been classified separately. Looking into the development of correspondence system at the national level and, more precisely, the problems and issues emerging from them, an attempt has been made to review the available studies in the Indian context separately. In other words, while, the review of studies conducted at the world level intends to provide a global outlook on them, the review of Indian studies pin-points the specific issues and concerns of researches on correspondence system at the national level. Considering the aspects as highlighted in the objectives of the present study (stated in earlier chapter) the previous studies conducted abroad and in India have been classified as follows:

- Organisational aspects : Policies, patterns and growth;
- Students : Assessment of needs, their reasons for joining the courses, their background, rate of dropouts, reasons for dropping out of the system/s;

- Instructional system : Different components of instruction, experiments on merit of one method/s over the others, and evaluation of the instructional processes on the basis of learners' perception, their problems and suggestions, their achievement and indepth analysis of the system/s; and
- Cost analysis.

Studies Abroad :

Policies Pattern and Growth ;

There have been several attempts on conducting studies on this area, Beardsley (1975), Fawdry (1975), Grimmett (1975), Kinsey (1975), Kuznestov (1975), Meirerhenry (1975), Wedemeyer (1975), Chamberlain (1977), Guiton (1977), Nolan (1977), Perry (1977), Pogano (1977), Sims (1978), Green (1980), Schuyer (1981) and Rumble and Borden (1983) are some of them. The common findings that have been marked in these studies are that the organisation structures are integrated within a larger system of education, usually a large university complex. Within each education set up, the systems follow certain overall policy statements on their roles and functions. The systems, however, have unique policy making models.

Learners of the System :

Needs and Aspirations of Learners :

On the areas of needs and aspirations of learners for joining different courses two types of studies had been conducted. One was at the stage previous to entrance to the courses / before establishment of the institutions and the other was at the post entrance stage.

In the pre-entry stage, in the case of one study in the open university, the U.K., the target group learners were asked about their awareness of existence of the open university (Walter Perry, 1977).

The study revealed that over five years period (1971 to 1976) in the U.K. 64% of the total adult population had known about the university. From 1971 to 1976, the percentage of men being aware of the open university increased from 33% to 76% and the percentage of women increased from 29% to 58%. Further, in the stage of inception of the same institution, a sample survey of 3000 adults revealed that 5% of the total respondents were very much interested in joining the open university courses and 0.9% respondents stated definitely to be amongst first applicants (Perry, 1976). In the case of a few correspondence institutions in the U.K. and Japan the target group learners stated about different reasons for joining the courses, which can be placed under two clusters, such as:

- (1) to improve upon academic qualifications, to continue with higher education, use of leisure time and to bring about personal development (Sorgel, 1966; Ministry of Education, Japan, 1975; and Wanieweicz, 1981) and
- (2) to improve upon occupational efficiency, to be placed in higher jobs, to bring about economic efficiency in terms of improvement of living condition (Sorgel 1966, Wanieweicz 1981 and McIntosh 1978).

The studies of second category revealed that the students who had already entered the correspondence education stream had done so because of the above stated reasons (Childs 1966, National Extension College, 1967, Fairbanks, 1971, Glatter and Wedell 1971, McIntosh 1978, Peters, 1978, Idle et al 1978). Further, motivation for improvement of social status had prompted many students to join the courses (National Extension College 1967 and McIntosh 1978). In one of the studies of second category (Wanieweicz 1981) attempt was made to analyse the motivational factors of students on the basis of age and sex (Wanieweicz 1981). The study revealed that job related goals were the best motivating forces for most of the young man 18 to 24 years and women of 25 to 44 years. The women of above 45 years

age group stated that their joining was motivated by their hobbies, recreation and family concerns. However, it could be observed that factors like (1) changing personal or family circumstances; and (2) financial problems for unemployed ones had obstructed the ways of potential students to join the correspondence education programme (McIntosh - 1978).

Characteristics of learners :

Studies concerned with learners' characteristics can be recognised with several background variables like age, sex, marital status, regional background, employment, occupation, social class and academic qualification. Further, in some of the cases analysis of learners' characteristics were done taking into consideration the courses inside the correspondence education system and the outside parallel systems. With regard to age of the students, it could ^{be} found that in the UK very high percentage of correspondence education students belonged to around 30 years of age (Glatter and Wedell 1971, McIntosh 1978), in the U.S.A. and West Germany around 55 to 56% correspondence students belonged to 35 years age group (Johnstone and Rivera 1965, Peters 1965) in Costa Rica very high percentage of students of distance university were below 25 years age group (Rumble and Borden 1983). In comparison to other adult education course students, the correspondence course students were found to be quite younger (Johnstone and Rivera 1965).

With regard to the sex of students of correspondence education, the studies conducted in the U.S.A. and the U.K. revealed that most of the students i.e., around 70% were men (John Stone and Rivivera 1965, Glatter and Wedell 1971). In

the cases of open university, the U.K., the situation of 1971 i.e., 70% men and 30% women, changed towards 56% men and 44% women by the year 1978 (McIntosh 1978). In Canada, however, the largest percentage of students were women especially from 25 to 34 years age group (Waniewicz 1981). In Costa Rica, the ratio of men : women students was 54:46 (UNED 1979a).

Regarding marital status of correspondence students it was found that most of them were married and had children (Meddleton 1965, Schramm 1967, Short 1967, Waniewicz 1981, Glatter and Wedell 1971, McIntosh 1978, Rumble and Borden 1983).

About residences of students the studies like Peters (1965) and Glatter and Wedell (1971) revealed that in comparison to ruralites more urban based learners were attracted towards correspondence system.

The studies on employment and occupation background of correspondence students revealed that among professional course students, 99% were employed ones whereas in the case of general courses 69% students were having employment (Glatter and Wedell 1971). In the case of Costa Rica, it was found that a higher proportion of the Distance University students have had a full time job. (UNED 1979). It was found in general that the employed students were absorbed in several occupations like civil servants, industrial workers, library servants, teachers, medical, and welfare servants, housewives, commerce and private sector oriented professionals, clerical and office staff, administration and management personnels, shop keepers, Armed forces personnels etc. (International Correspondence School, 1965; Glatter and Wedell, 1971; McIntosh 1974).

The academic background of correspondence learners at university stage was found in varied forms. The Open University

of the U.K., which did not insist on formal schooling experiences had attracted one third of its first batch students during 1971 from no formal education background and the rest from formal background (McIntosh 1974). In another study (Perry 1976) it could be found that during 1971 only 33% students of the Open University were fulfilling the minimum qualification requirements for entry into other British Universities. However, by the year 1975 the students' percentage from such category had increased to 46.4. In Distance University, Costa Rica an increasing trend was marked among non-degree students, i.e., without having 'bachillerato' (Rumble and Borden 1983). The studies conducted in Minnesota University, had revealed that the correspondence students' grade points were higher than those of day scholars, evening course students and summer students (Kanun 1968). However, the studies conducted by Meddleton (1965), Schramm (1967) and Short (1967) revealed different results i.e., the general correspondence students were often less able academically or less qualified than full time students taking similar courses. There were studies (Scotten and Weck 1963 and Glatter and Wedell 1971) which focused on coursewise analysis of correspondence students' academic background. It was found that there was no difference between academic background of general and professional course students, summer and non-summer students.

The studies on enrolment in different types of correspondence courses revealed different findings. In the U.K. a greater proportion of students were preparing for professional qualifications than for external degrees (Glatter and Wedell, 1971); in Minnesota University approximately 37% of students had registrations in one or more of the other units of the university (Kanun, 1968). It was, also, found that in Minnesota, about 59% of correspondence students had registration histories of less than one year, one third from 1 to 5 years and a few had histories of registration covering more than 21 years.

Dropouts :

The studies conducted on the dropouts of correspondence education system can be classified as:

- (1) rate of dropouts;
- (2) duration of dropouts;
- (3) dropouts and completion of assignments;
- (4) reasons of dropouts;
- (5) suggestions for checking the dropout rates and
- (6) different factors associated with course completion rates.

Regarding rates of dropouts in correspondence system it could be marked that their percentages were quite high i.e., 72% , in West German (Peters 1965), 60% in the USA (Childs 1966). The studies regarding duration of dropouts revealed that in the course of longer duration of courses the dropout rate was spread through out the term, of course, it went on receding from the opening of the session towards the end. Sheath (1965) reported that a course which had 28% dropouts during the first year receded to 15% dropouts, the next year and further receded the following years. Similar findings were marked in the cases of the open university of the U.K. (McIntosh 1974). With regard to dropouts and their completion of assignments, the studies like Bradt, 1956 and James and Wedemeyer, 1959 revealed that very high percentage of dropouts failed to submit any assignment.

The major reasons of dropouts, as identified by different studies on preference basis could be seen as : (1) job interference with study; (2) lack of time; (3) interference with family / home responsibilities; (4) changes in career plans; (5) problems with the modes of studies and completion of lessons; (6) late submission of assignments; (7) difficulties in the nature of course itself; (8) lack of contact with the instructor; (9) lack of personal interest; and (1) some other personal problems (Bradt 1956, James and Wedemeyer 1959, Sheath 1965, Meddleton 1965, Sloan 1966, Pulley 1971, Glatter and

Wedell 1971, Smith 1978, Heinze et al. 1978 and Idle 1978). The suggestions for checking the dropout rates were read as: there should have been extension of period of studies, reduction in number and extent of lessons, thorough response from instructors, more detailed and explanatory lessons etc. (Sloan 1966).

Several factors which could be found to be associated with the completion of courses were highlighted either positively or negatively. The factors like promptness and regularity in studying and completing the lessons, motivation of students, their maturity, clear cut ideas about vocational growth and personal achievement were positively related with course completion, (Hughes 1955, Kuiper 1967 and Donehower 1968), whereas the distance from the place of residence of students to the venue of the institutions, involvement in job and heavy work load were found to be negatively related with course completion. (Donehower 1968 and McIntosh 1974). It was also revealed that the percentage of women's completing the courses were found to be higher than that of men (Donehower 1968 and McIntosh 1974).

Studies on Instructional System of Correspondence Education :

(i) Descriptive Studies :

Studies under this category had aimed at description of students' participation in instructional programmes, their study habits, problems in studies, etc. In the Open University of the U.K. (McIntosh 1974) the majority of students (70% to 80%) chose to watch and listen the instructional programmes broadcast at their leisure. Regarding, use of study centres, it was found that in the early weeks many students (50 to 60%) attended them mainly to see councellors and other students to familiarise themselves with the system. Later on, the attendants percentages receded to 30% or so. As the examination approached, some students were unable to go to study centres. A study conducted by Grahm (1971) on completion of assignments in Hermods revealed

that 46% students consulted their friends and family members and 45% consulted available literature, and 18% students left the tasks unresolved. Fortyone per cent students stated that they would have proceeded at the same pace with or without assignments, 21% students expressed that studies would have been completed slowly without assignments, and 37% students commented that assignments caused them complete the course more promptly. Very high percentage (71%) of students called for more comprehensive assignments.

Another study conducted by Idle et. al. (1978) on study pattern of successful external students in Australia revealed that an average students studied about 8 hours per week per subject. There existed much differences due to the varying sizes of the subjects based credit points. Regarding their schedule of study 60% students reported that they follow a set schedule for study. It was found that the city dwellers scheduled their studies better than the country dwellers. Most of the students stated that the text books were main sources of information for them. The use of library materials by students depended on the nature of the subject and ready availability of material. Regarding audio cassettes, it could be found that the isolated students used them more often than metropolitan and country students.

(ii) Experimentation on Instructional Processes :

A few studies were conducted to study the efficiency of certain methods of instruction over others. Simich (1965) conducted a study of the comparative effectiveness of self instructional methods of learning including PLM and the correspondence courses techniques, it was found that the correspondence students out scored the individualised instruction group but the difference achievement scores was not significant. Willingham's (1971) study aimed at studying comparative effectiveness of combination of different groups of methods viz.,
 (1) students meeting the instructors who used lecture cum discussion

approaches three times a week; (2) Students meeting tutors once in a week and taking correspondence study; (3) Students taking usual correspondence courses. No significant differences could be marked in the achievement of students who undertook these different methods of instruction. Green (1967) studied the effectiveness of correspondence study methods by using PLM, TV and homeworks/assignments. The methods were found to be equally effective in comparison to conventional methods of teaching, as there did not exist significant differences between the achievement scores of students undertaking studies through different methods.

Wilson's (1968) experimentation aimed at studying the effect of immediate feedback, planned review of lessons and voice components upon prompt response of assignments by the students and their achievement in examinations. It was found that the students included in the experimental group were somewhat more likely to start, more likely to complete and tried to complete the courses in lesser time. However, there was no additional effect upon the rate of sending assignments and achievement of those students in comparison with students of control group who took usual correspondence courses. Pfeiffer (1971) studied to determine the effect of letters and postcards of encouragement on rate of submission of assignments. It was found that neither the letters nor the postcards of encouragement resulted in a significant increase in the rate of submission of assignments.

(iii) Reaction of Students Towards Instructional System :

The reaction studies which included the responses of students entering the course, dropouts and students completing the courses indicated both positive as well as negative opinions about the instructional process of correspondence education. Regarding efficiency of correspondence studies over regular studies, most of the students expressed a high opinion about the correspondence studies provided they included better quality exercises and test materials (Glatter and Wedell 1971). On this matter, most of the students

completing the courses successfully commented similarly. However, they pointed out that better correspondence study depended upon regular study of the texts, self checking exercises followed by assignments and teachers evaluative remarks on them, etc. (Grahm 1971). Most of the students of correspondence courses opined that correspondence studies provided more effective exercise and test materials in comparison to part time oral courses. Also, they were more helpful to assess students' progress by themselves (Glatter and Wedell 1971). While reacting to instructional system most of the dropouts stated that correspondence studies required more work and they lessened their interest in the absence of classroom contact (Sloan 1966 and Pulley 1971). However, in Pulley (1971)'s study most of the dropouts stated that the quality of correspondence studies were either superior or equal to other approaches of instruction.

(iv) Problems of Students :

The studies like, Powell, 1971 and McIntosh, 1978 highlighted that several factors like students' involvement in job, lack of time and their involvement at home came on the way of academic progress of students. In another study (Idle et al 1978) it could be found that insecurity, obstructed students' concentration on their studies. They felt the need to know others' opinion on subjects; wished to hear tutors verbally clarifying the areas of difficulty; wanted to know the tutors' opinion prior to doing assignments and wanted to know exactly what was expected. It was found that, the more insecure the students, the greater was the desire for group activity. The more the distance between the institution and the places of residence of students the more insecure they were.

(v) Suggestions of Students :

A few studies (Powell 1971 and Grahm 1971) highlighted students' suggestions for improvement of correspondence studies.

These studies revealed that other than reading texts, additional reference materials such as TV, cassettes and other communication media be provided; contacts with tutors through personal visits, telephone calls etc. be encouraged; more frequent and comprehensive assignments be provided to students.

(vi) Comparison of Achievement of Correspondence Students and Regular Students :

In several studies attempts were made to compare the achievement of correspondence education students and regular students taking similar courses. The results sought to be encouraging for correspondence education students. Of course, in some cases they were at par with the results of regular course students. The former kind of results were marked in the cases of studies like Zeigel (1924), Childs (1949), Parsons, (1957), Spencer (1964), and Central African College, (1965), as statistically significant differences could be marked between mean average scores of students undertaking correspondence courses and regular courses respectively. The latter kind of results have marked in the studies of Robert, (1928), Dysinger and Bridgeman (1957), and Sheath (1965), as no significant differences were marked between the achievement scores of the students of either stream. In no case, however, negative position of correspondence students in comparison with regular students was reported.

(vii) Indepth Evaluation Studies :

There have been a recent trend in conducting indepth evaluative studies of instructional system of correspondence education of a particular course/institution. While the evaluative criteria have been varied in nature, there have been efforts to identify different dimensions of instructional programme and to arrive at a wholistic picture about this. First, in the case of evaluation of flexi study (Noble and Green 1981) its' intrinsic worth has been studied in terms of meeting the needs of target group learners, enthusiasm of teachers,

correspondence materials and available resources based instruction. Second, applying similar type of references the effectiveness of Emergency Science Programme in Guyana (1981) has been recognised. Third, the 'Science Foundation Course' of the open university, the U.K. (1981) has been found to be effective with reference to improvement of pass rate while maintaining standards; minimising the rate of dropouts; and maximising the course completion rates. Similarly, other course evaluation projects of the Open University, U.K. viz., 'Living with Technology', and 'Biological bases of Behaviour', have been reported with effective values. These have been marked through assessment of target group learners, appropriate nature of feedback, learners' positive reaction towards the courses etc. Fourth, with regard to evaluation of instructional programmes at an institution i.e. Distance University in Costa Rica (Rumble and Borden, 1983) have reported it to be effective as to a large degree it has been achieving its objectives by meeting previously unfulfilled needs at the higher level in the country.

Cost Analysis :

On this area, the findings of a worldwide study (Sims, 1978) may be worth its citation. The study revealed that most of the correspondence educating processes were established with limited financial backing from educational authorities. However, the situation changed following better results of the correspondence education systems. With regard to total costs, the education systems. With regard to total costs, the total amount of money spent on recurrent aspects was more than two and a half times that spent on capital costs. The recurring costs stood out as the prominent concern in planning, programming and budgeting for correspondence system of education.

Studies in India :

Organisational aspects: Pattern, Policies and Growth :

In his exclusive attempt Singh (1978) highlighted the need

for correspondence courses in the country, the various stages of preparation and development, the pattern of imparting education through correspondence courses, and the academic and administrative problems being faced by the Institutes. The study also made an assessment of the present position and put forward suggestions for future development and streamlining of the system. While analysis of several records, and documents enriched the value of the study the experiences of the author have been reflected in the assessment of the present position and suggestions for future development. Especially, rendering suggestions for streamlining and future development, the author expressed need for a comprehensive survey to assess educational needs, need for broadbasing correspondence courses like Business Administration, Agriculture, Economics, Education, Engineering, Health and Hygiene, History, Home Economics, Journalism etc., need for autonomy and freedom, need for strong faculty, training and retraining of correspondence teachers through intensive workshops, seminars and summer courses; national syllabus, and several ways and means for improvement of lesson writing, despatch and printing, response sheets submission and evaluation, personal contact programmes, study-cum-library centres, audio visual aids, library services, incentives to students, office set up and evaluation and assessment of the scheme.

Further conducting an empirical study on the trend of enrolment in correspondence courses from 1971 to 1976, Dutt (1976) pointed out that (1) several correspondence institutions in India were having a very low level of enrolment even after three years of their existence, in some courses even less than 2,000; (2) the overall compound growth rate of enrolment in correspondence education; was 8.5% per annum in India during the 5 year period (1971 to 1975). However, the compound growth rate at the post graduate level was 13.1%, at PUC/Intermediate level, it was 11.5% and at the graduate level, it was only 9.7% per annum; (3) While during 1971-1976 the entrance to graduate courses varied from 62% to 66%, at post graduate level it

increased from 12.8% to 15.8%; (4) the correspondence courses were usually a mere extension of the system of regular courses offered through universities.

Biswal's (1979) study, which comprised a survey of objectives, staff pattern, enrolment rate, instructional pattern, and finance revealed that

- the objectives of correspondence instructions imparted through different universities remained similar all over the country;
- most of the courses offered through correspondence system remained similar to those in formal system;
- the academic staff pattern remained more or less similar in all universities whereas differences were marked with regard to administrative staff pattern;
- enrolment rate was found to be higher in Arts, Commerce and Education disciplines in comparison to others;
- administration procedure was found to be liberal in nature. Most of the DCCs did not fix-up a maximum percentage of marks for giving admissions to a course;
- mostly the correspondence materials were presented in essay forms and were despatched to the students without following any rigid system. While in most of the cases, compulsion in submission of assignment was insisted, there was no regularity in sending off the evaluated assignments to the students before examination;
- examination pattern of correspondence courses remained similar with that of regular system;
- out of 24 Directorates 7 had regional study centres;
- all the directorates used to conduct PCPs for all courses, where lecture method of instruction was given prominence;
- only 12 directorates had library system out of which 3 had postal library system;

- the major sources of finances of the directorates were students fees, whereas meagre funds were raised through grants from the State Governments and the U.G.C.

Learners of Correspondence System : their needs and aspirations, Socio economic background; and dropouts :

On these areas a few sample surveys were conducted by Balasubramaniam (1976) on CIEFL, Anand (1979) on under graduate students of Panjab University, Biswal (1979) on M.Ed. students of the H.P. University and Pillai and Mohan (1983) on the students from all the courses offered by the M.K. University. Regarding the reasons for joining the courses Anand (1979) revealed that 98% of the Pre university sample students of Panjab University joined the correspondence courses to improve their qualifications and the rest 2% stated for their love for learning. In the same study, while asked about taking up correspondence courses in preference to regular college courses, the reasons stated by sample learners were - full time employment (43%), dropping out from the colleges for certain reasons (17%); non availability of admissions in the regular colleges (14%) etc. seventy two percent of these students hoped to gain better employment by undergoing higher studies and the rest 28% hoped to pursue further studies. Pillai and Mohan (1983) stated more explicitly about the hopes of correspondence students of M.K. University, such as education (39%), social (18%), psychological (17%), economic (16%), and occupational (9%). The indicators for these hopes were learners desires for (1) improving qualifications (26%), (2) learning further (21%), (3) getting financial benefits (11%), improving status (1%), (4) promoting career (6%), (5) utilising leisure (5%), (6) fulfilment of demands (5%), (7) changing the occupations (5%), (8) better job opportunities (4%) etc.

The studies conducted on the background of learners of Panjab University, M.K. University, H.P. University and CIEFL revealed that most of the students belonged to the age group of

20 to 30 (Anand, 1979 and Pillai and Mohan 1983); the major chunk of population were men, whereas women constituted a very meagre section i.e., 6% to 37% (Pillai and Mohan 1983); in total the SC and ST students' population was less than 10% (Anand 1979 and Pillai and Mohan 1983), the ratio of married students to unmarried ones was 1:3 (Anand 1979); 65% students were employed ones (Pillai and Mohan 1983) and belonged to different vocations like teachers (27%), administrative staff (11%), housewives (7%), self-employed (6%), bank employees (3%), business (2%) other educational services (2%), Army (2%) and employed in private undertakings (3%). On an average, the students belonged to lower middle class background (Anand 1979, Biswal 1979 and Pillai and Mohan 1983).

Balasubramaniam (1976) found that during 1973-75 the dropout rate in CIEFL varied from 57% to 66%. Further, he could identify the nonpayment of semester fees as major reasons for dropouts. However, there were around 20% to 40% dropouts who could discontinue for reasons other than this.

Instructional Processes :

Most of the studies conducted so far in India on correspondence education have focussed attention on description of correspondence system of instruction, reaction of students and teachers, comparison of achievements etc. The studies falling on this category were conducted by Shashi (1972) on University of Delhi, Bhusan and Sharma (1976) on PCP of H.P. University, Dutt (1976) on 7 different universities of India, Anand (1979) on Panjab University, Biswal (1979) on all the directorates of 24 universities of India, Mathur (1979) on Panjab University, Panda (1980) on Utkal University, Pandey (1980) on 7 Universities of India, Pillai and Mohan (1983) on M.K. University, Vydehi (1984) on S.V. University and Sarwal (1984) on CIEFL.

Regarding study hours of students only Anand (1979) had conducted a small sample survey and reported that on an average a Pre university student of Panjab University spent 259 hours per session for completion of studies. In addition to this the student might be taking 70 hours for writing assignments. Further, with regard to study procedures Anand (1979) revealed that 81% of the Pre University students depended upon the instructional processes of correspondence system only and the rest 19% depended upon coaching academy in addition to correspondence system. Fortyfive per cent students reported to study other notes and digests available in the market in addition to the lesson scripts.

Regarding the usefulness of correspondence lessons it was found that in all cases most of the students appreciated them (Anand 1979, Biswal, 1979 and Pillai and Mohan 1983), while in the case of H.P. University and Kashmir University assignment system had been found to be useful by most of the students (Biswal 1979) it was not the case with M.K.University (Pillai and Mohan 1983), Analysing the rate of submission of assignments of Delhi University during 1974-75, Dutt (1976) found that 45.37% students submitted at least 3 assignments per head and nearly 55% students did not submit a single assignment. As stated by Dutt (1976) and Biswal (1979) all the institutes of correspondence Courses had provision of PCPs for all the courses. The PCP attendance analysis done by Anand (1979) revealed that in Panjab University from each zone around 40% of Pre-University Students sent their consent to attend the PCP and around 18% students turned up on the first day of registration. However, the attendance gradually decreased over 10 days duration of PCP i.e., only 40% of the registered attendants of 1st days remained present till the 10th day. In all the cases (Anand 1979, Biswal 1979, Mathur 1979, Pillai and Mohan 1983) most of the students had expressed positive reaction towards the usefulness of PCP. Mathur (1979)'s study had identified such usefulness in the following ways; as stated by most of the students:

- to help in the preparation for examination;
- to cover important and major topics of the syllabus;
- to have deeper understanding over the subject; and
- solving other academic problems.

These areas coincided with the reasons for which the students attended the PCP.

On the opinion of students regarding PCP different studies revealed contradictory facts. Especially, with regard to compulsion in attendance of PCP most of the M.Ed. students of H.P.University welcomed it (Bhusan and Sharma, 1976) where as the fact was reverse in the case of Panjab University (Anand, 1979; and Mathur, 1979). Regarding attendance most of the Panjab University students opined for organisation of PCP twice in a session with 7 days duration each (Anand 1979) where as in H.P.University most of the M.Ed. students opined for 15 days duration of PCP in each semester (Bhusan and Sharma 1976). Other common results as reflected by the above studies on PCPs were that: most of the students preferred coverage of all the topics in gist during the PCP while giving prior importance to difficult topics; lectures should be followed by discussion; Correspondence institute should arrange boarding and lodging for the students; library facility be made available to students during PCP; experts of repute in various areas should be invited to deliver lectures in PCP etc.

Most of the students who had completed correspondence courses from M.K.University found different aspects of correspondence instruction viz., lesson scrips, assignments, PcPs, regional study centres and radio broadcast programmes useful, (Pillai and Mohan 1983).

Focusing on the problems faced by the heads of the institutions and departments teachers and students, Biswal (1979) revealed that :

- identification of experts to write the lessons, selection of appropriate number of teachers for evaluation of assignments, delay in receiving the assignments from students and evaluation of assignments, lack of co-ordination between directorates and regular teaching departments of the university were the problems for most of the heads of the institutions and departments of all directorates;
- insufficient time provided for writing lessons, excess number of assignments given for correction and limited time provided for completing specified courses during PCP were the problems for most of the teachers of all the directorates;
- supply of inadequate length of correspondence materials, lesser time provided for writing assignments, inadequate guidelines given for writing assignments, nonavailability of sufficient reference books were the subjects of complaint of most of the M.Ed. students of H.P. University.

Vydehi (1984) evaluated the presentation of 1st year degree general English course of S.V. University with regard to satisfaction of students' needs, attainment of objectives of course, and nature of the instructional processes and evaluation procedures adopted. Analysis of aims of English teaching, methods of instruction, reaction of students, and teachers and observation of PCP, were done to locate the weaknesses of the present structure of curriculum. The author prepared an alternative 'student active instructional format' and a new type of distance teaching material. The achievement comparison of students undertaking conventional approach and modified approach revealed results in favour of the modified approach. A similar kind of study has been undertaken by Sarwal (1984) for preparation of teacher training correspondence course units for English language teaching in CIEFL.

The achievement studies reflected divergent facts regarding the strength of correspondence instruction in comparison to regular course instruction in India. For instance, Sashi (1972)

and Panda (1980) found no significant differences between the achievement of undergraduate students of correspondence and regular streams of Delhi University and Utkal University respectively. However, in the cases of rest of the studies mixed results were identified. Anand (1979) found that in the Panjab University the pass percentage of correspondence students were lower than that of overall university level with regard to Pre-university and B.A. I Courses, whereas the facts were reverse with regard to B.A.II and B.A.III courses. The second class holders' percentages were higher in the cases of Pre-university, B.A.I and B.A. III courses of correspondence streams. Biswal (1979) found that there was no significant difference between academic achievement of correspondence and regular stream students with regard to M.A. English and B.A. courses of Punjabi University. However, the regular stream students of M.A. Punjabi course and B.A. course of Punjabi University and M.K. University respectively had scored higher than the correspondence stream students of similar courses. Pandey (1980) found that at over all course levels in Meerut, Delhi, Panjab, Punjabi, Bombay, Srivenkateswara and Madurai Kamraj Universities, the pass per centages of correspondence streams were higher than those of regular streams. Further, it was found that the proportion of third division holders was higher in correspondence stream than that of regular stream. Comparatively the regular streams produced more graduates with first and second divisions.

Economics of Correspondence Education :

Dutt (1978) compared average fee per student and average expenditure per student in Rajasthan, H.P., Panjab and Delhi universities. The study revealed that only in the case of Delhi University the expenditure per student was higher than the fee charged per student. In the rest of the cases the position was reverse. The major area of expenditures in all these universities had been - salary of teaching and non-teaching staff; expenditure on preparation of learning materials;

payment for PCP and library.

The unit cost analysis which was done by Biswal (1979) and Pandey (1980) revealed in general that the unit costs of correspondence courses were very much lower than that of regular courses in the case of all sample universities. Further, Pandey (1980)'s study which was more explicit with regard to such analysis revealed that:

- There was significant difference between two streams with regard to recurring income, correspondence courses supported themselves without government subsidy and mostly depended on students' contribution. However, with regard to non-recurring income no difference was marked between two streams. On total income, there existed differences between two streams;
- The differences in recurring and non-recurring expenditures of regular and correspondence education were not different although their heads of expenditure were not similar;
- Significant differences existed between per student expenditure on direct-cost, indirect cost and total cost at enrolled and appeared level, whereas no significant difference was marked with regard to direct cost per student for pass level. However, there existed differences between per student expenditure on indirect cost and total cost at pass level;
- There was no difference in terms of wastage cost per student at direct, indirect and total levels of two streams;
- The direct cost per student (failure) was not significant, but indirect cost and total cost per student (failure) were significant between two streams;
- At all enrolled, appeared, passed and graduation level, the correspondence education was found to be more economical, as the total cost benefit per student was Rs.2823.14 at undergraduate stage for the year under study (1978).

While commenting upon the less expensive nature of correspondence courses and the nature of the courses provided at present, Gupta (1978) had apprehended that 'the cheap education through correspondence only widens the economic inequality in India'. In his study, Gupta (1978) remarked about introduction of courses which could strengthen the agriculture sector of the country.

An Overview :

The above presentation gives a hint about the research efforts on certain major aspects of correspondence education at university stage. From the global point of view, it can be noticed that, still, such efforts stand at initial stage. At this stage mostly, the major focus of researches had been exploration of facts on different aspects of the system, viz., organisational pattern and growth; assessment of needs of learners, learners' needs for joining the courses, and characteristics of learners and dropouts; different aspects of instructional system; and achievement of learners. There is little doubt about the contribution of these studies in supplying first hand information about the nature and status of correspondence education in different countries. The facts arrived at also tell about the functioning pattern of such systems to some extent. However, most of these studies have been conducted in isolated form. They, too, have chosen different variables for investigation in unrelated form. As a result, the complexities involved in the organisation and functioning of the instructional system have not been brought to the focus. Whether, at institutional level or at national level, very few efforts have been made to develop comprehensive view about the functioning of the system.

There have been quite a number of studies aiming at evaluation of the system. While, most of them have considered achievement as the major criterion of evaluation, in some cases the opinions of participants of the system have been considered as other parameters of evaluation. Mostly, the studies have followed product oriented evaluation approaches. In the absence of process based, and appropriate context oriented parameters of

evaluation, most of these studies have failed to prompt the policy makers for bringing about improvement in the functioning of the system. However, the recent intensive approaches of evaluation have been reflected in the studies of Noble and Green (1981), Brophy and Dudley (1981), Scanlon (1981), Kirkup (1981) and Jones and O'shea (1981). These studies have sought to make a headway in the field of evaluation of instructional system of correspondence education.

Especially, in the Indian context, a small number of studies have been come accross. The studies conducted so far, are either generalising or institutional type. The studies of first category (Dutt, 1976, 1977, 1978; Singh, 1978; Biswal, 1979; and Pandey, 1980) have explored certain base line data about the system in piecemeal form. Mostly, they have provided hints for undertaking further investigations on certain broad issues cutting accross the institutional variations. Such issues can be identified with planning and policies of the system at national level; introduction of courses; terms and conditions of different courses; application of technology in instruction; production and dissemination of instructional materials; collaboration of different agencies and correspondence institutions for management of instructional system; use of appropriate evaluation procedures; cost-effectiveness etc. Also, they have generated scope for looking at certain context oriented problems at institutional level. However, in spite of the availability of these generalised studies, little attempt has been made to analyse and consolidate the facts as explored by all the studies on different aspects of the system at national level.

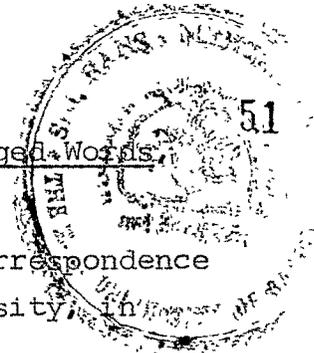
On the other hand, there have been a few institutional level studies (Sashi, 1972; Bhusan and Sharma, 1976; Pandey, 1980; Pillai and Mohan, 1983) which have concentrated on specific issues of particular institutions without taking into consideration several interacting forces existing in the institution. They

have failed to provide illuminative pictures about different aspects of the functioning of the system. Therefore several crucial problems related to policy decisions remain unresolved at institutional level.

On analysing the studies conducted so far (and the major concern of present day system) it has been found that several pertinent questions, raised in the previous chapter, with regard to organisation and management of instructional system; accessibility of the system; motivation of learners; rate of completion of courses, the nature of instruction with special reference to different instructional components; the outcome of the system etc., indicating the effectiveness of the system, remain to be answered. Such questions are: How far the system has grown taking into consideration outsider environmental forces?, How much the target group learners have been benefited by the system? What are the motivating factors that prompt the students to join and continue with specific courses? What are the factors that hinder students to continue with the studies?, How far the system has been successful in providing appropriate instructional facilities for attainment of several objectives of instruction? With special reference to - organisation and management of instruction? evaluation procedures, students' co-operation with instructional processes? - Students' achievement? - private and institutional costs? comparison of achievements of correspondence students with those of regular courses? and comparison costs of correspondence courses with those of regular courses? What are the pitfalls in the existing framework of instruction and what corrective measures can be taken for improvement of the system on different aspects? The present study has made a venture in treating these questions as major thrust of investigation. It, too, highlights several methodological concerns, as stated in earlier chapter, in the context of arriving at appropriate answers to these questions. It can be presumed that every system functions in the context of a particular environ-

mental set up. Moreover, the interactions of several internal and external forces in a given set up result in the functioning of the system. Thus, several problems that are resultant of such interactions are to be tackled through deeper understanding of different aspects of the system. In addition to this, with a view to taking corrective measures for improvement of the system, much emphasis is to be given on understanding of the process aspects of the system on the whole. Keeping in view, these methodological concerns, the present study has adopted intensive approaches of inquiry in the context of one institution. The major focus of the study has been: to trace the growth and development of the institution under investigation since its inception; to develop an indepth understanding about the organisational set up, accessibility of the system, motivation of learners in joining and continuing with the course; the dropouts; the nature of instruction with reference to different components involved therein; and the financial management; and to evaluate the functioning of the system with reference to certain specific criteria.

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