

Design of the Study

As presented in the first chapter, the major objectives of the study were to conduct an intensive investigation on different components of the correspondence system and to evaluate these components with reference to certain specific criteria viz., a rational model of an ideal system of correspondence education; perception of the participants over the functioning of the system; and comparability with alternative stream of instruction. To attain these objectives the case study approach was followed by the researcher. In this process, effort was made to highlight all significant aspects of the system operating in specific environmental context. Also, an evaluative effort was made in the context of parameters stated above. The present chapter aims at giving details about the nature of evidences that were gathered through different kinds of instruments, the procedures followed in construction of tools, the sources from which evidences were gathered, the sampling procedures adopted, the conditions in which the evidences were collected in order to meet the above stated objectives and general procedures followed in analysis of data.

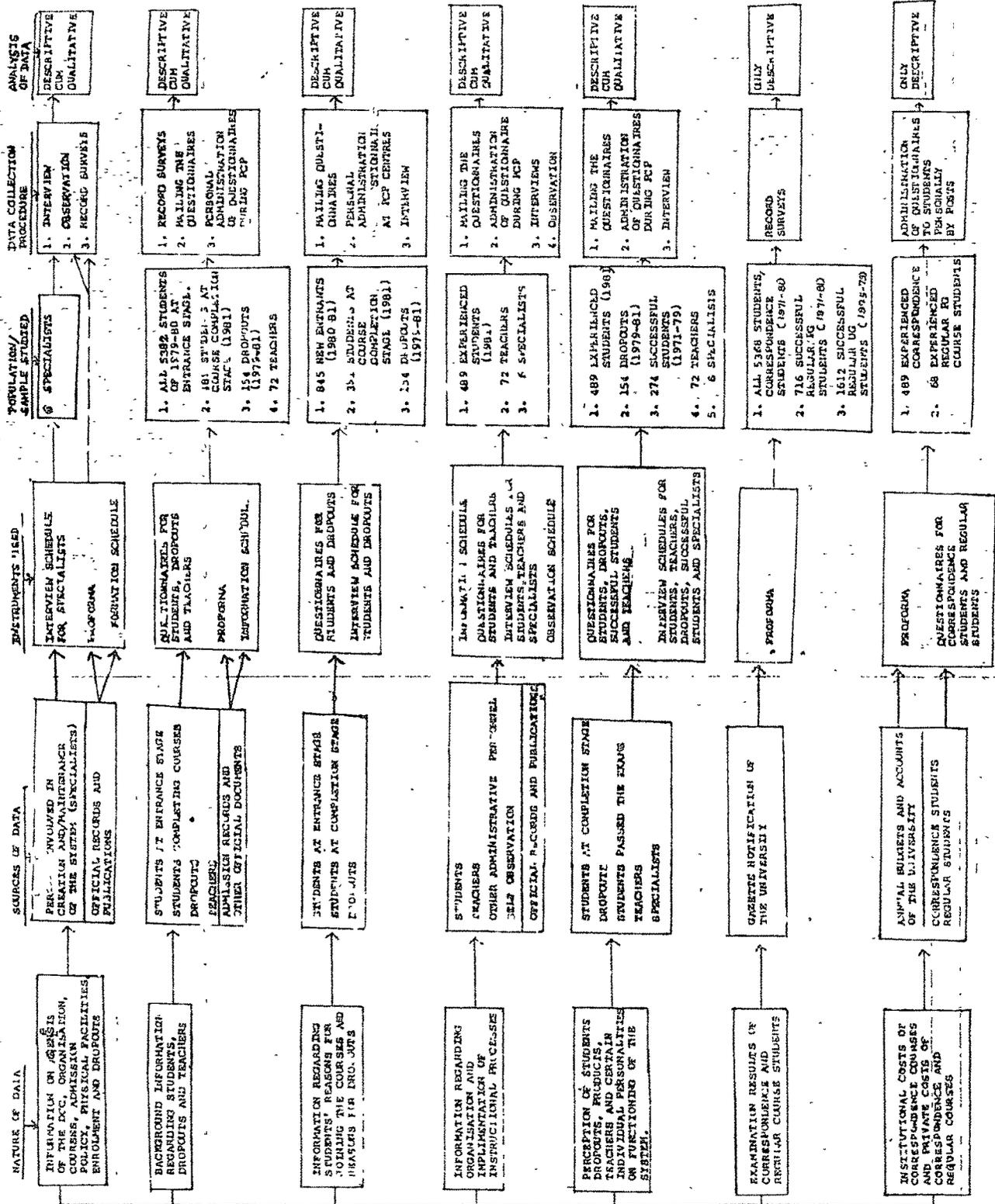
A summary statement about the design of the study is presented in Flow chart No.1.

(I) Nature of Data :

Keeping in view the objectives of the study extensive data were to be collected for investigation. Such as :

- Information pertaining to the genesis of the institution, organisational structure, courses offered, admission policies, physical facilities, other facilities provided for academic growth of the staff, enrolment rate and dropout rate;

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- Background information regarding students just entering the courses, students completing the courses, students discontinuing the courses and personnel involved in instructional programmes of DCC;
- Information regarding students' reasons for joining correspondence courses and students' reasons for discontinuing the courses;
- Information regarding organisation and implementation of instructional processes;
- Perception of experienced students, dropouts, successful students, teachers and some specialists involved in creation and/or conduct of the institution regarding the functioning and out come of the system;
- Examination results of correspondence course and regular course students; and
- Information regarding Institutional costs, and private costs of correspondence courses, and private costs of regular course students.

(II) Sources of Data :

The sources from where data were collected at different stages can be classified into three broad categories viz., Persons, Official records and Publications, and the activities going on the institution. The details of the different kind of sources are presented hereunder :

(a) persons :

Keeping in view the objectives, evidences were to be gathered from different groups of persons. The persons who have been regarded as the sources of data, have been related to the functioning of the correspondence system of education in one or the other way. These persons are:

- the specialists in management of correspondence system viz., the founder vice-chancellor of the H.P. University, the present Director, the former Directors, the former Assistant Directors, and an Executive Council Member;
- the deputy registrars, assistant registrars and superintendents of different sections of the DCC and University offices;
- the full time teaching staff of the DCC and part time teaching staff of the Directorate working inside and outside the university campus institutions;
- the students who continued with their courses, the students who discontinued the courses and the students who have completed the courses successfully; and
- the station Director and Broadcast Officer of the All India Radio (AIR) Simla.

(b) Official records, Publications and other Written Documents :

The official records of the DCC and university offices studied for the study are of different categories, such as : admission registers, filled up admission forms submitted by the students, files maintained for the students on individual basis, contact programme files, assignments submitted by students, evaluated assignments, correspondence files related to writing of lessons, files pertaining to students' enquiries, examination files, gazette notification of examination results etc.

The publications collected for the study from the DCC and the university offices include printed lessons of all post-graduate and undergraduate courses, printed references and supplementary materials, annual reports of the university, annual budgets and accounts of the university, guidelines provided to the students, prospectus of the DCC, prospectus of the university, progress reports submitted by the DCC to the University Grants Commission, reports of the seminars and workshops organised by

the DCC, handouts about the DCC, advertisements in the news paper etc.

Other written materials and documents referred for the study comprise guidelines provided to the teachers for reviewing and translating the lessons, the tariff of remuneration, executive council minutes regarding the DCC, Syllabi of different courses, cyclostyled letters and other necessary materials supplied to students from time to time, lecture notes supplied to students during PCPs, annual reports of the DCC, annual budgets of the DCC, library records and its stock register etc.

(C) Activities of the Institution :

The functioning of the administrative section of the DCC, the daily activities of the fulltime teaching staff, teaching programmes organised during PCP, other activities organised during PCP, and the activities in the library have been treated as the primary sources for collecting evidences about the functioning of the DCC.

(III) Instrumentation :

Several kinds of tools - structured and non-structured were used for data collection. Such tools were:

- Information Schedule;
- Proforma;
- Questionnaires;
- Observation Schedule; and
- Interview Schedules.

In the process of preparation of the tools maximum concentration was paid to the utility of different kinds of tools with regard to different purposes of the study. Different tools were to take final shape at different stages of data collection. In the initial stage, taking into consideration different objectives and sub-objectives of the study all the relevant aspects on which

data were needed were traced out. It was done through the study of available literature related to present study and certain first hand information available on the functioning of the institution under study. The classified list of different components of investigation for each objective and sub-objective and the proposed tools were scrutinised by the researcher. In this process, comments rendered by two experienced teachers involved in teaching and organisational activities of the Directorate were referred to with due consideration. In the first phase different tools viz., Information Schedule, Proformas, Observation Schedule, Interview Schedules for students, dropouts, successful students, and specialists were prepared. These tools were presented before a group of experts to examine whether the expected data with relation to different specified components of the institution could be collected through them. The group of experts consisted of two senior teaching staff of the Directorate, two senior research students of the Centre of Advanced Study in Education (CASE) and the supervisor of the Project.

On the basis of the observation made by the experts necessary modifications were done in these tools. Further, personal experiences of the researcher gained through his visits to the DCC was useful in framing the questionnaires meant for present students, successful students, dropouts and teachers. These questionnaires were presented before a team of experts consisting of one Professor of Education and one Senior lecturer of History being involved in instructional activities of the Directorate, one reader, two lecturers and six senior research scholars of the Centre of Advanced Study in Education (CASE) and the supervisor of the project for checking the content validity of the items set in the questionnaires. In addition to this, their opinion regarding the language, the pattern of presentation and the mode of analysis of data collected through those tools were sought from the experts. Suggestions of the experts were considered for proper modification of the questionnaires.

The questions set in the questionnaires were in English, Since, most of the undergraduate, and Hindi and Sanskrit Post-graduate students were not properly acquainted with English language, it was thought appropriate to translate the questionnaires meant for them into Hindi. For translation the researcher sought co-operation from one research student of Hindi literature and a Hindi method teacher of the M.S. University of Baroda. The content validity of the Hindi version questionnaire was checked against the English version questionnaire by a language expert of northern region having mastery over both the languages. The Hindi version questionnaires were duly finalised according to the suggestions rendered by the expert.

The details regarding the purposes of tools, their components, framing of items and the mode of responses are presented in the following sections.

Information Schedule : This schedule has been used for collection of information regarding the creation of the Directorate, its administrative and academic structure, the instructional and evaluation processes, the physical facilities, etc., The information schedule consists of the following sections:

1. Creation of DCC,
2. Courses offered,
3. Admission procedures,
4. Correspondence Texts,
5. Assignments,
6. Personal Contact Programmes,
7. Follow up and Guidance,
8. Library Facilities,
9. Examination,
10. Staff Pattern,
11. Physical Facilities.

Each of the sections of the information schedule has several enquiring points. At the time of preparation of the tool, these enquiring points were analysed vividly and put in sequential order for smooth data collection and analysis purposes. The information schedule is presented in Appendix IV.

Proforma : Five proforma viz., Background Information about students, Annual Budgets and Accounts (1975 to 1980), Background Information about Teaching and Administrative staff, Enrolment and Dropouts Data and Examination results have been used for collection of several baseline data.

(i) Background Information about Students :

This proforma aimed at gathering basic information about students' background available in the admission forms filled in by the students. The information were concerned with students' age, nationality, sex, caste, nature of occupation, region i.e. rural and urban and state.

The tool is presented in Appendix V.

(ii) Annual Budgets and Accounts (1975-76 to 1979-80) :

The tool was used to gather information about the statement of revenue and expenditure of the Directorate as presented in the annual budgets and accounts of the University and Official records of the Directorate since 1975-76 to 1979-80. The proforma has two sections viz., Revenue and Expenditure. The revenue section is further classified into (1) Directorate's account, (2) University account and (3) Students' account. The expenditure section is classified into three sub-units viz., (1) Salaries, (2) Other charges and (3) Remunerations. (See Appendix VI).

(iii) Background Information about Teaching and Administrative staff:

The proforma was used to gather information regarding background information of the personnel involved in teaching and non-teaching works of the Directorate, on fulltime and parttime basis since 1971-72.

The tool is presented in Appendix VII.

(iv) Enrolment and Dropouts :

The proforma was used to gather information about annual enrolment and dropouts on course basis from the year 1971-1981. The tool is presented in Appendix VIII.

(v) Examination Results :

The tool was meant for gathering evidences on examination scores of the Directorate, University teaching departments and affiliated colleges students on year wise basis. Further, information regarding the number of students who appeared and passed the annual examinations for several years were to be gathered through this tool. The tool is presented in Appendix IX.

Questionnaires :

Seven questionnaires were utilised for data collection from different groups of respondents. The questionnaires were :

- (1) Background Information of Correspondence Students;
- (2) Reasons for Selection of Correspondence Courses;
- (3) Students' Perception of Correspondence System of Education (I);
- (4) Teachers' Perception of Correspondence System of Education;
- (5) Students' Perception of Correspondence System of Education (II);
- (6) Successful Students' Perception of Correspondence System of Education;
- (7) Private Costs of Regular Post-graduate Students of H.P. University.

(1) Background Information of Correspondence Students :

The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather certain information concerning the student himself/herself, his/her family members and his/her locality. The information sought about the student himself/herself were regarding his/her address, age, caste, marital status, dependence of family members on him/her, academic achievements, employment, occupation and income. The

information sought concerning family members of the student were: their education, employment, occupation and income. The information sought regarding the locality of the student were - on the demography, different kinds of institutions situated therein, the distance of student's place of residence from the nearest higher education institution/s, District Head Quarters, Towns and Cities, and conveyance facilities available in the locality. Through this tool frequencies with respect to different categories were to be calculated.

The questionnaire is presented in Appendix - X.

(ii) Reasons for Selection of Correspondence Courses :

This questionnaire was prepared with the intention of seeking responses from the students regarding their reasons of joining the correspondence courses, and their preference of correspondence courses to the day/evening colleges/ private system of appearing in the examinations, the influences made upon them by different human sources for selection of correspondence courses, and their special experiences, if any in selection of correspondence courses. These aspects were presented in four parts: The part 1 consisted of 13 items concerning different purposes of higher education. The items were framed keeping in view the 'academic', 'social' and 'economic' aims of higher education. For this, the objectives of higher education as highlighted by the University Education Commission (1948-50), the Education Commission (1964-66) and in some selected literatures related to distance education were scrutinised by the researcher. Out of 13 items presented in this part the first five represented academic purposes, the next four indicated social purposes and the last four denoted economic purposes. Part 2 of the questionnaire included 12 items: different factors that influenced students to prefer correspondence courses to regular courses and private system of appearing in the examinations. The factors considered were: Students' age and maturation, their interest, availability of time, financial problems, adjustment problems, absence of other suitable alternative channel of pursuing higher education etc. A perusal of tools

used in other studies related to the theme of this part and informal interview with a group of correspondence students were considered for construction of these items. Part III indicated the alternatives regarding the personal sources that influenced the students in selection of correspondence course. Part IV included an open ended question regarding the students' special experiences in choosing the course. For first two parts of the questionnaire the students were asked to rank their responses, for third part they were asked to state direct responses, through tickmarks and for fourth part, they were asked to respond in open form.

It was decided to consider only first five ranks of the reasons stated in first two sections for the purpose of study. In this context, some weightage was to be given for different ranks according to following principle: 1st preference, 5, 2nd preference 4, 3rd preference 3, 4th preference 2 and 5th preference 1.

The questionnaire with English and Hindi versions have been presented in Appendix XI (a and b). In case of responses to 3rd section frequencies were calculated. The responses to 4th section were to be analysed qualitatively.

(iii) Students' Perception of Correspondence System of Education (I)

The questionnaire aimed at collecting evidences about students' perception of the usefulness, limitations and problems concerned with different aspects of correspondence education. Also, their suggestions on these aspects had been sought through this tool. The questionnaire was divided into ten sections:

- Enrolment,
- Orientation,
- Syllabus,
- Lessonscripts,
- Assignments,
- Personal Contact Programmes,

- Evaluation,
- Library Studies,
- Finance and
- Courses offered.

- (1) Enrolment : In this section, the information sought through the items was confined to the difficulties faced by the students regarding their enrolment, and their reasons, and to their suggestions for enrolment procedures. The researchers' observation of present practices of enrolment and informal discussion with the students were the basis for the presentation of items in this section.
- (2) Orientation : The items included in this section sought opinion of students regarding usefulness of postal orientation, Directorate's promptness in responding to their queries, and their suggestions for improvement of effective orientation system. The observation of present orientation system and interaction with a group of students were kept in mind while framing such items.
- (3) Syllabus : The items included in this part were concerned with the information from the students regarding timing of receiving the syllabus, usefulness of its content, adequacy of the syllabus with regard to its completion in stipulated term and their suggestions regarding improvement of presentation of the syllabus. The study of present form of syllabus of different courses were considered as the basis for framing the items.
- (4) Lesson Scripts : This section dealt with the items that aimed at studying students' perception about the presentation of lesson scripts, usefulness of lesson scripts, difficulties in studying the lesson scripts and suggested references, present practices of despatch of lessons and their suggestions about the improvement of lesson scripts. For framing the items there was a detailed study of present system of despatch

of lessons, scrutinizing a fair number of lessons and informal interaction with students and teachers of correspondence courses.

- (5) Assignments : The students, in this section, were asked to opine on the usefulness of answering the assignments, use of different kinds of materials in preparation of answers, the nature of difficulties encountered therein, timing of receiving back the checked assignments, usefulness of evaluated response sheets and their suggestions about the improvement of present system of assignments. Study of the nature of assignments; evaluated response sheets and the process of the despatch of assignments, plus the informal interactions with the assignment evaluators and students were useful in framing the items of this section.
- (6) Personal Contact Programmes (PCP) : The items presented in this section aimed at studying students' opinion on present practices of teaching processes during PCP, adequacy of duration of daily teaching programmes, timetable, duration of the PCP, library facilities, and organisation of co-curricular activities; students' difficulties in attending the PCP and participating in teaching learning processes and their suggestions regarding the arrangement of venue, duration, timetable, attendance rules, methods of teaching, students' strength in each class, medium of instruction and introduction of co-curricular activities. There was an additional section in the questionnaire for the students who could not attend the PCPs. In this section the non-attendants of the PCPs were requested to state the reasons for not attending the PCP. The items were framed on the basis of observation of PCP centres when functioning, consideration with organisational procedures in the directorate, informal discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff of the Directorate, and a select group of students.

- (7) Evaluation : The items included in this section intended to gather opinion of students on adequacy of present system of evaluation, especially with regard to its internal and continuous features. The content of the items were related to the condition of submission of assignments, addition of different kinds of tasks to the present form of tasks given through assignments, feedback mechanism, self evaluation and terms and conditions of examinations. The study of evaluation procedures and conditions as stated in the university Handbooks and the nature of evaluated assignments; and interaction with the examiners, assignment evaluators and students were the sources for framing such items.
- (8) Library Studies : In this section, the students were asked to opine on the present library facilities and their difficulties in availing the facilities. They were asked to extend suggestions for improvement of library study facilities. Observation of present library activities, its procedures, and interactions with students have been useful in framing the items of this section.
- (9) Finance : Through this section, queries were made about the annual expenditure of students on all appropriate means related to (1) Postal charges, (2) Purchasing books and stationeries, (3) travelling expenditure, (4) boarding and lodging charges, (5) private tuition charges and (6) any other. The information gathered through this aspect of the questionnaire is to be utilised for measurement of Private Cost of correspondence students.
- (10) Courses Offered : This section was meant for getting students opinion about introduction of new avenues of correspondence education in which they may like to continue with, in future. There has been classification of Post-graduate and Undergraduate level courses into four categories viz., applied courses, vocational and professional courses, courses related to aesthetic values and courses related to general disciplines. Further, each of these sections have

been classified into different subsections. Such as the applied studies has two sections viz., applied social and behavioural sciences and applied natural sciences, the vocational and professional courses has 6 sections viz., management, agriculture and allied, engineering and technology, teacher education, law, and miscellaneous courses; courses related to aesthetic values have 5 branches viz., literary criticism, art appreciation, music, printing and sculpture; and the courses related to general disciplines has three branches viz., natural sciences, social and behavioural sciences and humanities. In total, the list contains the name of 88 courses. Moreover, the students are asked whether they are interested in pursuing PH.D. and M.Phil. degree courses through correspondence system. The courses under above mentioned categories have been chosen on the basis of available literature on problems and issues of modification of university level courses. The list of the courses has been prepared through a scrutiny of courses offered at university level, both through formal and non-formal streams, in India and abroad. The classification of courses has been done keeping into consideration the major purposes of different courses and homogeneity in the nature of various courses.

In each section of the questionnaire as stated above, the questions were set in both closed and open ended forms. In closed forms of questions the alternative expected answers were provided where the respondents were asked to put tick mark against the suitable alternative/s, or stating yes or no, or presenting a rating statement on three/four point scales. Most of closed form questions were followed by questions seeking students' reasons for their responses. Frequencies of responses to different closed form questions were to be calculated. With regard to open ended questions, responses were to be categorised qualitatively.

The English and Hindi version of questionnaires have been presented in Appendix XII (a and b).

(IV) Teachers' Perception of Correspondence System of Education :

The questionnaire aimed at gathering evidences on teachers' perception on the usefulness and limitations of the present practices of correspondence education programme, their difficulties in carrying out instructional and evaluation activities, and their suggestions for bringing out improvement in the system. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part dealt with information regarding the background of the teachers i.e., their educational qualifications, teaching and research experiences, nature of the instructional activities they performed in the Directorate etc. The second part consisted of six sections on questions related to teachers' perception of the system. They were :

- Courses of studies
- Lesson Scripts
- Assignments
- PCPs
- Evaluation
- Facilities for Professional growth of DCC teachers.

- (1) Courses of Studies : In this section, the teachers were asked to react on the syllabi of their own subjects, especially with regard to the modifications of the units of the syllabi, adequacy of the contents and flexibility of courses of studies. The items were framed on the basis of study of present syllabi recommended for different courses at postgraduate and undergraduate levels.
- (2) Lesson Scripts : This section seeks teachers opinion on the adequacy of presentation of lesson scripts with regard to its: introduction, nature of content, style of presentation, and language; adequacy of the guidelines provided for writing, reviewing and translating the lessons; and their suggestions for bringing about improvement in the presentation of lesson scripts, and financial and academic incentives given to the for preparation of lesson scripts. The items

presented have been framed taking into consideration the role of lesson scripts in correspondence education, the present practices carried out in the process of writing, reviewing and translation of lessons and the role of the concerned teachers therein.

- (3) Assignments : This aspect dealt with the items meant to study the reactions of assignment evaluators to the present system of evaluation of assignments. Also, the teachers were asked about the problems they faced in connection with evaluation of assignments and their suggestions for solution of those problems. The scrutiny of evaluated assignments has been helpful in preparation of these items.
- (4) PCPs : In this section, the teachers were asked to opine on the strategy adopted in selection of the topic, organisation of teaching activities and guidance provided to the students. Also, they are asked to state about their problems both academic and administrative and their suggestion for solution of these problems. The items have been framed on the basis of observation of PCPs and interaction with the instructors.
- (5) Evaluation : In this section, the teachers were asked to react to the present practices of evaluation of students' performances. The aspects covered under this section were about the nature of assignments, coverage of syllabus in assignments, regularity in evaluation of assignments, improvement in feedback mechanism, the place of assignments in consideration to the award of degree/certificates, assignment evaluation and documentation of students progress, internal assessment system and the role of assignments therein, self evaluation, nature of questions asked in the semester/annual examinations and the introduction of new system of evaluation. The teachers were also asked to state about their difficulties with regard to their role as evaluators and their suggestions for solution of those problems, considering the above aspects.

(6) Facilities for Professional Growth of Teachers : This section aimed at getting reaction of DCC full time teaching staff regarding the facilities provided by the DCC for their academic growth and sharing the responsibilities of various activities in the DCC. They were asked to opine on the adequacy of the facilities provided to them in different areas like, library studies, writing and reviewing the lesson scripts, delivering lectures in post-graduate teaching departments and the PCPs, guidance of research works in the post-graduate teaching department, group interaction with the staff of the DCC etc. Also, they were asked about their preferences to continue with the DCC over joining in other institutions. While the answers to close form questions were to be calculated frequencywise, the responses to open ended questions were to be categorised qualitatively. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix XII.

(V) Students' Perception of the Correspondence System of Education (II) :

This questionnaire was meant for the students who could not continue with their study till the completion of course. There have been two parts in the questionnaire. The first part intends to gather the students' responses regarding the reasons why they could not continue with the course and their suggestions for changes in the system which could enable them to join the correspondence education again. The second part of the questionnaire includes questions related to the background information of the students. For this, the questionnaire No.1, as stated earlier, has been utilised as it is.

In Part I, items regarding the reasons of discontinuing the correspondence education have been framed taking into consideration all possible alternatives. The points referred for the items are: nature of courses, lessons scripts, assignment interaction system, PCP, library facilities, teacher-students interaction and student-student interaction, time factor and its limitations, correspondence with DCC, availability of alternative means, examination problems,

economic problems and personal problems. In addition to this, there are open ended questions regarding students' special experiences that influenced them to drop out of the correspondence courses. The suggestions of the students have been sought under different heads like introduction of new courses, improvement of course patterns, improvement teaching system etc.

The items included in this section of the questionnaire were framed on the basis of informal interviews with a selected number of dropouts of the correspondence courses. The responses to close questions were to be analysed on frequency basis and the responses to open ended questions were to be categorised qualitatively.

The tool is presented in the Appendix XIV (a and b).

(VI) Successful Students' Perception of Correspondence System of Education :

This questionnaire is intended for the students who have completed the undertaken correspondence course successfully. Through this questionnaire, these students' opinion has been sought on four aspects viz., purpose of opting for correspondence courses, fulfillment of the purpose at completion of the courses, reasons for non-usefulness of correspondence courses on certain aspects, and suggestion for improvement of correspondence courses. The part I of the questionnaire includes the same 13 points that were presented in the part I of the questionnaire No.2 viz., reasons for selection of correspondence courses. In part II, there are a few alternatives stated against the questions regarding the non-usefulness of the correspondence courses on certain areas. In Part III, the students are asked to opine on the improvement of correspondence courses with regard to introduction of new courses, instructional processes, examination system etc. The items of the questionnaire have been framed on the basis of interaction with the successful students of correspondence courses. As in the case of other questionnaires, this questionnaire too includes both close and open form questions.

The responses to close questions were to be calculated on frequency basis and the responses to open ended questions were to be categorised qualitatively. The tool is presented in the Appendix XV (a and b).

(VII) Private Costs of Regular Post-Graduate Students of H. P. University :

This tool aimed at gathering information about the annual expenditure (1981-82) incurred by the Post-Graduate Teaching Department Students of the H.P.University. There were two sections in the questionnaire viz., Tuition Costs and Non-Tuition Costs. The items included in the first section were on tuition fees, admission fees, library fees etc., and the items of the second section were on expenditures on boarding and lodging, instruction related costs and miscellaneous expenditures. The tool was prepared keeping in view the studies conducted in the field of private costs of university students.

The tool is presented in the Appendix XVI.

Observation Schedule :

One observation schedule was prepared by the researcher to observe various dimensions of the Personal Contact Programmes organised in different centres. The tool was in non-structured form. The observation notes were to be prepared on the aspects stated on the tools viz., venue; duration; total attendance; classroom teaching including methods of teaching, student teacher interaction and contents of teaching; maintenance of records; arrangement for library studies and arrangement for boarding and lodging.

The tool is presented in Appendix XVII.

Interview Schedules :

Several interview schedules were prepared in non-structured form to elicit responses from different kinds of respondents. These tools were:

- Interview Schedule for Experienced Students.
- Interview Schedule for Dropouts.
- Interview Schedule for Successful Students.
- Interview Schedule for Teachers.
- Interview Schedule for Specialists/personalities involved in initiating and/or co-ordinating the correspondence courses.

(i) Interview Schedule for Experienced Students : This tool was used for gathering evidences from a select group of experienced students through informal interactions. There were 8 aspects on which the students were to reflect their views. These aspects were

- Reasons for joining the courses.
- Courses of studies.
- Lesson Scripts.
- Study habits.
- Assignments.
- PCPs.
- Evaluation.
- Future Educational Plan.

(ii) The interview schedule was in non-structured form. With the help of several points stated under each aspects the students were to be asked different questions in the due course of interview. The details of the tool are given in Appendix XVIII.

(ii) Interview Schedule for Dropouts : The schedule was used for collecting data from a select group of dropouts on three major aspects :

- Personal experiences of dropouts in joining the courses;
- the circumstances in which they discontinued the courses;
- their views on joining the correspondence courses again; and
- some observations about improvement of the courses.

The tool was in non-structured form. In the due course of interview several questions covering above aspects were to be asked to the respondents. The details of the tool is presented in Appendix XIX.

(iii) Interview Schedule for Successful Students : This tool aimed at gathering evidences from those students who had passed the correspondence courses in previous years. The areas covered in the tool were:

- personal experiences of students in joining the courses
- usefulness of the correspondence education programme in improvement of their academic career, profession etc; and
- their views on improvement of correspondence courses with regard to different aspects of the system.

The schedule was in non-structured form. This is presented in Appendix XX.

(iv) Interview Schedule for Specialists involved in initiating and co-ordinating the Correspondence Courses : The tool aimed at collecting evidences from different persons like the founder Vice-Chancellor, the present and former Directors of the DCC, and Executive Council Members who have been involved in initiating and co-ordinating the Correspondence Courses. The aspects covered in the schedule were :

- Personal experiences (if any) about the creation of the institution.
- Views on management of the system from administrative as well as instructional point of view.
- Problems encountered in organisation and implementation of instructional programmes.
- Future perspectives of the institution and suggestions for improvement of the system.

The schedule was in non-structured form. Several questions were asked to the respondents in an informal setting with the help of this schedule. The schedule is presented in Appendix XXI.

(v) Interview Schedule for Teachers : Through this tool it was intended to explore the facts regarding experienced teachers reactions and opinions on the functioning of the system. Different aspects covered for discussion with the teachers were included in this tool, such as :

- Personal experiences of teachers with regard to their involvement in writing/reviewing the lessons, teaching PCPs etc.
- Their views on improvement of the management of the system from administrative as well as instructional point of view.

The schedule was in non-structured form. In the due course of interaction with the teachers, several questions were to be asked to them on the above areas. The details of the Schedule is presented in Appendix XXII.

IV. Sampling and Procedures of Data Collection :

As stated earlier extensive data were to be collected from different sources for meeting the requirements of the study. Depending upon the nature of sources, and the kinds of data to be collected therefrom, different approaches were used for collection of evidences. The variety of approaches employed therefore were: administering the questionnaires to some sample respondents or population by person, mailing the questionnaires to some sample respondents, interviewing select groups of persons from different categories, observing the on going programmes of instruction and other activities of the institution understudy, conducting survey of records and documents and studying different publications of the institution concerned. Considering different objectives of the study in some cases data were to be collected about the concerned population and in many cases sample surveys were to be conducted too. Also in a few cases some specialists involved in initiating or conducting the correspondence courses were interviewed. As the

major portion of data was to be collected from different samples, proper care was taken for following appropriate sampling procedures in identification of sample respondents. In the present study, both direct and cluster sampling techniques were employed. Table-1 contains particulars about the population size, sample selected and persons contacted with regard to different sources of information. The course wise population and/or exact sample, and data collection procedures have been detailed out in the following:

Collection of data from students, dropouts, products of the courses, teachers and other categories of persons:

Different kinds of data concerning human sources were collected through questionnaire surveys and/or conduct of personal interviews with the following kinds of persons.

(1) New Entrants

A sample of 846 students out of the total students who were just enrolled for the first semester of B.A.I, II and III, Pre-University, I.A., and M.Com. courses during the year 1980-81 were chosen for studying their reasons of joining correspondence courses (objective No.2 iib). During the year 1980-81, in the first instalment i.e., before the 15th August, 1980, 1854 students were admitted to the first semester of above stated courses. All of them were mailed the questionnaires, out of them 846 (46%) students responded to the questionnaires. The sample sizes for different courses were:

- P.U.C., 148;
- B.A. I, 94;
- B.A. II, 18;
- B.A. III, 74;
- M.A. I, 326; and
- M.Com.I, 186.

(2) Experienced Students :

The students studying in IV semester/ II Semester / final year of different courses were taken as experienced students because of their exposures to the practices of correspondence system during their preceeding semester/s / year/s of studies through correspondence institution. To meet certain objectives of the study, it was thought worth while to know thoroughly about their background, their reasons for joining correspondence courses, their reactions on the feasibility of the system and their suggestions for improvement of the system, a cluster of 489 students were selected from Pre-university, B.A., H.A., M.Com., and M.Ed. courses. The details regarding the sampling of experienced students meeting different purposes are clarified, further, as follows:

As stated above, a sample of 489 students from the 4th semester courses of all M.As. and M.Coms. II Semester courses of M.Ed., II and III year B.A. and P.U.C. classes have been drawn for the detailed study of students background, objective 1, ii.a. The coursewise classification of the students indicates that 112 M.A. students, 69 M.Com. students, 50 B.A. students, 48 P.U.C. students and 210 M.Ed. students have been included in the sample. The same sample excluding P.U.C. i.e., 48 number, students have been taken for the study of students' perception of correspondence system of education. This sample is chosen because, the students having experience of correspondence system of education till the completion of a course can have a better understanding over the functioning of the system and therefore, they may express worthwhile opinion about different aspects of correspondence courses. Further, the same sample of H.A., M.Com. and M.Ed. course students have been adopted for the study of the experienced students' reasons for joining correspondence courses.

The sample of M.A. course students have been identified into two groups of students viz., attendants of the PCP and the non attendants of the PCP. During the 4th semester PCPs of 1981, organised for N.A. Economics, Political Science, History, English

and Hindi classes, around 110 students were found to be the attendants in all the three PCP centres i.e., in Simla, Delhi and Amritsar. As the attendance in the PCP was voluntary the presence of the students fluctuated from class to class and period to period. Moreover, no rigidity was maintained for registration of students in formal structure. Expecting high response from the students all students attending the PCP were administered the questionnaires meant for them. Out of 110 only 56 students representing the above 5 M.A. courses returned the questionnaires. Also, 5 students, 1 from each course who did not return the questionnaires were interviewed by the researcher in the venues of PCPs. Because of non-availability of the particulars of the students who attended the PCP, it was difficult to identify non-attendants of the PCP. Therefore, excluding the names of 61 students who returned the filled in questionnaire and were interviewed, a list of rest 476 M.A. students completing the courses was prepared. Out of them 25% (119), students' names were recognised with the help of random number table. Besides this, considering small enrolment figure, all 11 students completing M.A. Sanskrit course were to be contacted. In total 130 M.A. students, representing all 6 courses offered through correspondence, were mailed the questionnaires. With repeated reminders, 51 (39%) students returned the filled in questionnaires. Hence, the total number of sample for all M.A. courses including attendants and non-attendants of students was raised to 112 i.e., 20% of the total students completing the M.A. courses. The representation of different M.A. courses in the sample are: Economics 30, Political Science 20, History 16, English 20, Hindi 21 and Sanskrit 5.

Unlike M.A. courses, the sample of M.Com. and M.Ed. courses have been chosen from attendants of PCP centres. This is because the attendance in PCP is compulsory for both the courses. For M.Com. all the course completion stage 108 M.Com. students who attended 2 PCP centres organised in northern region i.e., in Simla and Ludhiana were contacted personally. Out of 108, 67

students returned the filled in questionnaire. Two students who did not return the questionnaires were interviewed by the researcher. In total 69 students were treated as the representative sample of the M.Com. course, because of two reasons; first, the M.Com., students population is mostly restricted to Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh and Delhi states and the students attending 2 PCP centres organised in Ludhiana and Simla gave proper representation to these states/ union territories; second, 69 students constituted 20% of the total students who completed the M.Com. course of the term 1979 - 1981.

In the case of M.Ed. course, the sample has been chosen from the attendants of Personal Contact Programmes of 4 centres organised in Simla, Chandigarh, Delhi and Madras. Alike, M.Com., course all students i.e., around 450 remaining present in the classes of 4 PCP centres were administered the questionnaires. Out of them 208 students responded to the questionnaires. Also two M.Ed. students among non respondents of questionnaires were interviewed by the researcher. The researcher had prepared notes on each interview with the help of the interview schedule. The representativeness of this sample of M.Ed. students is justified on two points; i.e., one, the sample is representative of both northern and southern zones of the country which constitute the major percentage of M.Ed. students population, two, the sample size of 210 is quite large for generalisation purpose and constitute around 10% of the population of M.Ed. students who completed the course during the year 1981.

For B.A. and P.U. Courses the sample have been chosen from the enrolment registers. During 1980-81 the candidates being eligible for appearing the B.A. and P.U.C. annual examinations were 456 and 547 respectively. Out of their enrolment registers of both the courses every fourth student was selected for the sample. Hence 109 B.A. and 136 P.U.C. students were selected as the sample for data collection. The questionnaires were

despatched to these students by post and in return only 50 (46%) and 48 (36%) students of B.A. and P.U.C. respectively, returned the filled in questionnaires. Hence, they constituted the final sample of these courses for the study.

(3) Dropouts :

The dropouts were defined as those students who discontinued the courses before the period of completion of respective courses. The sample of dropouts include 154 respondents belonging to P.U.C., B.A., M.A., M.Com. and M.Ed. courses. The major aim of selection of this sample is to study the perception of dropouts about correspondence education. While selecting the sample of the study it was determined to restrict the sample selection from the dropouts of one full term of different courses. Accordingly, it was noticed that the total number of dropouts of M.A. and M.Com. two year courses of 1979-81, and M.Ed., B.A. II, B.A.III, and P.U.C. one year courses of 1980-81 were 2048 in number. For the purpose of the study 25% (512) dropouts were selected randomly following random number table. The sample dropouts were recognised on a proportional basis for each course from the admission registers. According to the addresses of dropouts the researcher located 10 dropouts at their residences and took their interviews. The researcher prepared notes on each interview with the help of interview schedule. The questionnaires were mailed to 502 students at their present addresses, and out of them 144 responded to the questionnaires. The sample size which is 7% of total population has accommodated respondents from all courses i.e., 15 PUC, 12 B.A., 32 M.A. Economics, 20 M.A. Political Science, 3 M.A. History, 22 M.A. English, 8 M.A. Hindi, 20 M.Com. and 22 M.Ed. students.

(4) Successful Correspondence Students (I) :

This sample which comprises of 274 respondents is chosen for the study of the perception of students who have completed correspondence courses successfully towards this system of education. The sample consists of students who had passed their

postgraduate and/undergraduate courses during 1971-72/73 to 1977-78/79, academic years. While selecting the sample, in the first stage the list of all candidates passing various correspondence course examinations during these years were sorted out. Detailed lists of passed students of M.A. Courses, M.Ed., M.Com., and B.A. courses were located for the years 1971-73 to 1977-79, 1971-72 to 1977-78, 1974-75 to 1976-78, and 1975-76 to 1978-79 respectively. From the list every fifth student was treated as the sample and therefore 384 M.A., 371 M.Ed., 61 M.Com., and 29 B.A. students were included in the previous sample. Out of 845 successful students, 10 students were contacted by the researcher at their places of residences and were interviewed. The researcher used to prepare notes on each interviews with the help of the interview schedules. The rest 835 successful students were sent the questionnaires by post. Out of them with repeated reminders 264 (31%) persons returned the questionnaires. The coursewise breakup of final sample indicates that for B.A., M.A. Economics, M.A. Political Science, M.A. History, M.A. English, M.A. Hindi, M.A. Sanskrit, M.Com. and M.Ed. courses the sample students are 9, 18, 18, 15, 19, 22, 2, 17 and 154 respectively.

(5) Present Students of Regular Courses :

This group constituted of 68 Postgraduate Arts and Commerce students of post graduate teaching departments of H.P. University for the purpose to study their Private Costs, objective 2:V. for selection of the sample. All 152 students attending the classes of the final year courses of M.A. Economics, M.A. Political Science, M.A. History, M.A. English, M.A. Hindi, M.A. Sanskrit and M.Com. during the year 1981-82 had been administered the questionnaire. Out of them only 68 (45%) students returned the filled in questionnaire. The facultywise break up of the sample shows that there are 50 Arts students and 18 Commerce students are included in the sample.

(6) Teachers :

The study included 72 sample respondents among teachers. The purpose of the selection of such group of respondents was to study their perception of the functioning of the correspondence education programme. As the population of teachers being involved in teaching programme of correspondence courses either in parttime or full time basis is limited, it was decided to contact all of them for the study. During his visits to PCP Centres and the campus of the H.P. University the researcher had met all 43 full time staff of the DCC, all 48 university teaching department teachers/research scholars who were involved in correspondence instruction programme and 40 teachers working on part time basis from other institutions for the purpose of administering questionnaires. The rest 83 teachers were mailed the questionnaires. Out of 131 teachers contacted personally, 58 of them could return the filled in questionnaires, and out of 83 teachers being approached by post only 14 could respond to the researcher. It could be found that among respondents 56 teachers were part timers and 16 were full time staff of DCC. Also, for development of better understanding about the instructional system, 2 DCC staff and 3 outside staff who had already filled in the questionnaires were interviewed by the researcher. The researcher prepared separate notes on the interviews, with the help of interview schedule.

(7) Specialists :

Some relevant information was also, collected from some persons who were involved in initiating and/or conducting the correspondence courses. The researcher had taken interviews of the founder Vice-Chancellor of the University, two former directors and one former assistant director of the DCC, the present director of the DCC and a member of the Executive Council of the H.P. University. While conducting the interviews, the researcher used to write the content of interaction with appropriate references. Moreover, after conducting the interviews, the researcher used to prepare final notes of each interview.

Non-respondents among Samples :

With regard to questionnaire surveys, it could be marked that the respondents for each tool varied from section to section or item to item, of course within the size of total respondents. It might be due to the reasons that, first, all sections/items in a section might not be applicable to every respondents, second, in some situations, the respondents might not have felt at ease to answer all the items. There was every possibility for second group of respondents to be limited in percentage in comparison to that of the first group. Taking into consideration the fluctuation of sample respondents, the units of sample for different items in concerned tools were remained in slightly varied form.

Collection of data from Office records, Publications and other documents :

Certain specific records concerning admission and examination results were studied with the purpose of getting some background information of students who get enrolled into different courses, and examination results of correspondence course students as well as of regular course students. The details regarding the number of students and sampling techniques adopted therein are presented in the following:

New Entrants (i) :

With regard to certain aspects of background of students, such as, age, sex, occupation, region, and employment data was to be collected on all students just enrolled in different streams of correspondence courses in the year 1979-80. During the year 1979-80 the total number of students depositing the admission fees was around 7500. However, due to certain official and other formalities like registration, migration certificates, experience certificates and other academic documents the admission of all the students filling up the admission fees was not declared final. Out of the records available for 5382 students, the background information of the whole cluster of students was collected by the researcher.

Successful Students of Correspondence Courses (II) :

This population of 2048 M.A., 371 M.Com. 2189 M.Ed., 332 B.A., and 429 P.U.C. students was chosen to study the examination results of correspondence courses from 1971-72 to 1980-81. While collecting the examination scores of the pass students of correspondence courses it was determined to collect the information of students from all courses passing the examinations from 1971-72 to 1980-81. Depending upon the availability of information from concerned records data were collected for different courses for some specific years. That is for M.A., M.Com., M.Ed., B.A. and P.U. C. courses the data were available and collected for the years 1971-73 to 1979-81, 1974-76 to 1979-81, 1971-72 to 1977-78, 1974-75 to 1978-79 and 1974-75 to 1978-79, respectively.

Successful Students of Regular Courses :

The examination marks of all pass students of regular M.A. (683) and M.Com. (33) students of the years 1971-73 to 1979-81 were collected from examination records. Whereas, considering the large size of the population of regular B.A. and P.U.C. Pass students, it was decided to adopt cluster random sampling approach for selection of sample students. Five affiliated colleges (25%) of the H.P. University were selected following systematic random sampling technique. The cluster of all students of P.U.C. (725) and B.A. (887) of those institutions passing the examinations during 1975-79 were included in the sample.

Besides above aspects, relevant official records and publications were studied with regard to collection of evidences on genesis of the institution, organisation, physical facilities. library facilities, admission policies, terms and conditions of courses, enrolment (1971-81), dropouts (1971-81) and finance of the DCC (1975-80) and the university. Moreover, data regarding some of the background variables of the students, pass percentages etc. were available in analysed form from concerned records. They

were utilised for the present investigation too. The researcher scrutinised around 300 evaluated response sheets of B.A., M.A., M.Com. and M.Ed. courses. Also, all most all lesson scripts of different courses were studied by the researcher.

Observation of Activities of the Institution and Informal Interaction with Different Kinds of Personnels :

The researcher had an access to observe several activities of the institution, such as functioning of the administrative section, the activities of the teaching staff of the DCC, activities in the library and activities during the PCP. Along with his observation, informal interactions were taking place between the researcher and the concerned staff, viz., the teachers of the DCC, the Deputy Registrars of different administrative sections of the DCC and the university the assistant registrars, superintendents and assistants in charges of the DCC to develop comprehensive ideas about the functioning of the system. More specifically, the activities of PCP centres organised at 6 different places of the country during 1980-81 were observed.

On the basis of such observations the notes have been prepared about the attendance of different course students in different places, the procedures of selection of instructors, distribution of workloads, class room activities including teachers role, students' participation and coverage of topic, co-curricular activities, and residential facilities for students and organisers.

V. Analysis Procedures :

Different kinds of data collected for the study were subjected to descriptive cum qualitative analysis. First, data regarding genesis of the institution, organisation, nature of courses, physical facilities have been analysed in narrative form. With regard to enrolment and dropout rates course and yearwise analyses have been done. In appropriate places the rate of growth of annual enrolment, the relationship between enrolment rate and dropout rate, proportion of enrolment in different semesters,

proportion of dropouts in first semesters etc. have been analysed.

With regard to background information regarding new entrants, successful students and dropouts data have been classified on percentage basis taking into consideration different variables viz., age, academic qualification, employment, occupation, income, region, caste, sex etc. Especially in the case of analysis of income position of students, the percapita income was treated as a common index. For this purpose only employed students' (approximately 70% of the total population) income were analysed for the study. The percapita income was calculated by dividing total income by the total units of dependants, where every adult was treated as one full unit and every child below 14 years of age was treated as half the unit. Further, the frequencies found in different income slabs have been converted into percentages. For further analysis purpose classification have been made on the basis of students' states, so that average per capita. income of each state have been referred to for analysis of students' income positions.

With regard to analysis of data regarding students' reasons for joining the courses the following procedures were employed. In the case of study of students' reasons for joining the courses the respondents were asked to rate their own responses. For analysis purposes, only first five preferences of reasons were taken into consideration. The weightage given to these preferences were:

<u>Preferences</u>	<u>Marks</u>
First	5
Second	4
Third	3
Fourth	2
Fifth	1

In case, the students had ticked less than 5 items in order of preferences appropriate weightage was given to those items. On the basis of allotment of weightage to the items under first two sections of the concerned questionnaire total scores against each

item was calculated for different sample groups. Further, for each sample group, the items under each section were ranked according to their respective weightages. Hence, rating was treated as a common basis for comparison of responses of different course, and sex groups. The answers to open ended questions were analysed following content analysis techniques. In some cases the original verbatims of respondents have been placed in appropriate places. Whereas data regarding reasons for dropouts were analysed in percentage forms on coursewise basis. As it was in the cases of analysis of reasons for joining the courses, the open answers of dropouts regarding reasons for discontinuance have been analysed in qualitative form.

Data concerning organisation and implementation of instructional processes and perception of different groups of respondents which were collected through close questions of questionnaires were mostly analysed in percentage forms in different specific categories. Whereas data gathered through interviews, open ended questions of the questionnaires and observations were analysed in qualitative form by applying content analysis and narration techniques.

For analysis of data concerning examination results of correspondence and regular courses descriptive statistical techniques like Means and Standard deviations, pass percentages, percentages of students with different divisions etc., were found out. Data regarding institutional costs and private costs were mostly analysed following percentage analysis techniques. In the cases of percapita expenditure analysis, the averages were found out.

The above presentation gives a hint to the procedures adopted for different kinds of data collected for the study. The detailed analysis of data along with their interpretation would be presented in the next chapter. However, in appropriate places of the next chapter, necessary details about data analysis procedures would be highlighted.

Table 1 : Population and sample of the study : sourcewise

Sources	C O U R S E S										Total	
	F.U.C.	B.A.	B.A.	III	Total	Econo	Political	H's-	Hindi	English		Sanskrit
Students :	I	II	III	IV	Total	mis	Sci	Sci	Sci	Sci	Sci	Total
- New Entrants II												
- Population	Not relevant											
- Persons contacted (1980-81)	248											
- Sample responded	148#	94#	18#	74#	186#							
- Experienced students' at course completion stage												
- Population	547											
- Persons contacted	136											
- Sample responded	48#											
- Dropouts												
- Population	252											
- Persons contacted	63											
- Sample responded	15#											
- Successful students.												
- Population	NR											
- Persons contacted	NR											
- Sample responded	NR											
- Regular course students.												
- Population	NR											
- Persons contacted	NR											
- Sample responded	NR											
- Records of examination results & correspondence												
- Population of pass students studied	429#											
- Population of pass students studied (RU and B.A.)												
- Population of pass students studied (B.A. and U.Com. only)												
- Sample of pass students studied (RU and B.A.)	725#											
- Admission records												
- Population of new entrants I studied	445#	133#	153#	42#	328#	454#	329#	99#	176#	263#	18#	1269#
- Teachers of correspondence courses full time and part-time												
- Population contacted												
- Persons responded	16#											
- Specialists interviewed												
- Population interviewed												
- Persons interviewed												
- Specialists interviewed												
- Population interviewed												
- Persons interviewed												
- Specialists interviewed												

DCC Staff 43 H. P. University teaching department staff 18 Teachers of other institutions 123 Total 214#

