

Chapter V

Conclusions

During the year of its inception, (1970) the H.P. University brought a proposal for extending the facilities of higher education through correspondence system. With a view to satisfying the popular demand for higher education in the state and to provide education of better standard, it was thought appropriate to strengthen the existing facilities of formal education offered through the university teaching departments and the affiliated undergraduate colleges, and to provide higher education through alternative means to those who could not have either benefitted through formal system because of several unavoidable circumstances. Since, the second year of its creation, the university started offering correspondence courses leading to P.U. (Humanities); B.A. with English, History, Hindi, Economics, Political Science, Mathematics and Sanskrit (later on adding sociology), M.A. in English, Economics, History, Hindi, Political Science and Sanskrit, M.Ed. and B.Ed. (discontinued since 1973). It may be mentioned that in the country the H.P. University was the 7th university to offer correspondence courses at higher level. Especially, it was the first institution to start with a number of PG courses through correspondence both of general and professional type in the country.

With exception of Masters Degree courses in the field of Science, Law, Business Administration and Music, almost all Arts and Education courses were offered through regular and correspondence systems of the H.P. University. Later on, during the year 1975-76, Commerce course was started at Master degree level in both the systems. Eventhough the university had proposed for offering several M.Phil. degree courses in the above disciplines

through correspondence system, the proposal has not been materialised yet. However, the traditional degree oriented courses offered at PG departments and other affiliated institutions were offered through correspondence system. As recommended by the UGC, at the initial stage, for varieties of reasons, the pattern of regular courses and correspondence system should have been common. However, as the DCC grew over the years, the university could have taken initiative in offering instructions for various areas of specialisations/ optional papers, etc. through correspondence system which were not being offered through the regular system. This could have been done with a view to meeting the unique educational needs of the target group learners of correspondence system. With regard to this, the H.P. University did not adopt flexible policies for growth and special identity of correspondence system of education. Rather, it remained more or less static and non-innovative as far as providing correspondence courses to the target group learners is concerned.

Students : Enrolment and Dropouts

The facts regarding the number of students who join the course and the dropouts indicated certain common feature of the flexible system of education. Attracted by its flexible admission policies and other attractive features of correspondence system, a very large number of students rushed to the system since inception. The enrolment in the correspondence courses was almost one third of the total enrolment of all institutions of the H.P. University. Hence, with the different kinds of UG and PG courses offered to a vast number of students, the correspondence system could occupy a major position in the management set up of the university. However, due to the creation of a number of correspondence institutions in the northern regions of the country in particular growth in the enrolment of different PG Arts courses in the H.P. University was affected adversely in the subsequent years of creation of

the DCC. On the other hand, since the year 1972 the rate of growth of UG courses, M.Ed., and M.Com. courses was comparatively higher. Although, during the second year of the inception of the DCC, the enrolment had come down to around 3400 from 11614, since the year 1972 it has been experiencing a rising trend (from 3400 upto 5500 and 7500). Further, as a comprehensive look at the growth rate of correspondence courses reflects, in near future, unless some changes take place, especially, in terms of introduction of new courses or discontinuation of some of the existing courses, the enrolment position may continue around 5000 to 7500. By having such enrolment, the DCC may continue to be a major position in the university.

Secondly, unlike other institutions of correspondence education and university level, since its creation, the major focus of the DCC of the H.P. University remained on different kinds of PG courses. Hence, depending on the nature of these courses, quite a large portion of total enrolment of the DCC was concentrated at PG level. However, among PG courses, the demand for M.Ed. and M.Com. courses had been prominent since their introduction at the DCC. It may be referred to that till late seventies the H.P. University was the only institution in the country to offer M.Ed. course through correspondence. Thus, it could attract a large number of students for this course. Still, since the provision of this course through correspondence system of the M.K. University of Southern Region of the country, the enrolment position of the M.Ed. course of the H.P. University has not affected in any way. Further, a few M.A. courses viz., Economics, English and Political Science could have high enrolments. On the other hand other M.A. courses like History, Hindi and Sanskrit could have comparatively lesser enrolment. Especially, throughout the years (1971 to 1981) the annual enrolment of M.A. Sanskrit course could remain restricted to limited numbers of 17 to 58. In all, at PG level, the total number of enrolment in correspondence system was so high that it was around fifteen times to that of similar courses of regular

system. Especially, at M.Ed. and M.Com. level the gaps of enrolment of correspondence courses and regular courses were extremely wider. With regard to enrolment at UG level, the picture was some what different from that of PG level. Unlike many of the correspondence institutions in the country, where the greater chunk of the total correspondence students enrolled, belonged to the UG sections, this institution had most of the students enrolled in the PG courses. However, because of the high rate of enrolment, the enrolment position of UG courses (8%) out of total enrolment of the DCC at the time of inception could be raised to around 30% over the total enrolment of DCC over a period of a decade. It could reveal growing popular demand for UG courses over a period of 1971 to 1981.

Thirdly, a major fact that could be marked with regard to correspondence system was the high rate of dropouts, which was 32 to 85 per cent at PG level and 13 to 37 per cent at UG level. It shows that, eventhough, a large number of students entered the system, because of several reasons most of them could not avail the benefits of correspondence studies till completion of the courses. Thus, the dropout phenomenon acted as a major limitation of the correspondence system. Especially, after admissions and before completion of the first semesters the percentages of dropouts among total dropouts of most of the PG courses were very high (50% to 75%). It was because of high rate of dropouts during first semesters of different courses, a lot of variation could be marked between the enrolment positions of first semesters and second semesters of every academic year. As major wastage might be caused due to high rate of dropouts, this problem needs proper attention for the improvement of the system.

Background of Students :

(i) Entrance Stage : Taking into consideration, different background variables like age, sex, employment, caste, and belongingness to different regions, it could be marked that the

student population of correspondence education at entrance stage was of multifarious nature. Except, the students of UG courses, who mostly belonged to the H.P., most of the students of PG courses belonged to different parts of the country. In this context, the institution could reflect its popularity among target group learners at national level. Further, the major chunk of students population at entrance stage were from men group (87%), wider age range of 16 to 60 (99%), upper castes (74%), employed cadets (79%) and rural regions (55%). To some extent, the success of correspondence system could be indicated as it could play important role in providing better scope for higher studies to specific groups of students viz., comparatively elder age group students, employed ones and inhabitants of villages. However, on the other hand, this system could not reflect much popularity among women and lower caste students in comparison to those of regular system.

(ii) Course Completion Stage : The study of learners' characteristics at course completion stage could reveal that while comparatively lower age group students continued with UG courses till completion stage, most of the upper age group students continued with PG courses. Especially, at M.Ed. level a large number of students hailed from 25 to 60 years age group. Of course, there was not much difference in the age distribution of students at entry points and at course completion stages. There was quite a large number of students who had some years gap between their last qualifying examination and enrolment in the present courses. It may be due to the flexible admission policies adopted by the correspondence courses, most of the students with lower academic achievements in the last qualifying examinations could enter these courses. Further, a sizable number of them were supposed to be first generation learners (30%). However, among different course students, comparatively PG students' parents were better qualified than those of UG students. It could, also, be marked that a very high percentage of students continuing with studies were employed ones (74%).

Especially, most of them belonged to occupation categories of clerical (23%), and teaching positions (53%). As a professional course, M.Ed. enrolled almost all of its students from employed groups and teaching occupations; on the other hand, the general courses offered opportunities to the employed students of as many as seventeen occupations with small coursewise variations (with clericals 57%). However, unlike the occupations of PG course students, the occupations of a sizable number of PG course students (15 to 51%) were comparatively of lower ranks like attendants, labourers and protective service workers. As a significant achievement of the system, it could also be marked that a large number of students hailed from middle (27%), lower middle (37%) and poor per capita income groups (9%). Eventhough, at entrance stage quite high percentage of the students belonged to rural areas, (55%), because of high rate of dropouts among them, there remained comparatively lesser percentage of village students at the course completion stage (36%). Further, there were around one fifth of the total students at the course completion stage who belonged to remote and underdeveloped villages. As it was in the case of entry points, very high percentages (81%) of upper caste students continued with studies till completion of the courses. On the other hand, most of the students belonging to lower caste groups were belonging to villages (60 to 61%), employed positions (90 to 100%), comparatively lower rank occupations (80%, general course), lower per-capita income (58%) and lower qualified parents. In comparison to general caste students, they were in backward postions, while, at entrance stage around eighty seven per cent of the total enrolment were men, because of comparatively high rate of dropouts among them their percentage out of the total students at course completion stage came down to 83%. It seems, those women students who had joined the correspondence courses were more motivated to continue with courses till completion than the men students. Of course, mostly, those women students belonged to unmarried groups (58%) better educated

families, upper castes (93%), urban areas (88%), employed positions (65%), comparatively upper occupational positions, and upper income groups (63%). These facts indicate that the correspondence system proved its credibility in terms of providing educational opportunities to comparatively elder age group persons having some years gap between their last qualifying examinations and present courses, students with employed positions, comparatively lower income and middle income groups and first generation learners. It may be because of the lesser utility of courses offered at present, students from certain select occupation groups only are attracted towards the correspondence courses. Further, the system had limitations with regard to motivating a large number of students belonging to women group, lower castes, comparatively better educational background and rural regions for continuing with correspondence studies.

(iii) Dropouts : The background analysis of dropouts revealed that the dropouts of most of the courses belonged to comparatively upper age group. Also, comparatively, the dropouts were having larger gap of time between their last qualifying examinations and admissions to correspondence courses. As for their previous academic achievements, they were as qualified as the students' who completed the courses. As stated earlier, the percentage of men dropouts (91%) was quite higher than that of men students continuing with studies till completion of courses (82%). The fact was reverse for women students. The dropouts, mostly, belonged to the general caste groups (78%). However, they were comparatively inferior to the students who completed the courses, with regard to their parents' educational qualification. Comparatively very high percentage of them belonged to employed positions (87%). However, they possessed more or less similar occupations and income positions as those students who completed the courses. While a very high percentage of them belonged to rural regions, an equally high percentage of students

continuing with their studies belonged to urban regions. These facts convey that the dropouts of correspondence system were more distinct with regard to certain characteristics like age, time gap between last qualifying examination and admissions to correspondence courses, employment positions, sex, parental education and regional backgrounds.

Reasons for Joining Correspondence Courses :

Students' responses sought through questionnaire surveys as well as personal ^{interactions revealed that among} different categories of purposes, the academic purposes like : to continue with higher education, to specialise in a particular field, to spend leisure in a purposeful way, to broaden their outlook and to become capable of understanding rapid changes that take place in the field of knowledge were the most inspiring factors for all students in joining correspondence courses. The economic purposes like : to acquire more knowledge and skills of the job in which the students worked, to be promoted to higher rank in the job in which the students worked, and to get better job than the job the students already held, occupied second rank in motivating different course students. Especially, these purposes were comparatively more influential for M.Ed. and M.Com. students in selecting the correspondence courses. The sociological purpose, particularly, to improve the students of own family and caste or community was another significant factor for most of the students of a few courses in selecting the courses.

With regard to other reasons for joining correspondence courses in preference to regular/evening courses or appearing in the examinations privately, the non-availability of time mental maturity, non-existence of colleges (day and evening) in the locality, heavy expenses in formal college education and lack of provision for taking examination privately were valued as most influential among all the reasons. It appeared that several background factors of students had major link with

such reasons as: age, employment, paucity of time, and poor financial condition might have blocked the students' ways for pursuing higher studies in formal institutions. By catering to the educational needs of such group of students, the correspondence system seem to be perceived as an alternative channel of higher education. However, it could be found that there were quite a considerable number of students who had stated about non-availability of seats in regular colleges prompted them to opt for correspondence studies. It may be due to their poor academic achievements and the flexible admission policies of correspondence system such category of persons could prefer correspondence courses to regular courses. Thus, the correspondence system acted as secondary channel of higher education, too. As a positive indication it could be marked that very high number of students decided to join the courses on their own. As an unique feature of correspondence system it could be recognised that unlike regular system this system could attract comparatively matured and elder persons who had self-determinations in joining the courses.

Reasons for dropping out of the courses:

There were several factors that affected the students in discontinuing their studies; such as instructional factors, management factors, utilitarian factors and personal factors. In many cases a sizable number of dropouts could not cope with the instructional system, hence they dropped out. Some such problems were related to non-attendance of PCPs, lack of use of library study facilities, lack of proper teacher student and student contacts, non-availability of reference materials, not submitting required number of assignments and difficulties in studying the lesson scripts. Nevertheless there were major limitations of DCC in the management of instructional system which came on the way of the continuation of studies of the students. Further it could be identified that quite a large number of dropouts representing all courses aspired for

continuing with correspondence courses again, provided certain improvements are brought about in the instructional system.

Teachers:

The DCC involved both categories of staff viz., teachers from teaching departments and affiliated colleges of the H.P. University, and other universities/institutions, and its full time staff in the organisation of instructional programmes. Especially, for production of correspondence texts and teaching during PCPs. Most of the teachers from outside institutions were utilised by the DCC. Their background with regard to educational qualifications, research and teaching experiences and professional positions revealed that a sizable number of them were senior ones. However, in comparison to outside staff the full time staff of the DCC were found to be less experienced ones. In all, the teachers involved in correspondence education programme were either working in formal education institutions or were equally qualified to teach in those institutions. Thus, from the point of view of teacher inputs, both formal and correspondence streams stood at par with each other. Further, it was suggested that for enhancing instructional facilities the DCC must be having positions of full time staff at par with the positions of teaching staff of the teaching departments of the H.P. University. It could be seen that, eventhough, the DCC had provided better scope to its full time staff in participation of organisation and implementation of teaching activities, a considerable number of them had preferred working in formal system to the correspondence system. It indicated that appropriate steps must be taken by the university in providing academic and professional incentives to the full time staff of the DCC, so that their involvement in teaching programmes can be encouraged further.

Instructional and Evaluation Processes :

(i) Orientation : The instructional processes of correspondence system are such that every student is supposed to be alert about the terms and conditions of courses and his role in instructional and evaluation processes. Thus, the DCC takes responsibilities of orienting the students in the above aspects and clarifying their doubts, if necessary. The present system of providing first hand information to students is appreciated by many students. However, a large number of students, dropouts and successful students complained about the lack of promptness of the DCC in responding to their queries whenever needed. In this regard, an urgent need was felt for improvement of guidance and information mechanism of the DCC through its promptness in responding to the questions of students and creation of information bureaux in the campus as well as in other regions of the students.

(ii) Syllabus : With regard to the syllabi of respective courses most of the students had expressed positive views, whereas very high percentage of B.A. students had stated in negative form. It was highlighted that as the students remained away from the teaching institution, especially from their teachers, the syllabi sent to them should be clear in terms of explanation of topics, their instructional objectives and reference books for essential and further readings.

(iii) Lesson Scripts : The present position of correspondence texts seem to be at pivotal form of instructional system. They were given prior importance by almost all students in continuing with their studies. Especially, their usefulness had been realised by most of the students who could continue with the courses till completion. It could indicate, a positive role of lesson scripts in facilitating learning experiences of correspondence students. However, a considerable number of students, found it difficult to cope up with the instruction provided through lesson scripts, thus, they discontinued their studies. Of course, around one third of students at course completion stage

remarked about the lack of usefulness of lesson scripts. Along with the present students, dropouts, and successful students, majority of teachers from different courses had expressed moderate views about the style of presentation, contents, clarity, in concepts, suggested references and language of lesson scripts of respective courses. Several kinds of limitations of lesson scripts with regard to above aspects were marked by a considerable number of teachers too. Keeping in view the improvement of the quality of the lesson scripts, different categories of participants rendered suggestions for making them instructional objective oriented, clear and systematic, self instructional type, adaptable to the learners academic background, comprehensive and updated with newly emerging thoughts in respective fields, simple in language, and appropriate in terms of latest and locally available suggested references. These ideas must be considered in the production of lesson scripts.

Also, there is a need to take prompt steps in improvement of correspondence texts for different courses by means of involving subject experts as well as educational technologists. In this regard major efforts is to be made for providing appropriate financial and academic incentives to the producers of correspondence materials. Moreover, there is a necessity for regular scrutiny of lessons by creation of respective expert committees, providing orientation to the lesson producers through seminars and workshops, and keeping on revising/reviewing the lessons with a gap of a year or so.

It was evident that the present form of lessons were appreciated by most of the students of PG level. On the contrary, because of annual system of examination at UG level around half of the respondents of this level had opted for division of lesson booklets into different segments and sending them at different intervals of academic session. Whatever the differences might have appeared in their opinions regarding the form of lessons, both PG and UG level students, dropouts and successful students

had opined for promptness of DCC in timely supply of lessons to the students. Another, significant fact, that was highlighted by most of the above category respondents that the DCC must take initiative in sending additional reference materials to students along with the lessons. This system need to be encouraged through several means, such as charging, extra contributions from students, supplying them on credit basis, improving mobile library system etc. As a whole, it is expected that the above concerns for improvement of correspondence lessons and their dispatch system would demand a fresh look on the part of the DCC from both academic as well as administrative point of view.

(iv) Personal Contact Programmes : The facts regarding organisation and functioning of PCPs revealed that the selection of venue of PCPs could act as an influential factor in students attendance in PCPs. There were other factors like employment positions, financial stringency, personal preoccupations, lack of proper arrangement of boarding and lodging, lack of timely promptness of DCC in sending information regarding the schedule of PCPs which had come in the way of students' attendance in PCPs. Eventhough, the attendance of PCP was kept compulsory for M.Com. and M.Ed. courses around 70 to 80% students of these courses attended PCPs. Whereas around one third of students of rest of the courses could attend the PCPs on their own interest. It reflects better perception of students regarding significance of PCPs in correspondence studies. It could be marked that the compulsory attendance courses had over crowded attendance in PCPs. On the other hand, among voluntary attendance courses the attendance of most of the courses in each PCP centre was limited to small groups varying from 2 to 15 students. It was evident that among voluntary attendants and the M.Ed. students most of them were highly motivated for attending the PCPs. They had opined for making attendance in PCPs compulsory for all courses. Similarly, most of the successful students had appreciated the significance of PCPs and suggested for organisation of PCPs in students local regions for enhancement of attendance.

The duration of PCPs was found to be very much short from the point of view of academic interaction to be carried out during PCPs. Except, M.Ed. students who got chances for attending PCPs for a fortnight in each semester, most of the students of other courses, successful students, dropouts and teachers opined for increment of duration and frequency of PCPs. This issue deserves special attention in the context of improvement of PCP. As a whole, no uniform policy was maintained by the DCC in directing teachers for selection of topics for teaching during PCPs. Because of the limited time available and extensive nature of course contents, most of the teachers used to teach selected topics during PCPs. However, considering the relevance of all topics, around one third of the teachers of all subjects, especially all from Sanskrit used to make attempt for covering all topics briefly during PCPs. It seems, keeping in view the objectives of PCPs, there is a need for following a uniform policy in selection and coverage of selected topics during PCPs. The short duration of PCPs, inadequate arrangement of time table, lack of orientation given to the teachers, and overcrowded attendance in some of the courses caused problems for teachers in managing their teaching programmes.

The usual methods used for teaching during PCPs were lecture, and question answers. Mainly, because of paucity of time, most of the teachers were engaged in coverage of selected topics through delivery of lectures. Comparatively less importance was given on other methods of teaching like seminars and group discussion. On the one hand, while the application of the methods was not successful for overcrowded classes, on the other hand because of lack of incentives by the organisers and teachers these methods were not used at all in small group classes. It shows that the real purpose of organisation of PCPs was not attained in the absence of interaction oriented methods. Of course, the students, who attended the PCPs expressed positive

opinion about the functioning of the PCPs. They could perceive the utility of PCPs in terms of clarification of doubts in studies and getting further inspiration for reading. For further improvement of PCPs most of the students, successful students, and teachers suggested for increment of duration of daily teaching programme, use of group discussion and lecture methods, involvement of expert teachers in PCPs and reduction of students' strength in each PCP of certain courses. It could also be witnessed that teacher students' contact during PCPs were informal and it helped students to clarify their doubts after the class hour too. However, the facilities for library studies and co-curricular activities were very much neglected during PCPs. There were some management problems faced by the teachers in terms of getting advance intimation about the schedule of PCPs, arrangement of boarding and lodging and timely payment of remuneration.

Keeping in view these facts, proper arrangements of PCPs in terms of selection of venues in students' regions, sending prompt information to teachers and students, division of students into appropriate groups, utilisation of appropriate methods for enhancement of group interaction, orientation of teachers about the selection of topics, appropriate arrangements for timetable, organisation of co-curricular activities and facilitating library studies during PCPs, etc. may be provided.

(v) Library Studies and Other Means of Instruction : The very success of correspondence system depends on reading of books, periodicals and other materials along with other instructional inputs provided to students. But, because of lack of library facilities and lack of availability of books in market most of the students could not make use of suggested references. A considerable percentage of dropouts had stated about these difficulties which came on the way of continuation of their studies. The meagre library facilities provided by the DCC was catering to the needs of only 3% students enrolled

in different courses. Also, as stated earlier the provision of library studies during PCPs was very much negligible. In this context, there is an urgent need for expansion of library facilities through the opening of regional library system, having arrangements with other regional colleges/universities for library membership of DCC students, encouraging book bank system and postal library system, and having facilities for mobile library system during PCPs.

It has already been highlighted by the UGC that for encouragement of students' guidance activities, and library studies the regional study centres must be established in local regions of the students. Such centres might be run in the regular colleges of different regions or the DCC might have its independent facilities in these areas. Some of the teaching staff of concerned/nearby colleges might be employed by the DCC on part-time basis for the purpose of teacher student interactions. Further, along with facilities for guidance activities, some other arrangements must be arranged in these centres to hold Sunday classes, holiday classes, facilities for library studies, use of TV and Radio facilities. These ideas were appreciated by almost all participants. In this context, immediate steps must be taken for the encouragement of regional study centre facilities.

As another popular means of distance education the radio system has to be given priorities in teaching programmes of correspondence system. At present, because of the lack of initiatives by All India Radio and some problems at the end of DCC, the correspondence system has been handicapped in making use of radio programmes. Along with initiatives for use of radio facilities, steps must be taken for use of TV facilities for improvement of correspondence instruction. In this regard, joint efforts are to be made by the university level authorities as well as concerned ministries of information broadcasting at national level.

(vi) Assignments and Other Systems of Evaluation : The utility of assignment system was perceived to be very much significant in correspondence system of instruction. While reacting on the nature of assignments, most of the teachers, students, dropouts, and successful students had pointed out several limitations concerning the present form of questions and partial coverage of syllabus by assignments. It could also, be marked that students' seriousness was not reflected to a large extent in answering the assignments. Most of the students had taken it as a casual requirement for appearing in the examinations.

Regarding the conditions of submission of assignments it could be marked that most of the students appreciated compulsory submission system. However, there were differences in opinion of different groups of students with regard to terms of submission of assignments. Very high percentage of UG students had opted for submission of assignments in different instalments in an academic session. Also, most of the teachers of all courses favoured this idea from the point of view of giving regular feedback to students. They had reacted against the present practice of submission of assignments which created problems for proper evaluation of response sheets.

The present system of evaluation of assignments was found in neglected conditions. Except a few cases, because of limited time available for correction of assignments, lack of proper guidelines given to the evaluators, insufficient remuneration given to external evaluators, and non-awareness of evaluators about objectives of instruction proper steps could not be taken by the evaluators for giving feedback to students. A more dissatisfactory picture was witnessed about lack of promptness of DCC in despatching evaluated response sheets to all students in time. Especially, the situation was worse at UG level as one third of B.A. students stated about receipt of checked response sheets after their examinations were over.

With regard to improvement of the nature of assignments, most of the teachers suggested increase in the number of questions in assignments covering each unit of lessons, inclusion of long answer questions and objective type questions, inclusion of questions calling for higher order mental abilities, involving theoretical as well as practical exercises and project works, and providing guidelines for giving the answers. Stressing on the need of properly evaluated answer sheets, most of the students, successful students and dropouts insisted on improvement of present system of evaluation of assignments and timely despatch of evaluated response sheets to the students. Also, most of the teachers suggested for proper distribution of workload of teachers, especially referring to UGC norms, supply of printed model answers to students along with checked response sheets, appointment of more number of staff for evaluation of assignments, appointment of evaluators in regional study centres, supply of guidelines for evaluators, and random check on the evaluation work by the DCC. For improvement of regular feedback system, most of the teachers suggested for maintenance of profiles for each student concerning their past achievement and performances in current examinations and assignments in different papers. It was suggested that practice of the DCC should be revived. Further, some of the specialists involved in the management of correspondence system suggested that the administrative machinery must be reorganised for the improvement of the assignment system. It was suggested that teaching staff of each course must be attached to different sections of the administrative staff in this regard.

There were other aspects of evaluation system such as terms of examination, internal assessment system, self evaluation system and examination system with relation to correspondence instruction processes, on which optimistic views were expressed by different kinds of respondents. While appreciating the flexible role of semester system most of the correspondences students, especially from UG courses opined for continuation of

this system. For encouragement of regular studies and motivating students for better achievement, most of the students suggested for introduction of internal assessment, improvement of assignment system in the line of afore said suggestions and assessment of their performances in PCPs in terms of practicals, project works and participation in seminars and group discussions. Also, most of the teachers suggested for encouraging self evaluation system in terms of giving exercises in lesson scripts along with the answers.

Keeping in view the above facts, appropriate steps must be taken for improvement of assignments and other aspects of evaluation system. Such improvements are supposed to be brought about with special emphasis an achievement purposes of the correspondence system of education.

Output of the System :

The examination results of correspondence course students revealed that with regard to pass percentages the M.Ed. and M.A. Hindi course students had comparatively better achievement (around 50 to 57%) than those of the other courses which varied from 20% to 40%. However, the results of pass students with regard to their divisions showed favourable results for M.Com. and M.A. Sanskrit courses. In all, among pass students the first class students' percentages varied from 0.0% to 0.90% and the second class students' percentages varied from 10 to 48. These facts regarding poor pass percentages and divisions of different course students did not reveal an impressive picture about the correspondence system. Further, a look at the results of both regular and correspondence stream revealed that comparatively the correspondance system had a poorer performance than the regular system. It might be due to differences in certain characteristics of learners of both the streams, such differences might have occurred.

Further, facilities available for library studies and group interaction of regular course students in the campus might have been a plus point over the correspondence course students. It indicated that the correspondence system must bring about improvements in its instructional system to be treated as alternative to regular system, especially with regard to its outcomes. The perception of qualified students regarding the utility of correspondence system reflected that a large number of students perceived the utility of correspondence courses in terms of academic and sociological respects. Nevertheless a large chunk of products did not perceive the utility of the courses, particularly with regard to occupational aspects. For this, the underlying reasons were mostly inherent in the nature and functioning aspects of the system. Thus, for making the courses more utilitarian, emphasis must be given on improvement/modification of the present structure of the system with regard to introduction of new courses and implementation of better programmes keeping in view the aspects as discussed previously.

Improvement of Present Courses and Introduction of new Courses through Correspondence System of Education :

In order to keep in touch with the changes taking place in the field of knowledge and to meet the educational needs of the target group learners of the correspondence system, there is a need for improvement of the existing courses and introduction of new courses from time to time. The views expressed by different groups of respondents reflect that the university must take appropriate steps in modifying the present courses from the point of view of instructional objectives, contents covered and provision of large number of optional papers in each course; and offering need based courses of different categories;

applied studies, vocational and professional courses, courses related to aesthetic values and courses related to general disciplines. Especially, with a view to strengthening the creditibility of correspondence system, the teachers and some specialists involved in the management of the system expected the university to make proper statutory arrangements for expanding the scope of the correspondence system and to provide the needed financial support for creation of new courses. Also, major attention of educational planners at state and central level to be drawn in this regard .

Finance :

The financial position of the correspondence system reflects that the major sources of its income was restricted to the students' contributions. Unlike regular courses' finances, no subsidy was released through grants from governments or other public organisations for raising the income of correspondence courses. Usually, the university had to spend ^{less} amount of money for the maintenance of the correspondence system than the total amount of money raised through the DCC. Even though there were needs for better organisation of instructional activities which could have demanded more expenditure, the university could not do so. As presented in earlier sections, there were several aspects of the system, such as guidance and information facilities for students, preparation of correspondence texts, library studies, PCPs, and assignment system, in which further improvements were to be brought about. Also, as per the suggestions of the different groups of participants of the system, for attainment of objectives of the system the university must make efforts for introducing new need based courses through correspondence system, providing regional study centre facilities and utilising other distance media facilities like Radio and Television. Such improvements would require utilisation of efficient manpower as well as more non-human resources, which in turn would demand more financial expenditure on the part of the university. In this regard it was opined by the specialists contacted and senior

teachers that the university must take a positive stand regarding this matter. They suggested that the DCC need not be treated as a source for supplying its surplus revenues to the university. Instead of this, for strengthening the position of the correspondence system some new ways are to be evolved to raise the revenues through grants from the state and central governments.

The private cost analysis of students reflected that the expenditure for correspondence education came to be very much lower than that of regular courses. As stated in second section, it was one of the reasons for motivating major percentage of students from lower middle and poor income groups for correspondence education. However, there were a large number of dropouts who could find it hard to meet private costs, hence they dropped out of the system. Further, it might have been because of other financial pressures on correspondence students, that they were not in a position to pay at par with regular students for purchasing of books, stationeries etc. In this regard, it was suggested by all kinds of participant respondents that the university should provide some financial incentives to the poor students in terms of fee concessions, scholarships, book bank system etc. In general, it can be concluded that there is a need for raising the efficiency of the present organisational system for the improvement of the correspondence education programme. In this context major emphasis is to be given on strengthening its financial position by raising the revenue through other sources than the students. Certainly, it would require a change in the policy of the university with regard to the financial management of the correspondence education programme.

The study, as a piece of educational research, is conducted in the context of only one institution of correspondence education. As it is, the findings derived through this investigation may not be generalisable to other universities offering correspondence courses. Of course, avoidance of generalisation oriented approaches, can in a way be considered as a strength of the study. It was highlighted that every system is unique in

nature. It functions in the context of a particular set up. The interaction of several internal and external forces in a given set up results in the functioning of the system. Thus, several crucial problems related to the functioning of the system called for intensive study of different aspects of the system in the context of specific net work. Through the adoption of an intensive approach, the study is in a position to provide illuminative pictures of different aspects of the functioning of the system. More specifically, the study has highlighted, in depth, the various facts of the system with reference to: organisation and management of instruction, the cost structure, accessibility of the system, motivation of learners, dropouts, the nature of instruction with regard to different instructional components, and the outcome.

Secondly, taking into consideration different criteria set for evaluation, the study has highlighted several positive points as well as limitations in the functioning of the system. The evaluative questions have been scrutinised in the context of specific situations. Through, a thorough scrutiny, the probable reasons behind different problems and shortcomings of the system have been brought into force. Moreover, this diagnostic analysis of the problems has helped arriving at meaningful suggestions for the various problems. It is expected that these ideas might be valued by the decision makers in right perspective.

Lastly, a study of this type should not be counted as an end in itself. Rather, taking clues from the present study several other questions may be raised pertaining to the functioning of the system. The answers to those queries may be derived through further investigations.