
UNIT 1 UNDERSTANDING DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Aims and Objectives of Distance Education
 - 1.2.1 Augmenting educational provision
 - 1.2.2 Open universities: A new paradigm
 - 1.2.3 Meeting technical/vocational education and training needs
- 1.3 Distance Education : Methods and Styles
 - 1.3.1 How distance education functions?
 - 1.3.2 Distance education technologies
 - 1.3.3 Distance learners: problems and needs
- 1.4. Distance Education: Organisation and Structure
 - 1.4.1 Distance education as an extension function
 - 1.4.2 Dedicated open universities
 - 1.4.3 Radio and television universities
 - 1.4.4 Networking systems
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Check Your Progress : Possible Answers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You will have already learnt the main features of the distance education system and its special characteristics. Nevertheless, even at the risk of being repetitive, it is useful to mention that while education has traditionally been a direct bilateral transaction between the teacher and the student, distance education requires the presence of mediators between the two. The separation of learners from teachers in space and time is one of the unique features of distance education. It is this separation that needs to be mediated by the deployment of different methods, one of which is the function of organising and managing an effective distance education system.

Traditionally, the organisation of education has been more or less similar across the world. Elementary education initiates children into learning, secondary education provides them with a strong foundation in knowledge and tertiary education helps people acquire specialised knowledge and training in its various applications. These three stages of education generally corresponded to the particular age of the children: elementary education up to fourteen years of age, secondary education between fourteen and eighteen and tertiary education beyond eighteen, but normally ending at the age of twenty two or twenty-three. An institution (school, college or university) is the central place where all educational activities take place, and any student who pursues

education has to seek admission to an institution and stay with it till the completion of the programme in which he/she is enrolled. The institutions prescribe the curriculum and the syllabi, appoint teachers, admit students, teach them, and then test and certify their attainments. All this however is done within the institution, in direct face-to-face transaction between the students and their teachers.

This pattern of the structure and organisation of education is far too simple. However, we are no longer living in a simple world. Multiple complexities have made education systems across the world look to alternative ways of solving their problems. To begin with, elementary education is still not universal in several societies, where the number of illiterates is alarmingly large. Adult illiteracy has become a major concern in these societies. Secondly, even those who enter elementary education often do not stay with it; there are also other problems associated with the secondary and higher stages of education such as shortages of buildings, equipment and qualified staff. While these deficiencies continue to aggravate the problems in the field of education, the unprecedented expansion in knowledge and its applications further widen the gap between the developed societies and the others. The less developed countries have to embark on a quantum leap to stay in their pursuit of development and education and training are the key factors in this effort.

What are the implications of these complexities for the education system? First, it is no more the traditional age groups that the relevant stages of education have to cater to. There is a massive multiplication of the learner groups; the illiterate adults, the school drop-outs, the unemployed youth, the housewives, those in the work force who wish to improve their knowledge and understanding. The list could be endless. Secondly, each of these groups has special needs, often distinctly different from those of the others. Some would be looking for acquiring skill and competence; others are in search of knowledge while some are seeking improved qualifications. In other words, with the multiplication of learner groups, learning needs are also multiplying and getting diversified. All these make the traditional ways of organising and managing the education system unequal to the complex tasks lying ahead of them. Naturally, alternate ways of organisation have to be explored. Informal and non-formal ways of teaching and learning begin to gain significance and distance education is a significant stage in the evolution of this process.

As we said in the introduction to this Block, the focus of this Unit is to acquaint you with the variety and range of distance education organisations across the world so that generalised organisational patterns can be drawn from a clear understanding of the ways in which they function.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- describe with clarity the range and variety of distance education systems across the world,
- explain the factors that influence the organisation and structure of those systems,
- analyse the relationship between the system or the institution and the overall environment in which it is functioning, and
- examine the manner in which the specific objectives of the institution influence the design of its organisation and structure.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education can serve a variety of needs and purposes. One of the most significant developments in the second half of the twentieth century was the realisation that adult populations across the world also needed opportunities for education at all levels. In the developed countries, this realisation was promoted by the fact that the economies of these countries needed reconstruction following devastation and destruction during the war. At another level, empires collapsed and a very large number of new nation states emerged, each of which had to build its own independent economic and social infrastructure. Education was the key to all these efforts. An inevitable consequence of this development was the exploration of new ways of teaching and learning as well as the emergence of new learner groups and new teaching needs. This quest for innovative ways of teaching and learning has received a tremendous fillip with the emergence of new communication technologies in the last two decades. The traditional universities began to open up offering their courses and programmes to non-traditional student groups through part-time and evening classes and also through provision for self-study. Extensive use of correspondence education methods was a part of these efforts. Soon enough, universities dedicated to the provision of opportunities for adult learners began to emerge across the world. This was followed by the development of large communication networks offering educational provisions of various kinds in different countries.

Distance education is thus not just one single method of teaching or learning. It is a configuration of various approaches and systems depending upon specific needs and also upon specific situations. Distance education systems and institutions therefore serve a variety of purposes, ranging from the augmentation of educational provisions especially for the adult and the working population to provision of technical and vocational education for meeting the specific needs of a specific industry or a group of industries or application of new technologies for the training of teachers to meeting the educational needs of the disadvantaged sections of society. Can you think of two more groups/purposes for whom distance education systems cater? As the objectives and purposes of each of these systems/institutions vary, so do their patterns of organisation and the methods and styles of their functioning. In this unit, we

shall take a broad overview of the distance education systems across the world from this perspective.

Before we proceed to look at the systems and their organisation, it is important that we keep in mind the following major features of distance education:

- the teacher and the learner are separated in time and space;
- the teaching-learning transaction requires certain degree of interactivity between the teachers and the learners;
- comprehensiveness of the learning experience is an important influence on the learning outcomes;
- since most distance learners also happen to be adults, their learning styles and preferences vary as between individuals and groups.

1.2.1 Augmenting educational provision

One of the earliest forms of distance education was the provision for private study for appearing in university examinations. The University of London has been providing this facility for over a century and allowing the nationals of the Commonwealth countries to appear in several examinations as private candidates. These students prepared for the examinations at their homes; the University of London did not require them to attend any classes. This facility enabled many candidates across the Commonwealth to qualify for degrees in several subjects from this university.

During the post-World War II period, the system of correspondence education emerged in a big way. Most higher education institutions in the former Soviet Union were providing correspondence tuition in a wide range of subjects including science, technology and the professions to people working in farms, factories and other establishments. In the People's Republic of China too, correspondence education was initiated on a large scale in the 1950s. The objective of this initiative was to train as large a number of people as possible in a short time to meet the needs of manpower for China's economic and social development. Over 800 of the 1000 or so Regular Higher Education Institutes in China launched correspondence education programmes during this period. It also established four exclusive Higher Correspondence Institutions to meet the immediate needs. The main purpose of correspondence education was to provide higher education and training to in-service personnel by making full use of the facilities (staff, equipment, laboratories, libraries) and other educational resources available with the formal system. In 1994, over one million students were enrolled in correspondence education in China.

India too witnessed a significant expansion of its correspondence education system in the last three decades. Initiated on a modest scale in 1962 with one university, the provision is now available in over 60 universities in the country with a total enrolment of over one million students.

Check Your Progress 1

What are the major reasons for the spread of distance education in the second half of the 20th century? Answer in about 50 words.

Note i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

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1.2.2 Open universities: A new paradigm

In many ways, the emergence of 'open universities' could be regarded as the starting point of the second generation distance education initiatives, following correspondence education. If correspondence education relied entirely on printed course materials and postal tuition, open universities utilised other communication channels like radio and TV as well as audio/video technologies to support teacher-student interaction. They also developed a wide range of techniques and methods in teaching as well as learning. We shall look at these methodologies later in this unit. At this point, let us take a look at the broad aims and objectives of some of the major open universities in the world.

The Open University in the United Kingdom, which in many ways became a major landmark in the evolution of distance learning systems, was established in 1969 to provide a second chance to adults who have not received higher education, and fuller professional training and qualifications for those who prefer to study while continuing to work and to improve continuing education facilities in the UK. Admittedly, meeting the educational needs of the adult learners in the UK was the primary focus of the Open University. Its missions were:

- open as to people, playing a leading role in the transition to mass higher education by serving an increasingly large and diverse student body;
- open as to places, contributing to the widening of educational opportunities by making its programmes, courses and services available throughout the European union and more widely in the world;

- open as to methods using distance teaching methods and new learning technologies and teaching techniques to serve home and work-based students;
- open as to ideas, being a vibrant academic community dedicated to the expansion, refinement and sharing of knowledge.

(This mission is the revised version after the European Union came into existence)

The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Pakistan was established in 1974 for providing facilities for the educational uplift of the masses, including those who are unable to attend conventional institutions, by carrying education to their doorsteps. The programmes offered by the University are in four major areas: functional education, general education, teacher education, and professional education. The functional education programmes of the AIOU combining basic education with development of skills/competence have been acclaimed as a major success in mass education.

The Universidad Nacional Abierta in Venezuela was founded in 1977 on the open university principle in response to the scarcity of study opportunities for adults, and the spectacular growth of the social demand for higher education. The main aims and objectives of the university are to train professionals in areas which are priorities for national development and to offer educational opportunities to those who have been unable to attend traditional higher education institutions.

The Universidad Estatal a Distancia was established in 1977 by the Government of Cost Rica to alleviate the shortage of places in higher education and to make higher education accessible both to those who could not take advantage of traditional courses and to the agricultural and working population. Education and training of teachers and educational administrators and personnel engaged in health services, cooperatives and agriculture were the major focus of the university's programmes.

The Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) in Thailand was established in 1978 with the objectives of promoting lifelong education, expansion of educational opportunities for secondary school graduates, personnel development and training of skilled manpower, and promotion of democratic values. The STOU offers programmes at the Master's and Bachelor's degree levels besides certificates. Almost three-fourths of its students are from rural areas.

The Open Universteit in Netherlands (OUNL) was established by the Government of Netherlands in 1984 (it is the only government-funded higher distance education institution in the Netherlands). The OUNL's charter identifies the following aims:

- to provide adults with a 'second chance' to enter higher education;
- to offer an alternative form of higher education for people who are not attracted by the traditional forms (second route);
- to create a more affordable form of higher education;
- to encourage innovation in higher education, as regards both content and methods.

The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education in Iran set up the **Payame Noor University (PNU)** in 1987 as a unique single mode distance teaching state university. The main aims of PNU are:

- to promote the scientific and cultural development of the society;
- to provide skilled manpower in areas critical to national integration and development;
- to create opportunities for individuals with family and work commitments to pursue their studies towards a degree;
- to present degree level programmes to underqualified or unqualified teaching staff of schools at the Bachelors degree level;
- to satisfy the ever increasing demand for higher education while holding costs to society within acceptable bounds;
- to arrange public training and, short and long term updating courses to keep people informed of the latest scientific and technological achievements;
- to make higher education accessible to the residents of rural areas and out reach sectors.

During the 1980's India also witnessed the establishment of several single mode open universities. We shall discuss them in Block-4 and therefore we are not considering them here.

1.2.3 Meeting technical/vocational education and training needs

Meeting the needs of technical and vocational education and training through home-study methods is not an entirely new development. The City and Guilds of Britain has been conducting examinations for several vocational trades across the commonwealth and awarding certificates to those who qualify in the tests.

In New Zealand there is an **Open Polytechnic** which was established in 1946 as a Technical Correspondence Institute. It offers technical and vocational education by a home-study system. It offers some 600 programmes in three broad categories, namely, technology, commerce and general studies. About 25% of all New Zealand students who pursue technical and vocational education programmes are enrolled with the Open Polytechnic.

From these traditional home-study methods, there have emerged more innovative, industry-specific and custom-made technical and vocational education and training programmes using the latest communication technologies in several parts of the world. In the UK, for example, the **Wye College of the University of London** offers diploma and Master's degree courses in agricultural development and the **National Extension College** of the UK offers several technician training programmes.

The **Cleveland Open Learning Unit (COLU)** in the UK was set up to respond to the changing needs of Industry and Education. Beginning with Process, Oil and Engineering industries, the COLU now offers a wide range of training programmes which integrate all aspects of academic and vocational requirements. The **Manchester Open Learning (MOL)** was set up in 1979 as a national provider of client-customised, tutor-supported, accredited open learning programmes to meet the training and personnel development needs within organisations, specially at the junior and middle management levels. The **Open College in the Arts (OCA)** in the UK has developed a wide range of courses in Art and Design, Calligraphy, Drawing, Creative Writing, Garden Design, History of Arts, Interior Design, Music, Painting, Photography, Video Production, etc. which are delivered through methods broadly similar to those of the UK Open University. The OCA has now become an affiliated college of the Open University.

The **Open Learning in Scotland (OLIS)** was established in 1990 to offer a complete range of open learning services for industry including advice on the availability of open learning materials, programmes that would meet the specific needs of a particular industry or organisation, tutorial support, provision of practical training, etc. The OLIS offers a range of process and engineering programmes to industry from multi-disciplinary engineering process plant operation, to instrumentation and electronics at the higher National Certificate level. The OLIS is in fact a joint venture between the Petroleum Open Learning which was created in 1988 to provide a comprehensive range of open learning services to oil and gas industries, and a college of Further Education in Scotland.

The **National Technological University (NTU)** in the US makes televised lectures available through satellite at specially set up reception centres which are based within firms. The NTU's clients are large firms which buy its services and enable their employees to take NTU's courses. The NTU is essentially a network service provider, linking the educational institutions and large companies for meeting their specific personnel development needs.

Check Your Progress 2

Identify and elaborate two major objectives for establishing open/distance education institutions ? Answer in about 50 words.

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

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1.3 DISTANCE EDUCATION: METHODS AND STYLES

The uniqueness of distance education lies in the fact that the learners are separated in time and space from their teachers. This separation is made up by some form of mediation between the two parties to the teaching-learning contract. In order to make this mediation effective, an organisational presence becomes essential. The structure and pattern of this organisational presence will depend on the methods and styles that the system employs to mediate between the learners and the teachers. In order to understand the essential features of this mediatory role, it would be worthwhile to look at the functions and tasks of the organisation in responding to the problems and needs of distance learners.

1.3.1 How distance education functions ?

A major task of any distance education institution is to promote its products (programmes and services). The programmes will be determined by the objectives for which the institution has been established and the specific groups of potential students to whom they are addressed. The programmes and courses may all be developed internally, or may be acquired from other distance teaching institutions. These promotional efforts have to be followed up by making arrangements for enrolling students at a number of places nearer their places of work/stay as they cannot be expected to travel to the headquarters of the organisation which provides the education.

Before the enrolment is closed, the organisation has to ensure that it has enough stock of learning packages for all programmes and that these can be distributed to all students. This demands that systems are in place for the production, storage and distribution of learning packages to students scattered over a wide territory. This has to be followed by provision of tutorial support to students, arrangements for practical work and experiments where necessary, preparation and distribution of student assignments, collection and evaluation of these assignments, provision of feedback to the students on their assignments, and a variety of similar services. Finally, the learners have to be tested and their attainments certified.

Most of these services are provided by all educational institutions. However, there is a major difference. In a face-to-face interactive situation, communication with all students is simple and easy. For example, a notice announcing the cancellation of a lecture, stuck on the main notice board, is adequate to inform all students about the situation. In distance education, any communication of consequence has to be individually conveyed to each student wherever he/she happens to be.

It is in this task of mediation between the learners and the institution that a variety of technologies are used by most distance education systems. We shall briefly take a look at these technologies.

1.3.2 Distance education technologies

Most distance education systems employ multimedia technologies in their teaching-learning transactions. The most widely used medium however continues to be the printed learning packages. These materials are specially prepared for the distance learner in the form of self-instructional material which attempt to build the teacher into the text. The competence required for designing and developing such materials is a highly specialised professional requirement.

Materials for self-study are only one part of the distance learning kits. These are supplemented by several institutions with electronic media that add to the learning material packages or to the interactive processes of learning. These technologies may include:

Radio: By far the easiest medium that can be accessed at a very low cost. Radio lessons are regularly broadcast at fixed hours by several distance education systems. These broadcasts can reach the remote learners, distributed across vast and often inaccessible regions. Improvements in the broadcast mode are progressively made in many cases by providing for two-way audio communication to facilitate interaction among the teachers and learners. Audio cassettes are a useful supplement to the printed text and they can be played back at any time by the learners, which radio broadcasts do not permit.

Television: This medium is rapidly being pressed into service by many distance education systems. Specially designed and prepared video cassettes related to the curricular content of distance education programmes are telecast at specified hours over the national television networks or specially established satellite-based communication channels. This medium is also used to provide live academic counselling to learners through tele-conferencing or video-conferencing. These systems use one-way video and two-way audio communication as well as a two-way communication for both voice and image. In some cases, even the Cable Television Networks are pressed into service to reach educational software to the learners' homes.

Computer-mediated communication: This is a fast developing area in educational technology. Computer networks – Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) – are extensively used to transfer information and learning materials electronically from the institution to the learners at their homes or workplaces. A large part of the student – institution transactions is also carried out through the electronic medium-securing forms, registering applications, payment of fees, submission of assignments and so on. With the growing popularity of the Internet a new era in distance education technologies is now emerging.

1.3.3 Distance learners: problems and needs

It is essential for distance education managers to be fully aware of the problems and needs of the distance learners to enable them to respond to these adequately. It has to be remembered that a distance learner is an isolated client of a large system who might always feel neglected. The system has therefore to ensure that the learners do not suffer from isolation. The only way to do this is to ensure that the learners know what they can expect and when, and then make sure that they get it and on time. Any failure in keeping this promise can be very costly; the institution might even lose goodwill and credibility.

From the distance learner's point of view, it would be useful to have some idea about what it means to be a distance learner. This package of pre-enrolment information should preferably include:

- Information about courses and programmes. This should clearly indicate who are likely to benefit from doing particular courses and what benefits might accrue to them in terms of job opportunities, including job-changes, career opportunities, further education, and so on.
- Some ideas about distance education methods and processes including study skills and techniques, time management and pacing of studies, balancing work and study pressures, and learning resources available.
- Comprehensive information about the institutional processes including when to apply and where, how and when to pay fees and to whom, what facilities and services are provided for each course or programme, where assignments are to be submitted, how and where tutorial support is

available, what are the arrangements for practical experience and experiments, what are the mandatory requirements for completion of each programme, when and how are examinations held, and so on.

This information package is very crucial as it provides the essential inputs for the conclusion of the learners' contract with the institution.

After enrolment, students will require a variety of services and facilities. What is commonly called the Student Services is a significant component of the distance learning system. Distance education managers have several strategic options to choose from. The choice will depend on one or more of the following:

- delivery of different services at a distance (by postal services) or face-to-face;
- whether these services should be delivered at their houses/work places, or at a commonly designated centre;
- are the services, especially tutorials and academic counselling, to be delivered synchronously as in face-to-face discussion, or can they be delivered asynchronously with gaps in the time of giving and receiving as in correspondence tuition;
- what are the services that can be delivered in standard formats like handbooks, newsletters and schedules and what are the services that are differentiated as between programmes/courses or groups of students.

The system for delivering these services may be structured in different forms and patterns. A crucial factor in designing the delivery systems will be the size of the institution (the range of programmes/courses, the number of students enrolled, the territorial spread and extent of the enrolment, the technologies available and are accessible, and so on.)

Check Your Progress 3

What is the advantage of audio/video cassettes over broadcast technologies for a distance learner? Answer in about 30 words.

Note : i) Space is given below for your answer
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit..

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1.4 DISTANCE EDUCATION :ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

You will have noticed from the foregoing discussion that the core of a distance learning system is its organisational effectiveness. The management and organisation functions are therefore central to the system itself. The form and nature of these functions as well as their organisation and structure will vary depending upon the objectives of the system, the range of programmes, the technologies used, the student group profiles and the general education and training environment in which the system operates.

We shall now look at some typical organisational models that will help us draw the general principles governing distance education organisation and management.

1.4.1 Distance education as an extension function

Traditional universities were perceived to be elitist institutions for a long time. This was primarily because entry to these universities was selective and those who were fortunate to enter them were essentially from the upper strata of the society. With pressure mounting on these institutions to open up, many of them took up extension work by offering their facilities to the community through short un-structured programmes, extension lectures or problem-solving initiatives. Many of them encouraged private students to appear for their examinations and later also began to offer postal tuition. Part-time studies, off-campus teaching, etc. became a part of these extension initiatives. These earlier initiatives in extending the benefits of a higher education institution to the general community (as against the formal students who have been admitted to its privileges) were perhaps the beginning of what has now evolved as distance education. The limitations of this endeavour were that they did not constitute the mainstream activities of a university; neither the community, nor the faculty considered these activities as the core of the functions of universities.

Even after distance education has evolved in its present form, the traditional institutions continue to regard it as an add-on effort and in consequence in several institutions the distance education activities remain a peripheral concern with poor resource allocation, inadequate facilities, and little or no concern for qualitative improvement and innovation.

1.4.2 Dedicated open universities

Exclusive Open Universities, or single mode open institutions as they are known, are now a three-decade old phenomenon. They emerged partly to remedy the shortcomings in the approach of traditional universities to distance education, and partly also to promote innovation and flexible teaching – learning approaches relatively free from the rigidities of the traditional system. Most of them have also been able to harness modern communication

technologies in varying degrees and forms. The success of this experiment in providing good quality higher education at a relatively low cost to large numbers of people has made it an attractive and imaginative approach to meeting the ever expanding needs for higher education.

We have seen earlier in this unit how the establishment of single mode open universities has captured the imagination of the political establishment as well as educational planners and policy makers across the world in all continents. The rapid growth of these institutions, their increasing popularity and acceptance by employer groups have made these institutions an effective alternative to the traditional system. They have also established that

- higher education can truly and effectively be made available through mass education programmes;
- high quality higher education can be provided at an affordable cost;
- education can truly be provided on a global scale without sacrificing its local and regional relevance;
- it can mobilise new resources for the sector of higher education even as its traditional support base is progressively eroding;
- the traditional functions of universities as well as the established ways of their functioning need to be reviewed and redefined if higher education is to become a dynamic instrument of change.

1.4.3 Radio and television universities

In the discussion on the emergence of distance education and its rapid expansion in the last 50 years, not much attention seems to have been given to the establishment of **Radio and Television Universities in the People's Republic of China** and the manner in which they have contributed to the growth of higher education in that country. We shall try and take a close look at this innovation.

Higher correspondence education has become a massive enterprise in meeting the manpower needs of the emerging Chinese economy. During the 1950s, the Chinese correspondence education programmes were being offered by over 840 higher education institutions which enrolled one million or more students.

During the 1960s, China also decided to use radio and television in augmenting educational provision. The Beijing Television University was established in 1960, which was followed by similar Television Universities in other metropolitan cities of China. However, there was a serious interruption in this experiment during the period of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Thereafter, the experiment was revived and a comprehensively reorganised system of Radio and Television Universities Network was put in place in 1978.

The Chinese Radio and Television Universities network consists of:

- A Central Radio and Television University (CRTVU) responsible for planning, policy making, macro-management, and development of the core curriculum in key areas of national development.
- 31 Provincial Radio and Television Universities (PRTVUs) with similar responsibilities and functions at the regional/provincial levels. These provincial universities are also involved in the design and development of curricula for key areas of regional development. They perform the functions of production and distribution of multi-media learning packages for all programmes (both national and provincial), holding examinations as per standards prescribed by the CRTVU, training of teachers and undertaking research in higher education through distance mode.
- 330 or so District Centres, called the Branch Schools to which are attached 2200 or more TV classes and work stations supported by an unlimited number of grass-roots level TV classes located in local communities. Thus the three-tier structure of District, County and Community level networks supports the teaching – learning transactions of the Radio and Television University Network.

In the initial stages, the network operated through microwave links. Since the 1980s, the network is using satellite-based communication to link the whole country.

The overall structure of the network is designed on the principle of vertical interdependence of the five-layer edifice. Till about 1986, the whole system functioned on the basis of centralised planning and control structures. There was uniformity in all spheres – planning, enrolment, curricula and syllabi, course materials, Radio and TV tutorials and examinations. The regime of liberalisation and economic reforms initiated in 1986 witnessed several changes in the management of the RTVU network as well. The constituents of the network now function on the basis of a decentralised system with much greater initiatives at the regional and local levels in the management of the network.

It would be interesting to look at the learning models established by the Radio and Television University network of China. The learning activities include:

- independent study through printed materials provided to each student;
- learning through audio-visual lessons in groups which are based at the work places or in local communities at the grass-root level;
- watching TV programme or videos and listening to radio programmes or audio cassettes in groups at fixed venues;
- compulsory face-to-face tutorials as prescribed for each course;
- compulsory assignments, and practical work.

TV classes are organised at different levels depending upon the size of enrolment, nature of courses and other relevant factors. Broadly there are:

- single independent TV classes at the grass-root level;
- joint TV classes organised by several small and medium size units;
- TV classes organised by local government departments;
- TV classes held by Regional/Provincial Radio and Television Universities;
- TV classes organised by local communities and social organisations.

This network had an annual enrolment of 530,000 in 1994 and had an output of over 1.8 million graduates till then. It should surely rank as the largest distance education system in the world.

The University of the Air established in Japan in 1985 is another variation on the Chinese experiment. It also uses radio and television and other technologies in the teaching learning processes. Since radio and television are the principal media in its teaching, the University of the Air functions not as a teaching institution within the discipline of a university framework, but as a licensed broadcaster under the national broadcasting law. It was set up with the objective of providing working people and housewives with the chance for a college education; providing an innovative and flexible system of higher education which is open to all high school graduates; cooperation with existing universities in making full use of the latest knowledge and newest educational technology in order to offer a system of higher education which meets contemporary needs.

The University of the Air offers teaching through satellite-based video transmission which reaches the entire Japanese Archipelago. It has to be remembered that the inhabitants of many of these isolated islands would have had no access to higher education if it were not for the opportunities provided by the University of the Air. In order to reach its students, the University of the Air sets up study centres which are in fact video reception centres which also function as fully equipped video libraries. Countrywide over 70 such video centres disseminate the university's courses and programmes.

1.4.4 Networking systems

This preliminary discussion on the organisation and structure of distance learning systems will not be complete without drawing attention to the more recent trends of distance teaching networks emerging in different parts of the world. The emergence of these networks can be attributed to the following reasons:

- it is no longer possible for any single institution to satisfy all the learning needs of vastly heterogeneous learner groups;

- as learner groups get diversified, so do the learning needs; no institution will have all the resources to respond to all the diverse learning needs;
- emerging globalisation of education provides a unified market; organisational ingenuity lies in the fact that resources and facilities at the providers level are pooled to respond to these needs to cut costs and enlarge the market;
- modern communication technologies offer the means to bring together a number of providers and consumers on a single platform.

The National Technological University (NTU) of the USA is one example of such a network. A small central co-ordinating unit functions as a vehicle for the delivery and accreditation of graduate programmes of engineering recorded on video-tapes at some 30 engineering schools of US universities. These video lessons are delivered by NTU at client sites which are generally large US firms. The NTU's courses and services are bought by these firms for the benefit of their employees. The NTU's role in this enterprise is effectively to link a number of providers with a number of clients without having to create any major infrastructure except the communication network.

Another example of a networked system is the **Open Learning Foundation in the UK** established in 1990 to increase the accessibility of universities and higher education to individuals, companies and public sector organisations by supporting the growth of the highest quality education. The Open Learning Foundation does not enrol its own students but, through its activities, enables its member institutions to increase their enrolments at overall higher student/staff ratios while maintaining high standards and low wastage rates.

The Open Learning Agency in Canada is yet another form of network. Its mandate is to provide leadership in the development and implementation of open learning in British Columbia. The OLA uses television, telecommunications, electronic printing technologies, and tutorials to enable students to learn in the most effective way possible. Courses and programmes range from high school completion and career, technical and vocational training to undergraduate university degrees. The OLA works closely with a number of partners in learning which include British Columbia's Universities and colleges, institutes, school districts, businesses, and community and government agencies. It also uses courses and materials acquired from other institutions for enriching its own programmes.

Check Your Progress 4

What is the main reason for the establishment of networking systems all over the world? Answer in about 50 words.

- Note :** i) Space is given below for your answer.
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

It has been our endeavour in the preceding sections to take you through different forms and structures that distance education systems and institutions have acquired in various contexts and environments. Our purpose in doing so is, as we mentioned in the introduction to this unit, to acquaint you with the range and diversity of distance teaching and learning structures and organisations. What we wish to emphasise is that there is no unique structure for a distance education system and that its organisation and management can be shaped and developed according to the needs and circumstances of the environment.

In describing the existing systems, and in analysing the principles and practices followed in their organisation and management, we are aware that we might have been repeating what has already been stated elsewhere. However, we also realize that while it is easy to present knowledge and information, understanding requires the use of redundancy or discussion, and preferably both. Redundancy involves communicating the same idea in many different ways, and contexts. What we have presented here, and what follows in the remaining units of this Block have all a particular contextual setting, and that is the manner in which distance education managers would look at the problems and concerns, which may be quite different from the perspective of those concerned mainly with subject matter specialisation or pedagogy.

1.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : POSSIBLE ANSWERS

1. Most of the developed countries realised the need for reconstruction of their economies devastated by war. Less developed countries and the new states which emerged around this period felt the need for rapid socio-economic development. Since education was the key to all development, there was a universal search for innovative methods of teaching and learning. Distance education which can cater to diverse needs and purposes offered an alternative.

2. Widening access and equity through augmentation of educational provision, and ensuring relevance for programmes through significant expansion of technical/professional/vocational education are two important objectives that distance education institutions seek to fulfil. The flexibility in the structures and process as well as its ability to reach out to large numbers through the use of information and communication technologies provides distance education institutions with an edge in realising both these objectives.
3. Broadcasts over radio and television require that the learners are glued to their sets at the scheduled time. They have no opportunity to pause and absorb what is broadcast. Audio/video cassettes on the other hand, are capable of being stopped, replayed and repeatedly listened to, or viewed, depending upon the inclinations of the learner and at any time of his/her choice.
4. No single institution in the world can cater to all the diverse client groups and their needs which are increasing continuously in a competitive global society. Pooling of resources and expertise of various institutions through networking systems with modern technologies would help to meet the growing needs of heterogeneous client groups.

UNIT 2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF HIGHER DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Distance Education Institutions: Typology
 - 2.2.1 Dual-mode institutions
 - 2.2.2 Single-mode institutions
 - 2.2.3 Consortium or networked systems
- 2.3 Organisational Structure of Open Distance Education Universities
 - 2.3.1 Decision making bodies
 - 2.3.2 Organisational network : division of work
 - 2.3.3 Regional network
- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.5 Check Your Progress : Possible Answers

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit, we have taken a close look at the variety and diversity of distance education systems functioning in several countries. A critical study of this survey will have provided you with a deeper insight into the evolution of distance education systems in different environments and in meeting a variety of goals and objectives. The presentation would have also helped you to understand the typology of institutional models, in terms of their organisational design and structure.

The emergence of distance education was a global phenomenon. Education systems across the world experimented with new innovations and experiments. What innovations were tried, and how new systems evolved, depended substantially on the environments in which these experiments were conducted. It is therefore time that we now turn to take a close look, from the management perspective at the organisational designs and structures of distance education systems and institutions, on a more general theoretical framework. The descriptive treatment of the evolution of distance education systems and institutions in the previous unit, we hope, will have provided you with a perspective to understand and assimilate the more theoretical models of management dealt with in this Unit.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- explain the types and characteristics of different organisational models and their structures,
- identify the factors that could influence the design of an organisational structure of a distance education system or institution, and
- relate the design of the system and its organisation to the objectives, functions and the environment.

2.2 DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: TYPOLOGY

As we have seen, open and distance education institutions are generally more comprehensive in their scope and are, therefore, more complex structurally as well as operationally. At the same time, it is also true that there cannot be an absolutely right way or even just one way, to organise distance education systems. These systems have similar goals and share two common features:

- they are designed to serve the needs of adult learners who are unable to attend campus based education;
- because they are not campus – based, the teaching-learning transactions require to be mediated by a variety of means.

It is this second characteristic that lends itself to a variety of organisational devices which different institutions in different environments evolve and continuously improve upon. It is important to keep this factor in mind while attempting to examine the organisational models of distance education institutions.

There have been a number of attempts to identify typologies of distance education institutions, especially those pertaining to higher education. The number of variables which characterise these institutions and the rapidity of change which a particular type of system undergoes within a short period of time are the two major factors which make the task of classifying them difficult. During the last four decades, developments in distance education systems have been diverse and revolutionary in more than one sense.

However, a broad classification into three types remains manifestly dominant, as it is supported by descriptive as well as analytical literature on distance education. We have another reason for our preference for this classification: it depends on institutional status as the main classifying criterion. As we discuss the management of distance education, we find it convenient to place this discussion in the context of institution(s).

Broadly, there are three types of distance education institutions (DEIs). They are:

- i) dual-mode institutions, ii) single-mode institutions, and iii) consortia or networks,

We shall elaborate on each one of them as follows.

2.2.1 Dual mode institutions

A dual mode institution is one which caters to student needs using both the modes – conventional face-to-face teaching and distance teaching with or without student support. It needs to be noted that the majority of distance learners, all over the world, benefit from these institutions. Historically, in most countries, they are not only older but also more in numbers than any other type of DE institutions. What we have said so far is not enough to understand the variety, which the dual mode DE institutions display. It is not within the scope of this unit to talk about each and every such variety. However, we should be able to lend some depth to this concept by talking about the three distinct models of the dual mode DE institutions.

Indian model : In India, it was the University of Delhi which introduced correspondence education for the first time in 1962, through the mechanism of what came to be called the School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education. The University of Delhi, as you know, is a conventional face-to-face teaching institution. By establishing the School, it became a dual mode institution catering to both the on-campus and the off-campus students. Subsequently, many more universities and institutions of higher learning became dual mode in order to extend their reach to larger number of students. Today, there are around 62 such institutions in the country, and the academic-cum-functional mechanisms for the purpose have been named differently as departments, directorates, schools, divisions etc.

In most cases these units have little autonomy, as the decision making is dominated by the units engaged in conventional face-to-face teaching. The academic programmes, course content, assessment schemes and operations are all governed by the authorities and bodies of the institutions in which the correspondence or distance education units have, at best, limited influence. Consequently, these units cannot bring in innovations, and their entire effort goes into establishing proximity with the conventional norms. Again, not all the units are structured in the same way. In some cases, the units have their

own academic staff who do not participate in conventional teaching; in some cases, the academic staff is on secondment (deputation) from the parent departments of the university concerned, and then there are some which have no academic staff at all (on full-time basis) and function as mere administrative units. The study conducted by Valicha (1990) revealed that DEIs in India need drastic changes in almost all areas of functioning including organizational structures and processes, to make them more effective in imparting education to distance learners.

Malaysian model: The major distance education operation at the university level in Malaysia is that of the University Sains Malaysia. The university has a separate unit with academic as well as non-academic staff to look after their DE courses. In this sense, this model is not different from the Indian one. But, there is a very interesting and marked difference between the two.

At the philosophical level, University Sains Malaysia holds the view that the experience of corporate life at a university is an obligatory component of a university graduate's education. Accordingly, to qualify at the university, a student must have spent at least one year as an on campus student. The normal practice is that the students who follow the distance mode are to give one year more than the on-campus students do for the same degree. While the on-campus students study on-campus all along, the distance students complete only the courses prescribed for the last year on-campus and the remaining courses through the distance mode. This way, the distance student experiences both on-campus and off-campus studies in the process of obtaining a degree.

Australian model: Strictly speaking, here we are talking about the Deakin model rather than any Australian Model. However, in the literature on distance education, the Deakin Dual Mode Model seems to typify the Australian case in general, though there are marked variations from institution to institution. Up to 1982, Deakin University had a separate administrative unit to take care of its off-campus students as depicted in the organisational Chart (Fig. 1). Subsequently, this unit was abolished and its activities were integrated with those of the main university activities. The basic point of departure in the model is its emphasis on using the services of the same academic staff to serve both the on-campus and the off-campus students.

To have named these models after the countries they come from is rather simplistic. We have used this terminology for the sake of convenience only. As, for example, what we termed the Indian Model is very much in evidence at the University of Queensland, Australia; and the earlier Deakin Model is hardly different from what is followed at the University of New England, New South Wales, Australia or the University of Zambia, Africa.

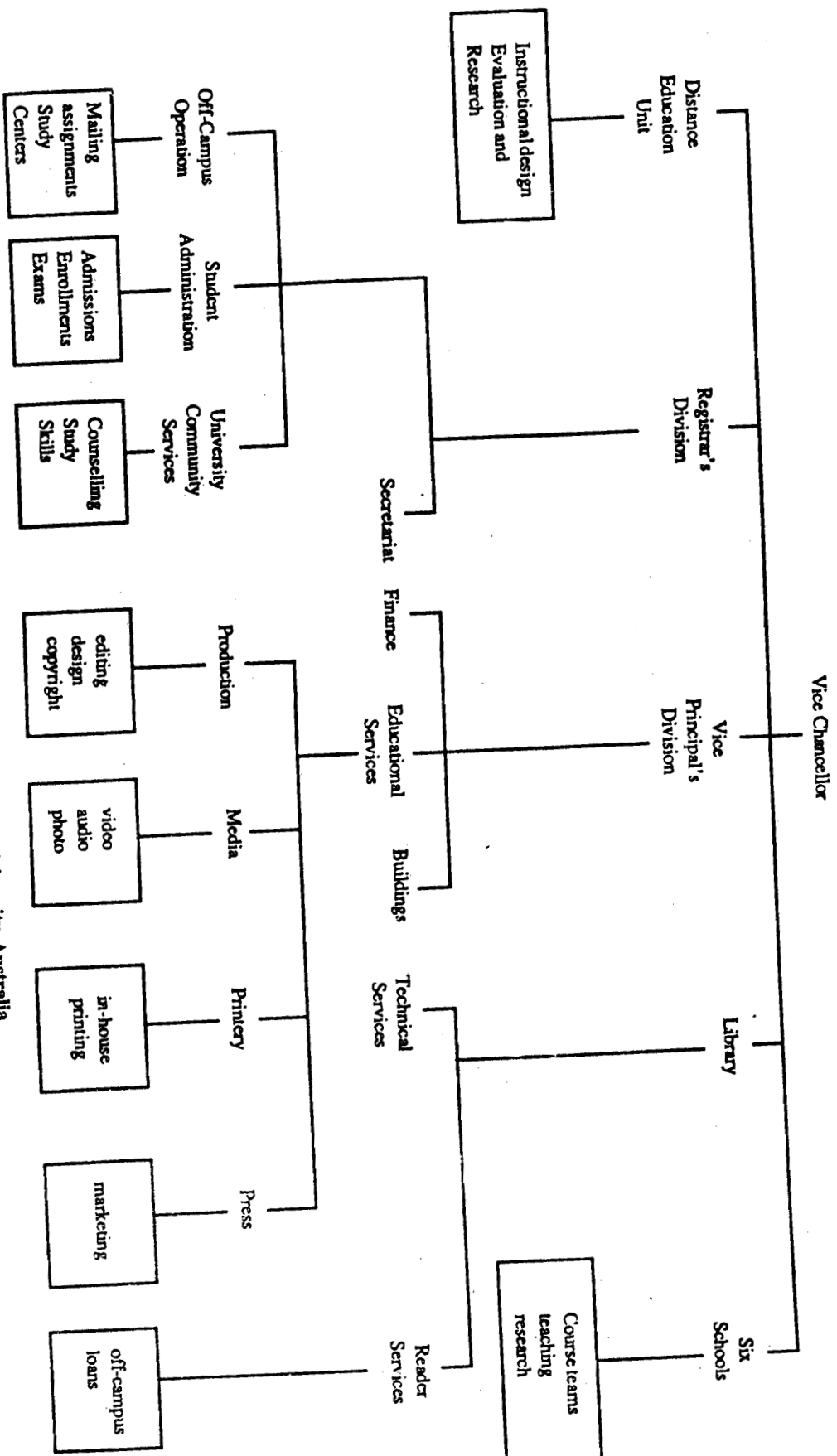


Fig 1. Organisational Chart: Deakin University, Australia

The major handicap which these institutes/units suffer from is their lack of autonomy. They are not able to fully exploit the potential of the distance mode of education, as they lack the required power base within the decision making bodies of the universities they belong to. Consequently, they can neither introduce innovations, nor can they meet their resource needs of correspondence/distance units. The second difficulty is the low 'status' these units are given in the overall academic corporate body which also finds its reflection in the attitude of the society. Where they follow the system of secondment, it is the unwanted academic in the parent department who is deputed to correspondence units; where such units have their own staff, they attract poor quality teachers. These views are not necessarily correct, but elsewhere they have been used or considered seriously to arrange for teaching the on-campus and off-campus students by the same faculty. Deakin University, Australia is an instance. Such integration based on using the same staff for teaching the two types of students is believed to ensure parity in academic standards resulting in credibility for correspondence/distance education units and their products. The other advantage of the Deakin approach is the share such units have in the power base of university administration. But, there are reports, for example those from the University of Zambia, that overworked teachers find it difficult to give their best to correspondence students who expect more and demand more from teachers. The counter-view in this case is that some teachers find it more challenging and stimulating to teach external students who are more experienced and more motivated than the usual day scholars.

At this stage, we need to bring in the fourth type of dual mode institutions. These are the ones which are given sufficient autonomy to plan their curricula, select their students, develop their study material and delivery systems. A good example of this type is the Correspondence Courses Department of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad in India. Besides, such a dual mode system has been in operation in the USA for a long time now. It remains, wherever it is, part of a university, enjoys considerable autonomy, has its courses and programmes accredited by the appropriate accreditation authorities and employs willing academic and non-academic staff to carry out day-to-day business, consequent upon which it enjoys a high level of credibility and is hardly ever differentiated from the normal face-to-face teaching systems.

Let us briefly consider the advantage/disadvantage of this system. On the one hand, there are instances of the success of the model (New England and Deakin) and there are, on the other, equally convincing instances of the weaknesses of this model (Zambia and India). Many research studies conducted on Indian dual mode institutions brought out the weaknesses in various aspects (Singh and others, 1994; Valicha, 1990). In conclusion, we may say that the weaknesses of the model may be attributed partly to the fact that a conventional model of academic practices cannot be wholly imposed on the distance mode of education and partly to the fact that a new educational mode (i.e. distance education) cannot grow effectively under the traditional

administrative and funding systems. This conclusion notwithstanding, we are inclined to admit that the human material involved also matters considerably, otherwise we cannot explain the success of the model, at Deakin or New England.

Dual mode institutions, especially the Deakin type, appropriately planned can respond adequately to issues like credibility of correspondence/distance courses, self development of the academic staff by means of research and extension activities, and also the social necessity of democratizing education on a large scale.

The last issue mentioned is the single decisive factor which may have given birth to single mode distance education institutions. The rigidities of the conventional universities strengthened over centuries of practice all over the globe, make it difficult for them to respond to new and emerging needs and demand for opening up education to masses, and to democratize it. It was for the new instrument, the new mechanism, namely the single mode distance education institutions, therefore not inappropriately called "open institutions" to set path-breaking trends and then usher in a major advance in the evolution of distance education.

We now turn to single-mode distance education institutions.

Check Your Progress 1

What is the major difference between the Indian and Malaysian models of the dual mode system of distance education?

Note : i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of unit.

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2.2.2 Single-mode institutions

Institutions typifying this model are exclusively distance teaching institutions. Unlike the distance teaching department/unit in the mixed-mode/dual-mode models, single mode institutions have complete autonomy with regard to what they teach, how and whom. Their administrators, academics and the production personnel all work for distance education. Secondly, unlike the consortium model of institutions, the open/distance-mode models do not have to accommodate differing educational philosophies, different organisational patterns, differing ideologies of using and the uses of media, or the indifference of certain departments or schools within one or more institutions. In other words, this model is free from the drawbacks which the other two models suffer from.

On pragmatic grounds too, a system of education which is quasi-industrial, has the learner separated from the teachers, the peer group and the institution, and uses electronic media to compensate for the lack of inter-personal interaction, i.e., a system that differs from the conventional system in crucial essentials cannot and should not be subjected to conventional constraints – administrative procedures and academic practices. The implication is that to run non-conventional systems, conventional norms and procedures of management have to be replaced by more suitable ones, and there cannot be a better approach than devoting the entire institution to managing the system (of distance education) as its sole charge. We would like to present a case study here: a detailed account of the functional aspects of UKOU.

UKOU – A Case Study

The case of the British Open University (or UKOU) could serve as a useful model of management of distance teaching universities of the single mode type. By selecting the UKOU for our discussion, we do not imply that it is the only model for learning managerial skills to run the single-mode universities. There are a number of single-mode distance teaching universities in Russia, China, Thailand, Pakistan, Canada, Israel, South Africa, Venezuela and other countries which can offer us valuable guidance and rich experience. We have chosen the UKOU primarily because of our familiarity with its success, its range of activities and the degree of efficiency in managing its affairs. The easy access to information, materials etc. on the management of the UKOU is another reason for the present choice of ours. A clear understanding of the organisational and administrative structure, the nature of the educational programmes and the ways of implementing these programmes should tell us what kind of management we must have if we are to build our credibility and academic standards which can stand comparison with the distance teaching universities of the first order.

Origins of the UKOU

In 1963 the Robbins Report on Higher Education stated that there was an untapped pool of adults in the United Kingdom who were in need of university education but had 'missed out' the opportunity earlier in their lives for various reasons. In the same year, Harold Wilson, then the leader of the opposition, after his visit to the then Soviet Union was impressed by the use of media technology there in the field of education, floated the idea of a 'University of the Air' in the Glasgow speech. When the Labour Party came to power in 1964, Harold Wilson, the new Prime Minister entrusted Jennie Lee, a junior minister in the Department of Education and Science, with the special responsibility for the University of the Air project. Subsequently a white paper was brought out and a Planning Committee was established to work at a comprehensive plan for an Open University, as outlined in the white paper and to prepare a draft charter and statutes. After the Planning Committee report was published in 1969, a Royal Charter was granted in June, the same year, establishing the Open University as an independent and autonomous institution authorised to offer its own courses and confer its own degrees. Walter Perry was the first Vice-Chancellor of the British Open University. Over the years the British Open University has emerged as one of the most celebrated distance teaching institutions of the world. One of the key factors that contributed to the success of the UKOU was the management of the various functions of the university.

Organisational Structure

Organisationally the British Open University is divided into five major areas, namely (i) The Academic Schools of Faculties (ii) The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) (iii) The Institute of Educational Technology (IET) (iv) The Regional Academic Services and (v) Operations of Course Production and Distribution. Detailed structure of UKOU is depicted in Fig.2. The general administration covering all these areas may be treated as the sixth area in the organisational structure. The executive head of the university is the Vice-Chancellor. There are four Pro-Vice-Chancellors with individual responsibilities for specific policy areas. The bi-cameral governmental structure of the university consists of two power sharing bodies, the Senate and the Council. The senate with 800 members comprises all members of the academic staff, the elected representatives of non-academic staff, part-time tutorial staff and some students and is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The Senate determines the academic policies. The Council is the executive governing body with 39 members with 25 of them drawn from outside the university and is chaired by the Pro-Chancellor. Besides, there are three bodies i.e., (i) the Academic Board, (ii) the Student Affairs and Awards Board and (iii) the Planning Board. The first two report to the Senate and the third reports both to the Senate and the Council.

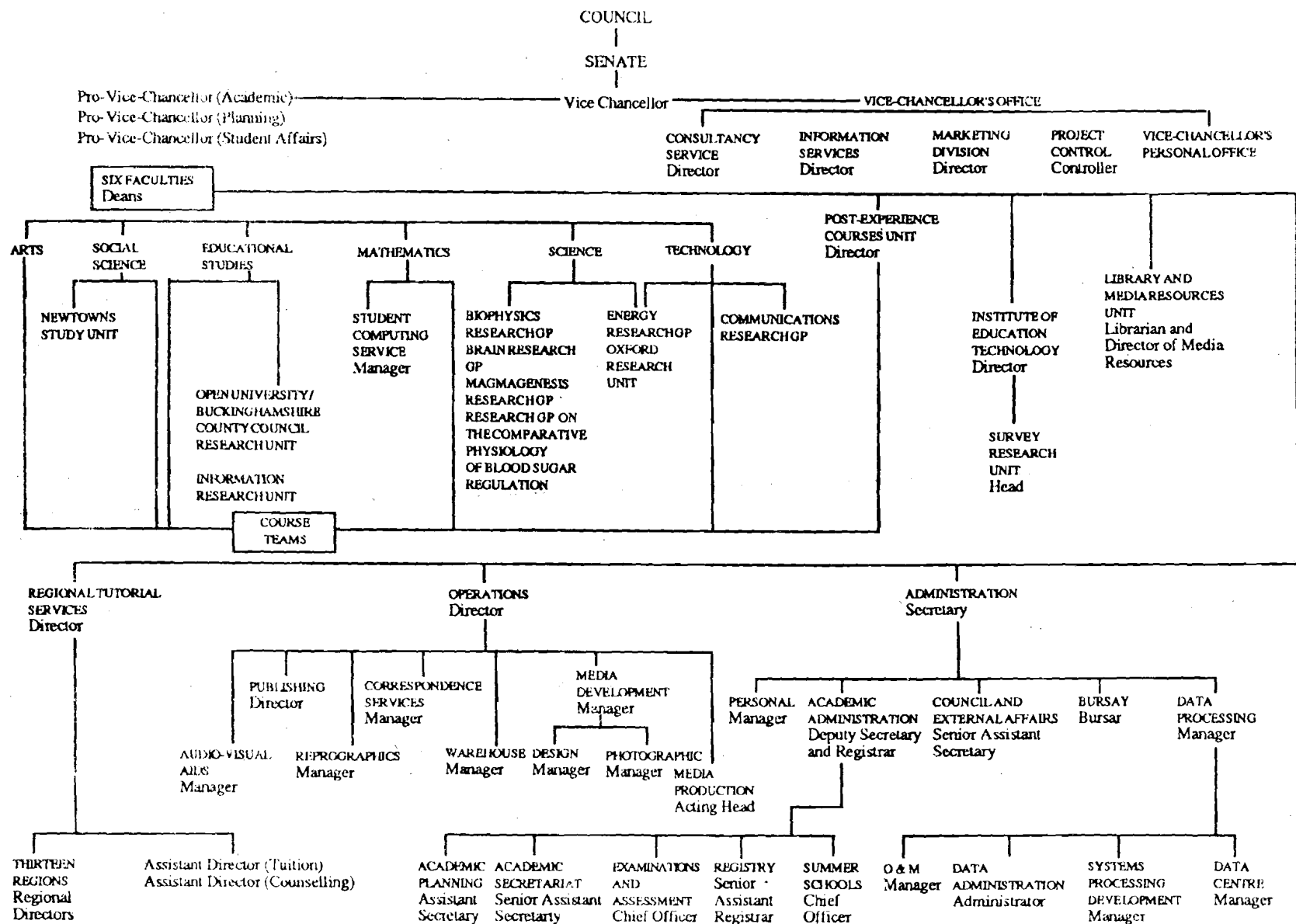


Fig.2 Organisational Chart: UKOU, London

Governance and Organisational Structure of the UKOU

Although the idea of the OU in Britain was floated by Harold Wilson soon after his visit to the then Soviet Union in 1965, it took another five years to give it a concrete shape. In September 1966 the Secretary of State for Education and Science put forward a proposal to set up a Planning Committee "composed almost entirely of University Vice-Chancellors, heads of university institutions and other university staff, and asked it - (a) to work out a plan for the establishment of the university, and as a separate institution, to be created by Royal Charter and Grant-aided by the Department of Education and Science (b) at the same time to consider whether these facilities could be provided under the aegis of an existing university or group of universities" (Perry, 1987). It should be noted here that the academic character and the autonomous status of the university were kept in mind even at the time of setting up a Planning Committee. When the Planning Committee was finally set up in 1967, the terms of reference given to it to work out a plan were as follows: "to work out a comprehensive plan for an 'Open University' as outlined in the White Paper of February, 1964, A University of the Air and prepare a draft charter and statutes" (Perry, 1987). The significance of the White Paper and a draft charter and statutes can be felt in the democratic spirit that went into the creation of the OU which had 'democratisation of education' as one of its goals.

However, the terms of reference given to the Planning Committee did not allow it an entirely new charter that would suit the needs of an open university aiming at new, innovative educational programmes. As a result the governance structure of the OU resembled the traditional pattern of other British Universities with a Council and a Senate. Of the 39 members of the Council 25 were external and 14 internal. The ratio between the external members and the internal members is roughly 2:1. Such a composition gives a clear advantage to the external members in the decision making processes of the council..

The Senate, on the other hand, is a fairly large body consisting of all the full-time academic staff and co-opted members. In 1982 the Senate had 800 members, of which 500 were full-time academic staff of the university. The Senate functions as a legislative assembly dealing with all academic affairs and policy matters.

There is a third statutory body – the General Assembly of all the staff and students. The general assembly is a very large body. Representatives of all types of staff, the part-time tutorial staff and the students are its members. The general assembly has no executive authority but it gives an opportunity for debate on all matters of the university at the grass roots level. Staff and students contribute their ideas and thoughts to the university through the assembly meetings and consultative committees.

Formulation of policy and its implementation pose the real problems to the management of every institution. Although participative democracy in the

Senate and the General Assembly leads to formulation of policies which seem to have got popular consent, the power and authority to implement the policies are vested with the Council where two thirds of its members are external. The strengths and weaknesses of the democratic character of the university, or of any institution for that matter, are ultimately determined by those who have the power to implement a policy formulated by the democratic fora.

It is obvious that the large bodies such as the Senate and the General Assembly would not be able to function as executive bodies. The executive body must be a small, compact, one so that decisions regarding implementation can be taken without delay. But unless the executive wing has similar thinking as the policy making bodies, there is bound to be friction and even confrontation. Such problems do exist in the British Open University. Nevertheless, it has been successful in keeping the friction between the Council and the Senate within manageable limits. Hence the smooth running of the OU so far.

Let us now take a look at some of the critical areas of the OU's organisation to understand how a single mode open university performs its functions.

Management of Material Development

The British Open University runs teaching programmes for undergraduates, post graduates and associate students. In addition, the university has a research programme, an institutional research and development programme, a programme of international activities and a programme related to the marketing of the university's teaching materials.

Offering a wide range of academic programmes at the undergraduate level has been the major activity of the British Open University. Students who want to register for undergraduate programmes must be 21 years of age. They need not have any formal academic qualifications. The OU students get their degrees through gaining credits, 6 for a B.A degree and 8 for a B.A. Honours degree. A full credit course is based on 32 weekly units of work. Each unit requires 12-15 hours of study of print materials, and the programmes broadcast through the Radio and the Television. The minimum period of study for B.A. is 3 years and for a B.A(Hons) is 4 years. The students sit for a 3 hour final examination after completing assignments and summer school requirements. The Associate Student Programmes (ASP) offer courses in the areas of community education, in-service teacher training, health and social welfare, technological updating, Management, History, Politics, Culture etc. Teachers, professionals, housewives, technical personnel and clerical and office staff etc. register for these courses. Students who complete the course work and pass a final examination get a course certificate. Those who complete just the course and do not sit for or do not pass the examination receive a letter of course completion.

Although the British Open University has adopted the multi-media approach to its instructional methods, the main component of the OU teaching materials is the printed text. Most OU courses have a radio and a television component. Where the courses have all the three components they are integrated. Science students get, in addition to the materials in print, radio and television programmes, the home kits to conduct scientific experiments. Students are required to buy certain books (called set books) for further study. The set books are low-priced books printed by private publishers on agreement with the Open University. To plan and manage the numerous operations related to the above mentioned tasks would involve a lot of skills and resources.

Course design or course creation : Faculty board or what we call "Expert Committee" gives the proposal for starting a new course or programme. The proposal must get the approval of the course-committee 24-36 months (i.e. 2-3 years) before the year of presentation of the course. Courses are written by course teams. The number of each course team may vary but it must have (a) the academics, (b) the educational technologists, and (c) BBC production staff. The course team will have a chairman who may be either a senior or a junior academic but must be experienced in developing distance teaching materials. The academics who write the courses are mostly from the internal staff and sometimes outside writers are also appointed contractually as consultants. It has been found that the internal faculty members are more committed, experienced and prompt in meeting the requirements of course writing. The BBC producers who are themselves highly qualified academics in the disciplines concerned interact with academics/course writers throughout the creation of the courses. However, the producers are responsible for the quality and production schedule of the radio or the TV programmes.

Library facilities are arranged for the course writers before they start writing the units or courses. A member of the course team works on the first draft and the draft is circulated among the other members of the team for their criticism, comments and suggestions. In the cases of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities a course usually goes in the name of one member of the team and the science course go in the names of the respective teams. Where differences of opinion or ideological disputes are involved, a consensus is sought to finalise the draft and send the manuscript for printing.

Though deadlines are usually met, they are not insisted upon if the academics have genuine problems in getting the courses written. As Perry puts it: "There is no sanction that can be applied to creativity. You cannot make academics write good courses, you can only provide encouragement and facilities and an ambience in which they can indulge their creative impulses" (Perry, 1987). The standard and the quality of the course materials are, however strictly to be adhered to by academics. Questions related to academic freedom of the team or the individuals are some of the toughest areas to be tackled by the management and usually it takes recourse to striking a balance between the contenders disputing various issues. However, it is accepted that an academic working in

an open university will not enjoy the same degree of individual freedom in choosing the contents and teaching them as is enjoyed by academics in conventional universities. The very act of asking a team of individuals with differing perceptions and ideological persuasions to work together rules out absolute individual freedom that may be possible in the case of an academic in a traditional university. Nevertheless, academics have the freedom to express all shades of opinion on global issues, though the university as an institution does not subscribe to any stance taken by any group of academics.

Course production and distribution: Once the final draft of a course is sent by the course team to the faculty editor, he/she makes the necessary editorial corrections and sends it to the printer. The OU uses private printers to print the course materials, and now it has its own press which prints supplementary reading materials. The printed materials are stored in the OU Warehouse and periodically mailed to the students. The OU graphic unit takes care of illustrations to be printed in texts and the copyright office sorts out the copyright issues.

The production of radio, television, audio and video programmes is jointly done by the OU and the BBC. The BBC's special unit set up in the OU appoints producers who are highly qualified academics in various disciplines. Producers are part of the course team and they work together with the academics. The BBC's final approval is necessary for broadcasting the programmes. Academics are preferred to professional presenters for radio and TV programmes. The OU programmes are transmitted nationally on BBC1, BBC2 and IN VHF Radio 3 and 4, mostly at weekends.

Check Your Progress 2

Describe briefly how the UKOU courses are created. Answer in about 50 words.

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

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Management of Student Support Services

Management of student support services poses perhaps the most challenging problems to an Open University. Much of the success of the university would depend on how carefully the services are planned and how sincerely and efficiently they are managed and implemented. The UKOU's student support services could function as a useful model to any open university in planning and managing its student affairs. Of course there will be variations in focus and priorities regarding the kinds of services that are to be given to students of a given distance teaching institution. But the systematic approach to the student support services as seen at the OU could help any open university. The basic issues that have enormous significance for the success of the support services are the sincerity of the institution towards its students and its correct assessment of their needs. The UKOU has generally succeeded in both. From its inception the academic bodies of the OU as well as the first Vice-Chancellor (Walter Perry) have been struggling to evolve an effective student support system, keeping in view the limited resources and the frequent financial cuts effected by the government. The salient features of the management of student support services at the OU can be listed as follows:

- Management of Regional Centres
- Management of Study Centres
- Coordination and supervision of tutorial services (summer schools included)
- Counselling services at various stages
- Provision for effective feedback
- Management of admissions, evaluation and examinations.

Management of Regional Centres and Study Centres : For the easy mobility and contact of students and efficient management of Regional Centres, the UK has been divided into 13 regions by the OU and each region has a regional centre. The thirteen regional centres coordinate and supervise the activities of 265 study centres of the OU. Management of regional centres include negotiations with the governmental or educational organisations in acquiring buildings for both regional and study centres, purchase and installation of equipment, maintenance of records on students etc. Management of study centres which are the immediate contact points for open university students is crucial to their successful completion of courses. The tutorial sessions are supervised and coordinated by the full-time tutors and counsellors attached to the regional centres.

Personal contact between tutor-counsellors and students is maintained throughout the period during which the student remains active. Attendance at the tutorial session is optional, but submission of assignments is compulsory for the students. Most under-graduate students and many associate students have

to do two types of assignments: tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and computer marked assignments (CMAs). The performance of students on these assignments is made available to them through a well-equipped feedback system. Study centres offer facilities for students to listen to or view audio-video cassettes and recorded programmes that are broadcast. Though full-fledged library facilities are not part of the system, study centres maintain small libraries of recorded cassettes. The public library system is adequate enough to serve the needs of OU students. Summer schools are part of the support services offered for the MA students with a view to giving them an opportunity to have the feeling of face-to-face students. Intensive work and a happy mood work best on such occasions. Arrangements are made with various educational institutions to provide accommodation, classrooms and laboratory facilities to students who attend summer schools.

Let us now turn to the third type of distance education system : consortia

Check Your Progress 3

What are the major components of the system of student support services in the UKOU?

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

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2.2.3 Consortium or networked systems

There are cases in which a number of separate distance education institutions or agencies collaborate to develop and practice distance education. These cases may be brought together under the label "consortium or networked models".

The consortium approach is essentially an inter-institutional cooperative effort aimed at resolving financial, operational and academic-service related difficulties. Consortia are of different types and new types are being established increasingly, so there does not seem to be any sense in classifying

them. Suffice it to discuss a few of them here in order to illustrate the approach for better understanding.

- Generally, the basis of a consortium is a funding arrangement, which may by itself or through an agency develop and produce study materials. These materials are given to the collaborating agencies/institutions to be served to their students. For example, the Università a Distanza of Italy has a course/programme development and materials production mechanism which receives funds from various sources- private and public including conventional universities. Students who use these study materials are enrolled by conventional universities which conduct examinations and award degrees and diplomas. Tutorial and other support services are provided at local study centres which are funded mainly by local bodies like municipalities. Another example of a similar arrangement is the Flexi Study system of the UK. It raises its funds by selling the material it produces, grants and donations from various private as well as public bodies. The pivot of this collaborative effort is the National Extension College (NEC). It enters into agreements with various colleges which provide some courses with the help of materials developed and produced by NEC. The NEC enrolls its own students too, and uses the same materials with them. This system is more open as it allows students to work entirely on their own, use correspondence or telephone tuition or face-to-face tuition.
- An interesting example of academic collaboration and economical operation is the consortium involving Massey University of New Zealand, other universities of New Zealand and the University of the South Pacific with headquarters at Fiji. In this case, Massey University is the central material developing and producing agency. The university itself is a dual mode institution which admits and teaches both on-campus and off-campus students with the help of its study centers spread across the country. The other universities of New Zealand also admit on-campus and off-campus students, but they teach only the on-campus students. The off-campus students of these universities remain the responsibility of Massey University. Wherever there are Massey university arrangements for off-campus instruction, students of other universities are to register for and attend Massey courses, complete them according to Massey norms, sit and clear Massey examinations. Grades obtained in such courses are transferred in the name of the student concerned to his/her home university. The same way, students of the South Pacific University can register for and gain credits on off-campus courses of Massey University to be counted toward their South Pacific degrees. One of the major reasons for the stability and success of this consortium is the central funding policy outlined and enforced by the Universities Grants Committee of New Zealand. What is of interest to us, as students of distance education, is the success of this operation.
- An altogether different kind of consortium is exemplified by the Norsk fernundervisning (NFU) of Norway. It is an institution with very small full

time staff of its own, and which neither develops any study materials nor admits\teaches any students. It has funds for promoting distance education in Norway. At the operational level, it initiates, approves, coordinates and enables efforts made by various collaborating institutions, like the Norwegian State Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board (Statens Filmsentral) which publishes and commissions private film and video producers to produce study materials. The distribution of materials is effected through market mechanisms such as booksellers and public mechanisms such as public libraries (for print materials) and the National Film Board (for audio and video materials). Registered with correspondence institutes, students are provided with support services at local centres arranged by these correspondence institutes or other non-governmental organizations.

It is not unusual for consortia and networks to collapse, inspite of the realisation that, given the global economic situation, networks are beneficial for all the participating institutions. The basic cause, again, is the rigidity which has shackled the conventional institutions as well as the psyche of the academics involved. Different institutes claim to have differing philosophical bases, and they remain keen to perpetuate their character as it is manifest in their educational processes as well as the content of their course. The levels of commitment of distance education differ from institute to institute, and within a single institute from department to department, and within departments from one academic to another; different organisational structures and operational models; different levels of technological attainment and ability to use technology; differing objectives with which the participants may enter a collaborative project; differences on technical issues like copyright, jurisdiction, sharing of the cost of collaboration, distribution of roles and inhibiting bureaucracies; and finally, among the academics involved, the pride in creativity coupled in many cases with a superiority complex.

Any attempt at collaboration should start with a serious consideration of the above inhibiting factors, which need to be overcome for success.

Check Your Progress 4

Bring out the characteristic differences between the three modes/ systems of distance education discussed above.

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

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2.3. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF OPEN DISTANCE EDUCATION UNIVERSITIES

In an attempt to understand the organisational nature of distance teaching universities we tend to turn to the structure of our familiar conventional universities. The pattern and structure of the management of conventional universities and distance learning systems are not exactly the same. It is therefore difficult to understand open universities on the basis of our knowledge of conventional universities because distance education universities are more complex both in their structure and in their management. Yet, it is not unusual to find that the organisational nature of autonomous distance education institutions is quite similar to that of conventional universities but totally different from that of the dual-mode or consortium systems of distance education. The reason for the similarity between open and conventional universities may be twofold:

- the impact of conventional management systems on education; and
- the reluctance of the framers of the legislation to introduce many changes.

2.3.1 Decision making bodies

The organisational structure of distance teaching universities is sometimes more hierarchical than that of conventional universities. With varying nomenclatures the following bodies are found in almost all the distance teaching universities:

Planning Board

A group of planners for the university is constituted at the very beginning to provide the necessary guidance to various operations of the university. This Board plays a key role both in academic, developmental and monitoring activities. The Board consists of outstanding academics and educational administrators of the country. The chief function of this Board is to take a holistic view of the University as a system and plan for effective functioning and proper development of the institutions. Such Boards exist in the open universities of UK, Pakistan, Japan and India.

Executive Council

The Executive Council is the principal governing body of the university. It consists of people of eminence from different disciplines, such as education, industry, science, technology and other sectors. Sometimes government

representatives are also the members of the executive council. In UKOU persons from BBC are included, which brings in better coordination with media organisations at various stages of development.

Academic Council

It is the principal academic body exercising general supervision over academic policies. It consists of outstanding academics from both inside and outside the university. It monitors and regulates the academic standards and the quality of course development mechanisms.

Finance Committee

It is another important body. This committee looks after various financial matters such as resource mobilisation and utilization, grants from the Government, expenditure control, fee structure, loans, grants etc.

As mentioned earlier, decision making bodies may have different names. In Thailand, the governing bodies of the university are called the 'University Council' and the 'Academic Senate'. The Chairman of the council is appointed by the King. The Vice Chairman is elected by its members. The Academic Senate is responsible for the academic affairs of the University.

The organisation of the University of the Air, Japan comprises the University Management Committee and the Faculty Council, as decision making bodies.

2.3.2 Organisational network: division of work

The Head of the Institution

The head of an open university is generally an eminent person exercising certain formal powers. He/she can be (i) the head of state ex-officio as in the case of IGNOU, India and AIOU, Pakistan, or (ii) elected as in UK Open University, or (iii) appointed by the head of state as in Thailand. In India the President of India is the head, called "Visitor", of IGNOU. The President of Pakistan is the "Chancellor" and the Minister of Education is the 'Pro-chancellor', of AIOU. Although the head of the institution cannot be directly involved in the operations of the institutions, his/her interest in the institution and advice to the executive head of the institution is of great value.

Executive Head

The nomenclature of the executive head or of the Chief Executive of the distance teaching universities conforms to the existing pattern in the conventional universities. The academic and administrative head of the university is called the Vice-Chancellor, the Rector or the President. The Chief

Executive's role in a distance teaching university demands more than the traditional administrative functions of his/her counterparts. Due to its complex nature, broad area of jurisdiction, scattered administrative units, multiple systems, it becomes necessary for the chief of the institution to play an effective role in coordination and a vital role in decision making.

Pro-Vice Chancellors

The Executive Head of an open distance teaching university is assisted by more than one deputies, often called, Pro-Vice-Chancellors. Each Pro-Vice-Chancellor looks after a major sub-system of the university or a set of activities i.e., student services, course development, evaluation, planning and development etc.

Directors

Then there are divisions to provide services or schools to take up academic activities. The heads of these divisions and schools are called directors in the open universities of India. These Directors have considerable room to exercise their powers; however their powers are unlike those of the heads of faculty or Departments in conventional universities.

The organisational design borrowed from their conventional counterparts cannot meet the unique demands made on open universities, which have to plan, produce and deliver the academic material to students; audio-video component also is to be planned, produced and made available to students through telecast or study centres. Hence there is the requirement of coordinating the production and distribution of material, arrangements of counselling and audio-video sessions for a large population of learners who are spread over a large area. For these activities, new structures which are non-existent in the conventional universities, are included in the organisational design of distance education universities. For example, in the University of Air, Japan divisions of Academic Production, and General Affairs have been included in the organisational network to look after specific functions of the university. In the organisational chart of STOU, Thailand, besides Schools we can see Educational Services, Academic Affairs, Registration, Records and Evaluation, Documentation and Information, and the University Press in Fig.3. In spite of the set organisational structure, the climate of Open Universities is more relaxed. The open education system nurtures a high degree of creativity because formal rules, impersonal relationships, narrowly defined jobs and relationships of clear authority are not characteristic of Open Universities as they are in conventional education systems.

2.3.3 Regional network

Furthermore as the open distance education universities cover a vast area, there is a need for establishing regional and local centres to provide strong support to students.

Most of the world's open universities have developed regional networks to support their academic programmes. Regional offices are established to provide local, personalised services, represent local presence and help to instil a stronger sense of identity in students and part-time counsellors. These Regional Centres also try to coordinate between central bodies and study centres. This decentralized pattern of administration helps the institution in recruitment of tutors and counsellors and in the admission of students, maintenance of records, maintenance of liaison with local educational bodies and in monitoring the progress of work. Regional centres also keep close and constant supervision over the implementation process. For example, UKOU has 13 Regional offices to provide information and such services as counselling, on-site seminars and summer schools. These centres have extensive networks of tutors and tutor counsellors for academic support, advice and counselling in almost every region of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In India, the National Open University has 26 Regional Centres. Athabasca university of Canada has three major Regional Offices which offer almost all the services in the local community- information, counselling on time, admission and registrations, course material stock, examination supervision, seminars and teleconferencing.

Provision for study centres is an important typical feature of the distance education system. There are more than 325 study centres in India to provide counselling and tutorial services to the students of IGNOU. Library and Laboratory facilities are also available here. As the study centres are generally established in the existing academic institutions the academic and infrastructural resources are put to use maximally.

In an attempt to further consolidate the facts presented in this unit, we have incorporated the organisational structures of single mode institutions i.e., AIOU in Fig.4 and CRTU, China in Fig.5 to give you a global perspective. This should also help you place IGNOU in the right context- you will study the organisational structure of IGNOU in greater detail in Block 4 of this course.

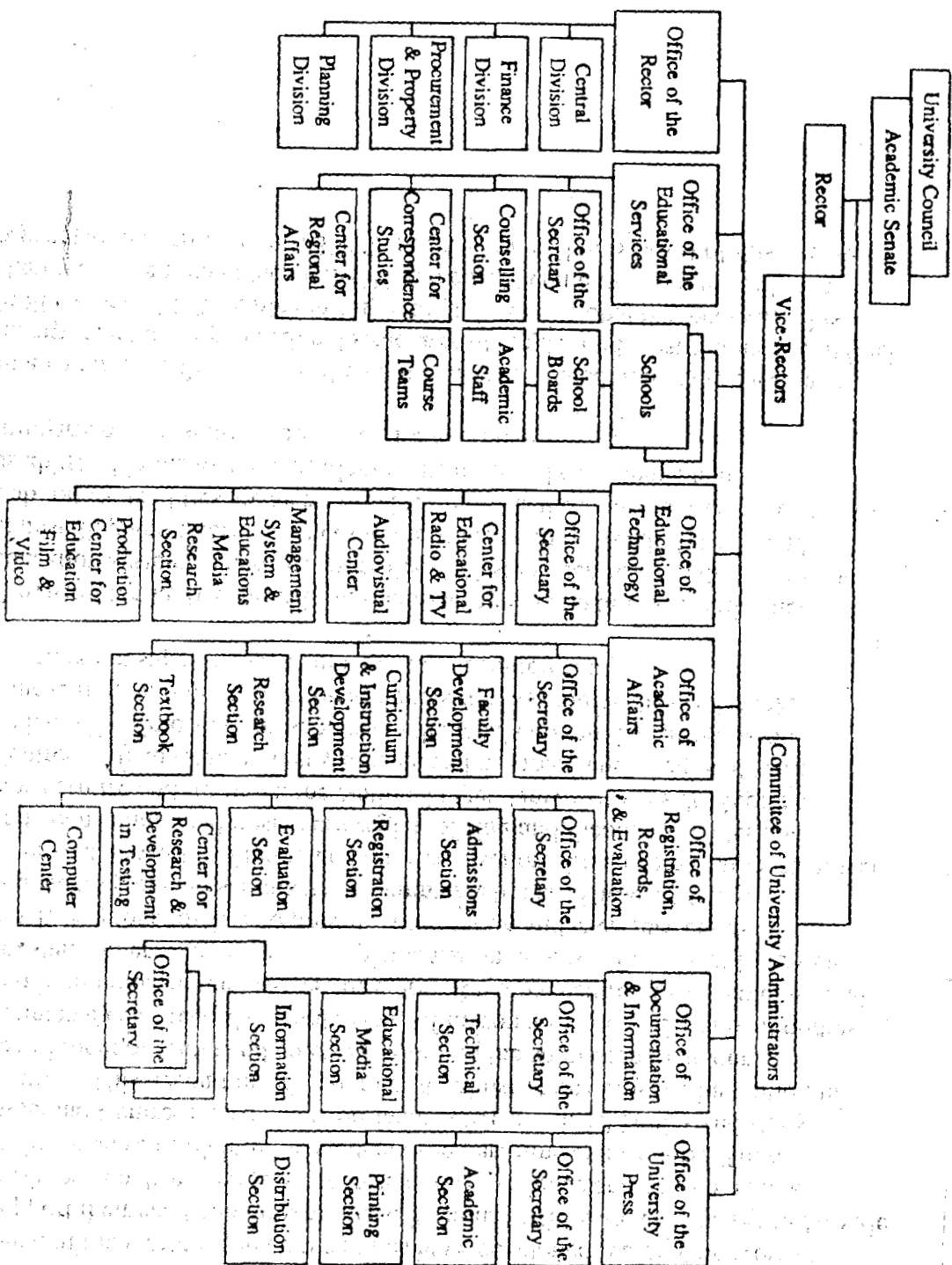


Fig. 3: Organisational Chart: STOU, Thailand

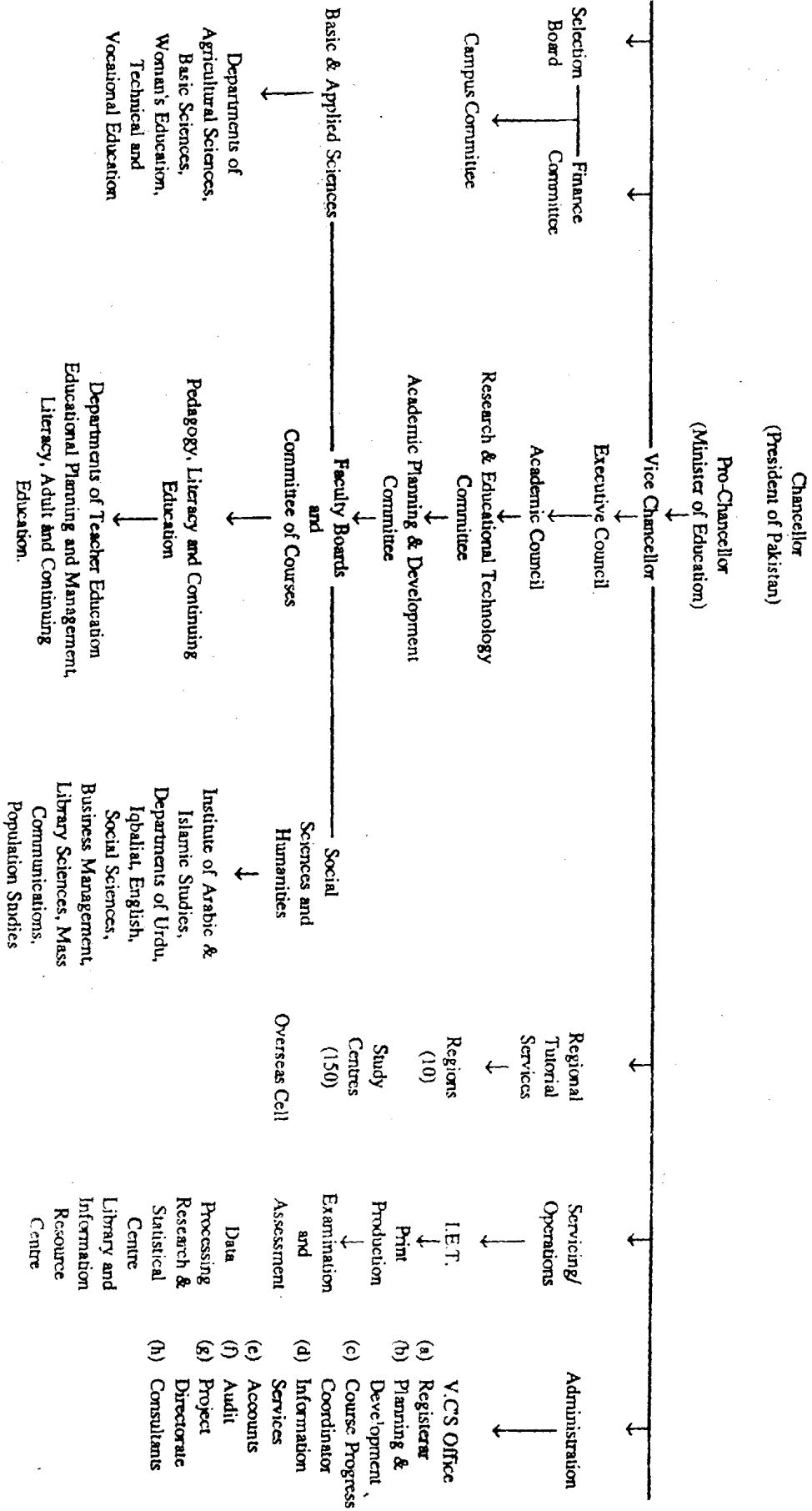


Fig 4: Organisational Chart: AIOU, Islamabad

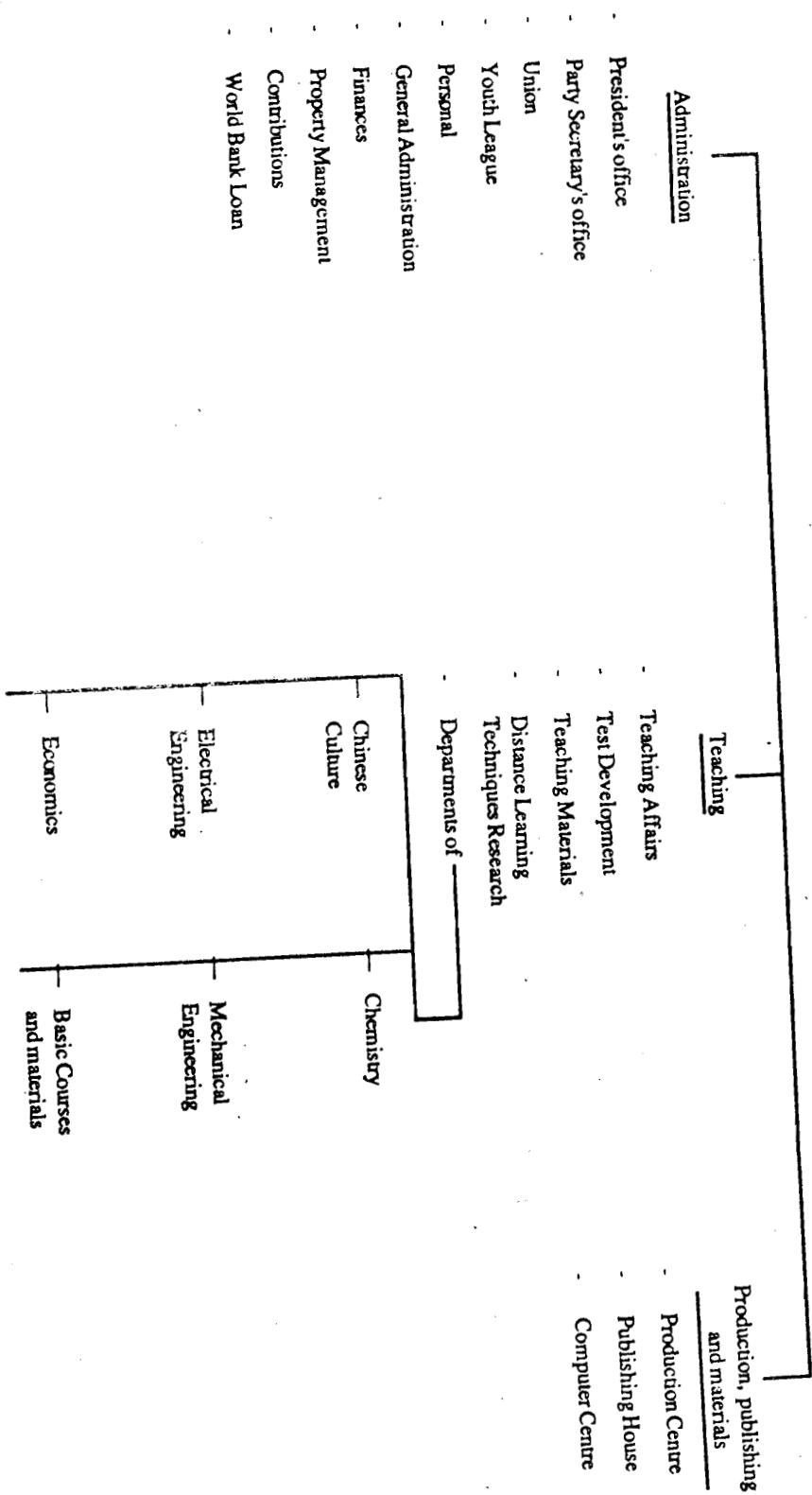


Fig 5: Organisational Chart: CRTU, China

2.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have tried to take you through the wide range and variety of forms in which distance education systems are organised and structured across the world, while looking at these systems, we also tried to generalise their features into 'types' so that our understanding of organisational models can be deepened. It is important to remember that our purpose is not to sit in judgement over the good and bad of any particular model; our concern is to discuss objectively their strengths and weaknesses that have been identified through critical study and analysis over a long period of time.

From organisational modelling, we moved in this unit to the more practical aspects of designing and structuring distance education institutions. In this discussion, we have freely drawn upon the experience of successful institutions like the UKOU to focus on issues that are crucial to the planning and management of distance education. We hope that this presentation would have sharpened your understanding of the system and its complexities.

2.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : POSSIBLE ANSWERS

- 1 Spending some stipulated time on campus by a distance learner is an essential component of the Malaysian model of dual mode distance education system. This feature is not found in the Indian one. This feature introduces a certain rigour into the operational aspects of the programmes.
- 2 The UKOU courses are written by Course Teams which comprise academics, educational technologists, and radio and TV producers. The academics write the course while the educational technologists and the media production staff develop the instructional system and produce the media packages in consultation with the academics. The processes of creating the courses go through several stages of review and revision.
3. The major elements that constitute the student support services system in the UKOU are: management of regional centres, management of study centres, coordination and supervision of tutorial and counselling services, provision of feedback and management of admissions, examinations and student assessment.
4. The dual mode system can be placed at the earlier stages of evolution of the open university system. At its best, the former is characterised by the distribution of the academic and other resources between on-campus and distance learners. Its weaknesses are limited scope for innovation, lack of status for personnel and inadequate finances etc. The single mode system is more committed to distance teaching and learning; it has demonstrated initiative and enterprise in innovations and experiments; and it has successfully adopted modern management methods and styles in its operations for improving efficiency and cost effectiveness.

UNIT 3 MANAGEMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Distance Education and it's Management
- 3.3 The Management's perspective
 - 3.3.1 Varying client needs
 - 3.3.2 Responding to emerging needs
 - 3.3.3 The student profile
 - 3.3.4 Media choice : reaching the students
 - 3.3.5 Technology and efficiency
 - 3.3.6 Institutional models
- 3.4 Strategic Planning
- 3.5 Management of the Programmes
 - 3.5.1 System development
 - 3.5.2 Course development and preparation
 - 3.5.3 Production and distribution
 - 3.5.4 Organisation of student support services
- 3.6 Financial Management
 - 3.6.1 Budgeting
 - 3.6.2 Activity costs
 - 3.6.3 Financial control
- 3.7 System Evaluation
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

3.0 INTRODUCTION

We have looked at, in some detail, the distance education systems at the higher education level and their organisational patterns and structures. Unit-1 in this block has taken you through the growth of open and distance education systems across the world focussing on their objectives and organisational patterns and structures. In Unit-2 we have examined the organisational structure of major distance education institutions in several countries in order to provide ourselves with a synoptic view of different models of institutions and their management styles and practices. We now turn to the general issues and problems associated with the management of distance education systems.

Political power is not merely an external variable in the management of distance education. It is a key determinant of the environment in which the system succeeds or fails. Government policies directly influence the ways in which distance education can effectively function in the national context; the funding patterns determined by the government will ordain the sustainability of the system. Discussions on the objectives of education,

strategies for attaining those objectives, concerns about access and equity as well as regulation of technology induction, broadcasting/telecasting and the recognition and status of distance education degrees are all influenced by ideological and political considerations.

While these larger issues and their influence on the shaping and conditioning of the distance education system will be discussed in greater detail in the context of the establishment and development of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India in Block-4, we shall confine ourselves in this Unit to examining the broader issues and problems in the management of distance education as a system with special reference to its styles and practices. Our attention will thus be narrowed down to the issues involved in the management of distance education programmes, their delivery systems as well as certain institutional concerns. These discussions will, in some ways, also prepare you to critically appreciate the management concerns in the context of a specific institution, namely IGNOU which we shall take up in Block 4.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to

- identify the major issues and concerns involved in the management of distance education systems,
- describe the roles and functions of management in the selection of programmes as well as their development and delivery,
- critically assess the various strategic options available to the management in the choice of media, technology and resource networking, and
- evaluate the economic aspects of the systems in terms of costs, benefits, efficiency and effectiveness.

3.2 DISTANCE EDUCATION AND ITS MANAGEMENT

Distance education is one of the most rapidly growing areas in education and training today. Developments in communication and information technologies have significantly accelerated the pace of growth of distance education. Freedom from the constraints of time and space has provided an added incentive to large numbers of people, vastly heterogeneous in character and attitudes, to pursue different programmes of their choice to meet a variety of needs.

The last few years have witnessed certain major trends in the provision of education and training across the world. These include significant reforms in educational theory and practice, diversification of the resource base for education including privatisation, progressive globalisation of education

leading to greater collaboration and networking, and above all, the emergence of distance learning as a major instrument for meeting the aspirations of large numbers of people in a knowledge-driven world economy.

The management of a dynamic distance education system has to grapple with a wide variety of issues and concerns. These include the mission and purpose of the system in the context in which it operates, the programmes and their curricula, the strategies for teaching and learning, the organisation of the infrastructure for communication and interaction with students, the choice of technology, policies regarding students and staff, the development and distribution of study materials, funding and the establishment of the credibility of the system itself. We shall address some of these issues in the following sections of this unit.

3.3 THE MANAGEMENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The study of the two previous units will have given you an idea of the varieties and styles of distance education systems across the world. They vary in purposes, size, technologies, efficiency and patterns of management. They also vary in structure and organisation. The managers of distance education systems have to address their tasks as the implementation of several integral components of a complex system. The ways in which decisions are taken and implemented in any of these components have a direct effect on all other components of the system. For instance, the choice of programmes will determine the systems of delivery and student assessment procedures; the enrolment levels will depend upon the managements' assessment of the market needs that influenced the choice of programmes; the detailing of the curricula will influence the professional acceptance and recognition of the graduates produced by the programmes; the recruitment of staff and allocation of other resources have to be consistent with the objectives, structures and levels of each programme; the choice of media and technology support will have to be relevant both to the environment as well as the needs of the programmes; and reliable and efficient support systems have to be in place for the implementation of all programmes.

3.3.1 Varying client needs

Knowledge is the most critical input for all enterprises in the world of today. With the current explosion in knowledge, human beings are finding it increasingly impossible to cope with the assimilation of knowledge even if it is only in selected fields. The traditional approach to education as a one-time effort early in life can no longer equip people to meet the challenges of life and work in today's world. Continuing education and life-long education is the only answer. Moreover, people can no longer afford to take time away from their family and work to pursue programmes of education and training which are traditionally confined to the class-rooms. They need

to learn at their work place or at their homes, free from the constraints of time and space. Continuing education is a rapidly expanding area of growth for the distance education system.

The motivation for learning is becoming increasingly diverse. The traditional forms of work are changing. The applications of technology at all forms of work are constantly growing. Most people would want to be familiar with these technology applications for their own professional work and growth. Employees would want their workers trained in newer technologies which are being inducted for improving productivity and efficiency. Many working people would want to be trained in new technologies to enable them to change jobs, or change organisations. These motivational variations determine the size and quality, as well as the heterogeneity of the learner groups of the distance education systems.

There are, in addition, groups suffering from several disadvantages or disabilities: very vast indeed is the constituency of the disadvantaged, - economically, educationally geographically and socially, while no less important are the groups of physically disabled. That all of them who need education and training to overcome their disadvantages and disabilities and live a fuller life needs no special emphasis.

Distance education can also be used to support vocational education and training. A major contribution made by distance education for many years in several developing countries is in the area of training unqualified or underqualified teachers. Some forty developing countries of the world had established teacher education programmes through the distance mode by the mid-1989s (Nielsen, 1990). In-company training programmes is another area in which distance education methods have made a significant contribution. For instance, the National Technological University, USA provides access to the graduate engineering courses of 29 universities to the employees of large corporations and government agencies which purchase access to the University's Satellite - delivered broadcasts (Rumble, 1992).

It is this multiplicity of learner groups and learning needs that constitute the potential market for distance education.

3.3.2 Responding to emerging needs

After having identified the wide range of needs which can be met by the distance education system, the management has to consider ways by which these needs can be converted into markets. A market will emerge only if there is a product (goods or services) and there are buyers whose needs can be satisfied by that product.

We have looked at the heterogeneous nature of the learner groups and the variations in their motivation to pursue programmes of education and training. If an educational provider has to respond to these varying groups and their motivations, a certain degree of customising of the products (in

this case, programmes of education and training) becomes inevitable. This would mean segmenting the markets into broad categories to provide for programmes in the same field at different levels (certificate, diploma, degree); learner groups by the levels of their previous educational attainments and positions (literate, school drop-out, secondary, post-secondary); working people by their professional fields, and so on.

A distance education system cannot be dynamic if it is not flexible. This flexibility is as much a function of its structure, as its methods. A forward looking distance education system would provide for a modular structure for its programmes with multiple points of entry and exit so that a potential learner can choose a module or a number of modules which will best satisfy his/her perceived needs with provision for moving on to the next module(s) as and when he/she feels the need to do so.

Check Your Progress 1

Identify whether the following statements are 'true' or 'false'.

Note: Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- i) The motivational variations determine the size and quality, as well as the heterogeneity of the learner groups of distance education system. ()
- ii) Continuing and life long education is 'NOT' the answer to the challenges of life and work in today's world. ()
- iii) A distance education system can be dynamic if it is flexible ()

3.3.3 The student profile

Distance education managers need to have a clear perception about who their students are and what their characteristics are. They could be a group of employees of a large firm, for example, or a large number of individuals scattered over vast distances. This is important and many decisions will depend upon this vital knowledge input. For example, the kind of delivery and support systems to be established, the kind of technology to be used, the level of fees to be charged, etc. will all depend upon the special characteristics of the learner groups to whom particular programmes are addressed.

It is clearly not feasible to launch a programme, enroll students and then study their profiles to design delivery systems. The distance education management has to anticipate the unique characteristics of particular groups and provide for delivery and support systems to match these characteristics. For example, a programme addressed to learners who have had no significant previous educational attainment has to provide for a greater face-to-face component in the delivery system to facilitate interactive guided

learning while a graduate professional education programme could possibly be offered through satellite - delivered communication packages with no face-to-face contact at all.

That also brings us to the question of choice of technology. The critical factor in the selection of technology is its accessibility. An expensive technology medium, if it is not easily accessible to large numbers of learners, cannot constitute an effective delivery system. To the distance education management, the learner locations and environments are important considerations in designing the delivery systems. For example, for widely dispersed learner groups, many of whom are in remote locations in rural areas, video cassettes played on TV sets would be a low-cost, but effective technology medium compared to satellite-delivered synchronised teleconferencing models using one-way video and two-way audio communication systems.

The size of the student groups is an important factor. A unique feature of distance education system is its ability to reap economies of scale. The learning packages of the system can be used for limitless number of students and for a reasonably long period of time. For every additional student enrolled, the marginal cost is only the additional production and distribution cost of the material. In other words, the initial investments made in the development and preparation of the material get spread over a larger number of students and over a period of time, thus offering substantial gains in economy. If, on the other hand, the number of students is too low, there will be no economy of scale and the unit cost will be very high. It is essential that the management is alive to the problem of the size of the learner groups before making any significant investments in developing new programmes.

3.3.4 Media choice : reaching the students

We have had occasion to refer to the use of multi-media packages in distance education programmes in the previous units in a limited context. In this section, we look at the wide range of media that the distance education management can choose from.

Distance education is essentially a form of mediated teaching and learning in which the learner and the teacher are separated by time and space. Over a period of time, this system of education began to harness emerging technologies, incorporating into the teaching and learning environment radio and television to begin with, and later, audio and video recording as well. With the emergence of new technologies, distance learning environments are evolving into virtual classrooms where instruction is delivered from a host site to distant sites using a combination of live, two-way interactive audio and video communication system. Computer-based interactive interaction through Local Area Networks (LAN) and Wide Area Networks (WAN) as well as the Internet has added a new dimension to the currently available distance education technology.

In this process of evolution, there were several stages of intermediate technologies. The application of a particular technology was determined by considerations of easy availability, accessibility, affordability and also the responsiveness of the environment to its use. Thus, while satellite delivered telecommunication technologies and computer-based communication networks characterise the delivery of distance education programmes in the developed countries, distance education delivery in the developing countries relies heavily on the printed text supplemented, on a limited scale, with radio and television broadcasts and the use of audio and video recordings.

The major considerations for the distance education managers while choosing which media to apply are:

- Use of only those media which their learners can access. It is not just the availability of a medium that is important, but the medium that is or likely to be most used by the learner groups.
- The affordability of accessing a particular medium both for the provider as well as the student. For instance, in several cases, even if the equipment and other hardware can be acquired, the professional and technical competence required for producing the software may not be locally available. Also, the priorities of the television channel owners may not match the priorities of educational providers.
- The pedagogical significance of particular media is a relevant factor. Not all learning needs to be technology-mediated. In most cases, printed texts may serve the purpose. Where teaching needs demonstration, video tapes, which can be replayed at will, can be a better substitute for face-to-face interaction than videos delivered through the broadcast mode.
- The choice of media should ultimately come from the judgement of the management about the method from which the students can learn best.

3.3.5 Technology and efficiency

Distance learning systems can be of varying sizes. There are ten open universities in the world which are considered mega universities each admitting over 100,000 students every year. There are also very small systems catering to a few students, often no more than ten or twenty.

Whatever its size, distance education enables a limited number of teachers to reach large number of students. This is possible because in distance education, materials and media substitute the efforts of the teacher in the classroom. For the distance education management, the trade-off is between the labour-intensive process of conventional teaching and the media-driven diffusion of materials through which economies of scale can be achieved. The investments made on the development of materials is spread over large numbers of students and the same course materials are used over several

years. It is this feature of the distance education system that makes it cost-efficient.

It is not the diffusion technologies alone that make distance education efficient. It employs a variety of technologies in its administration and management as well. Most distance education institutions today use Desk Top Publishing techniques for their course development and production; depending upon the size of enrolment, it resorts to 'just-in-time' production methods for low enrolment programmes and bulk production and warehousing for high enrolment programmes. Electronic transfer of materials, production of materials on CD-ROMs, on-line access to information and materials, walk-in admissions, on-demand examinations, on-line student assessment and grading, and so on, are increasingly becoming a part of the management culture of the distance education systems which make them both efficient and learner-friendly.

3.3.6 Institutional models

In the previous unit, we have discussed three broad categories of distance education institutions, namely, dual-mode institutions, single-mode institutions and consortia or network of institutions. While there could be some variations to this broad typology in specific country contexts, it is important for planners engaged in setting up distance education systems to choose a model that is appropriate to their context. We shall look at the factors to be considered in the choice of any one model.

The most important factor that should determine the nature of the distance learning system to be set up is the established needs for education and training. If these needs cover a wide range of programmes in terms of fields of study as well as their levels, and also a significantly large number of learners, it would be unrealistic to assume that an existing institution can take on such a full range of functions as an additional activity. As we have seen, there are 10 open universities in the world each enrolling annually over 100,000 students. To meet the demand for education on a vast scale like this, a dedicated open university should be the natural choice. If, on the other hand, the specific needs to be met are the provision of education and training to small professional groups or to working people in a particular firm or a group of firms, the automatic choice would be an existing institution offering programmes in the relevant fields. It will be unwise in such cases to set up separate institutions which will not be able to sustain its activities with any degree of economy or efficiency.

The second major consideration in the choice of a model is the specific purpose(s) for which the system is about to be launched. If the objective is the development of a purpose-built specialised system, say, providing for the continuous upgradation of teacher competence at the school level, all the three models can be regarded as appropriate. A dedicated distance teaching institution for teacher training would be a useful instrument for this purpose. A Teacher Training Institution or a Department of Education

engaged in traditional mode of training could also be an effective proposition in this case. Similarly, a group of institutions involved in teacher training can be joined together and given the responsibility on the basis of an agreed division of labour among them. The actual choice will depend upon the perceptions of the decision-makers and their understanding of the efficiency of each model. It has however to be noted that the specific mandate of an existing institution would also be a relevant factor as it may not be able to offer programmes beyond the levels of its mandate. For example, a Junior Basic Training Institute for Primary School teachers will not be able to offer programmes of training at the degree level for secondary school teachers.

A third important factor is the availability of resources. The extent of physical and financial resources as well as the quality and competence of the human resources are major considerations. Small countries with only one or two higher education institutions will find it extremely difficult to assemble all the infrastructure for a single mode open university. If the size of population is small, and consequently, the number of potential learners is limited, there could be constraints in sustaining distance education institutions and programmes. On the other hand, these very factors may force the choice on distance education in collaboration with an institution from another country, with the local effort limited only to providing specified services.

It is generally assumed, and sometimes even strongly advocated, that dual mode institutions are much more effective and efficient in running distance education programmes. This argument is based on the assumption that all the resources and expertise available with the universities offering traditional programmes can be deployed also for distance education with relatively low additional inputs. This argument is valid as an economic proposition. However, it can work only if within the institutional values and culture, distance education also gets parity of esteem with the regular programmes. If the experience of several universities in India is any indication, distance education programmes always get a low priority in the allocation of resources and even in the care and attention from the faculty and the management. It is for this reason that most Distance Education Directorates of Indian Universities are asking for major structural reforms in their organisation to provide greater autonomy and independent resource allocation patterns. This aspect of the matter also needs to be considered in the choice of a model.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) What are the main considerations that distance educators have to keep in view while choosing the media?
- ii) Which are the important factors to be kept in mind while choosing the model of a DE institution, to be established?

- Note** i) Space is given below for your answers
ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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3.4 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is the elaboration of the grand design for accomplishing any mission. It is a major management tool which helps organisations achieve their objectives. In other words, strategies outline how given objectives are translated into specific plans of action.

Typically, when a distance education system is set up by the government, by a university, or even by a private provider, there is usually a mission statement, often in very general and broad terms. These statements would, for example, define the mission of the system in such terms as augmenting educational opportunities, widening access, providing a second chance to those who missed out on relevant education, reaching out to economically, educationally and socially disadvantaged sections of the community, and so on.

In order to meet these objectives, it is necessary for the management of the system to draw up a plan of action which will spell out in some detail what should be done, how it should be done and at what cost. This detailed exercise can be done as a long term plan covering five to ten years or a short term plan for two or three years. Sometimes, the plan could cover both the short-term and the long term objective. From the management's perspective, these will be known as the goals which will be set in the context of the environment in which the system has to function. It is important that planners take into account the strengths and weaknesses of the environment as well as the opportunities that it provides while setting the goals. These may include the support or indifference of the government, significant unmet demands for education, critical gaps in the availability of educational provision, availability of, and access to, new technologies, the pace of induction of new technologies in economic activities in a society demanding training or retraining of personnel, and so on. This process is intended to identify the key factors that will contribute to the success of the initiatives and provide the management of the system with several strategic

options to choose from in going ahead.

A critical appraisal of these factors would yield information about the type and nature of the academic offerings to be developed, their levels and duration, size of the potential learner groups, the technologies that would be available for delivering the programmes, and also the resource support that can be expected through sponsorship, collaborative efforts and networking arrangements.

On the basis of the strategic plan so prepared, a financial plan is developed to indicate the investments to be made on course development and production, infrastructure including staff, revenues that can be earned to meet the expenditure, the resource gaps, if any, and the sources for funding them. The processes of strategic planning are such that would help the management at regular intervals to review the plans already prepared, make necessary changes in them depending upon the changes in the environment and also, more importantly, review the actual achievements against the projected targets to ensure that efficiency is not impaired.

3.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMMES

We have seen in the previous section that the strategic plans would usually provide the management with several options in respect of courses to be offered, delivery systems to be developed and the support structures to be established. It will be useful at this point to bear in mind that there are several significant features that characterise distance education programmes as compared to conventional classroom based education. Distance education, as we have seen, has emerged as an instrument for democratisation rather than for the maintenance of education as a privilege of the elite. This distinctive feature of the system has several consequences for the teaching-learning environment as well. For example, widening access necessarily implies that programmes are more open, permitting greater flexibility in entry requirements. Because of this openness, the programmes may have learners with less than the formal qualifications normally prescribed in the conventional system, and since the exit standards are usually comparable, the value addition provided by the system will be higher compared to the traditional system. This in turn makes demands on the delivery system, especially on the academic counselling and tutorial support. The induction of technologies in the delivery of various services also makes the management of distance education programmes more complex compared to class-room management.

3.5.1 System development

A great deal of preparatory work has to be done before any distance education programme can really get organised. Normally this task is assigned to a Planning Group which advises the system management about the design and detailing of all the components of the system. It shall be the

responsibility of the Group, depending mainly upon the strategies already settled, to elaborate each major function along with the tasks and sub-tasks involved in the performance of that function so that a proper operating system is in place while launching the programme. We have already discussed at some length earlier in this unit the processes involved in deciding the programmes to be offered and the potential learner groups for specific programmes. Important though this component is, we are not repeating here the manner in which it should get organised and made functional.

We shall therefore, proceed to look at those tasks involved in the development of learning packages, their delivery and the management of infrastructure for operating the system. These functions could be broadly classified into three groups :

- i) Course Development, Production and Distribution
- ii) Student Support System
- iii) Institutional Management

We shall, in the following sub-sections, take a closer look at the ways in which these groups of functions get organised and the more detailed components of each of these groups of functions.

3.5.2 Course development and preparation

Once the academic programmes to be offered are identified, the next stage is the development of courses for those programmes. This is essentially a function of the academic staff, who are recruited for their subject-matter specialisation in the relevant field. The tasks involve curriculum planning, material development and finalisation of instructional design. Often an integrated approach is taken in the execution of these tasks.

Course development and preparation is substantially a team effort (we have outlined the processes followed by UKOU in the previous unit). Typically a course team will consist of discipline specialists, instructional designers, media personnel, graphic designers, and editors. The material is prepared in the self-instructional format by building the teacher into the text. The selection and use of one or more electronic media components is a major decision at this stage. As we have said earlier, there are several factors that will influence this choice. The important among them are :

- accessibility;
- appropriateness of the technology to the environment as well as to the needs of the programme;
- pedagogic sustainability of the medium in supporting the learning process;
- user-friendliness of the technology;
- costs.

Management of course teams can be a complex issue. It is very unlikely that members of course teams are all in-house staff. Many of them could be part-timers, or casual associates performing a specified function, namely attending meetings and giving advice, writing a lesson, preparing charts or graphics, and editing the content, language or format. Coordinating the work of such a diverse group, with different levels of commitment to the task at hand can be a daunting task. This role of managing the team is performed by a full-time academic who is normally called the programme coordinator or course coordinator.

The roles devolving on the academics in a distance education system have a significant management content. Traditionally, teaching is an individual effort, but this is not so in distance education. Adaptation to the new role of managing a team or working as one of its members often requires a major change in attitude. Good interpersonal relationships, shared openness and flexibility, and willingness to adhere to start and finish dates are the major qualities that will make members of a course team effective.

Distance education systems are progressively becoming collaborative and networking arrangements in several countries. These arrangements vary in scope and purpose. At a very simple level, they could involve the sharing and exchange of information; they could then grow into more significant collaboration in staff training, acquisition of materials for use, joint development of programmes and finally the emergence of a common open learning system involving several institutions. The Open Learning Institute in Hong Kong (now Hong Kong Open University) started with the acquisition of learning packages from UK and Canada for its programmes. The Open Learning Agency in British Columbia, Canada has course sharing arrangements with Laurentian University and Athabasca University. Australian Universities (Deakin and South Australia, for example) have jointly produced distance education programmes at the postgraduate level. In India, the learning packages of the Indira Gandhi National Open University are acquired and used by a number of State Open Universities.

There are several advantages which flow from these collaborative systems of distance learning. Some of the major benefits are :

- No single institution can meet all the varying needs of distance learners in today's world. More and more distance learners will be looking towards a number of institutions for meeting their specific needs.
- A networked and collaborative system can respond more effectively to these varying needs ; and learners will have greater choice in the selection of programmes that will meet their needs best.
- The development costs (in terms of time and physical resources) can be shared by a number of institutions.
- Institutions which do not have the resources, especially those in the developing countries, can draw upon the learning packages produced elsewhere and use them in their programmes through adoption, adaptation or translation.

The learning packages of distance education systems normally have significant contents of media packages. Depending upon the sophistication in technologies and their availability, these packages may vary from simple audio and video cassettes to digital TV or multimedia CD-ROMs and Web Sites. The integration of these packages with the print medium which continues to be the most commonly used medium in distance education will depend on several factors which we had briefly discussed earlier in this section. At this point, it is relevant to suggest that use of one or more of these technologies will influence significantly the quality and intensity of collaboration and networking among a number of institutions ensuring most of the benefits mentioned above to a larger number of learners. More significantly, these technologies also contribute to the growing globalisation of education, and bringing distance education to the centre stage.

Check Your Progress

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What is the role of distance teacher as coordinator of a course/programme in a course team and what qualities are required in him/her to perform this role? Answer in about 50 words.

Notes: i) Space is given below for your answers

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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3.5.3 Production and distribution

Production of materials is an area in which the management of distance learning systems will need specialist personnel skilled in print, audio-visual, broadcast and computer-assisted learning. Technological advances are now making it possible to combine the functions of production with development itself. For example, the emergence of Desktop Publishing (DTP) makes it possible to integrate text and illustrations and format a whole page as it should appear exactly in the printed form. Nevertheless, the management of the system has to keep several factors in view, most of which are generally associated with industrial processes. These are :

Matching production with demand : Large distance education systems will require bulk production of several items, each tailored to the specific needs of particular courses. Production runs will therefore be very large even as a single item produced may serve the needs of a few years. Each item has to be identified and specifications settled much in advance, the numbers

required has to be estimated with reasonable accuracy, and production schedules drawn up depending upon the production capacity at the disposal of the management. In the case of printed texts, print orders can be placed with private presses or in the institution's own printing facility if it has been set up. In practice, this tends to be a complex area since adherence to schedules is very difficult to ensure. As the course development work has to start at least two or three years in advance of the actual enrolment, and academics often find meeting deadlines difficult due to reasons beyond their control, 'delays are generally the rule rather than the exception'. Even when the manuscripts are ready on time, several unforeseen factors can intervene to upset schedules. Shortage of paper, industrial strike in the press, problems of transport and so on can all dislocate even the most meticulously prepared plans.

Fluctuations in demand: Production runs are determined on the basis of the number of learners expected to enrol for each course on offer. These enrolment forecasts may or may not turn out to be true. If there is a large shortfall in enrolment, the system will be saddled with the responsibility of carrying a large stock in the warehouse; if on the other hand, the demand rises far above expectations the management has to resort to the production of additional stock in quick time. Both the situations can impact on the production and distribution schedules and lead to embarrassment for the management

Management of distribution: One of the first tasks that distance education management has to perform soon after the admission of students is to ensure that all of them get the learning packages for the courses in which they are enrolled. Any delay in getting the study materials across to students can have major consequences for the system. It could shatter student confidence; the management may lose credibility; and the system itself might fall into disrepute. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all logistics involved in the distribution of materials are settled much in advance of the enrolment. These will involve

- Appropriate and adequate warehousing of materials.
- Decision by the management on the pattern of distribution. This might include asking students to collect their materials from a specified place and at specified times; mailing the learning packages individually to each student; using courier services to ensure faster delivery, etc.
- These methods could also be attempted in combination in particular situations.
- Decision on the contents of packets: Most distance education courses will have student assignments as integral parts of the course packages. These assignments are normally prepared for each course every year by academics. It is quite likely that the preparation of assignments for all the courses may not match with the time table for despatch of study materials, thereby throwing the distribution schedule out of gear. The management has to ensure that systems

are in place to monitor the preparation and production of assignments as well.

3.5.4 Organisation of student support services

Students are the primary concern of any educational institution. In distance learning systems, with little or no direct contact between the institution and its students, it is the management's responsibility to ensure that student needs are adequately met. Meeting student needs involves performance of a whole range of functions: they have to be admitted to the institution, enrolled in courses of their choice, allocated to the study centres or counsellor, explained what is expected of them during their study with the institution (for example, payment of fees, adherence to regulations) and what can be expected from the institution (for example, provision of study materials, arrangements for tutorials/counselling, examination arrangements, etc). Organisation of these support systems is a critical component of the management of a distance learning system.

A person may become a student only after he/she is formally admitted to any institution. In traditional educational institutions, people are generally familiar with what they teach and how one gets there. In these days of competition, even such institutions enter the 'market' to attract better students. A distance teaching institution, on the other hand, has to do considerable pre-admission counselling tasks which might include:

- Informing the public about what it offers. This will include provision of information about courses, programmes, their levels, prior requirements for enrolment, qualifications required, and so on.
- Offering advice on opportunities for careers and/or further education.
- Methods of study and the regulations governing it. Flexible arrangements for pacing the study, determining the course load, allocation of time for studies, arrangements for tutorials and practical work, assignments, etc.
- Self-study methods i.e. advising potential students about the methods and practices of the system and helping them through it.

There is no single method for organising an effective student support system for distance education. Managers have a wide range of alternatives to choose from. The final design of the system will depend upon a number of factors:

- The dispersal of students is a critical factor. If the geographical limits within which a system operates are relatively small, and most of the students have easy access to the institution/teachers, it will be easier to design a support system that provides for face-to-face interaction week-ends or in the evenings. However, large systems catering to

hundreds of thousands of students across large countries (like China or India for example) will have to design more complex systems which provide for multiple avenues of interaction using appropriate means of communication.

- The range of services to be delivered: Distance learners will require a wide range of support to help them through the system. These will cover specialist support to grapple with the subject matter of the course on the one hand, and availability of routine information like when and how to submit assignments or where to sit for the examination on the other. While much of the routine information needs can be met by a process of preparing standardized materials like handbook on student assignments and assessment or newsletters incorporating schedules of events etc, specialist support will require more careful and well-planned initiatives.
- Large systems with substantial enrolments will require effectively decentralised student support services. They will not be able to supervise the work of hundreds of thousands of students from a single location. Depending upon the size of an institution, a number of local centres have to be identified and systems established at such centres for students to access information, materials and other facilities as well as for any other business to be transacted with the institution. If there are a significant number of such centres, (normally known as study centres) then arrangements will be needed to coordinate and supervise their work. Large institutions like the UKOU and IGNOU do this through a number of Regional Centres.
- The type of programmes will determine the nature of services required by the students. For example, if the institution is offering technical/professional programmes, it will have to organise facilities for practicals and experiments for work experience. A computer application programme will need hands-on experience with computers and a nursing programme will require clinical experience for students in a hospital environment. The availability of an adequate distance learning environment is an essential element in the organisation of student support systems.
- Academic Counselling and Tuition : Student-teacher interaction is a critical factor in the learning process. Though the self-instructional materials produced by the distance teaching systems endeavour to incorporate such interaction into the materials, home-based self study is not yet the norm in most societies. A certain extent of interaction with teachers as well as peers is an essential component of an effective teaching-learning paradigm. Distance teaching systems have developed a local support structure to meet this need. Usually, a local educational institution is persuaded to function as a study centre which is paid for the services provided by it. The staff of such institutions work part-time

for the distance education system and their functions may include admission of students, local tuition, assignment handling and evaluation, and conduct of examinations. Teachers from these institutions provide academic counselling and tuition to the learners. For this purpose, teachers have to be recruited, trained and generally oriented towards the methods of the distance teaching system

- **Applications of Technology in Student Services :** Systems which employ various technologies in delivering services to students have to put in place structures and processes that will enable students to access these services. The extent and type of facilities to be provided will be the function of the technology in use. If radio lessons are the principal means of communication, all that the learners require is radio sets. If programmes are televised, those with TV sets at home can access them conveniently, while those who do not have sets at home will have to be provided access through sets installed at the study centres or local community centres. If video technology is in use, again those who have the right equipment can play the tapes at home while others will have to be provided access at their study centres. If the system uses the teleconferencing mode, down-link facilities and two-way communication systems have to be in place to make interactive processes effective. Distance learning through the internet has its own methodologies and hardware.
- **Examinations and Student Assessment :** Traditionally, examinations are designed to assess the learning outcomes and the levels of achievement attained by each student. Distance education is no exception. Indeed, the student assessment procedures and practices in distance education are almost the same as in the conventional system. The major difference is that the distance learners are remote from the institution and therefore it has to design and develop systems that would provide the students regular feedback about their progress as well as performance. Most distance learning systems therefore insist on a method of continuous evaluation of student performance through assignments which every student is expected to submit for each course.

These assignments are evaluated by tutors and returned to the students along with the tutors' comments. These assignments in several cases are integral to the scheme of student evaluation and the grades obtained in the assignments are taken into account with the results of the examinations at the end of the course to determine the final grades. The important issue for the management is to put in place the necessary system – the supply of assignments on time, arrangements for their collection and evaluation and the giving of the required feedback within a minimum possible time. In large systems, the study centres would be the ideal point for the transaction of this activity.

Check Your Progress 4

What are the major factors on which organisational design of support services, will depend upon?

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers
ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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3.6 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Distance education systems in several countries were initiated at the instance of their governments, or at least with their support. Education is almost universally a continuing concern of governments which provide the funds for this sector. The variations in this practice are the establishment of particular institutions by private agencies (schools and colleges, for example) or organisation for education and training facilities by different employing sectors for their own personnel. Since the governments decide the policies on education, private initiatives have of necessity to conform to the guidelines of the national policies. These may include specifying the types and levels of institutions, norms and guidelines for different types of institutions, extent of fees that can be charged, and so on. In short, governments play a significant role in the organisation and management of educational systems through the policy frameworks within which they have to operate, or through the mechanism of funding.

Generally, three types of distance education institutions with reference to their sources of funding, can be identified:

- institutions fully funded by the government;
- institutions sponsored by the government with the understanding that they become self-supporting after a certain period, say 5 years;
- private institutions which are not dependent on the government for funding.

The high costs involved in the creation of infrastructure and also in the development of course materials make it necessary that large scale distance learning systems be funded by governments fully or at least substantially. Besides land and buildings, the infrastructure consists of the equipment and

machinery required to provide the technological support for the delivery systems. Depending upon the media chosen, these support systems could involve moderate to heavy investments. The development of course materials is also a significant investment which takes considerable time as well. In the initial stages therefore, a distance learning system will require significantly large outlays to set itself up with little or no returns on these investments till students get enrolled and begin to pay their fees.

As and when the operations begin, however, the situation could change considerably. Unlike in the traditional system, the recurrent expenditure does not vary proportionately with the student number. In distance education, the marginal cost with the addition of every student is considerably lower than the average cost per student. This happens because of the economies of scale. In other words, the fixed costs incurred on infrastructure and course development get spread over a larger number of students and also over longer periods. In classroom based teaching, the strength of the faculty is determined by a fixed teacher-student ratio while in distance education, the permanent core faculty at the headquarters of the institution has no co-relation to the number of students enrolled. It is this lower variable cost per student that makes distance education relatively cost-efficient.

Though the initial investment is high, the prospect of continued high returns makes distance education a viable economic proposition for private providers. There is thus a strong commercial sector in distance education, but it confines itself to areas in which there is a known market which can pay prices that meet the costs. Thus in such areas as business studies or training in computer applications, one finds the presence of a strong private sector, but in such areas as teaching mathematics or languages, private initiatives are not too many. Again, while the private sector might try to cater to the needs of urban learners, they are very reluctant to enter the markets which are notoriously difficult to penetrate like the rural areas, hilly regions and also the large sections of disadvantaged population.

3.6.1 Budgeting

Every institution needs to prepare its budget and exercise control over its expenditure. The budget provides a realistic estimate of what an institution intends to achieve in a given environment; it is a target or goal that people believe in and try to achieve. It is also a useful standard against which performance can be assessed. These attributes namely, credibility, motivation and realism make the budget a dynamic instrument for the organisation and its people. The budget is dynamic because it can at any time be reviewed and revised depending upon market conditions and also the new opportunities and challenges that those conditions might offer.

Preparing the budget is normally an annual exercise taken up well before the commencement of the financial year. In order to prepare the budget, the management would need to know the estimates of revenue and expenses

and the associated data on programmes, activities, targets, past performance, etc. on which an objective and realistic plan of expenditure can be based.

The sources of revenue of a distance education institution are generally :

Government grants : This could be a fixed annual grant suitably adjusted to neutralise inflation, or determined on the basis of enrolment every year. To assess the quantum of grants, average per student costs in different programmes are settled in advance and all enrolments are converted into full-time equivalents. This formula could be very complex for distance education enrolment.

Tuition fees : These are generally prescribed by the institutions themselves after taking into account a number of complex and often incompatible factors which have a bearing on government policy, institutional objectives, economic conditions in the society, the need to recover costs, and comparability with fees in other institutions and programmes.

Other operations : Distance education institutions also function as publishing houses which bring out large volumes of educational materials. These include text books, course materials, audio tapes, video cassettes, CD-ROMs and so on. These materials have a vast market including students and teachers in the formal system. These can generate substantial revenue through marketing and sales. Besides, there could be consultancy assignments for the institutions as well as the faculty and the use of certain facilities like audio and video production studios, etc could be charged for.

Interest on investments, donations, etc.: Full fees are levied from the students at the time of their enrolment. In other words, education is one area in which the cost is recovered even before any expenditure is incurred. Expenditure on students gets staggered through their stay with the institution. A judicious investment policy of the fee income could earn significant interest for the institution. Donations, endowments etc could also be a source of income though these cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty.

Expenditure is often determined by the levels of income. If income goes up, so does the expenditure. Conversely, if there is a fall in income, expenditure will come down leading to the putting off of new initiatives in course development and/or acquisition of new equipment.

Budgeting exercises generally follow the pattern of organisation of activities. The major components of the distance learning system, as we have seen earlier, are course development, production and distribution, student support services and institutional management. Each of these sub-systems will have to prepare its own estimates of expenditure keeping in view the existing level of activities and the projected addition to those activities during the budgeting cycle. In preparing these estimates, it is useful to standardise costs through a process of activity costing which we

shall discuss later in this unit.

Expenditure on course development is independent of the current enrolment. This is a fixed expenditure and the outcome is the institutions' capital that earns future revenue. Much of an institution's reputation would depend on the quality of these materials. Therefore they need to be developed and produced with great care, and will require to be constantly reviewed and revised to maintain their currency. The single largest component of the expenditure on this account would be the salary of the faculty and ancillary staff.

The production and distribution budget would largely depend on the forecasts of enrolment on each course/programme, current costs of production of materials, salaries of staff engaged in these operations, the mode of distribution and its costs and so on.

Similarly, the student support system budget also will depend upon the systems of delivery of services, study centre costs, tutor costs, admission costs, assignment evaluation costs, examination costs and the like.

Institutional management costs consist of salary of staff associated with general administration, finance and accounts, estate management and other similar common services.

Most institutions will also have a capital budget for acquisition of durable sets (building, equipment, furniture).

Check Your Progress 5

Identify whether the following statements are 'true' or 'false'.

Note: Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- i) Unlike in the conventional system, the recurrent expenditure does not vary proportionately with the student number in DE. ()
- ii) The prospect of continued high returns makes DE a viable economic proposition for private providers. ()
- iii) The attributes namely, credibility, motivation and realism do not make the budget a dynamic instrument for the organisation. ()

3.6.2 Activity costs

As you will have noticed, the preparation of the budget is a process that involves several steps. It is not enough to identify the items of expenditure (there will be too many for each activity), but it is important to know what each activity costs. The management will have to establish systems that will continuously analyse the expenditure and work out the unit cost for

each activity as well as each product. In order to work out the unit cost on a reliable basis, it is essential to standardise the products and services. For example, the unit cost of print production has to be standardised in terms of a volume of output (usually a text of a prescribed number of pages) or an audio tape of a specified length of time or a videotape of 30 minutes, etc. Each of these outputs will have a standard cost that can then be broken down into various components, namely salary of staff (academic and others), cost of materials, cost of meetings, editorial costs and other associated overheads.

Similar efforts need to be made to analyse the costs involved in the delivery of various services to students. These will include cost of production of pre-admission literature (forms, brochures) advertisements, admission processing, etc. The cost of distribution of materials will depend upon the volume to be despatched to each student. Counselling and tuition costs will vary according to the instructional design of each course, as does the cost of assignments and their evaluation. At any rate, by a careful analysis of past expenditure, historical unit costs can be worked out fairly accurately for each component and these could be used as a guide for the future.

The above analysis will help identify the programme- specific costs separately for each programme. It will also help decide the levels of fees to be charged for each programme. Having considered the significance of cost analysis, it would be useful at this stage to look at some of the concepts associated with it.

- Direct costs are those associated with a particular product or service and which are specific to it. Cost of materials, used for a specific product, salaries paid to staff working exclusively on that product, etc. fall in this category.
- Indirect costs are those which cannot be identified exclusively with a product or service, but are shared with other products and services.
- Overhead costs are those aggregate indirect costs of a cost centre or cost unit. Examples of this category of costs are common services and utilities like central computing systems and local telephone exchange.
- Apportionment of costs is the process by which costs are assigned to different products or services on the basis of their share in the aggregate cost.
- Fixed costs are those which do not ordinarily vary with the volume of output. Buildings, equipment and most development expenditure come under this category.
- Variable costs are those which vary with the volume of output.
- Marginal costs is the additional cost incurred on increasing the output by one unit.
- Cost efficiency denotes the ratio of input to output. An institution is said to be more cost efficient than another if it can produce more output with the same level of input or the same level of output with less input.

- Cost effectiveness signifies the quality of the output relative to the demands an institution seeks to meet, the quality of the graduates, for example. It also involves the values and principles that an organisation stands for which contribute to the satisfaction of students and public as well as the loyalty and morale of its staff.

3.6.3 Financial control

Traditionally, educational institutions have shied away from the concepts and practices associated with the management of finances in handling their funds. Most of their income comes from government grants and the income from fees is a small fraction of the total expenditure. In this context, the major burden on the management of the institutions becomes confined to the accountability arising from the use of public funds. Therefore the managements were traditionally more concerned with the judicious utilisation of available funds, monitoring expenditure and ensuring that the grants given by the government were indeed utilised for the purposes for which they were sanctioned. This approach meant that the emphasis of the Finance Departments in educational institutions was more on accounting and auditing than on the wider aspects of financial management like ensuring better productivity, greater resource mobilisation, cost control and measurement of performance.

In the recent decades, the traditional approach to educational finance has undergone radical changes. With the progressive decline in government funding, most traditional universities are looking for alternate sources of funding. It is this quest for revenue that has prompted several traditional universities to launch distance education programmes (addressed to non-traditional student groups who would be prepared to pay more) and, more importantly, leading to the growing phenomenon of globalisation of education, made possible also by the developments in communication technology.

A meaningful system of financial control will have the following components:

- Periodic reviews of strategic plans to make adjustments in the size and levels of activities to match the expected funding levels.
- Reliable systems to forecast the enrolment levels to make realistic assumptions about fee income.
- Preparation of budgets separately for each cost centre and assessment of the performance of each to determine its productivity and efficiency levels.
- Regular and even flow of activities that ensures that the output matches funding and that there are no accumulated shortages of outcomes that might later need additional funding.
- Evaluation of every new proposal for delivery of any service in terms of possible alternatives, identifying the benefits relative to the costs

proposed.

- Enforcement of the principle of value for money for every proposal to incur expenses.
- Ensuring that all activities contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the institution.

3.7 SYSTEM EVALUATION

Research and evaluation play a major role in the management of the distance education system. Typically, the main tasks associated with management functions are planning, deciding, leading, implementing and evaluating. The performance of all these tasks requires information that helps to take the best decisions possible, and developing good practices that make the implementation of decisions effective.

Evaluation research in distance education can be designed and undertaken at the system level and also at the level of courses or programmes.

System level evaluation involves :

- Basic measures of activity - collection and compilation of basic management information on such matters as the number of students enrolled, the programmes and courses on offer, the revenue earned, unit costs, etc.
- Efficiency parameters - completion ratios indicating the ratio of students successfully completing a programme, drop-out levels, average time taken to complete a course, student load in terms of course options and preferences etc.
- Outcomes - student performance (examination results), sale of materials, extent of use of materials by non-students.
- Realising programme objectives - provision of opportunities, widening access, enhancing equity and responding to specific needs by analysing the student composition.
- Policy and practices - market surveys for needs assessment, acceptability of graduates in the market, diversification of approaches to delivery of services, impact of costs on students as well as the system.
- Organisational performance - Structure of the organisation and its methods, personnel policy, work ethos, financial management.

Course and programme evaluation can be:

- Formative evaluation - assessment of draft materials by trying them out on students to obtain feedback and also securing comments from internal as well as external experts before they are finalised. This process is also known as development testing. (More details about this

aspect are presented in course ES-312).

- Summative evaluation - obtaining information about the end-use of a course/programme; obtaining feedback from past students; evaluation of the teaching - learning strategies followed in relation to the outcome; styles of presentation; currency of content etc.

Check Your Progress 6

- What changes have taken place in educational financing in the recent decades? Answer in about 50 words.
- Define direct and indirect costs.

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers
ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

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3.8 LET US SUM UP

From models and types, and methods and styles that we considered in the previous unit, we have taken a close look in this unit at the bread and butter issues that managers of distance education systems have to grapple with. In discussing these issues, our attempt has been to explore the ways in which managers address them and find solutions, rather than merely analysing situations and identifying issues.

We hope that this treatment would have given you a deeper understanding of the ways in which the management of a distance education system goes about articulating its goals, setting its strategies, designing its structure, organising its activities, managing its finances and finally assessing whether or not the purpose for which it all started has been served.

We believe that as a potential distance education manager, you will have found this unit exciting.

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

1. (i) true, (ii) false, (iii) true
2.
 - i) The main considerations while choosing the media are: accessibility; affordability of the medium both for the provider and the student; pedagogical significance, appropriateness of the medium in relation to the environment and costs.
 - ii) Established needs for education and training (number of programme and size of learners), the specific purpose(s) for which institution is to be launched, and availability of resources – both physical and financial as well as competent personnel are the important factors which ultimately determine the model of the DE institution to be set up.
3. A course/programme coordinator plays the role of an academic manager, coordinating the work of the course team consisting of subject experts, produces, editors and instructional designers at the development stage and ensuring the preparation of assignments and their evaluation as well as the provision of tutorial support at the delivery stage. In order to be successful in this role, a distance teacher should develop skills in interpersonal relationship, should be open and flexible, and willing to learn and change oneself where necessary.
4. The factors which will influence the organisational design of support services are: (a) the spread of students across the country; (b) the range of services/components to be delivered to students; (c) number of students to be catered to by the institution; (d) nature of programmes –like practical based courses or only theory based etc., (e) extent of application of technology in support services by the institution and (f) assessment and examination system.
5. (i) true, (ii) true, (iii) false
- 6) i) In recent decades, government funding for education has gradually declined which made universities look for alternate sources of funding and to concentrate on financial management with emphasis on better productivity, greater resource mobilisation, cost control etc. This is a radical change from the traditional approach of finance branches of educational institutions which was largely concerned with accounting and auditing only.
 - ii) Direct costs are those associated with a particular product or service and which are specific to it. Indirect costs are those which cannot be identified exclusively with a product or service, but are shared with other products and services.

UNIT 4 ISSUES IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 The Institution and its Environment
 - 4.2.1 Why distance education?
 - 4.2.2 Other strategic issues
 - 4.2.3 Management of the institution
- 4.3 Planning in Distance Education
 - 4.3.1 The institutional objectives
 - 4.3.2 Programmes and curricula
 - 4.3.3 Staffing
 - 4.3.4 Staff development and training
 - 4.3.5 Designing the delivery system
 - 4.3.6 Finance and budgeting
- 4.4. Monitoring and Evaluation
 - 4.4.1 Management information system
 - 4.4.2 Maintenance of database
 - 4.4.3 Evaluation studies
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Check Your Progress : Possible Answers

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous three units of this block dealt with the management of distance education systems in the broad perspective of their evolution over a long period. We had a general overview of the pattern and structure of distance education systems across the world in Unit-1. While looking at the global situation, we have also noticed the presence of several organisational models. These are not peculiar to any one country or situation. What this Unit tries to emphasize is that these structures evolved partly as innovative responses to emerging situations, and partly also as adoption or adaptation of the models that are known to exist elsewhere.

During its earlier days, the traditional education system "extended" its benefits to people outside the "system". This extended activity was confined to part-time education, own-time education (home-based studies) and correspondence education. These activities were then peripheral to the main responsibilities of the system. It was only in the 1960s that social pressure began to influence the outlook of the formal system, particularly in the context of the student revolts in Europe and America. Greater democratisation of education and providing relevance to what the institutions teach became of much greater concern than ever before. This

concern, voiced mainly through the policy pronouncements of national governments in response to public pressure significantly affected the thinking of many institutions. In a large measure, it was the unmet social demand for higher education that prompted the then Government of UK to consider the establishment of the University of the Air which, as we have seen in Unit-2, was the genesis of the UKOU. Perhaps, the establishment of the UKOU also heralded the genre of single mode distance education institutions in several parts of the world.

With the immediate success of the UKOU as an innovative instrument in the provision of higher education, a large number of single mode distance teaching institutions emerged both in the developed and the developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s. The UKOU model very clearly influenced the structures and processes of most of these institutions. Soon enough, there were several studies on the principles and practices followed by these institutions and their approach to distance education management. It is a summary of these principles and practices that we have presented in Unit-3. In designing the presentation in this Block we have proceeded on the assumption that most theories are a structured view of practices and that management science is all about good practices.

Having studied the general principles and practices that are followed in the management of distance learning systems, we shall now turn to certain specific issues in the planning and management of a distance education institution.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- identify the specific issues involved in planning the establishment of a distance education institution relative to its environment,
- examine the strategic options available to the management, assess their relative merits and demerits and help make choices,
- design the systems, including the structures and processes, for development of programmes and delivery of services, and
- establish systems and procedures for evaluation of an institution's performance.

4.2 THE INSTITUTION AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

Education is generally an area which falls within the domain of governments. In most countries, governments determine educational policies and priorities, establish institutions and maintain them. When there is a significant private sector in education, governments regulate their functioning, set the standards and norms and, in many cases, also provide financial support to them.

Besides governments, there are several sectors in society which either have stakes in, or at least influence over, educational provisions. The academics in the existing system, the professions and their organisations, the parents and of course the students have all a major say in the type, nature and quality of educational provision available to them.

In many countries, especially in the less developed and the developing countries, there is an acute shortage of educational facilities. In some cases, there is shortage of resources for investment in education, in some others, even if some resources are available, there is a lack of qualified personnel for teaching and management, while in several other cases, all the needs of specialisation cannot be met from within the countries. There are also instances where the number of students seeking higher levels of education is too small to set up highly specialised facilities in several disciplines (many of the island nations, for example) or their number is too large to cope with the demand for educational facilities of an acceptable quality.

4.2.1 Why distance education?

The learner groups: Distance education systems can serve a variety of purposes. They are particularly appropriate for those who, for several reasons, cannot join traditional institutions like schools, colleges and universities. Many such people, for economic reasons, may opt for work/employment rather than pursuit of education after schooling. Most among them may still wish to improve their knowledge and qualifications for advancement in their career; some of them may wish to change jobs or enter new professions. There could be a large number of young people who had joined colleges and universities, came out with or without degrees and remained unemployed for long periods. Many of them would, therefore, be looking for opportunities to pursue technical or vocational training that might equip them with marketable skills and help them join the work force. There could also be a large number of learner groups, especially women, who are looking for opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills in some vocation or profession, so that they can utilise such skills gainfully to supplement their family income. These changing profiles of those who are seeking educational opportunities will continue to grow in size and diversity and innovative methods of education have to emerge to meet these needs.

The employers' perspective: From the employers' point of view, distance education methods offer several advantages. These are :

- Participation does not require the employees to be absent from their work place.
- It reduces the cost of training to the employers as well as their employees.
- The employer does not have to bear the cost of sending employees away on training courses. They save not only the cost of training, but also the compensation payable to the employees for the travel to, and stay at, the training place.

- Several employees may have some reluctance to take training because it involves movement away from their work place, even if it is temporary. Distance learning can get over this problem.
- Relatively few trainers can reach large number of trainees.
- Employers can train more people more quickly than is possible through traditional means.
- Employers can train dispersed work force simultaneously at the same cost.

The governments' perspective: While distance education methods enable educationists and trainers to meet a wide variety of needs, many of which cannot be met, or not met easily, through traditional methods of education and training. They provide governments with an option that is efficient and cost effective which, at the same time, also meets all the purposes that a traditional system serves. Government policy makers find distance education provision attractive for many reasons.

- It can meet the needs of the growing demand for higher education provision. With the expansion of the school system and the increasing participation of people at lower levels of education, there is an ever growing pressure of numbers on the existing higher education system.
- It is no longer possible to meet this demand by establishing more colleges and universities. They are increasingly becoming prohibitive in terms of cost.
- It is not just the unmet demand from the admission seekers fresh from schools that governments have to grapple with. There is a vast pool of accumulated unmet demand from adult learners who are looking for educational opportunities.
- The needs of people living in distant and remote areas, hilly regions and the backward pockets who have no access to educational facilities can no longer be ignored.
- The existing educational infrastructure in many countries may not be able to support and sustain specialised higher education facilities in terms of qualified personnel to teach, and viable student numbers.

4.2.2. Other strategic issues

As we have seen in the previous Unit, provision for open and distance learning in the national policy documents on education and training is an essential requirement for the effective planning and introduction of distance learning programmes in any educational system. These policy pronouncements will have effectively addressed the more fundamental questions like why distance education is chosen, whom it will serve, what resources will be made available, and how it will relate itself to the existing formal system, and so on. These are very significant questions as their answers will determine the scale of operations, extent of recognition and

social acceptability, the involvement of the traditional system as well as the academia in the distance education initiatives and, not the least, the extent of support from non-governmental funding agencies and the private sector.

It has to be accepted, particularly in the context of the developing countries, that visible and strong leadership and top-level support from the political system, especially the government, is essential to the successful launching of distance education schemes. Political backing was decisive in the context of the UKOU. It was even more so in the case of the IGNOU, as we shall see later. It was this support that set the planning machinery in motion. The Planning Committee for UKOU and the Project Committee for IGNOU were set up by the governments. They also determined their terms of reference. Surely, these were big confidence building measures for the planners as well as the general public, and had a significant impact on the environment in which the system was launched.

At this stage, there are several issues that the planners will have to take into account. These include elaboration of :

- the objectives of the institution;
- what needs it will meet;
- what programmes and curricula it will develop and how;
- what strategies it will follow in teaching learning transaction;
- what should be its personnel policy;
- what resources can be mobilised;
- what monitoring and evaluation system should be in place.

We shall take up each of these issues for more detailed discussion in this unit.

4.2.3 Management of the institution

A distance education institution has certain distinctive features that require management styles and patterns different from those normally associated with traditional higher education institutions, especially the universities. Most universities across the world were established and developed in the liberal traditions of self-governing institutions, appropriately 'buffered' from direct state control and intervention, marked by a style that is collegial and participatory. Distance teaching universities, on the other hand, combine in themselves functions of a traditional university as well as the assembly line processes associated with a modern industrial enterprise, since most of them have also to manage large scale production and distribution functions. The management styles of distance teaching universities, therefore, require an approach that is more techno-managerial than the collegial-liberal traditions of the conventional university. Unless the distance teaching university is efficient in its operations, it is unlikely to serve the needs of a vastly distributed student body with many of whom the institution may not come in

direct contact. The separation of the institution from its students demands application of modern methods and technologies to build bridges; the assembly line operations have to be closely monitored and watched for execution in a sequence with no breaks, and, in many cases, it has to be ensured that the turn around time is reduced to the minimum. The institution has therefore of necessity to implement modern management practices and methods that improve efficiency, assure quality of the products and services, and also keep up the morale of the students as well as the employees.

If such an orientation has to be provided to the management structure of a distance education institution, it has to be reflected, in some measure, in the instrument that creates the institution and the rules and regulations which govern its pattern of organisation and structure.

In many countries, at least in most developing countries, it is the governments that take major educational initiatives including establishment of new institutions. These could either be through legislative enactments or executive decisions. In either case, there would be a set of provisions which postulate the functions, powers and the composition of various bodies that comprise the institution.

Those associated with these processes of setting up the institution will have to address the following issues :

The pattern of governance: Conventional universities function through bodies like the Senate and the Executive Council. Senates are traditionally large bodies consisting of almost all the academics involved, as well as sections of other employees. Although they ensure the participation of all sections of the community within the institution in taking major decisions, they can tend to become slow-moving and often indecisive in crucial matters. Executive councils are smaller bodies, though within the conventional university framework, and comprising as they do, mainly of internal members, these bodies can also tend to be less efficient, and often ill-equipped to meet the managerial demands of processes that are different from those of purely academic institutions. The provisions relating to the composition, powers and functions of these bodies are of considerable significance in the management design of distance education institutions.

Constitution of management bodies: Traditional universities have always resisted all external influences and pressures on all their academic policy making and implementation processes. While it is important to protect and preserve the autonomy of educational institutions in deciding academic policies and programmes, it is equally necessary to ensure that they do not suffer from isolation from the environment. For a distance education institution, constant interaction with the environment is very essential not just to remove isolation but more importantly to inform its policy-making and programme-deciding processes. Provision of adequate and suitable representation to a variety of interests on the decision-making bodies of a distance education institution will therefore be useful. Planners will have to

consider and decide what balance should be maintained between internal and external representation on these bodies, keeping in view the institutional structures already existing in the environment and the support and strength that can be secured from the external sources.

The needs of cooperation and collaboration: A distance education institution will necessarily have to function in close cooperation and collaboration with a wide variety of institutions and also drawing upon their resources and personnel. While the constitution of various bodies could, in some measure, reflect this concern, it is also necessary to secure the active involvement of a cross section of stakeholders in the working of the institution itself. These could be through appropriate consultative mechanisms, both formal and informal, as collaboration and networking are integral to the successful functioning of a distance education system.

Check Your Progress 1

Which are the three major perspectives that influence the planning stage of a distance education institution? Answer in about 50 words.

Note: i) Write your answer in the space given below
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

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4.3 PLANNING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Planning is at the core of the management function. It enables an institution to survive and to adapt to the changing environment. Forward planning as a management tool does not seem to have captured the imagination of educational administrators in the conventional system as the market for this system is assured, and it does not seem to be under any major threat or competition. The distance learning system, on the other hand, has to create a market, gain credibility and attract public support. Its processes are much more complex, combining as they do several operations which are influenced by business processes like production and distribution of materials, for example. Unlike teaching and research which are seemingly leisurely pursuits on most campuses, distance education processes require a greater degree of efficiency and a sense of urgency in organising and scheduling various operations as well as meeting the deadlines. Planning is the established management tool for achieving this purpose.

Planning is essentially the preparation of a blue-print for action, for achieving a mission. A plan sets out systematically the activities to be undertaken so that the stated objectives can be achieved. In distance education, the planning stage also helps evolve the system since at this point itself, considerable thought will have gone into articulating the various components that constitute the system as well as the tasks associated with each of those components (we have listed these components in the previous section).

4.3.1 The institutional objectives

As we have noted earlier, the national policy documents or other appropriate instruments like legislation, will have set out the mission of the distance education system in very broad and general terms. But when an institution is established, the planners will have to indicate what goals it will try to achieve to attain the larger mission. Again, these goals may appear to be general statements reflecting the philosophy of the institution, and its approach to fulfilling its own goals. Within this approach, care has to be taken to specify, in clear and explicit terms, what those goals are and how they are going to be achieved.

In practical terms, these are stated as the objectives of an institution. In formulating these objectives, care has to be taken to ensure that they are:

- consistent with the mission/goals of the system;
- explicitly stated and clearly defined;
- expressed in measurable terms;
- sufficiently flexible to permit review and modification depending upon the changes in environment.

The distance education institutions produce not just graduates alone; it also produces course material which requires careful consideration of the financial, operational and personnel implications. These functions demand a more explicit statement of academic objectives and their inferences in quantitative terms. Explicit statements of specific objectives are crucial at an early stage, otherwise it may be difficult to cut back on plans once course development has begun. The extent of specificity of objectives or precise goal setting is very useful when there are severe time or resource constraints, or within a relatively stable environment, whereas broader, directional goals are more appropriate in the formative years of the institution, in conditions of uncertainty or when there is little consensus among the stakeholders in the institution.

The framing of the objectives depends on two factors:

- agreed goals of the institution; and
- assessment of the resources available.

The resource needs which concern planners include fixed assets (land, buildings, equipment), personnel (academic, professional, managerial and administrative), funds and time.

4.3.2 Programmes and curricula

The statement of objectives, even in general terms, will have given you an idea of the specific needs that the new institution will endeavour to meet. These could be, as we have mentioned earlier in this unit, providing educational opportunities to different learner groups (adult learners, working people, housewives, disadvantaged groups), or the meeting of specific education and training needs like training of teachers, developing skills for technology upgrading, or provision of more technical and vocational education. In whatever terms the objectives are formulated, the next task will be to identify what programmes should be developed to fulfil the stated objectives and what curricula should be designed and developed for that purpose.

Curriculum planning and development are essentially the tasks of the academics. To begin with, an idea has to be concretised. It may originate from an individual academic, a discipline group or a school/faculty of the institution (we are assuming here that the staff has been recruited and are in position; we shall discuss this issue later in this unit). This idea, or the concept of a programme or course is then accepted in principle by the relevant bodies of the University. Thereafter the major tasks are to:

- formulate the course specifications - these may include the aims and objectives of the course, the nature of the course (professional, vocational, awareness), level (certificate, diploma, degree);
- specify the contents and their structure;
- determine the learning packages (print, electronic media);
- settle the instructional design (support systems required, tutorials and counselling, recruitment and training of tutors/counsellors, student assignments and their evaluation);
- select the course writers and editors;
- prepare texts for production.

As these tasks will require to be performed if the institution has to begin its operations with teaching materials produced in-house. As we have mentioned in the previous unit, it is always open to a new institution to acquire learning packages for its first set of programmes as it will save considerable time (a lead time of two years or more has to be assumed for production of materials for a new programme). Further, such an approach will provide very useful experience in the delivery of distance education programmes and testing the appropriateness of different delivery technologies.

In the initial phase, the issues involved in planning new programmes are:

- search for materials already available;
- adoption, adaption or translation of these materials;
- writing of new materials;
- conducting development testing where necessary;
- finalising of production arrangements.

4.3.3 Staffing

The most important asset of any organization is its people. The principles and values of the organization are evolved around them. They determine its work culture; their levels of concern and commitment inspire the extent of public confidence in the institution.

Personnel policy of a distance education institution is a crucial issue. Although education generally is a labour-intensive enterprise, distance education can reduce this intensity. There is generally an established ratio between teachers and students in the conventional system. This is primarily because, there are, for several reasons, constraints on the size of a class. A teacher can at best interact only with a certain number of students at a time. Therefore faculty strength varies with the size of the enrolment. In distance education, the situation is very different. Students depend largely on self-instructional learning packages for home-based study. Face-to-face contact is very limited and takes place at different times at different places. These flexibilities permit a distance education institution to pursue personnel policies which are significantly different from those of traditional education. Distance education institutions have therefore an unusual mix of personnel - a relatively small core of permanent full-time staff consisting of academic, professional, technical and administrative personnel, supplemented by a much larger number of part-time staff at different locations engaged for specific periods and for specific tasks.

The categories of personnel required for a distance education institution and the nature of tasks to be performed by them can be summarized as follows:

Categories of Personnel	Tasks
Academic Staff • Subject specialists • Media specialists • Instructional designers • Tutors/Counsellors	• Curriculum planning • Preparation of learning packages and their production • Specifying the instructional system • Teaching/counselling students

Professional Staff • Printers • Copy editors • Graphic designers • Media producers • Cameramen, technicians • Computer professionals • Engineers	• Production of learning packages • Preparation of charts, illustrations and graphics • Production of audio and video tapes • Desktop publishing • Technology applications • Maintenance of equipments, studio
Administrative Staff • Managers • Administrators • Financial staff • Office staff • Warehousing staff	• Operations management • Monitoring • Personnel administration • Financial management and accounting • Office management and maintenance • Store keeping

The categories of personnel and the tasks mentioned above are by no means exhaustive, but only indicative. There are in addition several functions like investigations, surveys, analyses, evaluation research, etc which are relevant to several functions performed by the system.

The mix of staff on the basis of their engagement (full-time, part-time, permanent, short-term, etc) has to be settled keeping in view the work load for every task and the frequency at which it has to be performed. For example, many of the tasks associated with the material development functions (course writing and editing, preparation of graphics, video production, etc) need to be performed only once. When these are produced, what remains to be done is their revision and updating, at appropriate intervals where necessary. Most of the original tasks can therefore be performed by personnel engaged on a part-time basis or on short-term contract. Generally, however, the academics who coordinate this work and are responsible for the maintenance of the courses are appointed on a full-time regular basis as the core faculty of the institution.

A similar approach can be followed in the recruitment of staff associated with the delivery of various services. For example, tutorials and academic counselling for the distance learners are nearly always performed by part-time staff, as is the case with the managerial and administrative staff at the local study centers. Appointment of full-time staff for these functions can turn out to be extremely costly. Much of the cost-efficiency of the system also depends on its ability to contain the recurrent expenditure on staff salaries by pursuing a flexible personnel policy.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Space is given below for your answer.
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

i) What care has to be taken while formulating institutional objectives for DEIs and why such care is needed?

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ii) Identify the following statements as 'true' or 'false'.

- a) Framing of objectives does not depend on goals of the institution and availability of resources. ()
- b) Search for materials already available is not necessary in the initial phase of programme planning. ()
- c) Flexible personnel policy is one of the factors for cost-efficiency of the system ()

4.3.4 Staff development and training

Staff development and training is just as important to a new distance education institution as its personnel policy. As the methodologies are different and the competence required is highly specialised, it is necessary to consider recruitment and training of personnel at all levels in the initial stage itself.

The core competencies that are essential for distance educators are:

- Programme design and development
- Instructional design techniques
- Needs analysis and assessment
- Identification of job-related training
- Understanding of teaching -learning styles and preferences of adult learners
- Determination of appropriate training methods
- Management of programmes
- Communication technology and media

- Evaluation
- Planning and research
- Computer applications.

We had mentioned in the previous unit that most of the functions to be performed by a distance education system, ranging from course development to evaluation, requires the involvement of several specialists working as teams. Michael Moore (1993) describes open and distance learning environments, as settings in which "instruction is no longer an individual's work, but the work of teams of specialists - media specialists, knowledge specialists, instructional design specialists, and learning specialists". If such a team approach has to be fostered among the staff of a distance education institution, it is essential to ensure that the staff is put through appropriate training and orientation after recruitment. The focus of these programmes should be to develop in each specialist category the necessary skills and competence that can contribute to the creation of the distance learning environment in the institution. An illustrative list of the areas for training and orientation is given below:

Category of Personnel	Areas in which Skills and Competencies have to be developed
Academics	Instructional system design including • Education theories • Distance learning styles and practices • Adult education theories • Teaching strategies • Communication skills • Presentation techniques • Self-instructional material development • Instructional design for interactive learning • Writing skills • Editing skills
Professionals/Technologists	Communication and information technology and management Skills including • Knowledge of technology and hardware • Knowledge of multi-media

	- software and its applications • Computer networking • Knowledge of access to technologies • Knowledge of interactive technology • Educational software development
Organisation and Management, Personnel	• Organising and controlling • Management Information System • Team management • Collaboration and networking • Negotiating skills • Public relations • Group working • Strategic planning skills • Project management skills
Administrators and Financial Services	• Personnel administration • Knowledge of support systems • Policy-making skills • Budget-making skills • Cost analysis and activity costing skills

In the initial stages, planners and managers of any new institution will have to look for facilities to get their staff trained in these skills to begin the operations. Such training can be done by deputing groups of staff in different categories to well established institutions elsewhere or getting experts from those institutions as advisors or consultants for short periods to set up the systems and orienting the staff in operationalising the institution's functions. The initial start up period is very critical as it can set the environment in which the work culture will be evolved in the formative stages of the institution.

4.3.5 Designing the delivery system

Delivery of learning materials as well as a variety of support services to learners is a critical need in distance education. Since the learners are separated both in time and space from their teachers/institution, arrangements have to be in place for reaching out to the learners.

Most distance education systems, as we have seen in the previous unit, establish a network of local centres which remains the main contact point for learners in a designated district/region. The number of such centres will depend upon the vastness of the area to be covered, and the number of learners to be served. In the location of such centres, the major consideration should be:

- the centre should be capable of providing a learning environment;
- it should be accessible to students within a reasonable time and distance;
- tutors/counsellors for guiding learners should be available at the centre or in its neighbourhood;
- it should have the facilities to support a sufficiently large number of students mostly outside the normal working hours of the centre and on holidays;
- it should provide sufficient personnel for managing the centre, helping students and maintaining the records
- the compensation package for rendering these services may be drawn up either on a normative basis or through negotiations;
- arrangement should be made to orient the concerned staff about their roles and responsibilities.

The local centres may have to be provided some resource inputs depending upon the instructional system to be developed. For instance, if the instructional design envisages the use of electronic media, students should have the required facilities to access the media. If video technology is a part of the delivery system, the local centres should have both the hardware (VCR and monitor) as well as the software (video cassettes) so that learners can watch them during their visits to the centres. If on the other hand, video conferencing is integral to the interactive teaching-learning strategy, the local centre should have the reception facilities (downlink if satellite communication is used) as well as talk-back facilities to ensure interaction. Similarly, if the support at the centre involves significant face-to-face interaction, arrangements should be in place for a group of learners to interact with tutors/counsellors at scheduled times.

There could be programmes which require different kinds of support services. If programmes in science education are on offer, students need access to laboratories for experiments. Computer students will need hands-on experience with computers. Technical and vocational students will need work experience. If these facilities are not available at the local centre, they will require to be organised at any other place/institution in the neighbourhood.

As the institution grows, and with it, the enrolment, the network will also grow. There could be a very large number of local centres. It will then become necessary to put in place arrangements to coordinate and supervise the working of the local centres. This function is generally performed by

Regional Centres which are managed by full-time staff of the institution. When such Regional Centres are established, they would also be in a position to do resource mapping of their regions for easy expansion of the network.

If the early planning phase itself visualises a very large institution covering a large geographical area, and also high enrolments, a different approach to the establishment of the network could be attempted. In such cases, it would be advisable to set up Regional Centres in the initial phase itself which could then begin with the processes of resource mapping, selection of local centres and personnel, recruitment of tutors and counsellors and their training. This approach would also help quicker expansion of the network and facilitate almost immediate response to rising enrolments.

A major function of this network is the management of the logistics involved in delivering various support services to the learners. More specifically these centres provide

- a local face to an otherwise remote institution for most of the students
- personalised and often localised services to the learners;
- significant reduction in the response time for information, materials and assignment feedback;
- a forum for learners to meet and engage themselves in group work which could remove isolation.

Establishment and development of such networks also raise several issues for the management. More often, they tend to be resource-driven; the institution has to provide several resource inputs apart from personnel. These investments may not match the levels of enrolment all the time. In the performance of certain tasks (material distribution for example), the network centre could turn out to be another layer between the institution and the learners which might have an impact on efficiency.

In setting up the network, planners will also need to consider the problems and issues associated with centralisation and decentralisation of specific operations. For example, there are several operations that have to be carried out in a centralised manner, while several others could be decentralised to local centres. In doing so, care has to be taken on the following issues:

- define the roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction of the central office and the regional/local centres very clearly;
- establish well defined reporting lines;
- specify the areas in which the regional staff will have flexibility in operational decision-making;
- establish systems that help field staff to participate in policy making and execution through two-way feedback and monitoring mechanisms.

4.3.6 Finance and budgeting

As we have seen in the previous unit, governments play a major role in the field of education all over the world. They determine the policies, and the policies influence decisions on the funding of education. While governments might be the largest single source for educational finance in most countries, there could be private initiatives as well in establishing institutions within the broad regulatory framework provided by the governments.

Irrespective of the source from which an institution is financed, at the micro-management level, planners will have to address the following issues:

- the initial investment likely to be available at least for a period of the first five years;
- the broad break up of expenditure between capital and recurrent items;
- preparation of a time frame with time-bound activities and their costs during the initial phase.

The main components of the capital items (fixed costs) are

- land and buildings;
- furniture, office equipment and fittings;
- computer hardware and software;
- audio and video production equipment and facilities;
- media transmission equipment and facilities;
- vehicles.

The major components of the recurrent items of expenditure are

- salary of staff (full-time and part-time);
- costs of preparation and production of learning packages (these will include paper, printing, audio and video tapes, other production costs);
- stationery including postage, telephone;
- travel;
- costs of warehousing and distribution of materials;
- expenditure on delivery of services at the local centres;
- advertisement;
- general administration costs.

It is important to remember that an institution can earn any revenue in the form of student fees or sale proceeds of materials only after the learning packages are produced and admissions made. This may take a lead time of two years or more. It will therefore be realistic to assume that in the first five years or so, an institution may not be able to generate any significant

resources of its own, and will therefore have to depend upon external support for funding its activities.

When the activities begin, and the outputs flow on regular basis, it should be the endeavour of the management to continuously analyse the costs and establish unit costs for every activity and output. This exercise will enable the institution to prepare its budgets on a more realistic basis for all incremental additions to activities and more importantly, monitor and control expenditure for improving productivity and efficiency.

Check Your Progress 3

What are the main considerations for setting up of local/study centres? And what are the expectations from these centers?

Note: i) Space given below for your answer
ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit

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4.4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The flow of correct information at stages appropriate to the decision making process is essential for effective management. In fact, information is a critical input for realistic planning which requires flow of information to all areas that need to plan the system and secure the resources necessary to support development. It is not uncommon in many organisations that information is not routinely shared with all areas that might reasonably be expected to get information. In a distance education set up where many areas of operations are critically dependent on each other, the non-availability of information, or its inadequacy or inaccuracy, can lead to severe problems for management. There is a tendency among the managers and staff in several organisations to control information within their areas of responsibility, and not to pass it on to all areas that could benefit by it. The introduction of new technologies can be a potent force in changing established attitudes to information collection and use. For instance, if the institution were to implement a multi-user computer system, on which all data on programmes, courses, student finances etc are held on a single relational database, every one in the institution could access relevant information quickly and easily. There could be appropriate restrictions on accessing specified data (about personnel and related matters) and on users manipulating or modifying data. In this system, each operational area should have the responsibility for the entry of data arising out of its own

activities, working to a data entry schedule set at the University level. Each area then becomes accountable for the accuracy and timeliness of its own data, and its performance in the achievement of this goal would also become open to general scrutiny.

4.4.1 Management information system

Organising and controlling are major functions of management. The management of a distance education institution requires constant attention to details if it has to control changes in the basic input-output flows through the institutional operations. These would include:

- control over the processes associated with admission of students (including re-registration) and linking them to those relating to the provision of materials and services;
- control over various operations including those relating to the production of materials and their distribution, timeliness of delivery of materials and services, ensuring their quality and reliability and engagement of operational staff and their efficient utilisation;
- control over procurement processes and availability of material (paper, computer stationery, audio and video cassettes);
- control over costs (capital and recurrent) as well as income.

In order to control all these operations, and to ensure that they are efficiently managed, institutions generally put in place what is known as the Management Information System (MIS). In designing such a system, the following areas have to be taken into account :

- programme planning and scheduling;
- programme development monitoring;
- progress of print production;
- progress of audio visual production;
- assignment development and preparation;
- admission schedule;
- computer processing schedule;
- material despatch schedule;
- staff recruitment and training schedule;
- equipment purchase schedule;
- examination schedule.

Since all these are recurring activities, ideally, it would be useful to prepare an institution-wide calendar for all these activities which should then form the basis for monitoring actual performance vis-à-vis the schedules. In preparing the calendar, care would have to be taken to match the input-

output flows so that all interdependencies are taken into account at the MIS design stage itself.

It is not enough if the schedules are prepared and notified. There has to be constant monitoring of performance as well. Each operational area should, on an agreed date, provide all the relevant data about the activities accomplished by that date, indicating also the slippages, if any, as well as the reasons for the delays. This would help the MIS unit to prepare an institutionwide report on performance on the basis of which the management would be able to take corrective action where necessary.

4.4.2 Maintenance of data base

The discussion in the previous section highlighted the significance of collection and maintenance of data relating to various operations. These data will help evaluate the internal efficiency of the organisation. There are however several new dimensions to assessing the performance of a distance education institution and the availability of data is a critical factor for that assessment.

A distance education institution exists to serve its actual and potential students. It is important to know who these students are and how the institution responds to their expectations. A quantification of these attributes is possible if data is collected and maintained on the following aspects:

- proportion of the targeted population reached by the programme(s);
- proportion of the targeted population who knows about the programme(s);
- number of enquires made and applications received;
- number of applications against set targets;
- number of students on each course and programme;
- number of students who withdraw or drop out;
- reasons for withdrawal and dropout;
- student pass rates;
- persistence rates (students who stay on in a course till its completion);
- demographic profile of students (age, gender, employment, income groups, rural, urban).

A major output of a distance education institution is the learning materials produced by it. We have mentioned earlier that while preparing the material, institutions also undertake development testing. It is important that the feedback obtained from such testing is systematically documented and maintained. This data base could be an invaluable learning resource for the institution and its people.

It would be useful to undertake regular surveys on various aspects of the functioning of the institution and the services provided by it. For example, access to study centres, frequency of use of study centres, access to media and the pattern of its use, delays in the supply of materials and assignment feedback, etc could be the subject matter of such surveys.

4.4.3 Evaluation studies

Evaluation studies can be taken up at two different levels, namely evaluation of the performance of a programme or of the institution as a whole. Generally, the purpose of such evaluation would be to measure the success or failure with reference to the objectives set out, or for comparison of performance with other programmes, or institutions, or to correct any deficiency or weakness that may have crept into the management of a programme or the functioning of the institution.

The complexity of the nature of distance education makes the measure of its success more difficult. Even such simple indicators as pass rates and drop-out rates are difficult to assess, as in distance education, students are permitted such flexibility as multiple entry and exit points and pacing the studies according to their convenience. There is in addition, a multiplicity of objectives; not all students may be interested in the end-qualifications, and some may be interested only in the materials. Still, some indicators like sustenance of student interest, acceptability of graduates in the job market through tracer studies, surveys on use of materials by non-students, etc. can help to establish the measure of achievement of a distance education institution.

Comparison of performance of distance education programmes and institutions with those of conventional education can be a useful marketing strategy. Distance education is widely perceived to be cost-effective because it can reap the benefits of economies of scale. To establish this cost-efficiency, it is necessary that costs are continuously analysed and compared with those of other institutions, both of conventional and distance education. It has however to be kept in view that classical notions of unit costs can sometimes be misleading as the unit cost per graduate in distance education would be relatively high due to the notoriously low pass percentages compared to traditional institutions. Unit cost per enrolled student might be more relevant for comparison, though the standardisation of units (student, course, programme) might present some difficulty.

Corrective evaluation is essential for all organisations. Distance education institutions are no exceptions. On the other hand, they tend to be more easily influenced by changes in the environment. It is therefore necessary to assess the impact of environmental changes on the institution. For example, changes in the demographic profile of the population in a society can have an impact on the learning needs and styles of learning. Providers of distance education may have to reconsider their provisions depending upon the increase or decrease in the adult population looking for educational opportunities, just as they will have to review their offerings depending

upon the induction of new technologies requiring upgradation of skills for changes in job content. It is also likely that institutions may drift away from their original objectives due to internal or external pressures. Review of performance can be a useful tool in correcting such directional changes or departures.

Check Your Progress 4

Which major areas of DEI require constant attention and monitoring for effective management of the institution? Answer in about 50 words.

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

In the previous unit, our effort was to take you through the larger issues associated with the management of the distance education *system* and its major *sub-systems*. In this unit, we turned our attention away from the totality of the system and examined in details the concerns involved in the management of a distance education *institution*. Because of this shift in focus, the nature and quality of the issues discussed in this unit are different from those considered in the previous unit. We hope that you would have found the more practical aspects of setting up a distance education institution which include setting out the objectives and methodology, and the choices available for making decisions as well as the planning, recruitment and training of staff, and setting up the delivery system useful and interesting. We have also looked at the budgeting and costing exercise and the assessment of the performance of the institution.

4.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

1. The choice in setting up a distance education institution depends on several variables. To begin with, there is a large demand for education with those looking for educational opportunities constantly increasing.

They come from diverse groups – from those who missed out early education to those who are working, from the professionals to the housewives, from job seekers to those who want to change jobs. The rapidly changing technological environment demands continuous updating of skills of large numbers of working people. Employers cannot afford to withdraw them from work for training; they would prefer combining work with learning. Finally, the governments which finance education is generally in favour of more effective and cost efficient methods of expanding educational facilities. Distance education can respond to all these situations forcing its choice on planners.

2.

- i) Institutional objectives have to be carefully formulated to ensure that they are consistent with the mission of the distance education system which has been launched in a given environment. An institution has to define its goals explicitly and clearly; they should be expressed in measurable terms and should be flexible enough to adapt to changes in the environment. In the absence of such clarity of purpose, reviews and modifications become difficult, leading to drifts in objectives which it might turn out to be difficult to correct.

ii) a) false, b) false, c) true.

- 3. The Centres should be accessible to students, and are capable of providing a suitable learning environment. They should have academic and managerial staff to maintain the centre. The major functions of these centres are to provide face-to-face interaction and personalized attention to learners who feel isolated from the institution.
- 4. Admission of students including re-registration, schedule of course development, production and delivery of materials on time, and storage of large scale consumable items, tutorials and counselling assignment, evaluation and feedback and income and expenditure are areas where continuous monitoring and supervision and control are needed.

GLOSSARY

Structure : Formal and established pattern of relationship in an organization. The relationship includes people, tasks and activities.

Environment : The business environment of a firm comprise economic, social, political, cultural, legal and geographic factors which critically affect the working of an organisation.

Centralisation : The concentration of power and authority at one place. This may be concentrated in a person or a group of persons in the organisation.

Delegation : The sharing or handing over of authority and responsibility to a subordinate.

Organisation Chart : The depiction of specific positions in an organisation, their status within the organisation and the reporting relationship between a subordinate and his superior.

Geographical Structure : The organisational structure in which activities and tasks are grouped together on the basis of their location in a geographical zone or territory.

Network Structure : A structure in which one organisation acts as the 'lead' organisation and creates a network of many other external organisations whose services the lead organisation utilises in fulfilment of its objectives.

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

(Given below are the titles of a few books/journals which have been used to prepare this Block. It is NOT suggested that you should go looking for these books to study them in original. If you can manage, you may look for a few titles, but they are not obligatory for completing the course successfully).

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