

Correspondence/Distance Education in India : Excerpts from A Research Report

BAKSHISH SINGH, SAROJ MULICK AND NEELAM CHAUDHARY

We present here some excerpts from the Research Report Titled *Correspondence/Distance Education in India: An In-depth Study Covering the year 1989-90* by Bakshish Singh, Saroj Mullick and Neelam Chaudary, edited by B.N. Koul. The primary reason for giving these excerpts here is that the findings and the recommendations of this Research Report should reach the audience who have interest in watching the developments in the field of distance education in India. These findings and recommendations given here, we hope, would help the personnel involved in the practice of distance education in the various types of institutions of correspondence/distance education in their current efforts of reshaping, updating and upgrading numerous courses/programmes, policies and strategies. We expect that readers would get a clearer picture of the general scenario of distance education in the country.

The Research Report as such focuses on four themes: i) Profiles of institutions and students, ii) Teaching—learning methodology covering staff development, preparation and delivery of course materials and student support services, iii) Finance and iv) Networking of the institutions studied. In all, the study group contacted 41 Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs), 5 State Open Universities and 1 National Open University to obtain the necessary data. Questionnaires and some selective guided interviews were used to collect data, apart from extensive study of relevant literature on the themes concerned. Three types of questionnaire were sent to three categories: students, members of the faculty and institutions. These were further divided into two sub categories meant for CCIs and OUs respectively. Altogether the questionnaire contained: 60 questions for CCI students; 61 for OU students; 39 questions for the faculty of CCIs and 52 for the faculty of the OUs; and 106 questions for CCIs and 106 for OUs. There were also interviews with a selective number of all the categories mentioned. However, it was not possible to get the feedback from all.

The data collected from 29 CCIs, 4 OUs, 90 Students of CCIs and 89 students of OUs, 30 faculty members of CCIs and 18 faculty members of OUs, as also from meetings with Directors and Faculty members of 10 CCIs and 20 OUs was compiled systematically and analysed to arrive at general findings and recommendations. What follows as findings and recommendations should be treated as the essentials of analysis as also the interpretation of the data.

FINDINGS

Institutional Profile: CCIs

Some of the CCIs enjoy good reputation, some are regarded as just satisfactory but some which do not have proper infrastructure do not enjoy much credibility. Inadequate funding, somewhat lopsided growth and proliferation of institutes and duplication of courses within the same region or state, seem to be mainly responsible for retarding the development of quite a few of them.

The present scenario shows the maximum concentration of CCIs in the South (16), followed by the North (15), the Western and the central regions. (7) and the East has only 3. The maximum concentration of distance learners is also in the South, i.e., 58%. The Northern region accounts for 30% of the learners, the Western and the Central region for 7% and the Eastern region for 5%. From this, it is obvious that there has been a rather lopsided growth of CCIs in the country. This imbalance needs to be rectified so as to provide opportunities to the potential students for higher education in all parts of the country.

Just as any new system faces teething troubles, the CCIs also had to face many problems and most are still facing them. The worst of these has been the prejudice among some administrators and teachers of the conventional universities against the system of correspondence/

distance education. However, with the passage of time, awareness and reasonable credibility earned by some of the CCIs, this prejudice has subsided to a large extent, though some sort of superiority complex is still there among the conventional teachers. They must realise that correspondence education is an alternative channel of imparting education which has been adopted partly to cope with the ever increasing number of learners. Since the conventional universities/colleges have limited capacity, CCIs have greatly helped in reducing admission-pressures on them. The two systems are complementary, not rivals. Therefore, they need to work in close collaboration for meeting the educational needs of thousands of aspiring learners and for monitoring standards of higher education.

Unfortunately, most of the CCIs in India have confined their instructional package only to the printed course material which in many cases is neither self-instructional nor in any known distance education format. In line with the colossal advances in communication technology, they must adopt some of the technologies which are easily available to the people and raise their status to multi-media teaching-learning institutes.

So far as the types of courses are concerned, most of the CCIs offer courses which they expect would draw large enrolments, e.g., B.A., B.Com. and M.A. in various subjects. Some of the CCIs have done well in introducing some need-based vocational and professional courses also.

A couple of universities have introduced research level courses as well, i.e., M.Phil. and Ph.D. But the quality of course materials for almost all the courses is not upto the desired standards. Moreover, the CCIs do not provide any worthwhile support services to the students, except a personal contact programme which again is not compulsory in most of the cases.

One of the most annoying things for the institutes and the teachers has been their designations. Most of the institutes are treated as constituent colleges of the parent university. Some have succeeded in getting their institutes designated as Departments of Correspondence Studies/Education, but this has resulted in further reduction in the powers of the Directors who were consequently redesignated as Departmental Heads. Serious thought needs to be given to this issue.

The weakest features in the CCIs are the lack of proper staff development programmes, poor quality of course material and the lack of student support services. In the beginning, all the teachers were drawn from the conventional system. They had no training in the distance education system or the writing of course materials in the distance education format, and were expected to learn from their on-the-job experience. However, later on some orientation programmes, seminars and workshops were organised to make them aware of the essential aspects of correspondence education. But, a lot more needs to be done in this respect also.

Similarly there is no proper infrastructure for student support services in the CCIs. Study centres set up by some of them are mere apologies as they hardly serve any purpose.

OU's

The proper open teaching-learning system was initiated in India in 1982 when the Andhra Pradesh Government gave a lead to the country by setting up the Andhra Pradesh Open University (now renamed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University) at Hyderabad. The most important step in this direction was taken by the Government of India in 1985 when the Parliament passed an Act to set up a national open university named Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) at New Delhi. According to the provisions of the Act, IGNOU is responsible for determining and maintaining standards of distance education and bringing about coordination among all distance education institutes in the country. The national university has launched a wide range of academic programmes, with about 0.2 million students on its rolls. Multimedia self instructional materials in proper form have been produced by IGNOU.

The establishment of IGNOU at New Delhi in 1985 has proved to be a significant milestone in the development of distance education in India. It provided a central organisation for guiding and coordinating the activities of all distance education institutes and state open universities in the country. It has popularised the concept of open

teaching-learning system with the result that three more state open universities i.e., Kota Open University in Kota (Rajasthan state), Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University at Nashik (Maharashtra state) and Nalanda Open University at Patna (Bihar state) came to be established within four years of its establishment. Recently one more state open university has been established at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh state).

The Open Universities are definitely better organised in offering support services too. IGNOU has a wide network of regional centres and study centres which have library facilities available for the students. However, the attendance at the study centres of OUs doesn't present a satisfactory picture. Obviously, modifications are required to motivate students to use the study centres optimally.

If study centres display meticulous planning and implementation, the students are bound to respond enthusiastically. Some talks on certain important topics, in which the guest speakers drawn from various universities/colleges have specialised knowledge, would provide the much needed wider exposure to the students:

Student Profile

The total enrolment in 41 CCIs including the departments of correspondence courses of 4 deemed universities during 1989-90 was 487,349. The figure for 29 CCIs which responded to our questionnaire was 346,468. The enrolment in the 4 open universities during 1989-90 was 68,280. Comparing this with the overall enrolment of 42,46,878 in higher education, the coverage through Distance Education works out to 11.5%. There has been further increase in enrolment in CCIs and OUs during 1990-91 and the total number of distance education learners rose to .6 million against the overall enrolment of 4.4 million. The highest enrolment was in the CCI, Madras University—approximately .113 million, 4 CCIs had between 21 to 50 thousand students, 6 between 5 to 20 thousand and 15 below 5 thousand; 3 CCIs did not furnish the relevant information in this regard. Increase in enrolment in CCI, Madras is attributed to the fact that there is no other way for private candidates to appear at university examinations except through the CCI. In Delhi the increase is due to CCI's central location, a large population in and around Delhi and better infrastructural facilities. In Annamalai it is attributed to study centres scattered in different states, better infrastructural facilities, prompt delivery of lessons, etc. On the other hand, decline in enrolment in Madurai Kamaraj is due to the opening of more CCIs in the neighbouring areas, while in Sri Venkateshwara it is attributed to the lack of infrastructural facilities, shortage of staff and difficulty in getting information and application forms. Not much variation has been observed in the enrolments of CCIs offering Technical/Professional courses (CIEFL Hyderabad, JNTU Hyderabad, Mother Teresa Women's University and Gujarat Vidyapeeth). Tables 1-8 give a reasonable account of the profiles of CCI students and OU students.

Table 1 : Profile of CCI Students (1989-90)

Name of CCI	Total enrolment	Sex-wise		Caste-wise		BC	Others	Location		Occupation		Others
		F	M	SC	ST			Rural	Urban	Unemp-loyed	Emp-loyed	
1. Annamalai	37238			—	N.R.	—						
2. Barkatullah	2100			—	N.R.	—						
3. Bangalore Univ.	461			—	N.R.	—						
4. Bombay Univ.	15423			—	N.R.	—						
5. CIEFL Hyderabad	1108	449 (40.5%)	659 (59.5%)	24 (2%)	1	—	1083 (98%)	—	—	N.R.	—	—
6. Univ. of Delhi	41173	18502 (45%)	22671 (55%)	2236 (5.5%)	223 (.5%)	—	38714 (94%)	2883 (7%)	38290 (93%)	N.R.	—	—
7. Gujarat Vidyapeeth	31	8 (26%)	23 (74%)	1 (3%)	—	2 (6%)	28 (94%)	16 (51%)	15 (49%)	1 (3%)	30 (97%)	—
8. H.P. Univ.	12760	1099 (9%)	11661 (91%)	—	N.R.	—						
9. Jammu Univ.	1145	293 (26%)	852 (74%)	20 (1.9%)	2 (0.17%)	2 (0.17%)	1121 (97.8%)	261 (22.8%)	884 (77.2%)	N.R.	—	—
10. J.N.T.U. Hyderabad	1551	—	—	469 (30.8%)	55 (3.3%)	899 (59%)	128 (6.6%)	—	—	N.R.	—	—
11. Kurukshetra University	5316	1445 (27%)	3871 (73%)	144 (2%)	1	342 (6.4%)	4829 (91.6%)	2768 (52%)	2548 (48%)	—	N.R.	—
12. Kerala Univ.	4730	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. Kakatiya Univ.	2015	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. Madurai Kamaraj	40292	16336 (45%)	23956 (55%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15. Madras Univ.	112740	49816 (44%)	62924 (56%)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
16. Mother Teresa Womens' Univ.	108	108 (100%)	—	—	—	—	—	12 (11%)	96 (89%)	100 (91%)	8 (9%)	—
17. Mysore Univ.	21332	6327 (29%)	15005 (71%)	1214 (5%)	353 (1.8%)	—	19765 (94.8%)	—	—	N.R.	—	—
18. Osmania Univ.	2525	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
19. Panjab Univ.	6396	2447 (38%)	3949 (62%)	71 (1.1%)	25 (.46%)	64 (1%)	6236 (98%)	1092 (15%)	5604 (85%)	5009 (78%)	1387 (22%)	—
20. Punjabi Univ.	7142	—	—	692 (9.5%)	—	303 (4.5%)	6147 (86%)	3432 (48%)	3710 (52%)	3577 (51%)	3050 (42%)	515 (7%)
21. Punjab Agr. Univ.	650	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	650 (100%)	—
22. Patna Univ.	3194	1105 (33%)	2086 (67%)	—	—	—	—	721 (22%)	2473 (78%)	N.R.	—	—
23. SNDT Univ. Bombay	12016	12016 (100%)	N.R.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
24. Sri Venkateshwara	4213	1723 (40%)	2490 (60%)	160 (3.7%)	31 (.7%)	3312 (78%)	710 (17.6%)	858 (22%)	3355 (78%)	N.R.	—	—
25. Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth	4010	987 (25%)	3023 (75%)	585 (14%)	122 (3%)	992 (24%)	2311 (57%)	2013 (50.2%)	1997 (49.8%)	N.R.	—	—
26. Utkal Univ.	6795	—	—	74 (1.1%)	45 (0.5%)	119 (1.8%)	6676 (98.2%)	4968 (73%)	1827 (27%)	N.R.	—	—
The enrolment	346468											
Percentage of break up		39.6%	60.4%	5.7%	0.7%	5.9%	87.7%	39.8%	60.2%	56%	42%	2%

Table 2 : Profile of OU Students (1989-90)

	Total enrolment	Sex-wise percentage		Caste-wise percentage			Location-wise percentage		Occupation-wise percentage	
		F	M	SC	ST	BC	Rural	Urban	Unemp.	Emp.
BRAOU	16402	33	67	9	1	22	65	35	72	28
IGNOU	48281	4.5	95.5	3.7	1.6	—	20	80	N.R.	—
KOU	14394	22	78	6	3	1	N.R.	—	—	—
YCMOU	3540	26	74	18	2	N.R.	30	70	15	85

Table 3 : Enrolment in OUs during 1985-90**

Name of Open Univ.	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
BRAOU	15,702	19,271	16,303	16,827	16,402
IGNOU	—	4,381	16,811	42,324	48,281
KOU	—	14,278	22,983	18,327	14,394*
YCMOU	—	—	—	—	3,540

* B.A./B.Com.

** For the enrolment trend during the last six years in CCIs see Appendix 1.

Table 4 : The Enrolment Trend in CCIs During the Last Six Years (1984-1990)

Name of CCI	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
1. Annamalai Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	37238
2. Bangalore Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	461
3. Barkatullah Univ.	—	911	925	1192	1423	2100
4. Bombay Univ.	11938	12697	11807	11234	13194	15423
5. CIEFL, Hyderabad	670	755	814	887	976	1108
6. Univ. of Delhi	18520	21466	22743	27478	33853	41173
7. Gujarat Vidyapeeth	44	14	28	78	136	31
8. H.P. University	—	—	6298	8454	11051	12760
9. Jammu Univ.	1107	1210	1201	1088	979	1145
10. J.N.T.U., Hyderabad	424	722	—	489	NS	1551
11. Kurukshetra Univ.	—	—	2584	3405	NS	1551
12. Kerala Univ.	2762	4055	4161	4276	4347	4730
13. Kakatiya Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	2015
14. Madurai Kamaraj	69275	75866	67143	52877	44658	40292
15. Madras Univ.	42214	67968	78123	92753	104370	112740
16. Mother Teresa Women's Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	108
17. Mysore Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	21332
18. Osmania Univ.	431	574	805	1064	1113	2525
19. Panjab Univ.	7775	8899	8783	9713	7719	6396
20. Punjabi Univ.	4624	4194	5129	6895	6830	7142
21. Patna Univ.	2018	265	3357	2439	—	3194
22. Punjab Agr. Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	650
23. SNDT Univ.	9129	9152	11054	10868	11771	12016
24. Sri Venkateshwara	3804	2422	2466	2320	2010	4213
25. Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth	NA	601	1041	1711	3684	4010
26. Utkal Univ.	—	—	—	—	—	6795

**Table 5 : Performance of CCI Students
1989-90**

S. No.	Name of CCI	Total Enrolment	Dropouts	No. of students appeared	No. of students passed
1.	Annamalai University	37238 *	1021 (3%)	36217	35480 (97%)
2.	Barkatullah University	2100	121 (6%)	1979	1555 (78%)
3.	CIEFL, Hyderabad	1108	801 (72%)	307	295 (96%)
4.	University of Delhi	41173	27742 (67%)	13431	4127 (30%)
5.	J.N.T.U., Hyderabad	1551	603 (39%)	948	INA
6.	Kurukshetra University	5316	1116 (21%)	4200	2297 (54%)
7.	Osmania University	2525	200 (8%)	2325	1448 (61%)
8.	Panjab University	6396	933 (15%)	5463	2422 (44%)
9.	Punjabi University	7142	120 (17%)	4294 **	1908 (44%)
10.	Patna University	3194	209 (7%)	2985	546 (18%)
11.	Sri Venkateshwara University	4213	2509 (59%)	1704	1036 (60%)
12.	Utkal University	6795	413 (6%)	2112 **	1393 (65%)
Average			27%		59%

* Compiled from Annual Report 1989-90 of Annamalai University.

** It is not clear what Punjabi and Utkal Universities mean by Dropouts.

Table 6 : Comparative Student Profile: 1980-1990

Variables	MIIRD Study 1980-81	Mullay Study 1981	Present Study 1989-90
Institutes covered	22	22	29
Total enrolment	145945	185893	346468
Female	22%	44%	39.6%
Male	78%	56%	60.4%
Employed	69%	19%	56%
Rural	14%	30.14%	39%
Urban	86%	69.86%	60.2%
SC	4.9%	4.04%	5.7%
ST	0.8%	—	0.7%
BC	—	—	5.9%

From the above tables we highlight a few pointers here:

- Women's enrolment constitutes 45 per cent of the total enrolment in CCI Madurai Kamaraj as well as Delhi, followed by Madras (44%), CIEFL (41%), Sri Venkateshwara (40%) and Panjab University (38%). The lowest women's enrolment is in H.P. University (9%). The overall enrolment of women in distance education increased from 35% in 1985-86 to 40% by 1990.
- The highest enrolment of SC student is in JNTU (30%) followed by Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (14%) and Punjabi University (9%).
- The enrolment of ST student in JNTU is 3.3% and in Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth 3%.
- The highest enrolment of BC students is in Sri Venkateshwara (78%) followed by JNTU (59%) and Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (24%). In other CCIs it ranges from 0.17 to 6.4%.
- Rural urban break up: The highest number of ruralities is enrolled in Utkal (73%) followed by Kurukshetra (52%) and Punjabi University (48%), and the minimum is in Delhi University (7%).
- Unemployed: The highest enrolment of unemployed student is in Mother Teresa Women's University (91%) followed by Panjab University (78%) and Punjabi University (51%).
- Performance: The drop-out rate is the highest in CIEFL (72%) and Delhi (67%) and the lowest in Annamalai (3%). The range of dropouts in other CCIs is between 6 to 59%.
- Pass percentage: The highest pass percentage is in Annamalai (97%) followed by CIEFL (96%) and Barkatulla (78%) and the lowest is of Patna CCI (18%). The range of passes in other CCIs is 30 to 65%. Qualitative performance could not be assessed for want of full information from most of the CCIs except Delhi, Punjabi and Kurukshetra Universities.
- The total enrolment of IGNOU and the 3 state open universities (BRAOU, KOU & YCMOU) during 1989-90 was 82617. IGNOU shows a steady increase in its enrolment while other OUs do not show any significant variations over the past few years.
- Women's enrolment is highest in BRAOU (32%) and lowest in IGNOU (4.5%). Castewise the highest enrolment of SC students is in BRAOU (9%) and ST in YCMOU (5%).
- Rural enrolment is highest in B RAOU (65%) followed by YCMOU (30%) and the lowest in IGNOU (20%). The enrolment of unemployed students is highest in BRAOU (72%) followed by YCMOU (15%).
- Performance of OU students could not be assessed due to the long duration allowed for the completion of courses.

Comparative performance of students in three conventional universities and their CCIs is shown in the tables that follows:

Table 7 : Performance of Students in Conventional Universities

	Enrolment	Dropped out	Appeared	Passed
Annamalai University (1990)	8522	5,826 68%	2,696	2,405 89%
Panjab University (1989)	155,994	73,577 47%	82,417	43,817 53%
Kurukshetra University (1988)	NA	NA	24,249	15,505 64%
			Average	69%

Table 8 : Performance of Students in CCIs

	Enrolment	Dropped out	Appeared	Passed
Annamalai University (1990)	37,238	1,021 3%	36,217	35,480 97%
Panjab University (1989)	6,396	933 15%	5,463	2,422 44%
Kurukshetra University (1988)	5,316	1,116 21%	4,200	2,297 54%
			Average	65%

* The dropout rate in these CCIs, i.e., 3%, 15% and 21% is significantly less than what it is in the respective universities and the colleges affiliated to them i.e., 68% and 47%.

* The pass percentage in these conventional universities is 89%, 53%, and 64% (average 69%). In the CCIs of these universities, it is 97%, 44% and 54% (average 65%).

Considering that most of the learners in the CCIs are working people and quite a number of them are from the backward sections of society, their performance at the university examinations which are common for both the categories of learners, is indeed commendable. However, a clear-cut generalisation cannot be arrived at from these limited data. But the performance of the students of the 29 CCIs shows that their pass percentage ranges from 30% to 97% except for one CCI with 18%. 7 CCIs have shown a pass percentage of 50% or above. Obviously, the students of some CCIs are more motivated than their counterparts in the conventional universities/colleges.

Staff Development

- There is disparity among CCIs regarding the total strength of their respective faculty. It varies from

3 to 95, the smallest being at SNTD and Barkatullah and the largest at Delhi University. In a majority of CCIs, the faculty do not have any formal qualifications in distance education except their on-the-job experience. More than 50% of the CCIs do not provide any incentive to the faculty to do some course in distance education, but about 50% of the CCIs organise some workshops or seminars on distance education methodology for the benefit of their staff, and most of the CCIs do encourage them to attend seminars/workshops organised by various organizations like UGC, NCERT, NCDE, ICDE etc. Again, most of the CCIs encourage their faculty to do research in their own subjects while only 41% encourage them to do research in distance education. There is sufficient interaction between CCIs and their respective university teaching departments for curriculum development, development of course material and work at PCPs. This is a healthy practice which can strengthen the dual mode system.

- So far as OUs are concerned, IGNOU has the largest number of faculty followed by BRAOU, KOU and YCMOU. Not many faculty members of OUs have any formal qualification in distance education except their on-the-job experience. Though OUs do not provide any special incentives to their faculty for doing some courses in distance education, they organise workshops, seminars etc. for orienting and training their staff in the area of distance education. OUs also encourage their faculty to participate in seminars and workshops. All the OUs have stated that they encourage their faculty to do research in their own subjects and in distance education also, but none of the respondents provided the number of those of the faculty who have completed such research and obtained any corresponding qualifications.
- Most of the faculty of the CCIs and OUs found that keeping in view the strength of the students, the staff in their institutes is totally inadequate.

They also expressed the view that different criteria should be laid down for the recruitment of faculty in CCIs as well as OUs. Most of the faculty of both CCIs and OUs found the prospects of their promotion bleak as compared to those of the faculty of other university departments. More than 50% of the CCI and a majority of the OU faculty do not guide any students for research either in their own subjects or in distance education, but a majority of them both in CCIs and OUs are doing research in their own subjects. However, in some of the OUs, the faculty members are also doing research in distance education. A majority of CCI and OU faculty have stated that, if allowed to participate in the process of decision making they could make significant contributions on the basis of their experience.

Preparation and Delivery of Course Materials

i) Curriculum

- In most of the CCIs the curricula are framed by the Boards of Studies and approved by the Academic Council. The CCI faculty members are also generally involved in framing the curriculum, as a majority of them are represented on the Boards of Studies and the Academic Councils.
- In the majority of OUs, the curricula are framed by the Curriculum Design Committee/Special Committees and approved by the Boards of Studies and the Academic Councils. In all the OUs included in the study, the faculty members are associated with the development of the curricula.

ii) Course Materials: Developing, Printing, Content, Format and Delivery

- In a majority of the CCIs, lessons are written by individual teachers from CCIs, UTDs and other universities and colleges. Lessons are also written by course teams in some of the institutes. The faculty of the CCIs and outside experts together constitute the course teams. In most of the CCIs, a panel of course writers is prepared. Expertise and specialization in the discipline concerned are the main criteria for the selection of members for lesson/course teams. Although guidelines are sent to most of the lesson-writers, only a few CCIs organise orientation programmes for the lesson writers in order to train them for writing lessons in the distance education format.
- Lessons are revised and updated periodically in a majority of the CCIs but we cannot be sure of the type of revision/updating done by them because only some of the CCIs obtain feedback from the students before the revision of lessons. Some of the CCIs revise the lessons every three years while others do it before the start of the session every two years. A majority of them do not share/exchange lessons with other institutes.
- There is considerable variation in the remuneration paid to lesson writers in the CCIs. For U.G. courses, lesson writers are paid from Rs. 100 to Rs. 250 per lesson and for P.G. courses they are paid from Rs. 100 to Rs. 300 per lesson.
- In a majority of the CCIs, content editing of lessons is done by the faculty of the institutes, course leaders or external lesson writers. Similarly, language editing is done by faculty members of the CCIs, chief editors, course leaders and language editors. Format editing is also done by the faculty of CCIs, or by a communication expert or director of CCI, or the

course leader. Proofreading of the lessons is done by subject experts and proofreaders of CCIs, course writers and editors. In some CCIs, vetters, reviewers and editors are also involved in editing the lessons at one stage or the other. A majority of the CCIs provide course material in print form while some of them provide both printed and cyclostyled lessons. The lessons are printed by outside agencies and sometimes by the university/institute press. The final print order is given by the director, subject incharge or the printing committee concerned. So far as the printing rate is concerned, it varies from 10 paise to more than Rs 50.00 per page. Rs. 100 to Rs. 300 per page is paid for proofreading. The size and length of lessons also varies considerably. The length of booklets varies from 50 printed pages to 200 pages and the size of a page also varies vastly. Among the CCIs, a majority send lessons to the students in instalments varying from 2 to 12. Less than half the CCIs send a despatch schedule to students and only 38% are able to stick to it. The complaints about the non-receipt of lessons by students are dealt with by providing duplicate sets. All the lessons are sent by registered post or ordinary post under certificate of posting.

- In OUs, course units are written mostly by the faculty of the university, teachers from other universities and colleges and also by course teams. The faculty of the university and outside experts constitute the course teams in most of the OUs. All the OUs prepare a panel of course writers. The main criterion for one's selection on a course team is one's expertise and specialization in the discipline concerned. Not only are the guidelines sent to the course writers but orientation programmes are also organised in order to orient the course writers to write the course units in the distance education format. Course materials of all the OUs are revised periodically although the period varies from 3 years to 7 years. Some OUs have not yet reached the stage of revising their materials. Surprisingly, so far most of the OUs have not been able to develop a system for obtaining feedback from the students regarding the course units. All the OUs share/exchange course material with each other. There is no uniformity regarding the rate of remuneration which ranges from Rs. 350.00 to Rs. 1000.00 per unit for the course writers in OUs.
- In all the OUs content editing is done by course editors (external/internal); language editing is done by the faculty and language editors and format editing is done by the Distance Education specialists at the instructional technology centres and in some OUs by the faculty. Proofreading of the course units is done by the academic staff and the university proofreaders. In all the OUs

printed course material is provided to the students. As none of the OUs has a printing press of its own, course units are got printed from outside agencies. In most of the OUs, the head of the print production centre gives the final print orders, though in some OUs the director of the materials production unit and course incharges are also involved in this task.

- So far as the charges for printing a page are concerned, the variation is astonishing. It varies from Rs. 10.50 to Rs. 62.00 per page, but for proofreading a single rate is followed by most of the OUs (i.e. Rs. 3.00 per page). Variations also exist regarding the length of unit and the size of the page. The length of a unit varies from 10 pages to 40 pages, and the size of a page is 9" x 11 5", 1/4th demy or A-4. Most of the OUs send their course units in instalments varying from 2 to 5, though some OUs send the course materials in one lot at the time of one's admission. A schedule for the despatch of the course materials is also sent to the students in most of the OUs and they have been able to stick to the schedule. The units are sent to the students by registered post, under certificate of posting or through study centres. The complaints for non-receipt of the lessons by the students are looked into by the incharge study centres and/or by the public relations officer.

Although a majority of the CCIs have stated that their course materials are self-instructional, the comments of the experts who evaluated the course materials present an altogether different picture. A general appraisal of the course units/lessons is as follows:

CCI Course Materials: an Appraisal

- The lessons need to be logically structured and arranged. In some cases even a general list of contents is not provided for easy scanning by the learner. Each lesson should start with a small list of contents or outline structure showing the structural links between various themes or concepts within the lesson. The absence of this reference compels the learner to cram the content without understanding it.
- There is complete absence of intext questions (self-check or other types) and the lessons are not written according to the principles of self-instructional materials.
- Even the typography has not been appropriately set, as in most cases it certainly confuses the reader: bold letters, italics etc. need to be [properly set to sever a purpose.

The feedback obtained from experts on some aspects of the course materials of CCIs as well as OUs is given in Tables 9-11.

Feedback from the Evaluators

Table 9 : Content Evaluation
Content Rating of the Course Materials of CCI (N = 24 lessons)

		Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Not given
1.	Content Adequacy	—	2 (8%)	12 (50%)	10 (42%)	—
2.	Relevance of Content	—	4 (17%)	12 (50%)	8 (33%)	—
3.	Content density	—	3 (12%)	7 (30%)	14 (58%)	—
4.	Appropriateness to the level of learners	—	4 (17%)	20 (83%)	—	—
5.	Illustrations etc.—relevance and appropriateness	—	5 (20%)	4 (17%)	15 (63%)	—
6.	Language and style	—	—	—	24 (100%)	—
7.	Self check exercises/questions	—	—	—	—	24 (100%)

Content Rating of the Course Materials of OUs (N = 4 units)

		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
1.	Content Adequacy	—	—	2 (50%)	—	2 (50%)
2.	Relevance of content	—	2 (50%)	—	2 (50%)	—
3.	Content density	—	2 (50%)	—	2 (50%)	—
4.	Appropriateness to the level of learners	—	—	4 (100%)	—	—
5.	Illustrations etc.—relevance and appropriateness	—	—	4 (100%)	—	—
6.	Language and style	—	—	4 (100%)	—	—
7.	Self check exercises and questions	—	—	4 (100%)	—	—

Table 10 : Format Evaluation
Format Evaluation of CCI Course Lessons

Total No. of lessons evaluated = 28	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	N.A.	Not given
Provision of access device in the beginning of the lessons	—	2(7%)	1(4%)	2(7%)	21(75%)	—	2(7%)
Structural and behavioural guidance	—	—	1(4%)	3(11%)	19(68%)	—	5(18%)
Specification of objectives	—	—	—	3(11%)	16(56%)	—	9(32%)
Content correlation with objectives	—	—	2(7%)	3(11%)	—	23(82%)	—
Content presentation: concepts, principles, theories, methods, procedures	—	1(4%)	16(56%)	7(25%)	4(14%)	—	—
Use of charts, diagrams and illustrations	—	2(7%)	3(11%)	4(14%)	8(29%)	—	11(39%)
Free from contradictions and ambiguities	—	11(39%)	—	17(61%)	—	—	—
Language:							
a) Easy to understand	—	3(11%)	15(54%)	10(35%)	—	—	—
b) Easy to remember	—	2(7%)	11(39%)	13(46%)	2(7%)	—	—
c) Interesting to read	—	—	6(21%)	22(79%)	—	—	—
d) Conversational style	—	—	1(4%)	5(18%)	22(79%)	—	—
e) Non-derogatory to any class, religion and sex	—	5(18%)	14(50%)	9(32%)	—	—	—
Intext questions (quality)	—	—	—	—	—	—	28(100%)
Correlation of intext questions with objectives	—	—	—	—	—	—	28(100%)
Provision of access devices in the concluding part: summary, glossary and answer key	—	—	3(11%)	6(21%)	—	—	19(68%)

Format Evaluation of OU Course Units

Total No. of lessons evaluated = 26	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	N.A.	Not given
Provision of access device in the beginning of the lessons	—	3(50%)	1(17%)	2(33%)	—	—	—
Structural and behavioural guidance	—	2(33%)	1(17%)	3(50%)	—	—	—
Specification of objectives	—	—	3(50%)	—	3(50%)	—	—
Content correlation with objectives	—	3(50%)	1(17%)	2(33%)	—	—	—

Content presentation: concepts, principles, theories, methods, procedures	—	2(33%)	4(67%)	—	—	—	—
Use of charts, diagrams and illustrations	—	—	2(33%)	1(17%)	3(50%)	—	—
Free from ambiguities and contradictions	—	—	6(100%)	—	—	—	—
Language:							
a) Easy to understand	—	2(33%)	4(67%)	—	—	—	—
b) Easy to remember	—	2(33%)	2(33%)	2(33%)	—	—	—
c) Interesting to read	—	1(17%)	6(47%)	—	1(16%)	—	—
d) Conversational style	—	—	4(67%)	2(33%)	—	—	—
e) Non-derogatory to any class, religion and sex	—	1(17%)	5(83%)	—	—	—	—
Intext questions (quality)	—	—	—	2(33%)	3(50%)	—	1(17%)
Correlation of intext questions with objectives	—	1(17%)	—	1(17%)	3(50%)	1(17%)	—
Provision of access devices in the concluding part: summary, glossary and answer key	—	1(17%)	—	2(33%)	3(50%)	—	—

So far as the 'language' is concerned, it is categorised into five sub-indicators as given in Table 11. The rating for each sub-indicator is as follows:

Table 11 : A Comparison of CCI Lessons and OU Units

	CCI lessons	OU units
— Easy to understand	11% very good 54% good	33% very good 67% good
— Easy to remember	46% satisfactory 7% poor	33% very good 33% good
— Interesting to read	21% good 79% satisfactory	17% very good 67% good
— Conversational style	4% good 79% poor	67% good 33% satisfactory
— Non-derogatory to any class, religion and sex	18% very good 50% good	17% very good 83% good

A few observations on the feed back:

- There is a vast scope for enriching the content as well as building a lot of access devices into the text. Authors have been quoted without giving the appropriate references either in the text or at the end of it. Content density is high. Some of the concepts/facts should have been further elaborated with the help of examples. The suggested books for further study are limited in number and in their case also the references to publishers, year etc. are not complete. Besides the long answer type "suggested questions" at the end of a lesson, some short answer objective type questions could be very useful in leading the learner to re-read the text and comprehend the lessons better. The response sheet

alongwith each lesson is very useful from the student's point of view. Care should have been taken to remove typographical errors which are disturbingly large in number.

- Each lesson should have certain objectives to which self-assessment questions, assignment questions, term-end-examination questions, as well as the various concepts in the lesson could be properly linked for effective learning.
- The content is not presented in an intimate personal style, most of the presentation being in the usual textbook style.

OU Course Materials: and Appraisal

- The content structure, aims and objectives and introduction, all these access devices in the beginning of the unit are immensely helpful to the learners to start their work on the unit. Though the objectives have been clearly express in behavioural terms, there are certain inadequacies to overcome.
- Quotations and authors have been noted without presenting the full references, either within the text or in the footnotes.
- The placement of CYP (Check Your Progress) questions is not appropriate in some cases, while in many cases they are not based on the important themes preceding them in the text. Therefore, they are not totally related to the objectives of the units concerned. Besides, the composition of these questions is inadequate. Some word limit should have been provided wherever needed. Also, the questions could have been more comprehensive and broad-based.
- On the whole the presentation of OU materials is logical and systematic though there are a number of typographical errors which militate against the quality of the units.
- A majority of the students of CCIs who responded to the question concerned stated that the schedule of the despatch was sent to them while a majority of such students of OUs said that they did not receive any such schedules. Further, a majority of the CCI students received lessons regularly to work on them in good time while only 47% of the OU students had this advantage to talk about. A majority of both CCI and OU students got the course material in instalments.
- The OU students found the course materials not only self-instructional but also helpful in understanding the topics. The content and quality of the OU course material was of a good quality whereas a majority of the CCI students (63%) were dissatisfied with the quality and content of the lessons sent to them by their respective institutes.

iii) Other Communication Media

- **Radio** as a supplemental medium is used only by 14% of the CCIs. These CCIs belong to Delhi, Madurai Kamaraj, Punjabi and Panjab universities. Of these, 50% provide radio broadcasts twice in week while others provide it daily. The duration of radio broadcasts varies from 13 minutes to 20 minutes per programme. A majority of these broadcasts are relayed in the morning from 5.45 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. There is a vast variation in the number of radio talks/broadcasts per year, from 105 to 700. In a majority of such CCIs relevant broadcast schedules are sent to the students in advance.
- In all the OUs radio-talks are a supplemental part of the course material. The broadcasts are beamed for 30

minutes both in the morning and the evening on all weekdays and in the case of some OUs only twice a week. The total number of the radio broadcasts per academic year varies vastly — 25 to 288. Most of the OUs do send a broadcast schedule to the student in advance.

- In the CCIs which provide radio programmes to the students, some members of the faculty are involved in writing scripts as also in the presentation of the radio programmes. In OUs most of the faculty are involved in script writing, presentation and coordination.
- **Television:** In all the OUs telecasts are a supplementary part of the course material. The telecasts are provided twice or thrice a week for 20 to 30 minutes in the morning. 50% of the OUs send a telecast schedule to their students in advance.
- Almost all the OU students are aware of the television programmes telecast by their respective OUs. While a majority of them get advance notice about the topics to be covered in the telecasts, 39% do not receive any intimation at all. Even those who receive advance information about these programmes, get it from the T.V. announcement, not through any postal communication. On the whole students find these programmes helpful in clarifying concepts etc. presented in the course materials concerned.
- **Audio Cassettes** are produced only in 3 CCIs, (SNDT, Delhi and CIEFL). The number audio cassettes produced per course varies from 7 to 30 and per subject from 1 to 8. In two CCIs these cassettes are made available at the study centres while in one CCI (i.e., CIEFL), these are provided on request. The audio cassettes constitute a supplemental part of the course material in all the cases.
- In two state OUs, 2 to 4 audio cassettes are produced per course. In IGNOU, 5 audio cassettes are produced per 8 credit course. In a majority of OUs audio cassettes are made available to the students at the study centres and these constitute a supplemental part of the course material. IGNOU cassettes are available on sale, as also at study centres.
- The CCI students who responded to the questionnaire did not have audio and video cassettes as part of their instructional package. Therefore, they were unable to respond to the relevant questions in this case. Surprisingly, 90% of the OU students do not make use of any audio cassettes at the study centres.
- **Video Cassettes:** In all the OUs video cassettes are a supplementary part of the course material. In two state OUs 1 to 3 video cassettes are produced per course while in IGNOU 4 video cassettes are produced per 8 credit course. These cassettes are made available to the students at the study centres by all the OUs. IGNOU videos are available on sale as well. Although a large number of OU students make use of these cassettes, 35% do not use them at all.

Student Support Services

i) Study Centres/Personal Contact Programmes

- Of the CCIs, less than half have study centres. The number of the study centres per CCI varies from one to twenty, the highest number being that of Delhi University. Half of these CCIs share their study centres with other institutes, universities and colleges. The number of the students who visit the study centres per month differs from one institute to another. The attendance of students at the centres varies from 5% to 82%. Some of the CCIs have library facilities, a reading room and an information counter at their study centres but most of the study centres are not adequately equipped. They are just apologies for study centres. Most of the CCIs engage their own teachers and those from other colleges/universities to provide teaching/tutoring/ counselling at the study centres. Of the 29 CCIs investigated in this study, 10 provide teaching while 8 provide teaching as well as counselling at their study centres.
- All the OUs provide study centres while two OUs have regional centres also. The number of study centres and regional centres per OU varies from 24 to 202 and 6 to 16 respectively. None of the OUs shares its study centres with any other institute/college/university. Attendance of the students at the study centres varies from 40% to 100% in most of the OUs. All the OUs have library facilities, audio-video playback facilities, a reading room and an information counter at their study centres. Regional Directors and Coordinators look after the affairs of the regional centres and the study centres respectively. Local teachers drawn from the local colleges and universities are engaged to provide counselling. In about 50% of the OUs, the hours of teaching-cum-counselling vary from 42 to 96 hours.
- All the OU and most of the CCI students are aware of the study centres established by their respective institutes. Most of the OU students visit study centres quite often. The response of the CCI students regarding this question was evenly distributed across 'rarely', 'often' and 'very often'. A majority of the OU students found that counsellors/tutors were available at the study centres while the response of the CCI students was evenly distributed across 'mostly', 'rarely' and 'sometimes'. There are variations in the number of days for which counselling/PCPs are provided to both the OU and CCI students. While the variation in OUs is from 8 to 144 days, in CCIs, it is from 2 to 45 days. A majority of both

the OU and CCI students found the locations of the study centres convenient. The PCPs of CCIs were conducted by the teachers of their own institute together with some local teachers. OUs have part-time counsellors to conduct counselling sessions. Most of the students of both the CCIs and OUs found the environment of PCPs and counselling sessions encouraging and to a large extent they were satisfied with the support provided by teachers at the centres.

- In OUs, majority of the faculty have started the use of television, audio tapes, video tapes and personal computers in the study centres while only 7% of the CCI faculty use audio-cassettes during the personal contact programmes.

ii) Evaluation of Student Assignments (SAs)

- In most of the CCIs submission of assignments is compulsory but in only 32% of the CCIs do they count towards internal assessment. The students have to submit 2 to 11 assignments per subject/course. The evaluation of SAs is done by the internal staff of the institute, teachers are also involved by some CCIs. A majority of CCIs does not have any fixed norms or quota for the evaluation of SAs by their own teachers. The rates of remuneration paid to evaluators varied from 50 paise to Rs. 1.50 per SA for UG courses and from Re. 1.00 to Rs. 3.00 per SA for PG courses. The low remuneration paid to evaluators certainly has an adverse effect on the standard of evaluation. Most of the CCIs follow the marking system for the evaluation of SAs. In about 50% of the CCIs, the evaluators are required to give academic and constructive comments, but there is no monitoring or checking of an the work of evaluators though in some of the CCIs sample checking of evaluators' work is done by the subject incharge and the course-coordinator. moreover, only a few CCIs give guidelines to the evaluators for marking and commenting on the SAs. In only 34% of the CCIs, evaluators' comments are utilized as feedback for modifying and improving the course lessons/units.
- In a majority of OUs submission of SAs is compulsory and they count towards internal assessment. The evaluation of SAs is done by outside teachers who work as counsellors at the study centres. In two OUs, the students are required to submit 3 SAs per course while in one OU they must submit 1 SA for a 2 to 5 credit course and 2 SAs for a 6 to 8 credit course. There is considerable disparity regarding the remuneration paid for the evaluation of SAs by the OUs. It varies from Re. 1.00 to Rs. 7.50 per SA for all levels of

courses. Both the Grading and the Marking systems have been adopted by OUs for the evaluation of SAs. In the case of grading, 3 OUs follow a 5 point scale and 1 OU follows a 4 point scale. In all the OUs, evaluators are given orientation in order to make them familiar with the distance education system and the technique of evaluating assignments. In a majority of the OUs evaluators' comments are not utilized as feedback for improving the course materials.

- While in a majority of the CCIs the faculty are not quite satisfied, 55% of the OU teachers are satisfied to some extent with the existing evaluation systems. The faculties of both CCIs and OUs think that the purpose of evaluation is not only the assessment of learners' performance but also to provide support to the learner who generally works in isolation. While only 43% of the CCI faculty have stated that the internal academic staff is required to check the response sheets corrected by the outside teachers, a majority of the OU faculty stated that they were required to check 5% of the total number of assignments corrected by each counsellor. More than 50% of the faculty stated that SAs and evaluators' comments were utilised as feedback for improving/modifying the course units, but 33% of the OU faculty did not agree to this and expressed the opinion that OUs had not evolved a system of systematic feedback and its use for the improvement of course material. Half of the CCI faculty expressed that their institutes utilized SAs and evaluators' comments as feedback, but 40% did not agree to this and were of the view that even after many years of their establishment they had not evolved a proper system of getting regular feedback from students to improve the quality of their lessons.
- A majority of the students of both the CCIs and the OUs depend solely upon the course material sent to them. Most of the OU students and less than 50% of the CCI students submitted response sheets in all the subjects within the notified deadlines. Lack of time was the major constraint for the students of CCIs for not submitting response sheets on time. 91% of the OU students got their assignment-responses back with comments and found them helpful. All of them also found the submission of assignments helpful in clarifying concepts etc. and in improving their performance in the final exams. Though a large number of students of CCIs also received their assignments back with comments, only 38% found these comments helpful. The CCI students found the submission of SAs helpful to some extent only.

Finance and Economic Viability

- The highest budget among the CCIs is that of CCI Madras University (Rs. 140,184,577) and the lowest is that of Shivaji University (Rs. 80,000). Eighteen CCIs are in surplus and 7 in deficit. Others have not specified these details. The CCIs in deficit are Kakatiya (Rs. 2862,000), Delhi (Rs. 1808,550), Barkatullah (Rs. 1750,091), Panjab (Rs. 11309,576), Madurai Kamaraj (Rs. 1205,000), Kurukshetra (Rs. 409,000) and Mother Teresa Women's (Rs. 310,000). The three of the 18 CCIs which have accumulated their surpluses over the last 5 years are Shivaji (Rs. 119,000), JNTU (Rs. 250,000) and H.P. University (Rs. 8,142,206). Only 5 CCIs (H.P., CIEFL, JNTU, Utkal and Shivaji) have stated that the surplus is utilized for the development of the CCI concerned. In 4 CCIs surplus is diverted to the general revenue of the university concerned. (Tables 12-14 give more information on the issues under discussion).

Table 12 : Actual Unit Cost* of CCIs

CCI	Rs.		
Annamalai Univ.	1970	OU's	F
Barkatullah Univ.	433	**BRAOU	Rs. 1177
CIEFL, Hyderabad	4677		(1985-86)
Univ. of Delhi	1042		
JNT Univ., Hyderabad	4299	** Rs. 1177 includes 5 per cent of Capital Expenditure.	
Kurukshetra Univ.	1364	(Source: Koul, B.N.,	
Kakatiya Univ.	2606	Bakhshish Singh & Ansari,	
Panjab Univ.	2423	M.M. (eds.), (1988),	
Punjabi Univ.	1307	<i>Studies in Distance Education</i> , AIU and IGNOU,	
Patna Univ.	3561	New Delhi, (p. 150).	
Shivaji Univ.	2051		
Sri Venkateshwara Univ.	581		
Utkal Univ.	1577		
Average actual unit cost	2146		

- Students fee is the most important and a major source of income for all the CCIs. More than half of the CCIs give fee concessions and scholarships. Only 8 out of the 29 CCIs give fee concessions/scholarships to backward classes. More than 50% of the CCIs do not give such concessions.
- Average unit cost in CCIs (worked out by dividing the estimated budget provision by the total enrolment) is Rs. 1512 at the current prices, against Rs. 469 and Rs. 431 arrived at in Mullay and M/HRD studies respectively at the prices prevailing in 1981. These studies included the capital expenditure, building, furniture, typewriters etc. also in the total expenditure. The average cost has been worked out on the basis of all courses.

Table 13 : Income, Expenditure, Surplus and Deficit of CCI's for 1989-90

S. No.	CCI, University	Income Rs.	Expenditure Rs.	Surplus/Deficit Rs.
1.	Annamalai Univ.	67997200*	66389000	+ 1608200
2.	Bangalore Univ.	399096	N.R.	N.R.
3.	Barkatullah Univ.	4271501	6021592	- 1750091
4.	Bombay Univ.	9456000*	4702000	+ 4754000
5.	CIEFL, Hyderabad	18928000	18298000	+ 630000
6.	Univ. of Delhi	1752000	3560550	- 1808550
7.	Himachal Pradesh Univ.	14599621	13164072	+ 1435549
8.	Jammu Univ.	2567200	2161729	+ 405471
9.	JNT Univ., Hyderabad	2500000	2000000	+ 500000
10.	Kurukshetra Univ.	3600000	4009000	- 409000
11.	Kerala Univ.	2341500*	2116500*	+ 225000
12.	Kakatiya Univ.	2390000	5252000	- 2862000
13.	Madurai Kamaraj Univ.	26345000	27550000	- 1205000
14.	CCI, Madras Univ.	140184576.98	99383057.85	+ 40801519.13
15.	Mother Teresa Women's Univ.	1670400	1980400	- 310000
16.	Mysore Univ.	16755000	15438100	+ 1316900
17.	Osmania Univ.	4758600	4527700	+ 230900
18.	Punjab Univ.	3850827	15160403	- 11309576
19.	Punjab Univ.	2885500	2186384	+ 699116
20.	Punjab Agricultural Univ.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.
21.	Patna Univ.	—	—	+ 54000
22.	Shivaji Univ.	—	—	+ 12000
23.	SNDT Women's Univ.	3916500	3342900	+ 573600
24.	Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth	—	—	+ 842000
25.	Utkal Univ.	2690100	2282503	+ 407597.94
26.	Sri Venkateshwara Univ.	1492600	653383	+ 839217

* Budget Estimate 1989-90

Table 14 : Unit Cost as Calculated in the Mullay, the MHRD and the Present Studies

Name of CCI	Mullay Study* (17 CCIs)	MHRD Study** (22 CCIs)	Present Study (22 CCIs)
Univ. of Allahabad	486	520	—
Andhra Univ.	315	238	—
Annamalai Univ.	275	75	—
Barkatullah Univ.	389	—	2034
Univ. of Bombay	179	347	—
Univ. of Calicut	—	494	—
CIEFL, Hyderabad	—	—	1699
Univ. of Delhi	853	775	333
Gujarat Vidyapeeth	—	—	8933
H.P. University	502	504	737
JNTU, Hyderabad	—	—	1809
Jammu Univ.	528	—	2207
Kurukshetra Univ.	64	207	776
Kerala Univ.	321	300	493
Kashmir Univ.	—	1085	—
Kakatiya Univ.	—	—	2806
Madurai Kamaraj Univ.	246	310	842
Mohanlal Sukhadia Univ.	433	490	—
Univ. of Madras	—	269	125
Mother Teresa Women's Univ.	—	—	1833

Univ. of Mysore	400	928	785
Osmania Univ.	—	308	—
Patna Univ.	369	168	640
Punjab Univ.	705	590	2370
Punjabi Univ.	634	492	1046
Rajasthan Univ.	—	447	—
Shivaji Univ.	—	—	2000
SNDT Women's Univ.	—	132	270
Sri Venkateshwara Univ.	—	221	—
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth	—	—	538
Utkal Univ.	1269	587	396

Average Cost per unit
(= student)

468.70 431.23 1512.28

Notes: i) Mullay and the Ministry of Human Resource Development Studies pertain to 1980-81.

ii) the cost per unit in the present study has been worked out using the formula: Budget estimates/total enrolment (at current prices). The comparative unit costs of the three studies show three fold rise in the unit costs from 1980-81 to 1989-90.

* Mullay, V. *Correspondence Education in Universities (1980-81): A Review* — Published by UGC in 1986.** *A Study on Correspondence Courses in India: 1980-81*, Ministry of Human Resource Development — Published in 1987.

- Average actual cost, worked out according to the formula: (recurring expenditure on salary + course materials + student support services) divided by (the total enrolment—dropouts), comes to Rs. 2146 at current prices. Average unit cost as worked out by the CCI, University of Delhi, on the basis of recurring item wise expenditure gives a clearer picture.
- Among OUs, IGNOU has the highest budget which is justifiable because of its twin role of an open university and the apex body for all distance education institutes in the country. BRAOU did not specify the budget provision. YCMOU's budget is Rs. 23314,000. KOU has the lowest budget of Rs. 20875,000. The main sources of income for KOU and YCMOU are students' fees and state government grants. BRAOU has been getting grants from the UGC also. IGNOU's sources of income are the Central government grants and students' fees. None of the OUs is facing the problem of deficits, as all the three State OUs are in surplus and IGNOU shows a balanced budget. BRAOU has accumulated a surplus of approximately Rs. 50000,000 over the last 5 years which is the highest surplus of all.
- 3 out of the 4 state OUs give fee concessions to backward classes. IGNOU grants fee concessions only to its employees and handicapped students. BRAOU gives fee concessions on the basis of merit-cum-economic conditions.
- Average unit cost (variable + semi variable costs) worked out by IGNOU is Rs. 869.82. BRAOU's unit cost worked out by including 5% of the capital expenditure under recurring expenditure is Rs. 1177.00 (1985-86). KOU and YCMOU have not worked out their unit costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Distance Education is a multi-media teaching-learning system which has established its academic and economic viability. This innovative system has earned credibility all over the world as an effective alternative channel for imparting education at all levels to varied clientele and target groups. This system is of special relevance to the developing countries for meeting the future educational demands of the people and for coping with the urgent needs of updating knowledge and skills of in-service persons in various professions. Unfortunately, the vast potential of distance education has not been fully exploited by the correspondence courses institutes run by the conventional universities in our country.

On the basis of the findings of the present study, discussions with eminent educationists, vice-chancellors of a few conventional universities and those universities which run institutes of correspondence courses, as also some directors and faculty members of the CCIs and the general impressions about distance education at the national and international levels, the following recommen-

endations are made, theme-wise, for the consideration of all those who are responsible for the proper development of distance education in India.

Institutional Profile: CCIs

1. In view of the rapid proliferation of Distance Education in the form of correspondence courses since 1962 and the large scale expansion that is expected by the end of present century, the organisational concerns of the distance education institutes call for serious attention. These institutes must have strong and efficient academic and administrative wings which should work as a close-knit team. They are like two wheels of the cart and both must move together. There should be no jealousy, bitterness or prejudice against each other.
2. The academic policies must be decided by the director and the faculty. The administrative wing should lend full support in implementing these policies efficiently. Both the wings must have clearly demarcated duties. The CCIs which are organisationally weak should be strengthened, then only will these institutes be able to function smoothly and efficiently.
3. There should be reasonable uniformity
 - (a) in the names of the institutes of correspondence courses, and
 - (b) in the designations of the faculty.

As regards (a), the CCIs, after they upgrade and convert themselves into the distance education institutes, should be designated as Institutes/Departments of Distance Education. Director/Head of the institute should have full financial powers to operate within the sanctioned budget as per general procedures/formalities stipulated by the university concerned.

So far as (b) is concerned, the faculty members should have the same designations, pay scales and other benefits as are admissible to their counterparts in the teaching departments of a university. Some of the universities have already introduced this reform. Others which have not, should do so immediately in order to remove the long standing feeling of irritation and insecurity among the faculty members.

4. As has been noticed in this study, there is serious imbalance with regard to the number of CCIs in some regions, particularly in the East. This should be rectified by setting up more distance education institutes in the neglected area.
5. Most of the CCIs do not have adequate physical facilities. They must have a separate building to house the faculty, administrative wing, central library and reading rooms, meeting rooms, etc. Since a number of orientation programmes and PCPs are generally expected to be held round the year, there should be a separate building for holding PCPs,

counselling sessions and orientation programmes for the students. This building should include an auditorium and wherever possible, a post office and a bank. Provision should also be made for hostels, one for men and another for women students, for their board and lodging during the PCPs, counselling and examination days. For this the UGC and IGNOU should provide special grants.

6. Some of the CCIs have unnecessarily large faculties, out of proportion with the requirements of certain subject areas and also the total enrolment. They should try to balance their teaching and administrative staff so as to reduce deficits in their budgets. The teachers who are found surplus maybe adjusted against vacancies in the university teaching departments in their evening colleges.
7. CCIs which have low enrolments must examine the causes, assess the educational needs of various target groups in their areas and develop relevant courses to meet those needs. They must also give proper publicity and create awareness among the people about the relevance of their courses to the needs of society. Liaison with departments of public relations could help in this kind of venture.
8. The CCIs should give serious thought to the sharing of courses with other CCIs and open universities. Collaboration should be possible even for joint development of certain courses. It should be possible for an institution to use translations or modified versions of study materials
9. The CCIs, particularly when they upgrade themselves into distance education institutions, should launch vocational, technical and professional courses which have good demand. A number of such courses are available in some of the open universities in India as also in a number of distance education institutes in the Commonwealth countries. At present there is too much concentration on the B.A. and M.A. level courses in Humanities and Social Sciences. There is need for diversification of courses to match them with the human resource development needs of the nation.
10. There should be sharing of study centres also. This would enable each CCI to have a large number of study centres thereby increasing students' access to study centres.
11. Migration of students from one CCI to another, from a CCI to OU, from a CCI to a conventional university department and vice-versa should be permissible. This would strengthen the dual-mode system and give wider choice of courses to the students.

In order to ensure the implementation of these recommendations it would be necessary to evolve an action-oriented policy which should include:

- i) revision of the UGC guidelines for correspondence courses, and

- ii) discussions with the vice-chancellors of conventional universities in order to convince them about:

- the need of these reforms in the national interest and for the proper exploitation of the potential of distance education to cope with the future educational needs of the country;
- the need to give adequate autonomy to the CCIs;
- the necessity of upgrading the CCIs of their universities into, and giving them the proper status of, multi-media distance teaching-learning institutes;
- the necessity and advantages of collaboration and networking with other distance education institutes, open universities and within their own conventional universities;
- the need for diversification of courses and introduction of need-based, skill-oriented vocational courses as also technical and professional courses; (The CCIs should not be treated as revenue generating institutes. Some special courses relevant to the educational needs of men and women in the remote rural areas should also be launched. That would give wider outreach to the institutes and help in taking education to the doorsteps of the people, a majority of whom live in the villages.)
- the need for CCIs not to confine themselves merely to the courses offered by their conventional universities; and
- the dire necessity of utilizing the surplus funds of the CCIs for their development and not diverting them to the general revenue of the university concerned.

It is therefore recommended that the UGC and IGNOU should convene a conference of vice-chancellors of the universities which have CCIs to sort out these problems and to draw up a phased programme for converting the CCIs into the distance education institutes.

Institutional Profile: OUs

1. So far as OUs are concerned, they have a reasonably good organisational infrastructure and most of them are well staffed and very well equipped. In some cases probably there is rather a top-heavy administrative set-up. But in spite of this the following complaints of students should be looked into:
 - a) difficulty in obtaining information and guidance about programmes/courses, procurement of admission forms etc.,
 - b) delays in the delivery of course material, delays in the return of SAs after evaluation,
 - c) laxity in some study centres regarding the use of audio and video cassettes, and

- d) problems regarding counselling caused by delayed despatch of course materials.
2. IGNOU has the largest number of study centres but some of these are not functioning well. That may be one reason for poor attendance at counselling sessions in some of the study centres. Monitoring of the work of study centres needs to be strengthened.
 3. The course material provided by IGNOU is rated to be of a very high standard and some of their programmes have earned international reputation. But 20% of the students in the formal stream of the Bachelor's Degree Programme (BDP) find the course units much above their levels of comprehension. Obviously, the percentage of such students in the non-formal stream who do not have the requisite entry qualifications must be still higher. Probably, bridge courses in different disciplines and simplification of the language of instruction might help such students to come up to the level of other students who find the course units good or even very good.
 4. Another good feature about OUs is that they have started the practice of sharing courses and IGNOU is taking steps to build up networking in the OU system to ensure wider sharing of course materials, study centres etc. Ultimately, the CCIs, when they are upgraded to be distance education institutions, should also be included in the network.
 5. Some of the state OUs set up only recently should benefit by adopting the courses of IGNOU and other state OUs in the interests of quality and economy.
 6. BRAOU, which is the first open university established in the country in 1982, has accumulated a surplus of 50 million rupees over the last 5 years. This should be utilised for improving their organisational set-up, course material and student support services.
 7. In view of the recent CABE decision that every state should have an open university, IGNOU and the Distance Education Council (DEC) should gear themselves up to ensure proper growth and development of the state open universities.
 8. Since a large segment of OU students come from conventional schools and colleges, they need to be given proper orientation so that they may adapt themselves to the distance education mode of study. This orientation should be provided by the counsellors during the first one or two counselling sessions.

Student Profile

Students are at the centre stage in the distance education system. Their needs and interests have to be kept in mind in most of the activities of this system such as identification of courses, curriculum and course development,

preparation and evaluation of SAs, communication media used to supplement the course material, personal contact programmes and counselling sessions, etc. We can therefore safely say that distance education is a learner-oriented teaching-learning system. However, the success of a distance education would depend on how efficiently the institute, its faculty members and the administrative staff operate these varied subsystems.

The data compiled in this study shows that enrolment in CCIs ranges generally between 5000 to 50,000, though the highest enrolment in CCI, Madras University is 113 thousand. The number of course offerings also varies from institute to institute. But over 68% of the learners are on undergraduate courses (mostly B.A and B.Com) 24% on the postgraduate courses and 8% study various diploma/certificate courses. Even in OUs, the largest enrolment is in B.A. and B. Com. courses, but some of the professional courses launched by these universities have attracted reasonably large clientele. The future estimates of enrolment predict steep rise and the number is likely to touch 1.4 million by the end of 1997 as against the enrolment of 487 thousand during (1989-90) and 600 thousand during (1990-91).

In view of all this, it is necessary that adequate measures be taken to safeguard the interests of the learners so that the credibility of DE system is not adversely affected. The following recommendations are made in this regard, apart from the observations made elsewhere in this report.

1. The DE institutes should have an efficient system of information, publicity and guidance pertaining to their programmes/courses etc., so that students may not have any difficulty in getting the requisite information, guidance, prospectus and admission forms. Special efforts should be made to reach people in remote rural and tribal areas and to attract larger number of women and backward sections of society.
2. The educational needs of people in rural areas should be assessed and special courses developed to meet their needs.
3. Timely delivery of course materials to the students must be ensured to keep up their motivation and enthusiasm.
4. The evaluation of SAs should be carried out very carefully, pointing out the mistakes, the points left out in the answers etc. The evaluators must give constructive comments. Disparaging remarks should be avoided as they discourage students.
5. The turn-around time for the corrected SAs should in no case exceed 2-3 weeks.
6. Communication media other than print, e.g. radio, TV, audio and video cassettes should be used to supplement the instruction imparted through the printed course material.
7. Adequate face-to-face contact should be provided through counselling sessions and personal contact programmes in order to help students overcome the

feeling of isolation and pursue their studies satisfactorily.

8. A proper system of feedback from students should be evolved in order to bring about improvements in the teaching-learning methodology.
9. Adequate library and book bank facilities should be provided to the students.
10. For the proper implementation of recommendations 3-7 the institutes should have an efficient monitoring system.
11. Fee concessions on merit-cum-economic basis and concessions admissible to SC/ST/BC should be made available to the students as in the conventional universities and colleges.
12. Concessions in rail and bus travel should be made available to distance learners as in the case of students in the conventional system.
13. Board and lodging facilities should be provided to students during the personal contact programmes and examinations.
14. Effective student support services cell/division should be an integral part of the DE system. The Regional and Study centres under this cell/division could take care of recommendations 4-7.

Staff Development

Staff Development is of utmost importance for distance education institutes, both for the faculty and the administrative staff. Since most of the faculty and the administrative staff are drawn from the conventional system they are not familiar with this innovative system which requires a proper understanding of its concepts, various aspects and characteristics typical of the system as also their proper operational mechanisms. Without proper training, a majority of the staff are apt to resist flexibility, openness and innovations with regard to the development of curriculum, course material etc. The teachers from conventional universities are so much used to the closed classroom teaching that they find it difficult to adapt themselves to the multi-media distance teaching methodology. Even the external experts drawn from the conventional universities would generally try to work along the age-old conventional university patterns of instruction. Although some parity has to be maintained between the two systems for the sake of recognition and accreditation of the distance education programmes, we must not totally succumb to the pressure of the conventionalists. Of course some of the experts from conventional universities have open minds and they do contribute to fresh thinking in developing need-based courses. Others need to be persuaded to understand the inherent characteristics of the DE system. This can be done by lectures, discussions, seminars and workshops.

However, for the teachers employed to work in the DE institutes, a much more comprehensive and goal oriented training is needed. Unfortunately, staff development has been almost completely neglected by the CCIs. Except for occasional visits to some of the CCIs which had started earlier, or some short seminars and workshops, CCI teachers were never put through any proper training courses. This was understandable in the beginning, but now there are a number of courses on staff development available in our own country. Still, very few teachers from the CCIs have tried to avail themselves of this opportunity.

In OUs, the position is comparatively better but certainly not what it should be. On the administrative side very little has been done to provide training even to the senior officers who do not have any or adequate background of distance education.

Lest the CCIs and OUs should lapse into stereotype institutions, it is recommended that:

1. Information about the availability of courses on distance education should be brought to the notice of the faculty to encourage them to do at least one of such courses. The CCIs and OUs would do well to reimburse course fees to the teachers and the administrative staff who join such a course. It would further help if a qualification in distance education is made an essential or at least an additional or desirable qualification for the selection of suitable persons for the CCIs and OUs. We have a Diploma in Distance Education available at IGNOU and it should not be difficult for the teachers and the administrative staff to obtain it. IGNOU is launching a Master's Programme in Distance Education in 1993.* Some such courses are available abroad as well, e.g. the one at London University.
2. Regular orientation courses/workshops should be organised for course writers and evaluators of SAs. The CCIs and OUs should depute their teachers by rotation to participate in such programmes.
3. Some of the persons who have done a course on distance education or made good contribution at workshops etc. could act as resource persons for training teachers of their own institutes and the region.
4. The UGC and IGNOU should in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, the International Council for Distance Education and UNESCO, organise some special training programmes for
 - a) the teachers of the CCIs in the development of curricula and courses,
 - b) the teachers of OUs who do not possess any formal qualification in distance education,
 - c) the senior administrative staff of CCIs and OUs to familiarise them with the latest operational techniques,

* The Diploma Programme has subsequently been upgraded as Post graduate Diploma in Distance Education. The Master's Programme has been on offer since January 1993—Editor.

- d) the counsellors and coordinators in the latest techniques of counselling, electronic media and efficient management of study centres.
5. CCIs and OUs should encourage their teachers to participate in conferences, seminars and workshops organised by various national and international bodies.

Preparation and Delivery of Course Materials

1. Since distance education learners have to study mostly on their own and away from the teacher with only some amount of face-to-face contact, they have to depend primarily on the course material supplied to them by their CCIs or OUs. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that the course material should be carefully prepared in the self-instructional form. Serious attempts have to be made to build the teacher into the course material. The course lessons/units must be presented in simple language to suit the comprehension levels of the target groups. Each lesson/unit should have clear-cut objectives, good content coverage with illustrations, self-check exercises, a summary at the end, a glossary of difficult and technical words and a list of suggested readings. The course writers, individuals or teams should be given proper briefing and orientation with regard to the scope of the content and the technique of writing the lesson/units in the proper format as spelt out above.
2. The lessons/units written by the course writers must be subjected to thorough scrutiny and editing to ensure that they conform to the pattern of distance education course materials.
3. The lessons/units should be supplemented by radio talks, TV programmes, audio and video cassettes.
4. Difficulties of students in comprehending the lessons/units should be looked into and resolved at the counselling sessions/PCPs.
5. The lessons/units should be sent to the students in instalments suitably spread over the academic session according to a set schedule.
6. Delay in the delivery of the course material must be avoided as it is bound to affect the motivation of the learners and bring bad name to the institute.
7. Complaints of the non-receipt of course material by the students should be promptly attended to by the distribution section of the institutes concerned.
8. It would be ideal to try out the course material on a group of students before giving it the final shape. However, if that is not possible, arrangements must be made, at a later stage, to obtain feedback from the students for bringing about changes/improvements in the lessons/units subsequently.

Student Support Services (SSS)

Student Support Services have now become an integral part of most of the good distance education institutes, particularly in the open universities. Today it is a recognised and accepted fact/norm that adequate student support services are provided to the distance learners who are, most of the time, studying in isolation, away from the institution, teachers and the peers. The purpose is to help the students overcome the feeling of isolation and to facilitate learning through:

- appropriate assessment of SAs which count towards the final assessment to the extent of 25-30%. [The evaluators are expected to give constructive comments on the performance of students so as to encourage and help them.]
- the provision of radio, TV and audio and video cassettes to supplement instruction provided through the printed course materials.
- counselling sessions and personal contact programmes at the study centres.
- library facilities at the institute and the study centres.

Unfortunately, over 50% of the CCIs do not have any study centres. Of those which have set up study centres some have just one centre and some 3-6. CCI, Delhi University has the largest number of study centres—20. These are mostly in Delhi because an overwhelming percentage of their students are local. The CCI conducts a number of PCPs in Delhi and calls students in batches to these programmes spread over the whole year. They have good infrastructural facilities for holding their PCPs within their own premises as also well organised library facilities. However, as in most of the other CCIs, they do not have audio or video cassettes to supplement printed instruction. So far as other CCIs are concerned, the study centres that they have are not very effective and there is hardly any motivation for students to visit these centres.

However, the position in OUs is far better. Each of them has a special Student Support Services Division which manages a network of regional and study centres. Counselling sessions are provided at the study centres but attendance at these sessions is not compulsory. It, therefore, varies from 40% to 100% at various centres. Each study centre is manned by a coordinator and teachers drawn from local universities/colleges are appointed as part-time counsellors.

Keeping these contrasting scenarios in mind, the following recommendations are made for organising and strengthening study centres appropriately so that they function optimally:

1. Each CCI must set up at least 5-20 study centres, depending upon the enrolment and student clusters in different areas.
2. There should be a whole-time coordinator at each

study centre to look after the administration and various functions of the centre, e.g. library and reading room facilities, organisation of PCPs, etc.

3. As and when a CCI is upgraded to be a distance education institute, its study centres should have play-back facilities for audio and video cassettes.
4. Each study centre should act as an information centre of the CCI, and provide the necessary information brochures and admission forms of various courses as also necessary guidance to those who seek information.
5. As far as possible, the study centres should be located in the buildings of existing educational institutions or shared with other CCIs/Open Universities. They should be easily accessible to the students. Some mobile study centres should be organised to reach students in the remote rural areas.
6. Each CCI should have a well stocked central library with postal delivery facilities and the students should be provided a catalogue of the books available.
7. Each study centre should have a well equipped library with multiple copies of books, particularly those which are suggested in the course lessons/units, a well furnished reading room and a book bank for supplying the prescribed text books to the students for the whole session/year.
8. Attendance at the PCPs, particularly for postgraduate, vocational, technical and professional courses should be compulsory. In the case of science or technical courses, proper arrangements for practicals should be made with the help of existing colleges/universities/technical institutes.

So far as OUs are concerned, IGNOU pattern may be a good model for organising the student support services. However, the following recommendations need to be considered for OUs.

1. The regional centres and study centres should be well equipped with an information and guidance cell, a good library, a reading room and facilities for the use of audio and video cassettes.
2. Each regional centre should have an effective monitoring system to check the work of study centres. The regional director should make surprise visits to study centres to keep an eye on the conduct of counselling sessions and the use of audio and video facilities.
3. Counselling should not take the form of classroom lectures. These sessions should be utilised to explain the main thrust in the printed course material supplied to the students and for answering students' questions and sorting out their individual difficulties.
4. The audio and video play-back sessions should be preceded by a brief introduction by the counsellor concerned and there should be appropriate discussions after such sessions.

5. Mobile study centres should be organised to take the study centre facilities to students in remote rural and tribal areas. In fact, learners in these areas would need greater student support.
6. There must be sample checking of at least 10% of the SAs evaluated by the counsellors to ensure that they are properly evaluated.
7. The counsellors should provide to the OU school/department concerned the feedback which they can gather from the students' responses to questions in the SAs and from their discussions with students at the counselling sessions.

Finance and Economic Viability

The higher education institutes in India are financed by the Central and the State governments. The Central Government grants are disbursed to the central and state universities through the University Grants Commission (U.G.C.).

The central universities get 100% grant for their development and maintenance. Even the colleges affiliated to the conventional universities in the Union Territory of Delhi get 95% to 100% of their expenditure from the UGC.

However, IGNOU enjoys a special status so far as funding is concerned. It gets grants direct from the Department of Education, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and not through the UGC.

In the case of state conventional universities, 70% of their income accrues from the state governments concerned. The income from student fees in these universities varies from 6% to 30% of their budgets.

So far as the state open universities are concerned, their initial expenditure on establishment is met by the state governments concerned. The Indira Gandhi National Open University, which is also an apex body for the distance education system in the country, has the power to give grants to the state open universities for certain specific developmental activities subject to the condition that the state open universities ensure provision of developed land, core academic staff and adequate infrastructure, including academic and administrative buildings, study centres, studios etc. For example, BRAOU, Hyderabad got developmental assistance from IGNOU to the tune of Rs. 2.3 million and Kota Open University Rs. 2.2 million for staff development and computer facilities. BRAOU received Rs. 1,25,64,000 as a grant from the state government of Andhra Pradesh. KOU has not specified the grant received from the state government. The open universities also have to depend to quite a large extent, on the income from student fees to supplement their funds.

It is unfortunate that the correspondence courses institutes have been getting a raw deal, as about 50% of their income has to come from the student fees. The rest of the finance is expected to be provided by the state

governments and/or parent universities. The UGC provides funding to CCIs for various specific purposes and that too generally for the initial 5 years for a particular undergraduate or postgraduate course, as laid down in the UGC guidelines for correspondence courses. The grants are usually limited to Rs. 0.5 million per course for the undergraduate level (per subject in the case of postgraduate level) for a plan period of five years. After 5 years of the launching of a course, the state government concerned is expected to finance such courses, which may not happen in many cases. Thus, many of the CCIs are starved of funds with the result that fees charged by them are very high as compared to the fees charged in the conventional universities and colleges. The fees charged by CCIs for a full course range from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,500. The range in the case of OUs is Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,600. This causes hardships for distance learners.

It is surprising that while the conventional university system is highly subsidised by the central and state governments, distance education institutes are erroneously expected to be self-financing. The worst thing is that some CCIs, which generate surplus funds due to massive enrolments, are not in a position to utilise them on the improvement of the institute, as their surplus is diverted to the general revenues of the university concerned to cover its deficits. This has adversely affected the CCIs resulting in unsatisfactory quality of their course material, laxity in the evaluation of SAs and student support services including library services. Another serious repercussion of this situation is that such CCIs are unable to develop need based application oriented or vocational courses relevant to the aspirations of the learners.

If we really want education to be relevant to national and societal needs, divert large numbers of students to the vocational and professional streams and provide training of varied kinds to professionals, then it is necessary that a clear-cut funding policy be laid down for distance education institutes.

In view of the wide outreach, meaningful social impact, future potential and the expected coverage of the 50% of increase in the enrolment in higher education through distance education in the future, there is a strong case for greater and liberal investment on this system so that future educational needs of our country are adequately met and there is qualitative improvement in the education imparted through this system.

Various studies on costing show that the cost of educating a student through the distance education system, varies from 1/3 to 1/6 of the cost in the conventional system. This confirms the financial viability of the system. As per AIU comparative study of unit costs in the School of Correspondence Courses and affiliated colleges of Delhi University (1988), the unit cost in regular colleges of Delhi was Rs. 3520 against the student fee of Rs. 260. Thus, the state subsidy per student was Rs. 3250. Compared to this, the cost per student in the School of

Correspondence Courses, Delhi was Rs. 552 (1984-85) against the fee of Rs. 260 charged from a student. However, the cost per unit in the open universities is higher than that in the CCIs primarily because of the colossal expenditure on proper development of course material, electronic media and the huge network of student support services, e.g. Rs. 1177 in BRAOU and Rs. 870 in IGNOU.

From the various studies done on the financial aspects of distance education, it is clear that a considerable investment has to be made on the development of course materials, multi-media methodology, computerisation of various procedures, student support services including face-to-face personal contact programmes, SAs and adequate library facilities.

Thus, if we want standards of education to be improved and 50% increase in enrolment in higher education to be taken care of by distance education and open universities, the central and state governments and their funding agencies must ensure adequate financial support to achieve the following goals.

1. Upgrading CCIs to fully equipped distance education institutes.
2. Setting up new distance education institutes or open universities in the areas that have so far remained ignored, so as to rectify the present imbalance in the distribution of DE institutes.
3. Establishing on a sound footing all the new state open universities that are likely to come up as a result of the recent CABE decision.
4. Improving the lot of the existing open universities in terms of their capacity for launching need-based courses, particularly for the rural masses and people in the remote tribal and backward areas, strengthening student support services, adding mobile study centres to reach people in the remote areas and setting up effective monitoring systems.
5. Enabling IGNOU to have proper infrastructure for building a strong Distance Education Council, setting up proper infrastructure for obtaining feedback from the students and for monitoring the work of various schools, divisions and study centres.
6. Meeting problems caused by steep rise in the price of all items by increasing the quantum of grants proportionately.

To sum up, in view of the comparatively low cost of educating students through the distance mode, its utility for large scale application, the need for qualitative improvement and innovations to make education relevant to the needs of society and the nation, need for diversification of education towards vocational, technical, professional and in-service training of professionals, the central and the state governments should adopt a liberal policy of funding the flexible and innovative system of distance education

which alone will be able to cope with the future educational needs of the nation.

Networking

The need for a well-organised network system has been recognised by most of the distance education institutes and national and international associations of distance education. The greatest advantages of networking would be:

- economy of costs in developing various programmes and courses through sharing and jointly developing them,
- ensuring better quality of course materials,
- reduction in the costs of setting up student support services, particularly in the establishment of study centres,
- wider course offerings for the students,
- promotion of student mobility,
- improved dual mode systems whereby even a conventional university can use course materials of some open universities or other distance education institutes for the benefit of its students,
- further breakthrough in the development of the dual mode system if the conventional universities and open universities/distance education institutes agree to allow joint studentship to their students. This would help in bringing together educationists in the conventional system and the distance education system and result in mutual sharing of ideas, materials and research findings.

The idea of networking is catching up all over the world. Accordingly, the following recommendations on Networking among CCIs and OUs merit serious consideration.

1. As a first step, the CCIs should give top priority to convert their existing course material into the proper distance education format and improve the quality of their content so as to make their lessons truly self-instructional.
2. Once a CCI is converted into a distance education institution, it should make serious efforts to share course materials with other distance education institutes at the regional/state level, at least in the disciplines like Social Sciences, Humanities, Sciences and Technology or professional courses like B. Ed., M. Ed., etc.
3. To strengthen networking, it should be spread further to work out collaboration among distance education institutes and open universities for
 - sharing of courses and course materials,
 - developing new courses and course materials jointly,
 - sharing of study centre facilities.

4. The distance education institutes and the open universities should allow mobility of students from one system to the other for doing some courses from DE institutes and some from the OUs.
5. Further, the extent of student mobility may be extended further by allowing students to do part of their courses from their distance education institutes or OUs and the remaining courses from a conventional university. This would promote the dual mode system of education—a union of the conventional and distance modes of education.
6. In order to carry the idea of dual mode education a little further, there should be open sharing of ideas between the faculties of distance education institutes/open universities and the faculties of conventional universities to explore possibilities of sharing innovations in imparting education to the students through various communication media and to work out the modus operandi of collaboration between the two systems.
7. Indira Gandhi National Open University has initiated meaningful steps in this direction and networking has been started among open universities through the mechanism of the Distance Education Council set up by IGNOU. The Council should be strengthened to perform effectively.
8. Since IGNOU has requested the UGC to continue looking after the correspondence courses institutes, the UGC should also initiate and encourage networking on these lines, first among CCIs when they are converted into distance education institutes and then between distance education institutes and the open universities.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

General

1. In view of the fairly widespread proliferation of correspondence courses institutes, establishment of six open universities and the decision of the Central Advisory Board of Education that every state should have an open university, it is necessary that as a first step immediate measures be taken to improve and consolidate the programmes which are being offered by the 41 CCIs and the (presently functional) four OUs.

CCIs

2. Our primary concern should be to upgrade the CCIs to distance education institutes as has already been recommended by the DE Committee of C.A.B.E. Since IGNOU has requested the UGC to continue looking after the CCIs for sometime more, the UGC should,

in consultation with IGNOU, draw up a phased programme for this purpose.

3. Conversion of CCIs into the distance education institutes would involve the following steps.
 - a) Improving/rewriting of course materials so that the lessons may conform to self-instructional and distance education format.
 - b) Introduction of the readily available communication media like radio, TV, audio and video cassettes so as to convert the CCIs into multimedia distance education institutes—this would require training some persons in script-writing and production of radio, TV, audio and video programmes.
 - c) Staff development through workshops on different aspects of distance education and by making it obligatory for CCI teachers and senior members of the administrative staff to join the Diploma Programme in Distance Education offered by IGNOU—the UGC or the parent university should subsidise the course fee as an incentive for their staff to take this diploma.

Faculty members of the CCIs may, in batches, be deputed to visit IGNOU and/or a state open university in their region to acquire first hand knowledge of the operations pertaining to the different aspects of the distance education system.
 - d) Setting up proper and well-equipped study centres, one per 500 students. Each centre should have a well stocked library with multiple copies of books and adequate reading room facilities. The study centre should be manned by a whole-time coordinator who should be responsible for organising all the activities required of a study centre, e.g. efficient administration, providing information and guidance, counselling sessions, personal contact programmes, playback facilities for radio and TV recordings and audio and video cassettes. OUs should consider allowing the CCIs to share their study centres. Some organisations like NGOs and social service agencies could also be approached for this purpose.
 - e) As and when a CCI is upgraded to a distance education institution, it should be included in the network of DE institutes and open universities to facilitate its sharing of course materials, audio/video cassettes etc.
 - f) Submission of a requisite number of SAs should be compulsory as stipulated in the UGC guidelines and the marks obtained by the students should count towards the final assessment in the ratio of 25:75, 75% being the weight for the end-of-the term assessment.
 - g) In the event of a state government setting up an open university it may be left to the conventional

universities to decide whether or not they would like their CCIs to be merged with the OU.

- h) Faculty members of CCIs/DE institutes should have parity with the faculty members of the university teaching departments in respect of designations, pay-scales, representation on university bodies etc.

OUs

1. So far as OUs are concerned, IGNOU has set a good model which other universities could follow with some variations to suit local conditions.
2. However, on the basis of feedback from some students and the general impression in the minds of some counsellors and faculty members, the OUs should gear up their printing and distribution system as well as the regional services to ensure
 - a) timely delivery of course material to the students,
 - b) timely return of SAs to the students after proper evaluation including the comments of the evaluator, and
 - c) conduct of counselling sessions to the satisfaction of students.
3. A fool-proof feedback system should be evolved to obtain feedback from the students about the course material, evaluation of SAs, counselling sessions, playback facilities for audio and video cassettes and other publicized facilities.

For the time being, the feedback which is available with the counsellors or the faculty should be carefully examined by the course writers and the faculty members concerned to bring about the necessary changes in the course material so that its language as well as content is brought to comprehension level of the majority of students. Another way could be try it out on groups of students to find out the difficulties that they may have in understanding the course units and then modify the units accordingly.
4. A sound monitoring system should be developed to continuously assess the working of regional and study centres so as to check lapses, delays, slipshod work and other weaknesses of the system.

Dual Mode System

Dual mode system is already there to some extent in the CCIs where the faculty of the university teaching departments are associated with course writing, evaluation of SAs and lecturing at the PCPs. In a way this kind of dual mode operation exists in the OUs also, as quite a number of teachers from the conventional universities and colleges are associated with writing and editing the course material, providing counselling at the study centres and evaluating SAs of the distance learners. It will help extend

the notion of dual mode operations if the following recommendations are materialised.

- a) Unbiased recognition of courses, e.g. the courses offered by distance education institutes/open universities should be treated at par with courses in the conventional universities.
- b) Free mobility of students from a distance education institute/OU to conventional universities and colleges.
- c) Unhindered permission to do a few courses from the distance education institutes/open universities and a few from the conventional universities/colleges to obtain a diploma/degree. This would promote inter university mobility of students and be specially helpful to students in the conventional system because distance education system provides wide course offerings of which the conventional students can take advantage. This would also encourage inter disciplinary studies.
- d) Immediate restructuring of the conventional university Bachelor's Degree courses as per the UGC guidelines. Such restructuring would help in adopting the Foundation and also the Application-oriented courses developed by the Indira Gandhi National Open University or some state OUs.
- e) Acceptance and introduction of the practice of joint studentship—now that certain international organisations like the ICDE and COL, as also some regional associations of distance education are actively working for pooling the courses available within the Commonwealth/within a country/all over the world, sooner or later distance education will operate at the global level when it should be possible for a learner to take some courses from a DE institute in one country and some more from an institute in another country to obtain a degree/diploma.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We would like to conclude this report by saying that distance education has now become an independent discipline. It has earned international credibility and recognition. It is not a rival to the conventional system and in no way inferior to it. It would be a very healthy development if, instead of harbouring prejudices against this innovative system which has come to stay, the faculty, the vice-chancellors and the persons who matter in the conventional universities, as also the state employment agencies, public sector undertakings and business concerns realise the importance of the innovative aspects built into the distance education system and extend their wholehearted cooperation in further strengthening this system which has great potential for the future. The two systems have a lot to gain from each other and they should move together in that spirit. We must all realise that the colossal future educational needs of the people can be met only through the distance education system. We would like to wish all success to the international and national associations/organisations of distance education spread all-over the world as also to the dedicated distance educators who are firmly committed to the development of this flexible and innovative system of education which provides vast scope for improving the quality of education and making it relevant to the needs of the people, the society and the nations. This is the only system which can have a tremendous social impact and carry education to the doorsteps of the people, particularly in the remote rural/tribal areas where an overwhelming percentage of the people live. Those who hold the purse strings should bear all this in mind and ensure adequate funding to the system. We would wish the system to make rapid strides towards the fulfilment of its laudable objectives.