

An Overview of Distance Education in Maharashtra

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Abstract: -

The idea of distance education originates from the nineteenth century. Distance education used available communication technologies in these years – correspondence via mail. The mail services were inexpensive way of communication and they were at the root of distance education. , In the Maharashtra there are six Deemed, two central, six State, Two Private and one Autonomous University and Institutions working in the area of distance education. The main objective of this paper is to take an Overview of Distance Education in Maharashtra.

Key Words – Distance education, University, Institutions

Introduction:-

According to Marija Buselic, Distance learning is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom. It has been described as "a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both. Modern economic and social achievements at the end of the 20th century initiate the transition of global economy from old into a new virtual economy. Virtual economy is highly related to globalization and economy networking. This fact emphasizes the importance of knowledge. Today it has become the fundamental economic resource. For this reason knowledge enriched workers are the most wanted input and output. Education is necessary to achieve and supplement new knowledge. Because of geographical distance and level of development, education, in classical sense, is not available to a large number of world's population. As well as according to G. Kiryakova, The idea of distance education originates from the nineteenth century. Distance education used available communication technologies in these years – correspondence via mail. The mail services were inexpensive way of communication and they were at the root of distance education. Teachers sent materials such as lectures, instructions, assignments to learners by mail. The learners returned completed assignments to the teacher. He corrected, evaluated and sent them back to the participants in the course. In 1840 in Great Britain Isaak Pitman implemented distance education shorthand via correspondence. During the same time language courses were carried out in Germany via correspondence. In 1873 in the USA Anna Ticknor created a society, which provided learning opportunities to women in their homes. According to above analysis the main objective of this paper is to take an Overview of Distance Education in Maharashtra.

Concept of Distance Education:-

At undergraduate level distance learning usually means students engaging with learning materials at home or work. These materials are produced by the university, college or learning provider and are either sent directly to the student or more usually today accessed via the internet. Distance Education is an umbrella term which describes all the teaching learning arrangements in which the learner and the teacher are separated by space and time. In fact it is a mode of delivering education and instruction to learners who are not physically present in a traditional setting of a classroom. Transaction of the curriculum is effected by means of specially prepared materials self-study learning materials which are delivered to the learners at their doorstep through various media such as print, television, radio, satellite, audio/video tapes, CD-ROMs, Internet and World Wide Web etc. Also a technological medium replaces the interpersonal communication of conventional classroom based education that takes place between the teacher and the learners. Communication between the institution, teacher and learners is mainly through electronic media telephone, interactive radio counseling, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, chat sessions, email, website etc. and also through postal correspondence and limited face to face contact sessions held at Study Centers that are set up by the DE institutions as close to the learners' homes as possible. By formal education we mean the campus based education at the school, college and the University levels where curricula and syllabi have certain established patterns. The age groups, training, methods of teaching, materials textbooks used, evaluation etc. are known to the teachers and the taught. By non-formal education we mean any other approach to take education to those who have not been able to get formal education. Distance education refers to the 'mode' which does not require the physical contiguity of the teacher and the learner at all times. It is not unusual to confuse the terms 'Correspondence Education', 'Distance Education' and 'Open Education' with each other. 'Distance education' is an expression which officially replaced the earlier term 'correspondence education' in the Twelfth World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education, held in Canada in 1982. Since then the Council was med it+ the International Council for Distance Education.

Distance Education in Maharashtra :-

Lifelong learning is an essential goal of education as a means to improve the quality of life for an individual, culture or a society. Five decades ago policy-makers realized the imperative need of DE in order to expand the base of higher education. With the expanding base at the elementary and secondary education levels, the demand for higher education had increased. The University Grants Commission UGC suggested in its report for 1956-1960 that proposals for evening colleges, correspondence courses and award of external degrees should be considered. The Planning Commission took serious note of such a need and in its Third Five Year Plan mentioned the need for the introduction of correspondence education in the country.

Indira Gandhi Open University Distance Education University in India that has been accredited by distance education council. It was established in 1985 under IGNOU act and so the first distance education in India was launched then. In 1970, the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare organized a seminar on 'Open University' in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the UGC and the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO. After the seminar recommendation an open university in India has been established on an experimental basis. Starting in 1974, the government of India appointed an eight-member working group on open university, the leading role was given to G. Parthasarathi, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University. The working group recommended establishing an open university by an act of parliament as early as possible. They recommended that the university should have jurisdiction over the entire country so that, once it is fully developed, any student even in the remotest corner of the country can have access to its instruction and degrees (Working Group Report, 1974). As well as available Distance Education Universities List of Maharashtra is Given Below in the table.

Table No. 01

Name of the University and Institution in the Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Name of the University and Institution in the Maharashtra	Category
01	Bharati Vidyapeeth Distance Education University, Pune	Deemed
02	Dr. D Y Patil Distance Education University, Pune	Deemed
03	International Institute for Population Distance Education Sciences, Mumbai	Deemed
04	Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha	Central
05	NMIMS Distance Education University, Mumbai	Deemed
06	Sant Gadge Baba Amravati Distance Education University, Amravati	State
07	Shivaji University, Kolhapur	State
08	SNDT Women's University, Mumbai	State
09	Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded	State
10	Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai	Deemed
11	Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune	Deemed
12	University of Mumbai, Mumbai	State
13	Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik	State
14	Symbiosis Centre For Distance Learning, Pune	Autonomous
15	Balaji Institute of Modern Management Distance Education, Pune	Private
16	MIT School of Distance Education, Pune	Private
17	IGNOU Regional Centre, Nagpur	Central

According to above table, In the Maharashtra there are six Deemed, two central, six State, Two Private and one Autonomous University and Institutions working in the area of distance education. Along with all above University and Institutions IGNOU and YCMOU provide various courses in distance learning mode. The brief information about IGNOU and YCMOU is as follows.

Indira Gandhi National Open University: -

Indira Gandhi National Open University known as IGNOU, is a Central University located at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi, India. Named after former Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, the university was established in 1985 with a budget of 20 million, after the Parliament of India passed the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985 (IGNOU Act 1985). IGNOU is run by the central government of India, and with total active enrollment of over 4 million students, claims to be the largest university in the world. IGNOU was founded to serve the Indian population by means of distance and open education, providing higher education opportunities to all segments of society. It also aims to encourage, coordinate and set standards for distance and open education in India, and to strengthen the human resources of India through education. Apart from teaching and research, extension and training form the mainstay of its academic activities. It also acts as a national resource centre, and serves to promote and maintain standards of distance education in India. IGNOU hosts the Secretariats of the SAARC Consortium on Open and Distance Learning and the Global Mega Universities Network , initially supported by UNESCO. IGNOU has started a decentralization process by setting up five zones; north, south, east, west and north east. The first of the regional headquarters, catering to four southern states, Pondicherry, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep, is being set up in the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. The Ministry of HRD has entrusted the responsibility of developing Draft Policy on Open and Distance Learning and Online Courses to IGNOU.

Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University: -

Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University known as YCMOU was established in July 1989 by Act XX- (1989) of the Maharashtra State Legislature. It is the Fifth Open University in the country. The jurisdiction of this university, originally for the State of Maharashtra, has now been extended beyond this State and the university can now operate anywhere across the globe. The YCMOU has been recognized under section 12 (B) of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956. It is a member of various prestigious associations and bodies like the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada to name a few. The main aim of the YCMOU is to become a Mass Varsity and to make available to the common man, educational programmes that are of practical use in his day-to-day life and those that provide better prospects for the future. The

University offers several offline programmes and has also embarked on a number of innovative online initiatives. The YCMOU has its headquarters at Nashik, Regional Centres at 8 districts and the study centres spread all over the State of Maharashtra. Due to statutory powers conferred by an act XX (1989) of Maharashtra state legislature and the recognition by the 'University Grants Commission of India', this university is fully empowered to award various academic certifications like certificates, diplomas, and graduate, post-graduate, doctoral degrees. This university also takes all precautions, at all programme stages from 'Curriculum Design' to 'Examination', to ensure that the standards and quality of, education and examinations are preserved. The curriculum of these programmes is designed for Equivalence, with respective similar academic programmes, offered by other statutory universities. This university also provides many different diploma or certificates, which may or may not be equivalent to any other such certificates. All the degree and post-graduate degree programmes are duly recognized and approved by the 'University Grant Commission (UGC)'. Hence, these programmes are equivalent to the respective programmes offered by any other statutory university in India, for the purpose of employment, promotion and further education. In this respect, the status of this university is at par with all other statutory universities of India.

Conclusion: -

From the above analysis it is concluded that in the Maharashtra there are six Deemed, two central, six State, Two Private and one Autonomous University and Institutions working in the area of distance education. As well as all University and Institutions provides many different diploma or certificates, which may or may not be equivalent to any other such certificates. All the degree and post-graduate degree programmes are duly recognized and approved by the University Grant Commission.

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