REPORT

UGC-DEB Sponsored Research Project

A STUDY ON THE ACTUAL STATUS OF THE ENROLLED STUDENTS

IN NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

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NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Netaji Subhas Open University was established in 1997 by an Act of West Bengal State Legislative Assembly. One of the important objectives of establishing an open university in the State was to bring higher education to the aspirants at affordable cost. Since its inception thousands of learners have received Degree/Diploma certificates. But there was no such study to assess the status of the enrolled students of NSOU.

The present study of the Indian Open University with special reference to the status of the students enrolled in Netaji Subhas Open University may serve as a useful source of reference for everyone who are associated with the ODL system.

Researcher

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CHAPTER 1
OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM-
ITS GENESIS: GLOBAL TO LOCAL

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An open learning system is based upon the student's learning pattern. Although, they are enrolled in a system where they come across other learners in a partially competitive manner, an open learning system represents an alternative approach to the higher learning unlike attaching sole importance to the classroom teaching that is usually framed within a highly formal, institutionalized and centrally administered system of education. It epitomizes the principle of universality, flexibility and innovativeness. Therefore, its ideas, institutions, methods and procedures are framed accordingly. Conceptually, it can be viewed as a system which adopts the best elements of formal and non-formal system of education. The pioneer in the field of Distance Learning Dr. Desmond Keegan in his book, *"Foundations of Distance Education''* in its Second Edition (1990), primarily lists the main crux of Distance Education as follows: -

- Separation of a teacher and student throughout the learning process.
- Separation of the student or students from other learners or learning groups.
- Provision of means for a two-way communication so that the students can benefit from or initiate dialogue.
- Utilization of electronic means of communication to carry the content of the course.

Netaji Subhas Open University, being the first Open University in West Bengal, is the premier State Open University in India. Founded in the 1997 (Birth Centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose), the University has been contributing substantially towards the building up of quality human resource base of the State and collaborating with other open universities of the National and State levels towards the improvement of the quality of Distance Education. It also aimed towards promotion and appropriation of technology to create the distance education scenario of the international standards in our country.

Given the nature of necessities of the large hinterland, the University caters to spread higher education in different parts of the state and to cooperate with other universities to provide access to higher education and to different skill enhancing educational programs. This reach-out policy has dual objectives- the spread of higher education to the remotest corner of the state and providing viable career alternatives and vocational courses at an affordable price. It mainly aims

at democratization of education at the grass-root level with the idea of providing an equal opportunity for all. The University being committed to social justice, by targeting varied forms of employments for learners and cutting across all conventional modes of classification and discrimination, directly accomplishes the mission of operating Study Centre for inmate students at the Alipore Central Correctional Home. The ambit of the University is wide as it is a convergence of different schools of thought and activity.

To sum up, the University is trying to: -

- Provide quality education in a flexible mode to serve the aim of establishing an equitable knowledge society within the state, provide higher education through distance learning through the language of the state i.e., Bengali.
- Make education affordable to the disadvantaged.
- Provide facility for lifelong education to intending students.
- Strive for upgradation of technology without compromising the basic values of the society.
- Contribute to the development of the state and nation and to motivate students to strive for secular, scientific and democratic education.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The main focus of the project is solely based upon the findings of '*The Actual Status of the enrolled students in Netaji Subhas Open University.*' It can be observed that since the inception of the University, there is a blur image about the student's actual demographic, social, academic, economical and other multifarious parameters which are the pre-requisites for the better functioning of the infrastructural development of the University on the whole. There is no such study to assess the actual status of the students of the university. The researchers are also interested to know the women participation in the ODL program and how far the academic programs help them achieve their goal both in terms of economic and social. The necessity of collecting data relating to personal information of the students- their socio-economic conditions, academic records, previous educational backgrounds before pursuing courses at Netaji Subhas Open University, their occupation, demographic details are also considered.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The project is primarily based on the student's information. Hence the primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire and open ended questions. Currently the University has 109 study centers spread all over the State, which offer BDP and PG programs. So, some study centers will be selected on the basis of their geographical locations. The students and the office bearers of the selected study centers were interviewed personally and relevant information will be collected through questionnaire.

From among the current student volume of 3,16,626, a sample of its population have been selected for this survey as the study centers have been selected on the basis of geographical location. Thus it belongs to the category of Sample Survey. Moreover, a face-to-face interaction has also been conducted to establish an easy-going environment so that the research tends to be more accurate and true to the greatest extent. It, in a way, will help the upgradation and improvement of the University by getting an in-depth; first-hand knowledge about the unknown areas i.e., the students enrolled in Netaji Subhas Open University across its 109 Study Centers in the entire state.

Now, we would throw some light regarding the present institutional and administrative functioning of the University. Later on, we would analyze the 'openness' of Netaji Subhas Open University in brief with examples that it has set in the educational system of Bengal for the last few decades. We would review that how far the University has succeeded in its goal, accomplishing its mission and envisaging its vision, of providing an opportunity of higher education in vernacular medium to various disadvantaged groups of aspiring learners, which it had undertaken during the time of its inception in 1997.

The university, unlike the others, undertook a very noble mission of empowering the weaker sections of the society not only in terms of education but also by strengthening the huge workforce of the developing the society, by introducing vocational courses where the student-admission system is very flexible to boost the inclusive growth of our country indirectly and in a long-term basis, by empowering them in terms of working skills with the sole motive of their excellence in all the sectors (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary).

The present research is conducted with an aim to check on the present conditions of graduate students at Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU). However, a survey has not been done to study about the characteristics of students that have been admitted to the University- their purpose of taking admissions and impact of the education in their lives. At the time when more new courses are introduced to the system and the number is increasing continuously, a survey on students that have been admitted is deemed very important.

Since this study is the first of its kind, the research subjects are all students that were admitted to NSOU in BDP, PG and VOCATIONAL courses throughout 109 study centers in the entire state of West Bengal, based on a field survey which has been conducted to have a brief detail about the learners of NSOU. This study is entirely based on primary data collection. Primary data are first-hand data which are collected afresh and therefore, are original in character. The tools used for data collection are called data collecting devices or tools. One example of such a tool is questionnaire method which is efficient, realistic and convenient. The entire questionnaire is divided into 8 sections based on some crucial parameters. Each section is designed in such a manner so that it can fulfill the required criteria of the study. The questionnaire is composed of both open and close ended questions. Open-ended questions are those in which the respondents are required to respond descriptively so that they can express their opinion freely. On the other hand, close-ended questions are those where the respondents have to give their answers within the selected options. Although no equal weightage is given on the parameters, all the parameters have some bearings on the learners.

The main research area is of three parts: Analysis of prior information about students, analysis of the survey questionnaire and summary and suggestions for University policy making, targeted towards further improvement of the University. For the analysis of prior information about students, information such as admission and registration, gender distribution, age distribution, area distribution was analyzed. The survey questionnaire was designed to report the prior information of the students first and to categorize them accordingly. A comparative analysis of the results has been conducted. In the summary and suggestions, the main research findings have been summarized and suggestions that could shape the university policies have been jotted down. Since it is very difficult to cover every nook and corner of West Bengal, we have tried to make the study as homogeneous as possible. Therefore, we have selected few Study Centers from the entire state on the basis of their location in different districts.

1.4 DISTANCE LEARNING AND OPEN LEARNING

Distance Learning and Open Learning have been traditionally connected in the works of the experts in the field. Open learning is a very vague term indeed. For some authors it has to do with those educational systems or programs that are free of classroom constraints. On the other hand, the key distinction of this kind of education is nothing but the lack of formal requirements for admission of students into the academic programs, as opposed to close teaching or learning, where students must comply with certain requisites in order to take a course.

Thus, the following items could be listed as the main features of Open Learning (OL):

• The requirements to be met by prospective students is more flexible and enrolment are open to all. Therefore, this system is more flexible.

• There is no campus as such; there are no constraints of space (learning and teaching does not take place in just one location)

• The means used for teaching-learning of communication are varied and open for free.

• Students are free to choose the competencies and skills they desire to acquire in this system.

• The teaching/learning process is more flexible than that of other mode of teaching.

While Distance Education (DE) solely epitomizes:

• The separation between teacher and learner both in time and in space

• Several technical or didactic between teachers and learners. Communication between them is always "mediated".

• There is a tutorial organization or a support system that is more complex than those set up in programs used in residential courses.

 • Learners learn independently and in a flexible way. They choose the time, place and pace of their study.

• There is a bidirectional or two-way communication with feedback between teacher and learner.

• In distance learning more than any other teaching method, the technological side is essential, since it depends on the means used to bridge the gap between teacher and students.

Mass communication or teaching units are customized in such a way that course contents can be offered to anyone, anywhere, anytime and through technological means that make possible to

Correspondence Education (a)	Distance Education (b)	Open Education (c)
Refers to Traditional type of education given mainly through printed materials, by the postal system.	Refers to Non-Traditional Innovative type of Education that uses all the possible means of communication, the postal system being only one of them.	Refers to that kind of non-conventional education which has been weaning away from the conventional institutions.
The difference between (a) and (b) is characterized essentially by the advanced strategies and technologies of communication used in (b). The shift has been effected by the advancement of communication technology.		The relationship between (b) and (c) is that open education can be effected easily through distance education system. Advances in the practice of distance education helps and encourages education to become more and more open. Naturally they go together and a visible overlap is created.

Relationship between (a), (b) & (c)

reach massive numbers of people across time and space. It is both vertical and horizontal. Communication is vertical as it flows between teacher and learner, and also horizontal due to the flow of communication between students taking the same course. Distance learning is an ideal setting for collaborative or cooperative learning.

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Distance learning entails a sort of industrialization of education. It involves a standardization of learning products, as if it were a process of massive production and distribution of learning. This "industrial side" of distance learning opens the way to an increased flexibility, which is really one of the basic features and appeals of this mode of teaching. This is a real paradox, that learners often choose this kind of learning product because they need flexible ways to sharpen their skills without restrictions of place, time and so on and so forth.

NEXUS BETWEEN
DISTANCE EDUCATION AND FORMAL EDUCATION

DISTANCE LEARNING

| LECTURE | EDUCATION | RESPONSE | PCP |
| SCRIPTS | TECHNOLOGY | SHEETS | INTERACTION |

POOLING RESOURCES AND AVOIDING DICHOTOMY BETWEEN DISTANCE EDUCATION AND FORMAL EDUCATION

| LECTURE | TECHNOLOGY | TUTORIALS | SEMINARS |

FORMAL EDUCATION
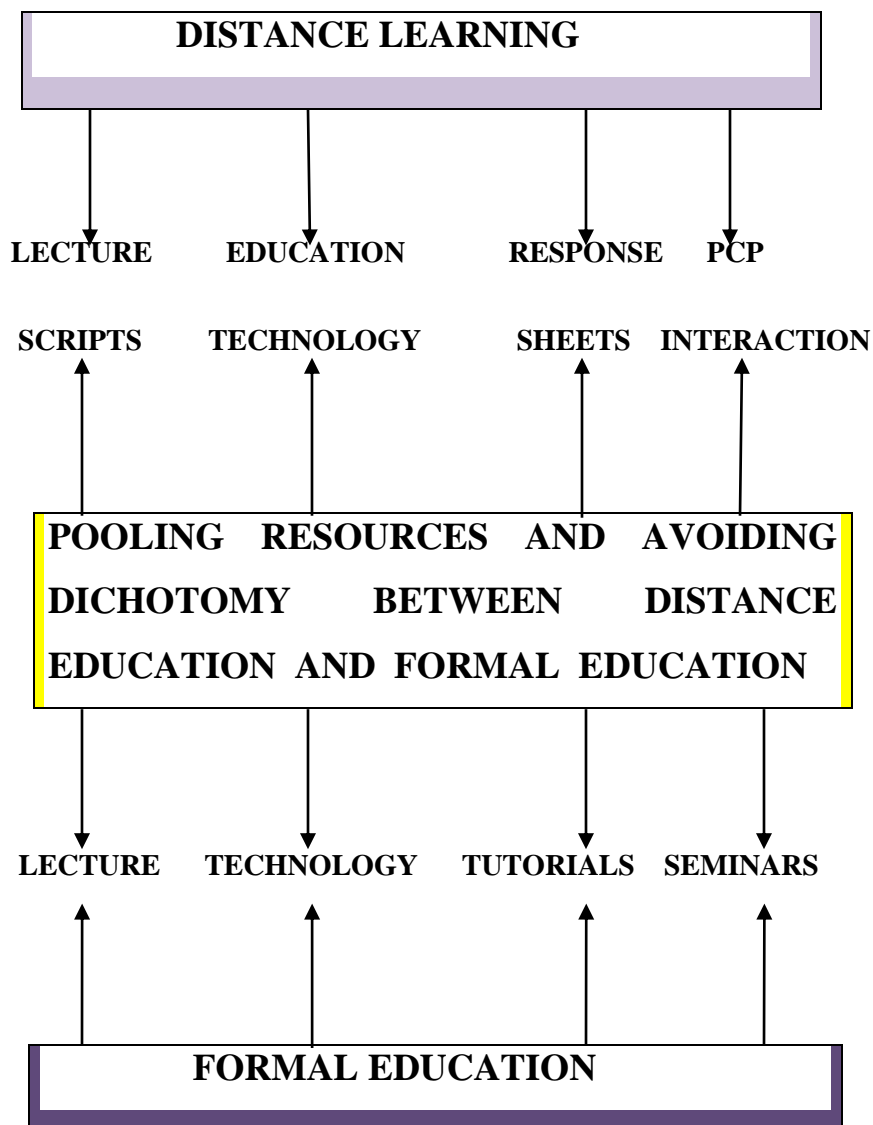
1.5 HISTORY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education is not a new concept. In the late 1800s, the University of Chicago-the first major correspondence program in the United States was established, in which the teachers and learners were at different locations. Before that time, particularly in pre-industrial Europe, education had been available primarily to males in higher levels of society. The most effective form of instruction in those days was to bring students together in one place and one time to learn from one of the masters. This form of traditional educational remains the dominant model of learning today. The early efforts of educators like *William Rainey Harper* in 1890 to establish alternatives were laughed at Distance Education, which was designed to provide educational opportunities for those who were not among the elite and who could not afford full-time residence at an educational institution, was looked down on as inferior education. Many educators regarded Distance Learning as simply business operations. Distance education opposed the elitist and extremely undemocratic educational system that characterized the early years in this country. Indeed, many distance learning courses were viewed as simply poor excuses for the real thing. However, the need to provide equal access to educational opportunities has always been part of our democratic ideals, so distance study took a new turn. As radio developed during the First World War and television in the 1950s, instruction outside of the traditional classroom had suddenly found new delivery systems. There are many examples of how radio and television were used early in schools to deliver instruction at a distance.

Distance education has traditionally been defined as instruction through print or electronic communications media to persons engaged in planned learning in a place or time different from that of the instructor or instructors. The traditional definition of distance education is slowly being eroded as new technological developments challenge educators to re conceptualize the idea of schooling and lifelong learning. At the same time, interest in the unlimited possibilities of individualized distance learning is growing with the development of each new communication technology. Although educational technologists agree that it is the systematic design of instruction that should drive the development of distance learning, the rapid development of computer related technologies has captured the interest of the public and has been responsible for much of the limelight in which distance educators currently find themselves. Although the

United States has seen rapid growth in the use of technology for distance education, much of the pioneering work has been done abroad.

The United Kingdom Open University (UKOU) was the world's first successful distance teaching university. Established in 1969, the University was founded on the belief that communication technology could bring high quality degree-level learning to people who had not the opportunity to attend on-campus universities. However, ideas about distance teaching and educational uses for broadcast media had been circulating in Britain for a half century or more. The Open University was founded by the then serving Labour Party government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson, based on the vision of Michael Young (later Lord Young of Darting ton).

Historical Timeline

1840 - Sir Isaac Pitman is credited with inventing correspondence courses by mail, which represented the first phase of distance education.

1892 – The first University distance learning program was established by University of Chicago.

1911 - University of Queensland in Australia established a Department of External Studies, which supported distance learning programs.

1920's - Federal government issues the first educational radio licenses to deliver distance education courses. Distance teaching is introduced in universities in the Soviet Union.

1933- The world's first educational television programs were broadcast from the University of Iowa.

1950 - Iowa State University became the first educational television broadcaster in the world.

1969 - United Kingdom's Open University was founded. The OU introduced a mixed-media approach to teaching distance learning courses.

1971 - PEACENET Founded - 1st to use satellites in distance education.

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*Source: -www.du.edu/~kkeairns/doc/history.html

TIMELINE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ADVANCED COUNTRIES

(INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO)

WRITTEN ERA

1728

The world's first Distance learning course is established in Boston, with Lessons sent by mail

1840

Shorthand is taught by correspondence in Great Britain

RADIO ERA

1922

Penn State begins offering courses through the Radio

1925

200+ Colleges and Universities of North America have been granted Radio-Broadcasting Licenses

1965

The first state-wide, telephone-based education program is offered by University of Wisconsin

TV ERA

1968

Standford University founded Standford Instructional TV Network, Offering Instructions for part-time Engineering students

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1969

U.S. Department of Defense creates the internet (ARPANET)

↓

1971

Social Critic Ivan Illich writes, *"De-schooling Society"* which describes Computer-Based Education

ONLINE ERA

1976

University of Phoenix is founded in Arizona (USA) to give working adults Flexible higher education options

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1982

CALC (Computer Assisted Learning Centre)- A Computer-based learning centre for adults is established in USA

↓

1992

The Electronic University Network offers a Ph.D. Program via American Online

14

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1994

The first completely online curriculum is introduced by Cal Campus, New Hampshire (USA)

1995

Western Governor's University is founded by 19 US Governors to help Western States maximize educational resources through Distance learning

MODERN ERA

1997

CVU (California Virtual University), a consortium of California Colleges, offering more than 1000 online courses is launched

1999

The world is introduced to a host of new educational tools, Incl. Blackboard and e-college

2001

Advances in online educational tools continue.

2002

The Open Courseware Project- a resource of free online course Materials from MIT, becomes available

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2003

81% colleges have at least one online college in US.

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2007

First ever MOOC, Advanced Learning Interactive System Online (ALISON) is created in Galway, Ireland

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2008

Online students are being connected with high-quality, affordable and transferable online college courses (khanacademy.desk.com)

↓

2009

No. of students taking at least one course online reaches 5.5 million (onlinelearningsurvey.com/highered.html)

↓

2010

83% of CEO's and small business owners in US considered online degrees to be as credible as traditional degrees (forbes.com/sites/peterhigh/2013/12/31/lessons-from-the- ceo-of-the-first-ever-mooc)

2013

77% of academic leaders rate the learning outcomes in online education as same or superior to those as in face to-face instruction, up from 57% in 2003

2014

98% of public colleges and universities offer online Programs in Western countries

FUTURE: - In coming five years, 90% of the academic leaders believe that the majority of all college students will be taking at least one online course especially in USA.

*Source: - www.straighterline.com/blog/brief-history-onine-learning-infographic/

1.6 HISTORY OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN INDIA

The concept of distance education has been explained in the earlier section. In this country, broadly, there are two types of distance education institutions: correspondence courses and open universities. It was in 1961 that the Central Advisory Board of Education decided to introduce the system of correspondence courses and a Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari who was the then Chairman of UGC. The first School of Correspondence Courses was started by the University of Delhi in 1962. The objectives were:

(i) To provide an efficient and less expensive method of educational instruction at a higher level in the context of national development.

(ii) To provide facilities to pursue higher education to all qualified and willing persons who had failed to join regular university courses due to personal and economic reasons or because of their inability to get admission to a regular college

(iii) To provide opportunities of academic pursuits to educated citizens through correspondence instruction without disturbing their present employment.

The University Grants Commission also encouraged the starting of correspondence courses and said that these courses are expected to cater to the following categories of students:

(1) Students who discontinued their formal education owing to pecuniary and other circumstances.

(2) Students in geographically remote areas.

(3) Students who had to discontinue their education because of lack of aptitude and motivation but who may later on become motivated.

(4) Students who cannot find a seat or do not wish to join a regular college or university department although they have the necessary qualifications to pursue higher education.

(5) Individuals who look upon education as a life-long activity and may either like to advance their knowledge in an existing discipline or to acquire knowledge in new areas.

Impressed by the potentialities of this form of distance education, i.e. correspondence courses, the Education Commission (1964-66) in India recommended strengthening of this system. There are now 14 State Open Universities and more than 200 universities which offer distance learning courses. A Committee appointed by the UGC has gone into the working of the correspondence institutions in the country.

The second type of distance education institutions in India are very few and new. Several countries of the world have started open universities to provide innovative education and to strengthen distance education. They are to be found in the UK, Germany, Spain, China, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Canada and Japan. The main features of open universities are: They are, like their conventional counterparts, autonomous bodies and are free to take their own decisions and formulate their courses. They use multi-media for instructional purposes-electronic media is an important component. There is a strong student support service. The material is prepared by a team of experts. Entry qualifications are flexible and relaxed, one can study according to his own pace of convenience. There is uniformity in the quality of education, i.e. the students have access to the same high quality education. The people working in these institutions devote their entire time to distance education. What is more, the Open University specializes in distance education and provides multi-media instruction to its students. In India we have been very slow in establishing full-fledged open universities. The Government of India took the initiatives in the early 70s when it appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of the then Vice-Chancellor of the IGNOU, G.Rama Reddy, to look into the feasibility of establishing a National Open University in the country. The Committee, after a good deal of deliberations, strongly favored the establishment of a National Open University. It said,

"*In situation of this type where the expansion of enrolments in higher education has to continue at a terrific pace and where available resources in terms of men and money are limited, the obvious solution, if proper standards are to be maintained and the demand for higher education from different sections of the people is to be met, is to adopt the Open University system with its provision of higher education on part-time basis. The group, therefore, recommends that the Government of India should establish as early as possible, a national Open University by an Act of parliament.*"

However, it was the Government of Andhra Pradesh which initiated steps earlier than other. Since then it seems to have caught on and a few other States in the country are showing interest in it. The University Enquiry Commission appointed by the Government of Bihar has suggested that the State Government should start an Open University to promote education in the non-formal sector. It argues that in the altered conditions of life and increasing rush for higher education, it is desirable to open avenues for non-formal education and encourage self-effort on the part of the candidates to study when they can spare time instead of forcing them to waste

their money and time by joining institutions with lesser infrastructure. The purpose of Open University has been very aptly described by this Commission as follows:

"The object of this university should be to help those who wish to get higher education through self-effort and to provide a wider range of courses of studies suited to the needs, occupational or personal, and interests of the students. The university system need not force anyone whether employed in some occupation or not, to join a college for receiving education for studying for a university degree. It should be open to all to employ their spare hours to learn through self-effort for qualifying themselves for the university degrees. The Open University should provide high quality of courses especially suited to the needs of such students and organize such guidance and aids which would help self-learning by those who wish to do so."

More than in the advanced countries, there is a strong case of promoting open education systems in a vast country like India. The conditions prevailing in the country demand this approach to education. It is accepted by all that there is tremendous pressure for education and this pressure cannot be met by starting formal institutions. The State has neither the resources nor the qualified personnel to expand formal education. Therefore, the present policy concerning education has to be re-examined critically. "The only hope lies in radical and innovative approach through the avenues of non-formal education and adoption of modern educational technology and encouraging self-learning." Realizing the utility and importance of distance education and with a view to strengthening it, the Government of India decided to set-up a National Open University. It was first announced by the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi in his broadcast to the nation in January 1985. Immediately after that the Ministry of Education initiated action for setting up this university, a Committee of distinguished educationists was appointed. Within six months, not only the project Report was prepared by Indira Gandhi National Open University, but also the Bill relating to its setting up was passed in the parliament and the University formally came into existence towards the end of September 1985. Its jurisdiction is the whole country. The origin of distance education lies basically in the philosophy that the society has a responsibility to provide educational opportunities to those who for some reason or the other cannot go to the conventional system.

CHAPTER 2
STATUS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA

The Open-Distance-Learning (ODL) system is a unique and challenging mode of education offered at the University level. This system provides ample opportunities for those who desire to have University education at their place of work or residence. This method is popularly known as Distance Education. It is perhaps the only way to meet the ever-increasing demand for Higher Education especially in a developing country like India. The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system is perhaps the only system that has been planned in such a way that it is able to cater to all those who desire to seek Higher Education in spite of the fact that they are in a disadvantageous position due to social, economic and other reasons. Also to cater to the increasing demand for Higher Education, flexibilities in terms of age, qualification, location, time, etc., have been introduced to the maximum extent.

There are 14 State Open Universities in India which have significantly contributed in the higher education in terms of students' enrollment which in turn increases the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) as well as creates a knowledge society.

2.1 DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY (1982)

The University, initially known as Andhra Pradesh Open University, came into being on 26th August 1982 through an Act of Andhra Pradesh State Legislature (APOU Act, 1982). It was renamed as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University on 7th December 1991 by the Government of Andhra Pradesh (APOU Act, 1992). The establishment of this University, the first of its kind in India provided opportunities of higher education to all sections of society and catering to the changing individual and social needs. The motto of the University is Education for all. In 1983, the University started functioning with a modest learner enrolment of 6,321 and 22 Study Centers. Since then there has been a steady growth in intake and an increase in the number of Study Centers. Presently, the total number of students on rolls in all the programs is about 4,50,000. Now the total study centers increased up to 200.

The University has set an example in the field of open learning by

- Providing access to a large number of heterogeneous learners cutting across the differences in age, gender, location and choice of courses.

- Creating a wide network of learner support systems.

- Reaching out to the unreached through multiple media including broadcast and telecast modes.

- Enhancing the interactivity of instruction through live phone-in and teleconferencing.

- Offering courses in three mediums of instruction - English, Telugu and Urdu.

- Giving hands on training in laboratory practice for Science and Technology Courses.

G. Rama Reddy Research Academy of Distance Education (GRADE):

The University established GRADE in 2001 to cater to the needs of distance teaching institutions, distance educators, researchers, policy makers, organizations and institutions with research interests for promoting distance education in the country.

2.2 VARDHAMAN MAHAVEER OPEN UNIVERSITY, KOTA (1987)

The Kota Open University was established by Rajasthan Legislative Assembly in 1987, which was later renamed as Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota (VMOU). It is the third oldest Open University in India. It focuses particularly on Humanities, Commerce, Library Science and Informatics. The University aims at the goal of seeking to educate those who are deprived under the conventional system of education. It is geographically distributed throughout Rajasthan, with six regional centers and about 10 study centers in different cities, in addition to a special Centre at New Delhi.

VMOU as an institution of Open Distance Learning intends to take education to individuals who are unable to leave home or workplace to seek education from a regular or conventional educational institution. By adopting multiple strategies like liberal admission criteria, delivering study material at affordable prices at the doorstep of the students, timely counselling and other student support services, flexible time schedule, etc. VMOU seeks to facilitate many students who, for multiple responsibilities or inadequacies of time, space and money have not been able to access higher education through conventional universities.

At present it is offering 80 Academic Programs which include Ph.D., M.Phil., Post Graduation, Graduation, P.G. Diploma, Diploma and Certificate Programs. In the inaugural year in 1987 there were only 9 Academic Programs in which only around 4000 students took admission.

2.3 NALANDA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY (1987)

The Nalanda Open University was established in March 1987 by an Ordinance, promulgated by the Government of Bihar. Nalanda Open University Act, 1987 was passed by the Bihar Legislature, replacing the Ordinance. It is the only University in the State of Bihar meant for imparting learning exclusively through the system of distance education. The University aims to provide educational opportunities to those who are unable to take up formal education and are still desirous to upgrade their educational qualifications and acquire knowledge in various fields of learning through the print medium (correspondence course), contact programs, study centers and mass media. At present, there are 10 schools operational under Nalanda Open University which offer Under Graduate, Post Graduate, Diploma, PG Diploma and Certificate programs.

2.4 YASHWANTRAO CHAVAN MAHARASHTRA OPEN UNIVERSITY (1989)

The State of Maharashtra has a long and rich tradition of educational reforms. It was therefore appropriate that the State realized the need of an open university. The Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) was established in July 1989. It is the fifth Open University in the country. The University offers several off-line programs and has also embarked on a number of innovative on-line initiatives. A technological leap was witnessed by the University with the launching of EduSat-based education, supported by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The University has established Virtual Learning Centers (VLC) in the State. Each of them has full-fledged two-way audio and video communication facilities. The University offers a wide range of programs from the short-term certificate level up to the research and doctoral level. These programs cover diverse academic disciplines and are coordinated by the eight academic schools of the University.

The University currently offers 200+ different academic programs comprising about hundred courses. Every year, on an average, 1, 50,000 new students are registered for various programs. The cumulative enrolment, as it stands today, is in excess of 29, 00,000 students. 11 Regional Centers and over 30 multi-program Study Centers provide various academic and student support services to these students. These Study Centers are distributed all over the State of Maharashtra.

2.5 MADHYA PRADESH BHOJ OPEN UNIVERSITY (1991)

Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University (MPBOU) was established under an Act of State Legislative Assembly OF Madhya Pradesh in 1991.

The University disseminates knowledge and quality education to different target group of learners irrespective of their age, gender, region, status and employment. MPBOU University provide easily accessible and quality higher education through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. One of the important objectives of the University, as mentioned in the Act, is the extension and expansion of Higher Education by reaching the unreached through various flexible means suited to the open and distance education mode using emerging Information and Communication Technology. In view of this objective maximum study centres of MPBOU are in those areas where there are no other systems of higher education in the vicinity of 30 km. The University also gives due emphasis to special target groups of learners coming from rural/tribal areas and those suffering from the physical disabilities.

One of the main objectives of the University is to develop and provide easily accessible system of higher education and training, by use of different modes of educational inputs such as lessons in print, text books, contact teaching, practical classes, TV/Radio/Video/Audio programs, using satellite communication, etc. The University has, by now, developed systems which are capable of providing quality higher education and training even in remote and less developed rural and tribal areas. A feature of the system is the orientation to take special care of the requirements, expectations and training needs of interested individuals, practicing professionals and students. Thus, the ultimate goal of the University is to provide higher education and training at the doorstep of the professionals, students and other stakeholders of education. Therefore, MPBOU is working earnestly for making higher education more accessible.

2.6 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY (1994)

The Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University (BAOU) is the seventh Open University in the country in terms of its establishment. It was established by the Act No. 14 of 1994 passed by the Gujarat State Legislature. The University offers 72 programs with an enrolment of more than 1,00,000 learners. The headquarters of the University is located at Ahmedabad. The University

has more than 507 Study Centers. It has jurisdiction over the whole State of Gujarat. It is open to all persons irrespective of classes, castes, creeds, religions or sex.

There are six schools, i.e. the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, School of Education, School of Commerce & Management and School of Computer Science, School of Science and School of Agriculture. The University is well on its course to provide opportunities for higher education to a large segment of the population and promote the educational well-being of the community in general.

2.7 KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY (1996)

The Karnataka State Open University established on 1st June 1996 by KSOU Act 1996, is considered to be a reputed Open University amongst the open learning institutions in the country. Keeping in view the educational needs of our country, in general, and the states in particular the policies and programs have been geared to cater to the needy.

The Karnataka State Open University came into being to achieve the following objectives:

• Democratizing Higher Education by taking it to the doorsteps of the learners

• Providing access to high quality education to all those who seek it, irrespective of age, region or formal qualifications.

• Offering need – based academic Programs by giving professional and vocational orientation to the program.

• Promoting and developing distance education in India

• Relaxed entry regulations

• Providing opportunities to study according to one's own pace and convenience

• Flexibility in choosing the combination of courses from a wide range of disciplines

• Providing opportunity to study from one's own chosen place and pace

2.8 TAMIL NADU OPEN UNIVERSITY (2002)

Tamil Nadu State Open University (TNOU) is the 10th Open University in the country, which was established in 2002. This University aims at benefitting the sections of the people who have been deprived of and denied access to higher education. The community of the deprived includes the destitute, the physically challenged, the working men and women, the economically weaker

and marginalized people, and the un-reached. Within a decade, since its existence, the TNOU has remarkably catered to the learning needs of more than 5 lakh students with over 100 programs, through 13 schools and 7 divisions. It has a well-knit network of students' support services with 4 zonal centers and constituent community colleges, 152 learning resource center (LRC), 165 Computer Program Centers, 195 Community Colleges, 10 General B.Ed. Program Study Centers (PSC), 13 Special B.Ed. Program Study Centers, 9 Special Centers in Prisons, 33 Off-Campus Centers, 3 Counselling and Physiotherapy Centers.

The Tamil Nadu Open University makes available socially relevant educational provisions that are learner centered, seamless and are of high quality by employing appropriate technologies to achieve equity in education, sustainable social transformation and composite national development towards becoming a Centre of Excellence in Open and Distance Learning (ODL). It helps in widening the access to higher education and by functioning as a catalyst to bridge social, including digital divides and to build a developed India.

2.9 PANDIT SUNDERLAL SHARMA OPEN UNIVERSITY (2005)

Pandit Sundarlal Sharma (Open) University (PSSOU) Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur. The University was established in the year with the main objective of providing wide scope of higher education to the aspirants. The study centers of the university are opened in the far flung areas of the state, especially in the tribal belt from Bastar to Sarguja. The academy of PSSOU aims at educating more and more people of rural socially economically backwards and to those who have aspired for education but can't manage to go far in distant cities.

2.10 UTTARKHAND OPEN UNIVERSITY (2005)

Uttarakhand Open University is the 12th State Open University set up at Haldwani, Nainital in Uttarakhand. The objective behind setting up Uttarakhand Open University (UOU) was to cater to the educational needs of the target groups through the open systems of learning and create skilled and knowledge-based human resource for speedy uplift and development of the State. The University operates through a network of eight Regional Centers and more than 300 Study Centers across the State. The education and training are being imparted through various means of communication that include study material, counseling, workshops, seminars, contact programs

or combination of any two or more of such means. The study material is designed in self-learning mode that makes distance learning effective.

2.11 KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY (2006)

Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University was established to provide quality higher education through open and distance learning to reach the unreached of the society to create knowledge based society.

KKHSOU, established under the provision of the KKHSOU, Act 2005 was enacted by the Govt. of Assam. It is the thirteenth of its kind and the only State Open University in the whole of North East of India.

The main objective of the university is to develop and provide easily accessible modes of quality higher education and training with the use of latest educational technology. Because of the inherent flexibility in terms of pace and place of learning, methods of evaluation etc., the university holds the promise of providing equal opportunities for higher education and bringing into its fold the deprived and denied sections in the mainstream. The very purpose of the University is to promote education to reach the unreached through the Open and Distance Learning System and the motto of the University is ''Education beyond Barriers of age, academic background and geographical boundaries.''

The number of study centers under this university has witnessed a giant leap having the numbers increased to 220 from the time of its inception when the number of study centers was 79.

2.12 ODISSHA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY (2015)

The Odisha State Open University have jurisdiction over the whole of the State of Odisha. The University focuses on education, research and training by diversity on means of distance and continuing education including the use of new educational technology available to common man at affordable cost. Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates issued by the University shall be treated at par with Degrees/Diplomas issued by other Universities established by centre/states and recognized by UGC. Emphasis is placed on Skill Based Education to enhance employability of the students. Besides Skill Based and vocational courses. The OSOU focuses on Teacher Education, Business & Management Studies, Computer Science courses, Engineering Science (short-term), paramedical courses, agriculture and foreign language courses. Add-on courses are

offered targeting students already admitted in Undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the State. The headquarter of the University is located at Sambalpur.

Objectives of the University: -

- To strive for excellence in the field of Higher Education by using latest methods & technologies;
- To provide best quality materials supplemented by training, workshop, hands-on practices, contact programs, using audio-video resources available through OER & MOOCS;
- To give emphasis on Skill based vocational courses for promoting the employment opportunities
- To make full use of educational technologies
- To adopt the best practices available in the field;
- To promote innovation in teaching, learning, training and research;
- To provide quality education at affordable costs;
- To reach out to people leaving in rural/remote locations in the State;

2.13 NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY (1997)

The Government of West Bengal established Netaji Subhas Open University in the year 1997 to commemorate the birth centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the great son of Bengal, and was entrusted with a noble cause and a new challenge to impart higher education through distance mode. The University started its functioning from historic building of Shri. S. C.Bose. Later, the Headquarters has been shifted to its own building at Salt Lake. The basic purpose of establishing the Open University in the State is to educate the disadvantaged groups of the society in the State. By disadvantaged section, we mean women, rural people, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, physically challenged, minority etc.

ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY

The Chancellor

The Vice Chancellor

| Registrar | Director/OC | Finance Officer | Controller of Examination |

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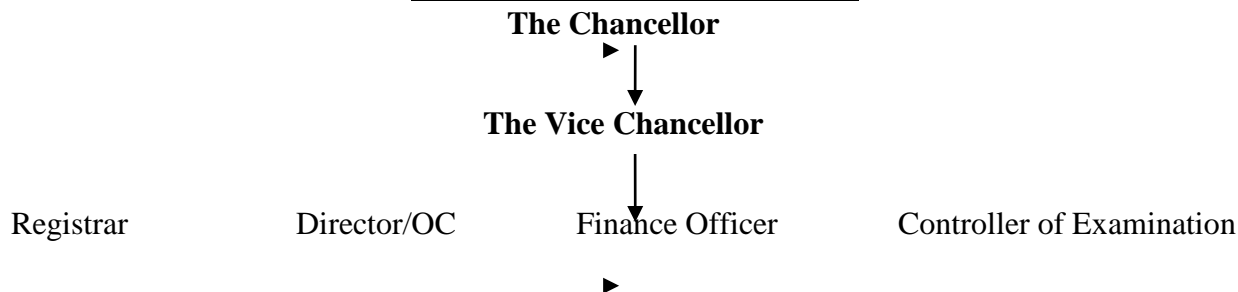
The unique features of Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) is: -

Flexibility- Students can learn and study at the same time. Flexibility is the biggest advantage of the distance learning. This also stands true in case of a working professional. Not everyone has a luxury of taking their own time to finish their studies. For those who have to take a break from studies to start working, these courses are a boon and thus provide an opportunity to pursue higher education.

Saves Time and Energy- Students spend a lot of time and energy on commuting between long distances. Hence, students can visit their nearest Study Centre for collecting their Self- learning materials and could stay at home and enhance their knowledge. In this way, the rural-urban divide can also be reduced to some extent.

Study at one's own pace- Not everyone has the same pace of learning. Some students learn quickly while others need few more time to grasp. Students can thus learn according to their own comfortable pace. The university represents such an ideal and thus framed its examination pattern accordingly.

Saves Money- These courses are always cheaper compared to their on-campus counterparts. Thus, it can easily reach widely cutting across discriminatory boundaries.

Convenient- If a student is little comfortable with the basic computer knowledge, then the system of ICT by the University is a boon for them. With a click of a button, they can do every from the start to the end. Even they can complete their assignments through the method of ICT. Therefore, to implement these ideals, the University presented Teaching Methods, Keeping in tune with these ideals.

Student Centric-The University allows its learners to complete a particular course within a stipulated period. One learner can complete the Bachelor Degree program within a minimum period of 3 years. But the registration remains valid up to 5 years. In case of the 2-year Post Graduate degree program, one can complete the course within 4 years from his registration. This flexibility helps the learners in completing the course at their own pace. There is another advantage of the NSOU program is that one student may clear his/ her backlog paper of any semester with the papers of current semester. By this provision, the learners can save their year/ time also.

TEACHING METHODS

1. Self instruction materials

2. Audio-Video CD

3. Personal Contact Program

4. Gyan-Vani FM Channel

5. ICT systems

The NSOU's student centric approach is based on 3Es

Engage- Updated Syllabus, job oriented course curricula, SLM, A/V lecture, Virtual class

Empower- Counselling, PCP, SLP, Workshop, Lab counselling

Excel- placement, promotion

TABLE 1: ENROLMENT IN OPEN UNIVERSITIES (2009-10)

NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY	ALL CATEGORIES			SC STUDENTS			ST STUDENTS		
	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
BRAOU	105425	74443	179868	21256	15009	36265	6623	4677	11300
NOU	20076	10356	30432	1757	907	2664	558	288	846
PT. SUNDERLAL SHARMA OU	10046	6881	16927	1699	1163	2862	1780	1219	2999
BAOU	22638	17161	39799	4511	3420	7931	1562	1184	2746
KSOU	57142	49719	106861	7168	6236	13404	3439	2992	6431
M P BHOJ OU	59035	34143	93178	10667	6170	16837	7142	4130	11272
YCMOU	189166	122242	311408	19814	12804	32618	6656	4301	10957
VMOU	35926	19953	55879	4731	2627	7358	3942	2189	6131
TNOU	34080	23070	57150	6264	4241	10505	249	168	417
U.P.RAJARSHI TANDON OU	13558	9095	22653	1228	823	2051	31	21	52
UOU	410	215	625	32	17	49	10	6	16
KKHSOU	12509	9943	22452	1378	1095	2473	1529	1216	2745
IGNOU	1535701	932507	2468208	114247	69373	183620	131694	79967	211661
TOTAL	2119364	1326290	3445654	198726	126668	325394	165843	102798	268641

* Manjulika Srivastava

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CHAPTER 3

STATUS OF ENROLLED STUDENTS OF NSOU

Brief history of launching of different courses (phase wise)

Netaji Subhas Open University started to offer courses from July 1998 with 31 Study Centers spreading the state of West Bengal with a Bachelor Degree Program (BDP) in Arts & Commerce. Since January 1999 further 5 study centers were opened with Arts & Commerce Courses under the BDP. The University started Bachelor Degree Program in Science subjects from January, 2000 session. The Post Graduate Degree Program in Science subject (Mathematics) and Arts Subjects (History and Social Work) along with Commerce were started from January, 2003 onwards when the number of study centers reached to 72. Further, the courses of Zoology and Geography was introduced in the year 2006-07. It gradually evolved throughout the state of West Bengal and today, in 2016, the university has 109 study centers in total, throughout the state. Further, the year-wise estimation of the growth of study centers haven been dealt with in the following sections.

After the preliminary developmental phase for a certain span of time, the students' volume of the University can be traced evidently from the year 2006 onwards in the form of comparative parameters over last 10 years. A stage-wise comparative statement of Admission Data is provided so that we could get a clear picture of the students' enrollment over these years and could trace the fast growth of the university in all these years.

From the tabular and graphical representation of the growth indicators given below, it can be deduced that the University has recorded an amazingly phenomenal and impressive over 30.6% average annual growth rate in the enrollment of students from all cross-sections of society for access to higher education. As of 2015-2016, 53,942 students are admitted at 109 study centers (came up till 2016) across the state of West Bengal. This is indeed a remarkably steep rise from 39,716 students in 2005-06 (within the span of 10 years).

In the year 1998, the number of Study Centers was only 35. As of now, i.e., 2016, the number has increased to 109, registering an average annual growth rate of 211.5% throughout the long span of about 18 years. Some more study centers are coming up within a few months.

In 2001-2002 academic sessions, the number of courses offered by the University was only 15. In 2016, the number of courses reached 64 which again show the average annual growth rate of 326.7% in a span of these 15 years.

GROWTH INDICATORS
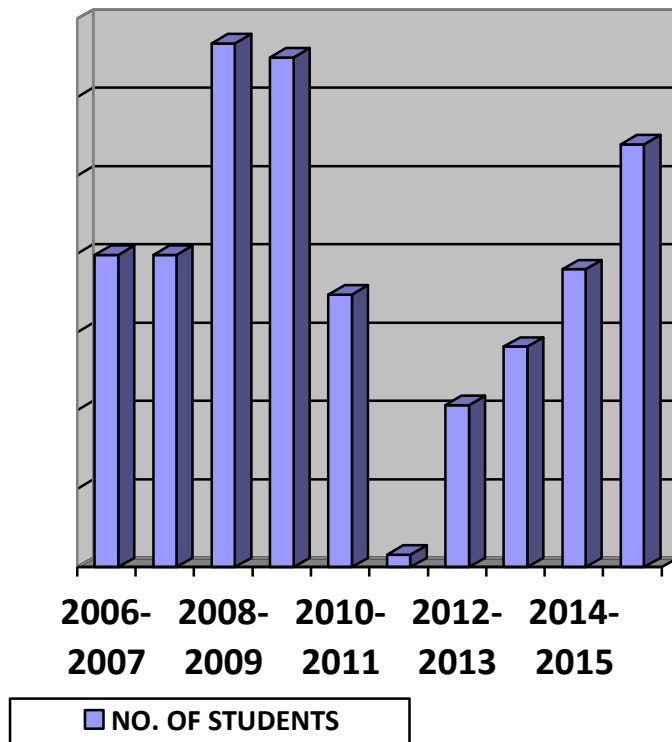
YEAR	NO. OF STUDENTS enrolled
2006-07	39,883
2007-08	39,885
2008-09	66,881
2009-10	65,048
2010-11	34,775
2011-12*	1,612
2012-13	20,683
2013-14	28,155
2014-15	38,025
2015-16	53,942

*No admission for BDP & PG

No. of students admitted in each year during 2006-07 to 2015-16
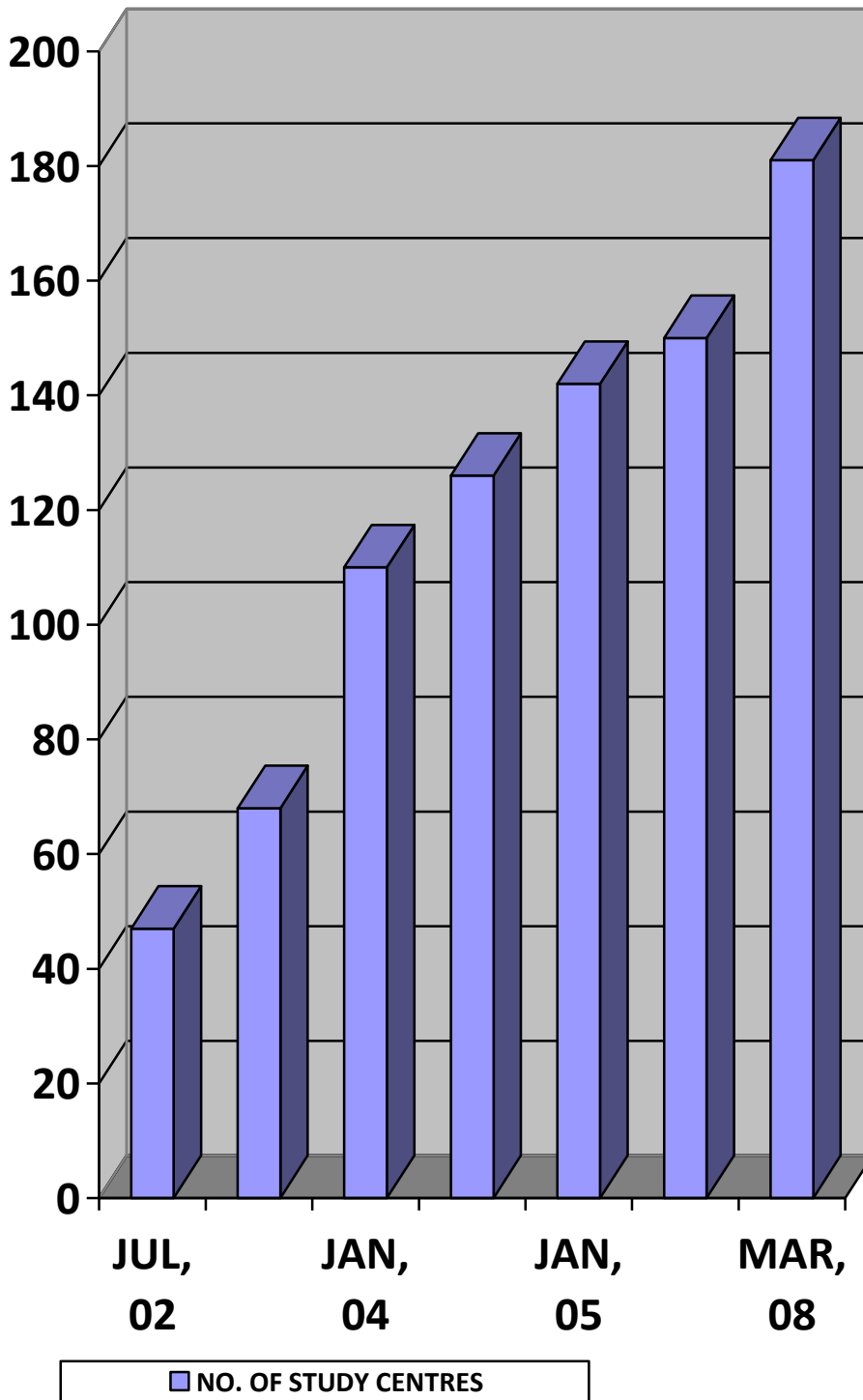
YEAR	NO. OF STUDY CENTRES (BDP+PG)
1998	35
1999	36
2002	45
2003	55
2004	72
2005	80
2006	84
2007	90
2008	94
2010	95
2012	96
2013	98
2014	102
2015	108
2016	109

Chart x-axis labels: JUL, 02 | JAN, 04 | JAN, 05 | MAR, 08

Legend: NO. OF STUDY CENTRES

No. of study centers increased over the period since its inception
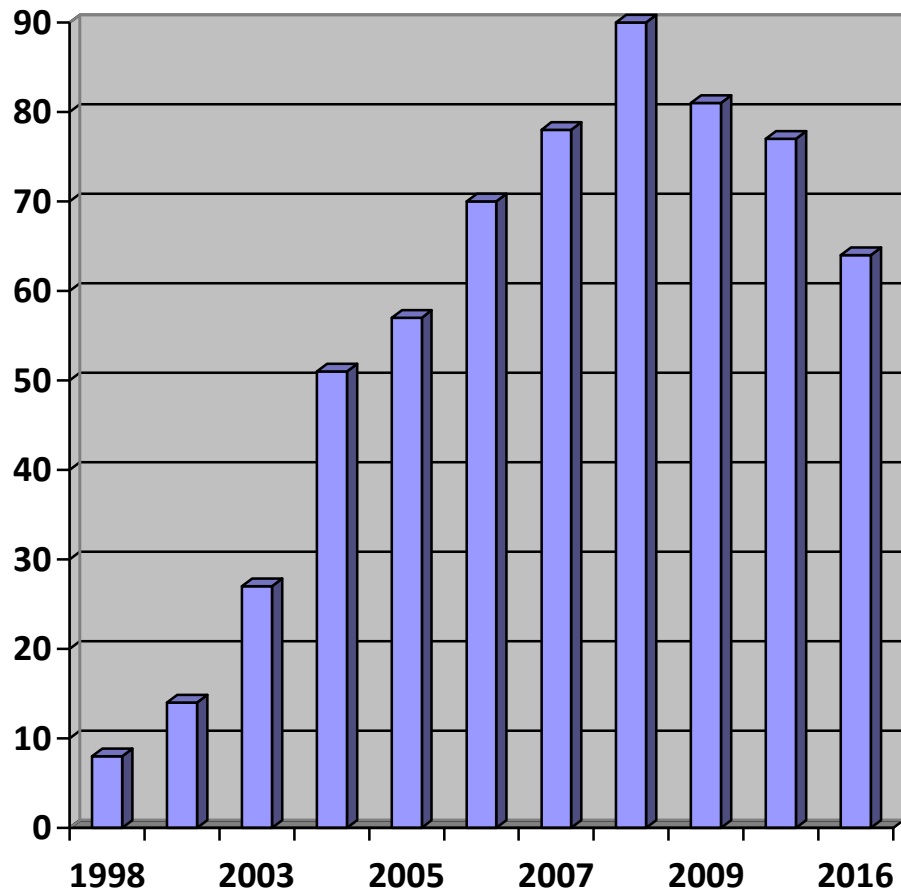
YEAR	COURSES
1998	08
2000	14
2003	27
2004	51
2005	57
2006	70
2007	78
2008	90
2009	81
2010-15	77
2016	64

No. of courses increased over the period since its inception

Student's Enrollment and No. of Graduates of NSOU

YEAR	YEAR-WISE ENROLLMENT	PASS OUT (Certificate issued)	CUMULATIVE ENROLLMENT
1998-99	236	xx	xx
1999-2000	640	xx	876
2000-01	1,019	xx	1,895
2001-02	1,400	xx	3,295
2002-03	3,482	564	6,213
2003-04	16,619	1005	21,827
2004-05	22,801	2215	42,413
2005-06	39,716	3188	78,941
2006-07	39,883	6307	1,12,517
2007-08	39,885	7605	1,44,797
2008-09	66,881	6658	2,05,020
2009-10	65,048	8364	2,61,704
2010-11	34,775	56647	2,39,832
2011-12	1,612	35737	2,05,707
2012-13	20,683	5372	2,21,018
2013-14	29,383	7296	2,43,105
2014-15	40,203	7533	2,75,775
2015-16	53,942	13091	3,16,626
Total certificate issued		1,61,582	xx

N.B.: Data compiled from the documents submitted to DEC and DEB for different years.

STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT ON THE BASIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION: -

The distribution of the students who are enrolled in Netaji Subhas Open University during the last four years, on the basis of Gender and Caste are described below: - (in percentage)

GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS' ENROLLED ON THE BASIS OF THE COURSES TAKEN IN NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY: -

Now, the details of the students' actual status on the basis of the courses they are enrolled in are stated below: -

	BDP		**PG**		**VOCATIONAL**	
	MALE	*FEMALE*	*MALE*	*FEMALE*	*MALE*	*FEMALE*
2012	64.39%	35.61%	54.2%	45.8%	47.94%	52%
2013	63.9%	36.11%	52%	48%	53.4%	46.7%
2014	64.63%	35.38%	56.3%	43.7%	50.8%	49.2%
2015	65.33%	34.68%	56.7%	43.2%	45.88%	54.12%

In the above table, it can be analyzed that the male students are higher in number than the female students in most of the courses especially academic courses. The reason is mainly due to the societal inclination towards educating the male members of a family. However, a little rise in the number of female students in case of the vocational courses may be seen. Though the female participation in ODL programs is less than male participation, the ratio is being increased in vocational courses.

CASTE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS' ENROLLED ON THE BASIS OF THE COURSES TAKEN IN NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY: -

In this section, the caste distribution of the students of the university on the basis of their program is stated below: -

	BDP		PG		VOCATIONAL	
	SC	ST	SC	ST	SC	ST
2012	20.33%	4.4%	17.76%	2.71%	16.45%	9.20%
2013	22.14%	5.1%	19.02%	2.87%	15.13%	5.28%
2014	22.66%	5.0%	21.98%	3.93%	17.59%	4.93%
2015	23.64%	3.5%	22.81%	3.93%	17.42%	2.97%

This table, unlike the previous one, of gender distribution is continuous and do not have change of parameters within the comparing categories. It represents the increase in ratio in SC's and ST's representation every year. This, lesser representation of certain groups of learners, is again due to the societal inequality that has aroused due to the lack of consciousness created mainly from the dearth of opportunity since time immemorial to certain sections of our society.

ROLE OF NSOU IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women Empowerment means Mother India empowered"- Jawaharlal Nehru.

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world but the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. The rise of feminist ideas has led to the improvement in women's condition throughout the world, in recent times. In India too, women education and empowerment has been the major preoccupation of both the Government and the Civil Society as it plays a very important role in the development of the country by helping in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. An educated woman helps education of

their girl children and can provide a better guidance to them. Educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate.

The major obstacle lies in the fact that Gender Discrimination still persists in India and lot more needs to be done in the field of women education in India. The gap in the Male-Female literacy rate is just the simple indicator. According to 2001 Census, the male literacy is more than 75% and the female literacy is just 54.16%. However, according to 2011 Census, with the decadal growth of 9.8%, the male literacy rate rose to 82.14% and female literacy rate to 65.46%.

According to the Country Report of the Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a weak position to execute power.'' Women becomes empowered through collective reflections and decision-making. The parameters of empowerment are:

- Building positive image and self-confidence
- Developing ability to think critically
- Building up group cohesion and fostering decision-making and action
- Ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change
- Encouraging group action in order to bring about change in the society
- Providing the means for economic independence

Distance Education has a tremendous impact in women's education and empowerment. Many studies were conducted to find out the factors that limit women's access to education. It is seen that women's access to education is limited by many factors like social, economic, cultural and geographical factors. Culture, customs and traditions come in the way of access to education for women in many under developed and developing countries. Even today in the villages and in some orthodox families, people strongly assert that women's place is only at home. Social taboos like safety for girls, abuse, violence etc. prevent women from education. Increasing cost of education during admission to school and colleges prevent parents from sending girls to colleges. In case of remote areas, proper access to schools and colleges are not available too. As girls are not allowed to travel in those areas, they were not given education. Distance Education works like a miracle in promoting education to them. Women tend to join Distance Education system mainly due to these reasons: -

- Flexibility of the system
- Earning while learning

- Early Marriage

- Better Marriage Prospects

- Low fee structure

- Learning at home

The impacts of distance education on women are mainly due to the following five factors: -

- Improved social status

- Enhanced Self Image

- Gained self confidence

- Earning while learning

- Promotion in jobs

Distance Education is revolution of its kind in the field of education. Breaking the conventional norms and reaching out to the masses for which higher education is a mirage. The distance mode of learning has indeed brought a perceptible change in the lives of millions of students across the globe unlike the earlier times when education was limited only to a few sections of society.

The advantages of Distance Education for women learners are:

- To improve career opportunities

- To inculcate self-confidence

- To help attain multiple degrees

- To update their skills

- A second chance of learning

- Acquisition of knowledge

- Change in socialization pattern

- Inculcate better decision-making capacity

- To earn respect in family and community

- Networking and communication opportunities

- Broadened scope and vision

- Flexibility in time and locality

- Learning freedom and doorstep education

- Assists in facing challenges of life

- Increases the literacy rate of the country

- Empowers women culturally, educationally and socially

Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women in India have been recognized as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas: bringing women together from all spheres of life to fight for their rights or a cause. Since the overall empowerment of women is crucially dependent on economic empowerment, women through these SHGs work on a range of issues such as health, nutrition, agriculture, forestry, etc. besides income generation activities and seeking micro credit.

If we look up at the scenario of our own state of West Bengal we will see that the Male-Female Literacy Rate [Ac. to 2011 Census] were 81.69% for males and 66.57% for females with the overall growth of 76.26%. Netaji Subhas Open University, being the sole state-funded Open University, striving for the mission 'To Reach the Unreached' is naturally take the responsibility to educate the women population of the state who do not have proper access to education otherwise. If we see the students' enrolment in terms of female students, we find that Netaji Subhas Open University's contribution is very significant. The female student enrolment is very significant in this University. The percentage of female students in vocational courses from women is also very encouraging because the vocational training gives them an opportunity for self-employment by which they become economically independent and contribute to their family.

Women enrolment in NSOU

	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
2012	35.61%	45.8%	52%
2013	36.11%	48%	46.7%
2014	35.38%	43.7%	49.2%
2015	34.68%	43.2%	54.12%

So, it may be inferred that the establishment of open university like Netaji Subhas Open University helps the women to continue their further studies like Bachelors' Degree Program, PG or Vocational courses. Therefore, the Open University system is giving the opportunity of higher

education to the people residing in remote areas and has increased the access of the disadvantaged groups like females.

GENDER EMPOWERMENT MEASURE: -

The **Gender Empowerment Measure** (GEM) is an index designed to measure of gender equality. GEM is the United Nations Development Program's attempt to measure the extent of gender inequality across countries, based on estimates of women's relative economic income, participations in high-paying positions with economic power, and access to professional and parliamentary positions.

The GEM was designed to measure whether women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making. The GEM tends to be more agency focused (what people are actually able to do) than well-being focused. The GEM is determined using three basic indicators. They are: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, percentage of women in economic decision making positions (including administrative, managerial, professional and technical occupations) and female share of income (earned incomes of males vs. females).

GEM in India is solely divided on the following basis: -

PROCESSES: - (Change in power relations)

- ➢ -Build organizational capacity
- ➢ -Forge participation inclusion
- ➢ -Strengthen leadership

DIMENSIONS: -

- ➢ Social/ Cultural Dimensions
    - o -Build conductive environment
    - o -Promote equitable relation between men and women

- Economic/ Entrepreneurial Dimensions

    o -Enhance Income

    o -Greater access to services

    o -Greater control over resources

- Political/Legal Dimensions

- -Enhance participation

    o -Increase voice and Decision-making

    -Empower women legally to realize their rights and entitlements.

Therefore, it can be deduced that the female students of NSOU are fulfilling most of the criteria of GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure). If we refer to our general observation deduced from the questionnaire research we would see that the time flexibility of the classes is student-centric, especially designed keeping in mind the necessity of the female students, so that they could manage their studies alongside their family responsibilities, as ODL system provides education cutting across different age-groups. As a result, it enhances spontaneous female participation and results in the all-round socio-economic and political dimensions of women education and empowerment (as mentioned in GEM designed by UNDP).

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF DATA BASED ON THE STUDENTS' SURVEY

If we talk about the Institutional Learning System, we would see that many new of methods have been developed to cope up with the practical needs of the society in terms of demands for higher education. The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system is one of them. It is usually assumed that, the learners in the ODL system are different from other system due to the institutional and structural uniqueness of this system. To understand the characteristics of these learners, both social and economic, we need to analyze few data and have to conclude about their socio-economic status. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the target population of the study was the students of Netaji Subhas Open University from all the programs (BDP, PG and Vocational). We undertook the questionnaire survey method to find out the results.

The questionnaire was primarily divided into nine sections, along with sub-sections. There were bilingual options, both in English and Bengali so that the medium of instructions of the students do not become a hurdle in the way of obtaining true results. The questionnaire starts with the learners' name along with program, year and subject of enrollment and the name of the Study Centre to which he/she is enrolled. This column is provided so that it becomes easier to segregate different student on the basis of their respective programs i.e., BDP, PG and Vocational and analyze their data accordingly.

Next comes Section-1, with which the questionnaire starts. It asks the respondents about their personal information like their gender, religion to which they belong to, their caste affiliations, their age, their marital status and the number of children they have. These questions can truly be termed as personal questions and it naturally highlights the societal characteristics of the respondents to some extent. This section contains tick-marked questions where the candidates are required to answer within a particular framework as it is option-bounded.

It is followed by Section-2, where we come across the questions that eventually depicts the family background of the respondents. It asks them about the number of members in their family, their family structure i.e., whether it is a joint or a nuclear family. Next it asks the respondents to provide with the demographic details of their family members i.e., relation with the respondents,

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their age, sex, education, occupation and monthly income. It is asked due to the fact that the family of a particular individual has a great effect on their socio-economic, political, cultural and psychological life. Thus if the details of the family of our respondents are obtained, we could get a deep insight into their socio-economic background of society and its functioning is nothing but a larger unit of family and its functioning. This section also contains multiple choice option based questions.

In the next section i.e., Section-3, we asked the respondents about their local environment like place of their residence as to whether it is in a village or a town or a city. They are also enquired about the jurisdiction of their residence (Panchayat, Municipality or Corporation) as it would provide a clear picture about their residential area. They are further asked about the distance they have to cover while commuting from their residence to their respective study centers along with their mode of commuting like on foot, by bicycle, bike, car, train, bus, auto and others. The respondents are also asked about each day conveyance charge and the time taken for covering the distance. Next the respondents answered about the facilities that are available to them at their residence from among various options like bicycle, motorbike, car, landline telephone, mobile phones, amenities like electricity, safe drinking water, magazines, newspaper, radio, TV, desktop, laptop, internet through mobile and computer, cooking gas, refrigerator, washing machine. Further, they answered about the distance of the nearest railway station, nearest post office, nearest bank, nearest public library, nearest telephone booth, nearest police station (in Kilometers) from their residence. The social, family, economic and technological amenities a learner enjoys must presumably have some impact on his studies. Therefore, we tried to record the amenities enjoyed by individual learner from his immediate surroundings mainly in this section both through option based as well as through few descriptive sections.

In Section-4, the respondents are asked about their employment data, which directly implicates their personal financial positions, therefore deciding a major part in their economic status. They are asked about present employment status as to whether they are employed or unemployed. A conditional clause is kept in the questionnaire i.e., if the respondents are employed, they should provide the details of their employment, mainly of their job type i.e., whether they are engaged in Government services, Private services, Business, Private Tuitions or are engaged in other unorganized sectors like Mason and Labour-based work or rickshaw, tractor, car, truck, bus

driver. They are also asked about their first employment in details. This section has a special significance as the ODL system has provide their learners the opportunity of 'learning while earning'. This section contains both option-type and descriptive-type questions.

Next, the respondents are asked about their academic data in Secton-5, where the year in which they completed their HS examination is asked, along with the percentage they obtained in that particular examination. Their elective and subsidiary subjects were also asked along with their year of admission and the expected year they would complete the course as it could help us to analyze the retention capacity of the system. Further, the respondents were asked about the reason for pursuing their education through distance mode. Here, they were placed with the options rather than description of their reason. These were judged mainly on the basis of three parameters- Time, Financial, Distance and shortage of marks failing to reach the strict cut-off requirement of other Universities.

The mass media play a very important role in reaching out to the students of ODL system as a substitute to classrooms. Radio and TV programs were conducted by IGNOU so that lessons could be taught to students through these media. Although, in very recent times, ICT-enabled programs are becoming more popular source through their online classes due to widespread usage of smartphones and internet access, even by the people residing in the remote areas. Therefore, our next Section, i.e., Section-6 asked the respondents about the time they invest in viewing or listening to Gyan-Darshan or Gyan-Vani programs.

Section-7, along with Section-8, turns out to be the most vital one, if we talk about the over-all development and improvement of the university. It acts as an input mechanism, through which we could get an insight into the information on the Examination and Study Center and their valuable comments on the Evaluation of the Learners' Support Services. The details of the questions that were asked in this section were discussed and explained in details with tabular and graphical representation, on a comparative basis among the programs (BDP, PG, Vocational), in the later part.

Last, but not the least, Section-9 deals with the open-ended descriptive type questions, where the respondents were given the freedom to write in their own way about their opinion regarding the functioning of the University. They were asked the reason as to why they have chosen this

University beside all others and the same goes for their subjects as well. They were also asked to provide suggestions regarding the counselling sessions and the academic counsellors, along with other specific comments.

NOTE: - The primary data collection through sample survey was of 100 BDP students, 55 PG students and 145 Vocational students.

STUDY CENTRE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LEARNERS: -

Study Centre	Sample Size Taken
Maharaja Manindra Chandra College (A-04)	22
Shibpur Dinabandhu College (A-08)	18
Gurudas College of Commerce (A-10)	16
Nistarini College Study Centre (B-07)	20
Bijoy Krishna Girls College (C-08)	21
Dr. Kanailal Bhattacharya College (E-09)	12
Ananda Chandra Collge (F-02)	18
Prabhu Jagat Bandhu Collge (F-09)	16
ChandrakonaVidyasagar Mahavidyalaya(G-03)	12
Enterprise Development Institute (P-01)	15
Shivananda Health Society (P-19)	20
Pranavananda Institute of Management and Technology (P-21)	14
Shanti Devi Vidyaniketan (V-10)	20
Anjali Social Welfare Research Foundation (V-27)	16
Anindya Yoga Society (V-30)	20
Nabadwip bakultala School of Education(V-40)	20
Vidyasagar Foundation (W-22)	20
Total	300

The first section of the questionnaire deals with the respondents' personal information. There are 5 major sub-divisions to the section which are dealt with as follows: -

Gender:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of gender, are given in the above table. Of the learners included in the survey, we can see that there are about 52% male students and 48% female students, out of 300 respondents which is a very good number in terms of gender representation. Furthermore, it can be seen that the balance is tilted towards female candidates when it comes to PG students and again slightly tilted towards

female students in case of Vocational students. But male candidates outnumbered the female candidates in case of BDP students.

PARAMETERS	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
GENDER	MALE	58%	45.5%	49.65%
	FEMALE	42%	54.5%	50.34%

Age:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of age group, are given in the above table. The majority of the students belong to the age group of 18-25 years. Next comes the students belonging to the age group of 26-35 years in terms of strength. There are students enrolled in the age group of 36-45 and also above 45 in case of vocational studies. Thus it can be concluded that although young population in the age group 18-25 years is seen to have more desire for higher studies, it is also found that some of the students are above the age of 40. Thus it appears that they are generally going back to studies after taking employment or after being settled in vocational or some other engagements. Thus it is noticed that the learners enroll cutting across age boundaries. 18.93% of the respondents do not answer to this question.

PARAMETERS	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
	18-25	52%	46.5%	37.93%
	26-35	36%	30%	42.06%
AGE	36-45	9%	14.5%	9.65%
	45 ABOVE	0%	0%	2.06%
	NO MENTION	3%	9%	6.93%

Category:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of caste category, are given in the above table. On the basis of the sample survey, we can come to the conclusion that the majority of students belong to the general category of about 64%. Next, 18% of students come from OBC category, 15% from SC category and 3% from ST category. We did not get the reply from 1% of the total respondents perhaps due to the fact that they do not want to reveal their caste affiliations.

PARAMETERS	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
CATEGORY	GENERAL	70%	81.83%	54.48%
	OBC	10%	7.27%	26.89%
	SC	15%	7.27%	15.17%
	ST	5%	0%	2.75%
	NO MENTION	0%	3.63%	0.68%

Marital Status:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of marital status, are given in the above table. On the basis of the sample survey, we can come to the conclusion that 33% of learners are still pursuing education after marriage. This system of learning is beneficial for both male and female candidates especially for the female ones as they have to carry out their family responsibility side by side of pursuing their studies.

PARAMETERS	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	36%	25.6%	36.55%
	UNMARRIED	63%	74.4%	63.44%
	NO MENTION	1%	0%	0%

Family Structure:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of their respective family structures, are given in the above table. On the basis of the sample survey, we can derive that 41% students' hails from the joint family system while 44% students come from small/nuclear family and we do not get the picture of family structure of 15% students as they did not mention their family structure details.

PARAMETERS	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
FAMILY STRUCTURE	JOINT	40%	36.6%	42.75%
	NUCLEAR	44%	56.36%	46.20%
	NO MENTION	16%	2.06%	11.03%

Residential Area:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of their respective family structures, are given in the above table. On the basis of the sample survey, we can derive that 52% of the students have a rural background and hails from Panchayat areas

while 33% students are from Municipality areas along with 13% students coming from Corporation areas constitutes the urban population of the university of total 46%. 3% students do not respond to the question of their residential area.

	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
RESIDENTIAL AREA	PANCHAYAT	54%	27.3%	60%
	MUNICIALITY	27%	52.72%	28.96%
	CORPORATION	13%	16.36%	10.34%
	NO MENTION	6%	1.82%	0.68%

Mode of Communication:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of their mode of commuting to the study centre from the residence, are given in the above table. The result shown in the above table reveals the fact about their mode of commuting from their respective residence to the study centers. We can see that among all the 300 respondents, 2.33% of them avail auto. 12.33% respondents go to the study center by bike. 42.33% avail bus which is the majority. 8% use personal cycles for travelling. 10.66% travels by foot which means that the residence is in the locality of the study centre. 20% of the respondents travel by train.1.66% travel by some means of vehicles.

	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
MODE OF COMMUTING TO STUDY CENTRE	AUTO	3%	1.81%	2.06%
	BIKE	27%	12.72%	2.06%
	BUS	35%	60%	40.68%
	CAR	1%	0%	0.68%
	CYCLE	9%	0%	10.34%
	FOOT	11%	12.72%	9.65%
	TRAIN	8%	10.9%	32.41%
	OTHERS	3%	0%	1.38%

Employment Status:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of the employment status of the students who have responded to the sample survey, are given in the above table. We can derive that 37% of the respondents are employed in various fields and 60 %

of the respondents are not engaged in any sort of employment at present, while pursuing their courses.

EMPLOYEMENT STATUS	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
	EMPLOYED	32%	40%	40%
	UNEMPLOYED	63%	59.18%	60%
	NO MENTION	5%	0%	0%

Reasons for pursuing Education through Distance Mode:

The Percentage of Learners in BDP, PG and Vocational courses, subdivided on the basis of the reasons for them to enroll in distance mode, are given in the above table. We can derive that 39% of respondents enroll in this system because they do not have enough time to attend the conventional system whereas 30.33% suffer from financial constraint. The very few students of 7.33% have failed to cope up with the strict cut-off policy of conventional system may be just with few marks, also stands as one of the reasons for the enrollment in distance mode of education. Lastly, a miniscule percentage of students also faced the problem to cover huge distance from inaccessible areas and thus availed the facility of 'learning at home'. 22.3% of the respondents have not answered to this section.

REASONS FOR PURSUING EDUCATION THROUGH DISTANCE MODE	SUB-PARAMETER	BDP	PG	VOCATIONAL
	DISTANCE CONSTRAINT	0%	1.81%	0.68%
	FINANCIAL CONSTRAINT	28%	16.36%	36.24%
	TIME CONSTRAINT	50%	45.4%	29.65%
	SHORTAGE OF MARKS	9%	17.36%	3.44%
	NO MENTION	13%	18.18%	30.34%

In the next segment, we have discussed about the students' support services in the concluding part of the sample survey, where we put forward some questions based on the first-hand everyday experiences of the respondents. Again, we have divided it in three sections of BDP, PG and Vocational. The questions were put forth following the answers of the respondents as given below: -

Section 7: Information on Examination & Study Centers

(*NM denotes 'No Mention')

(i) Enrollment number received in time?
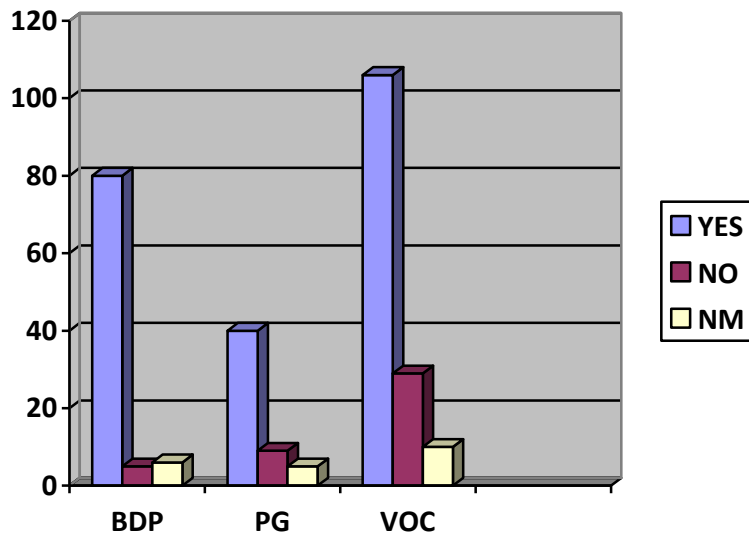
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	88	40	106
NO	5	9	29
NM	6	5	10

(ii) Similarity of the term-end papers with that of the assignment papers?
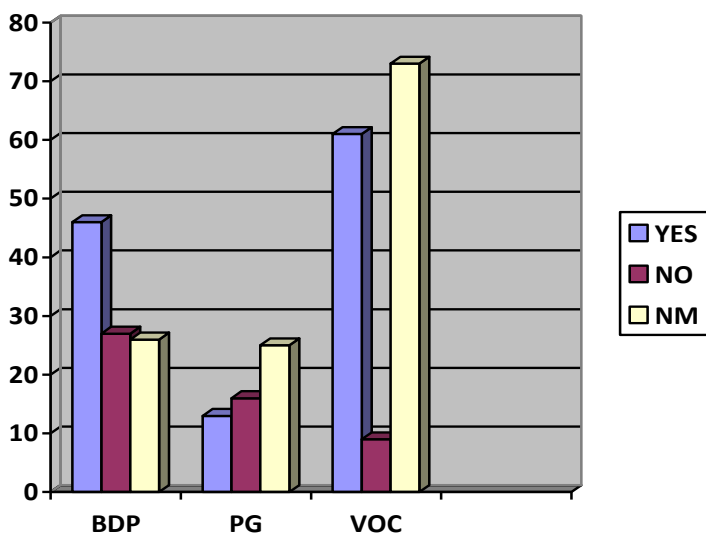
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	46	13	61
NO	27	16	9
NM	26	25	73

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(iii) Assignment question papers received in time?
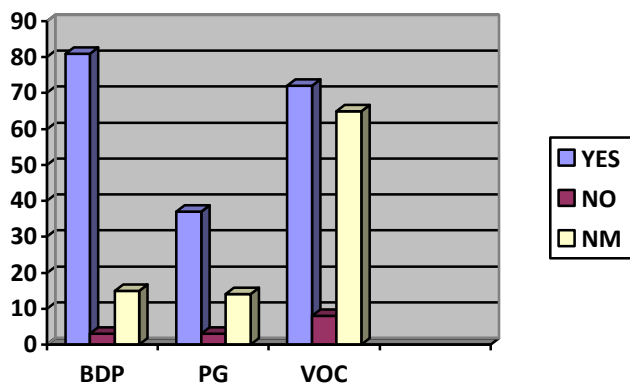
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	81	37	72
NO	3	3	8
NM	15	14	65

(iv) Satisfaction level of the students with the distribution of marks to every question and their pattern in term-end papers?
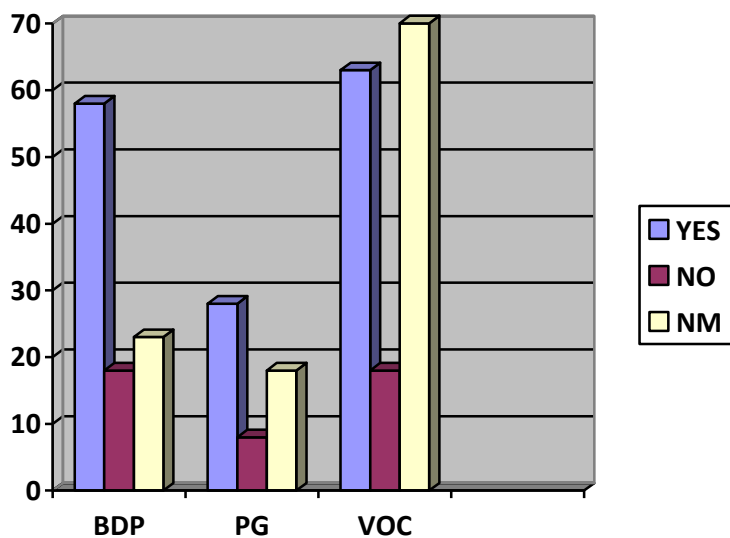
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	58	28	63
NO	18	8	18
NM	23	18	70

(v) Access to library at Study Centre?
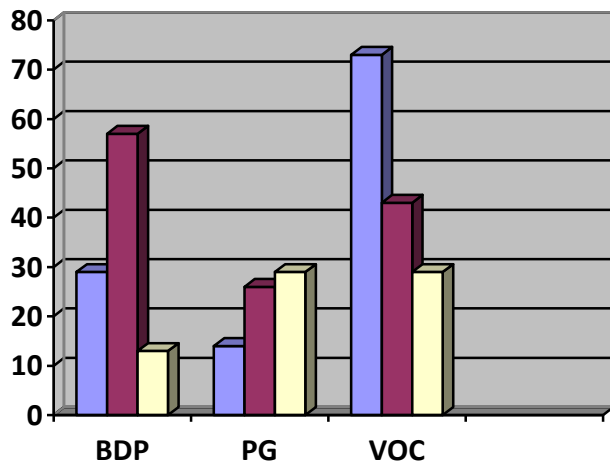
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	29	14	73
NO	57	26	43
NM	13	29	29

(vi) Whether help from internet for reference work?
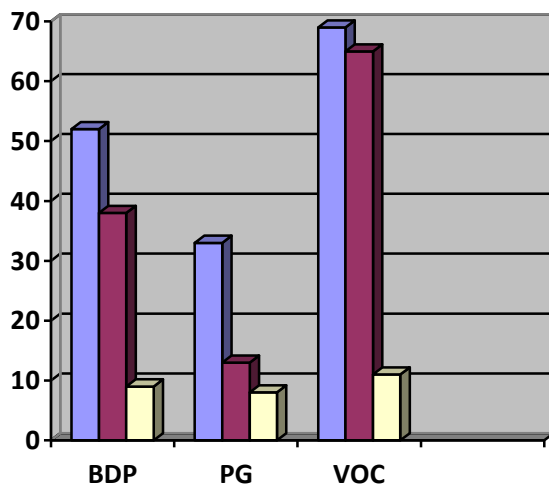
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	52	33	69
NO	38	13	65
NM	9	8	11

(vii) Consultation of outside books for references in order to supplement study materials?
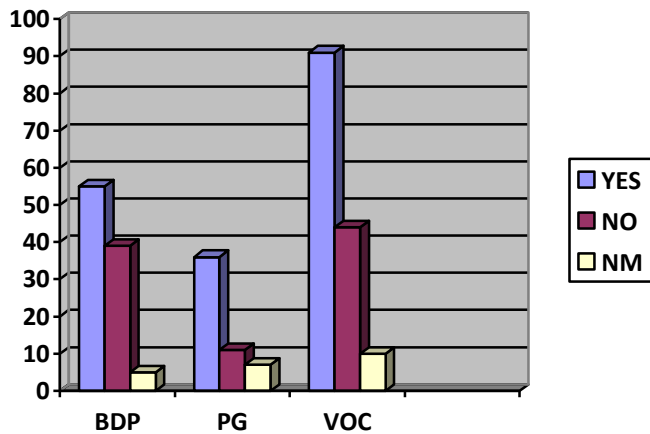
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	55	36	91
NO	39	11	44
NM	5	7	10

(viii) Students' registered for the first time?
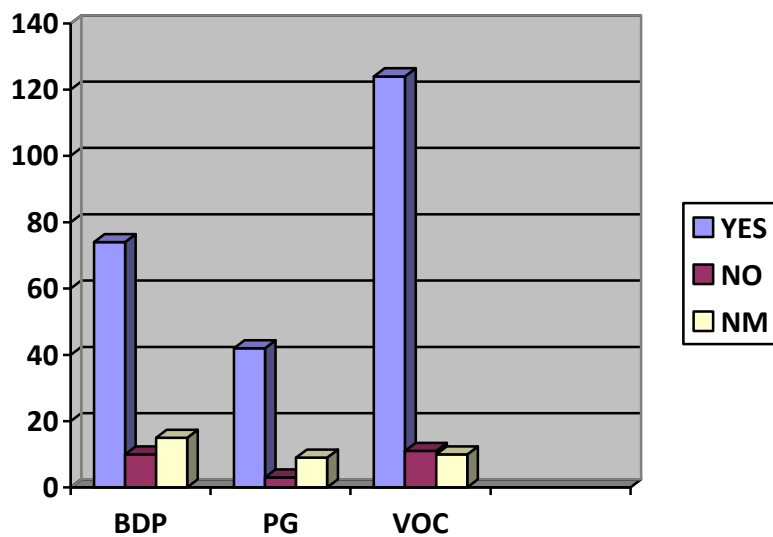
	BDP	PG	VOC
YES	74	42	124
NO	10	3	11
NM	15	9	10

(ix) Time limit of study Centre to remain open in a week?
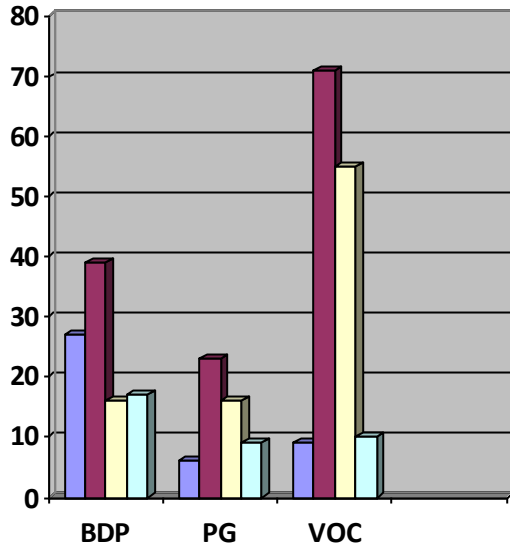
	BDP	PG	VOC
UPTO 4HRS	27	6	9
5-8 HRS	39	23	71
9-12 HRS	16	16	55
NM	17	9	10

SECTION-8: Evaluation of the Learner Support System

(*D-Dissatisfied; PD- Partly Dissatisfied; PS- Partly Satisfied; S-Satisfied; NM- No Mention)

(i) Are the study materials duly self-explanatory in nature?
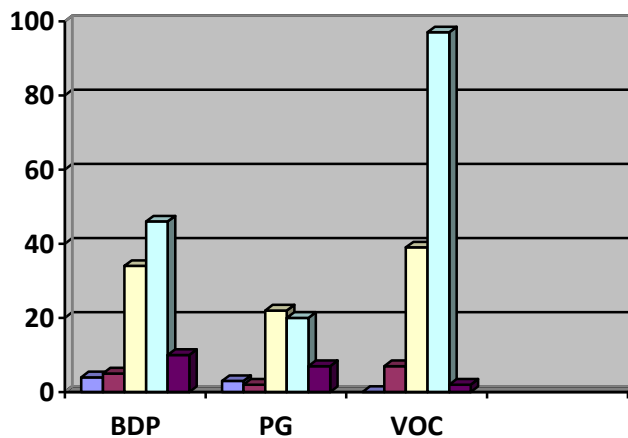
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	4	5	34	46	10
PG	3	2	22	20	7
VOC	0	7	39	97	2

(ii) Are the study materials voluminous in nature?
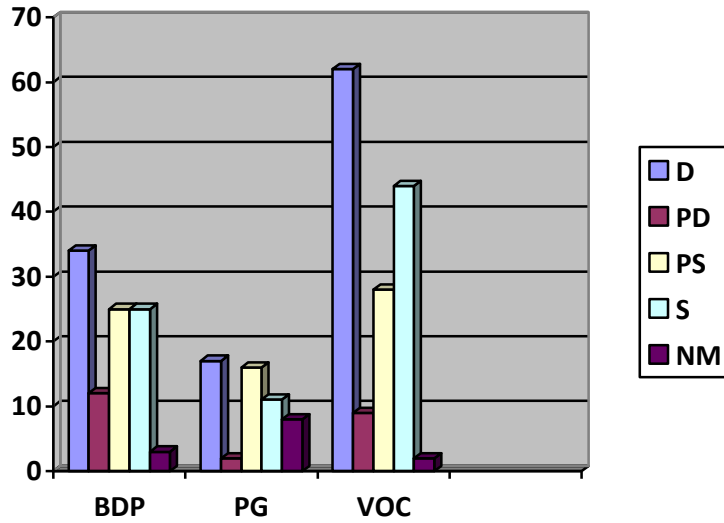
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	34	12	25	25	3
PG	17	2	16	11	8
VOC	62	9	28	44	2

(iii) Are the study materials learner friendly?
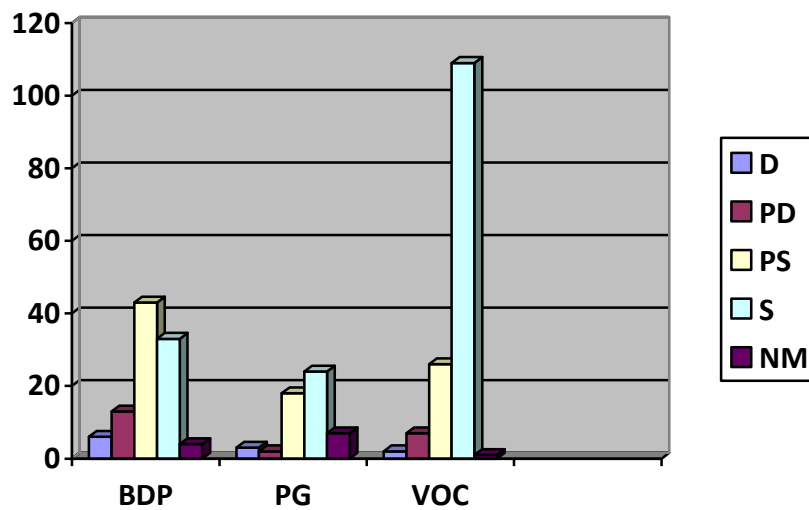
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	6	13	43	33	4
PG	3	2	18	24	7
VOC	2	7	26	109	1

(iv) Is the language used in the study materials easy to understand?
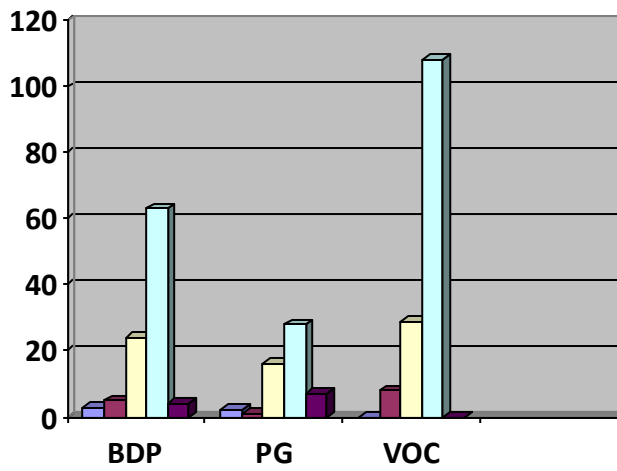
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	3	5	24	63	4
PG	2	1	16	28	7
VOC	0	8	29	108	0

(v) Is the learner allowed to work at his/her own pace?
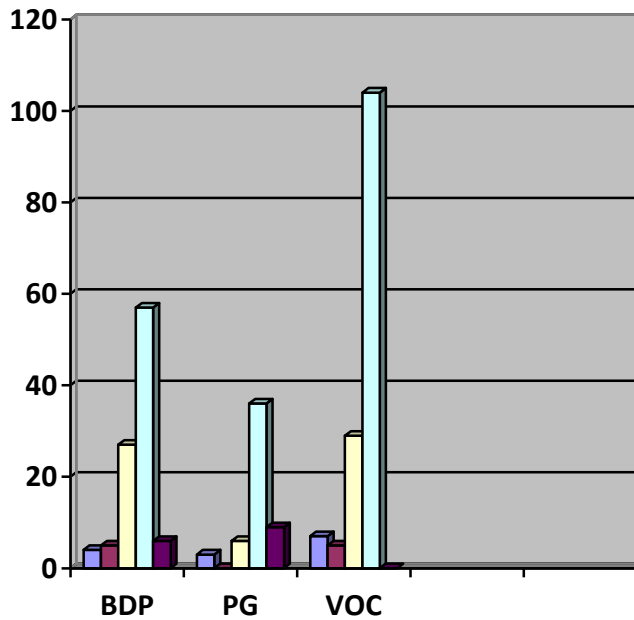
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	4	5	27	57	6
PG	3	0	6	36	9
VOC	7	5	29	104	0

(vi) Are the ideas of different concepts properly organized?
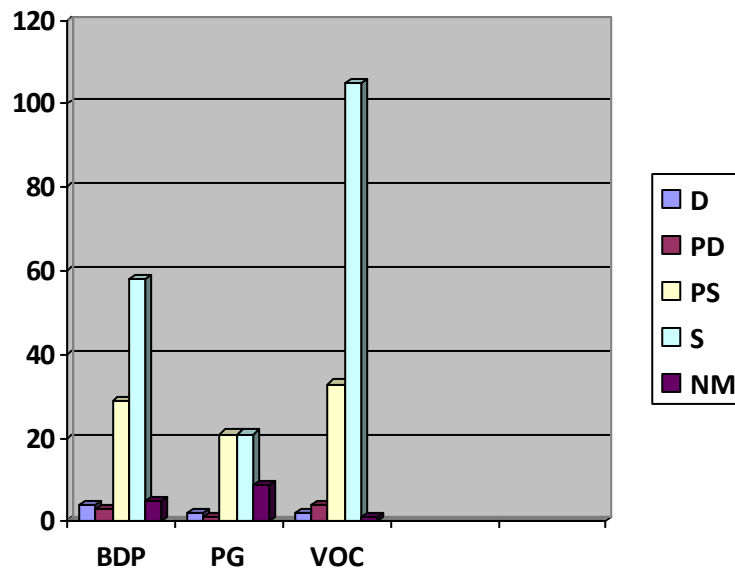
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	4	3	29	58	5
PG	2	1	21	21	9
VOC	2	4	33	105	1

(vii) Did the study materials receive in the Centre before counselling?
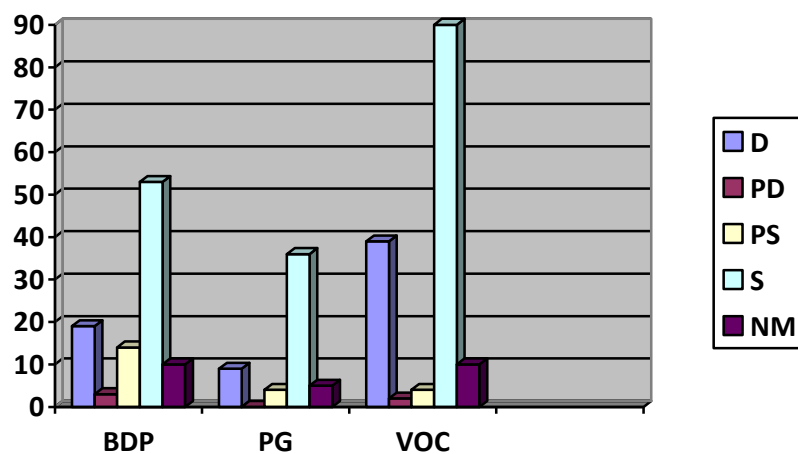
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	19	3	14	53	10
PG	9	0	4	36	5
VOC	39	2	4	90	10

(viii) Is the study Centre cordial, sympathetic and helpful?
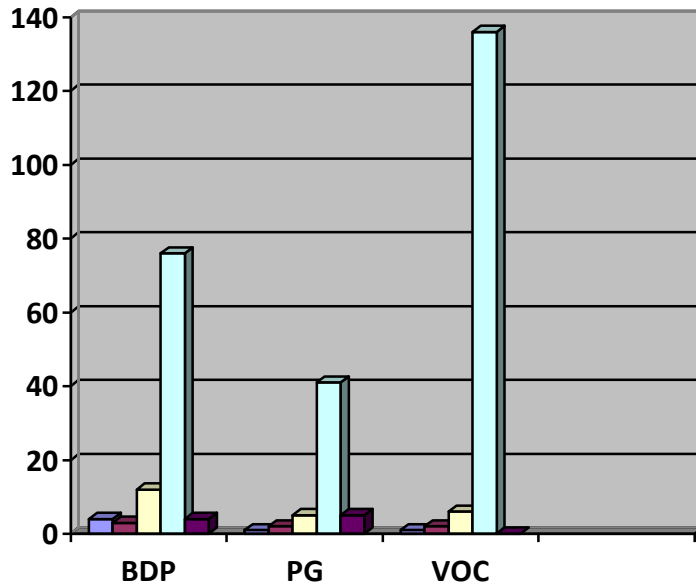
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	4	3	12	76	4
PG	1	2	5	41	5
VOC	1	2	6	136	0

(ix)Benefit received from counselling at the study Centre?
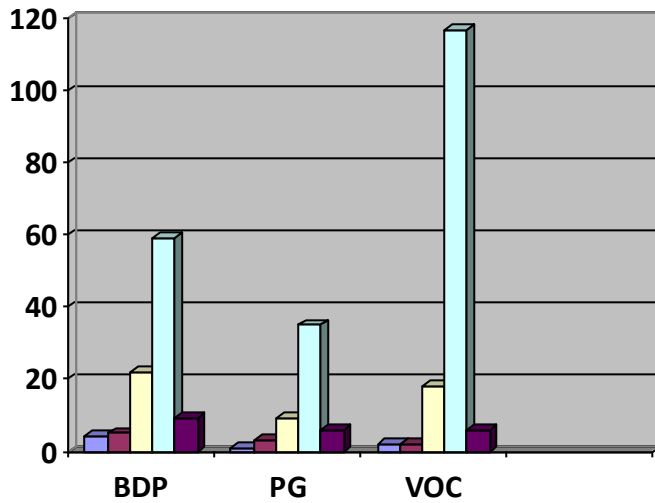
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	4	5	22	59	9
PG	1	3	9	35	6
VOC	2	2	18	117	6

(x) How good was the counsellor to answer all queries of the learners on the whole?
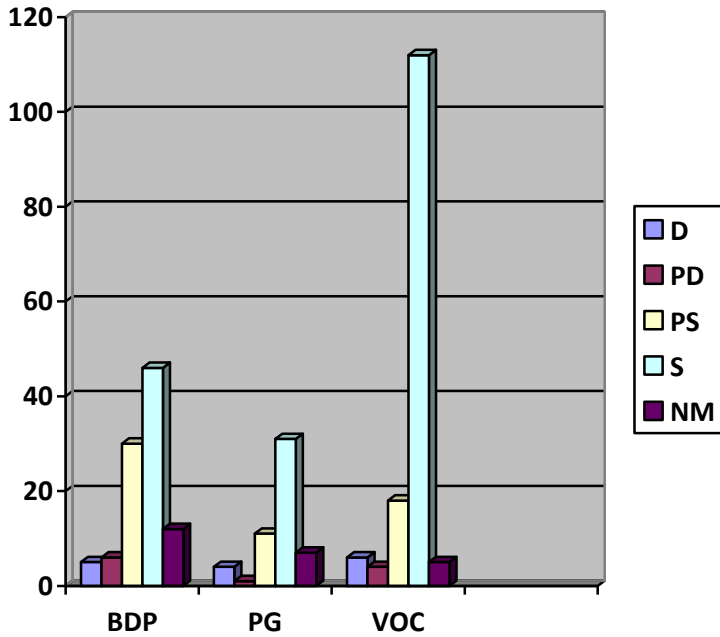
	D	PD	PS	S	NM
BDP	5	6	30	46	12
PG	4	1	11	31	7
VOC	6	4	18	112	5

(xi) Do the study materials contain sufficient illustrations and worked out examples?
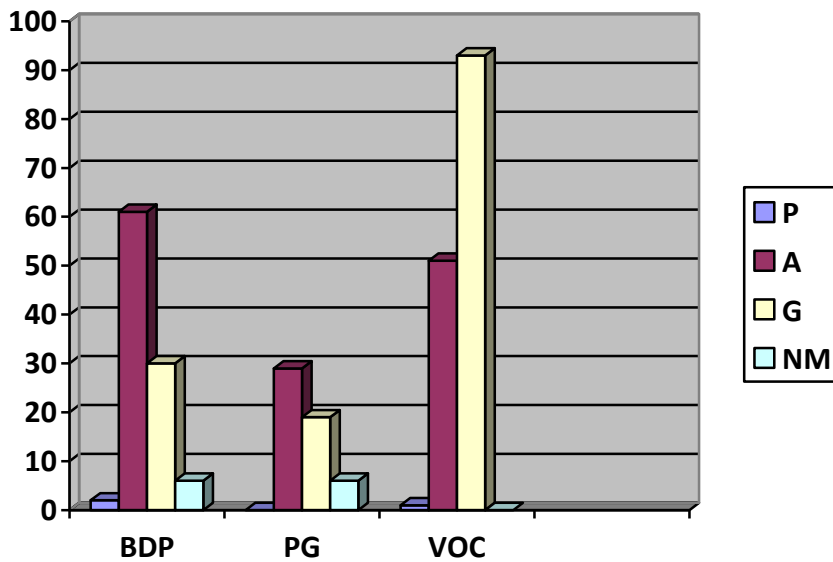
	P	A	G	NM
BDP	2	61	30	6
PG	0	29	19	6
VOC	1	51	93	0

(xii)   Opinion regarding the quality of the study materials?
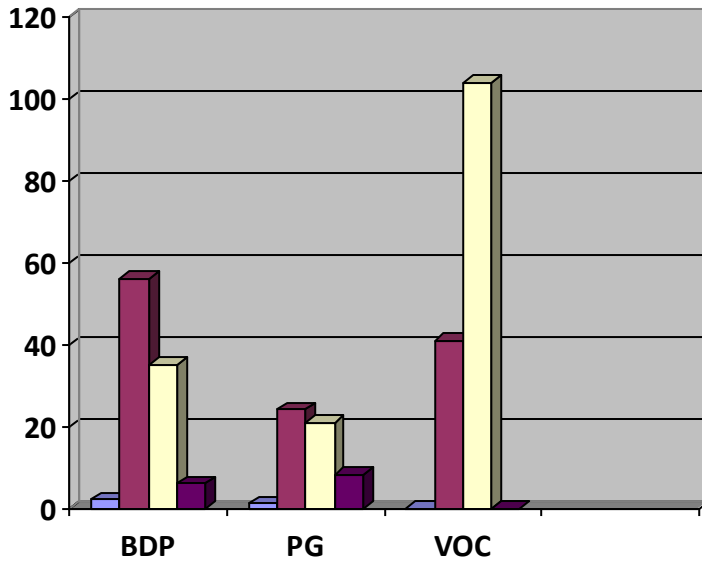
	P	A	G	NM
BDP	2	56	35	6
PG	1	24	21	8
VOC	0	41	104	0

(xiii)   Opinion regarding the print quality of the study materials?
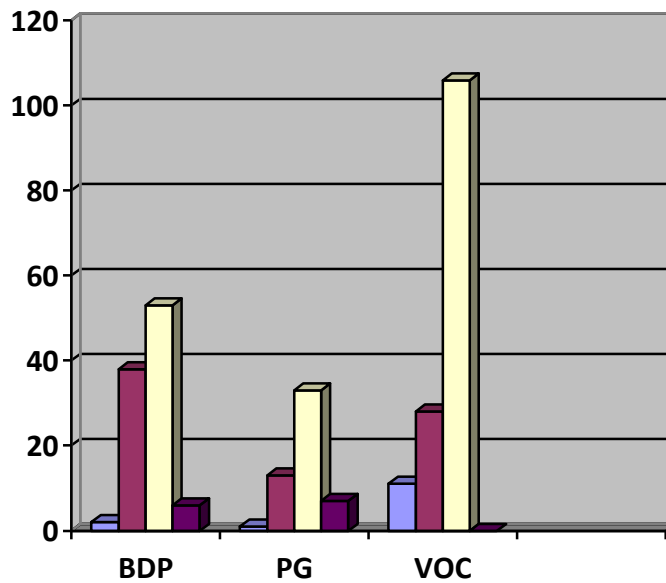
	P	A	G	NM
BDP	2	38	53	6
PG	1	13	33	7
VOC	11	28	106	0

(xiv) **How effective was the counselling sessions to the students?**
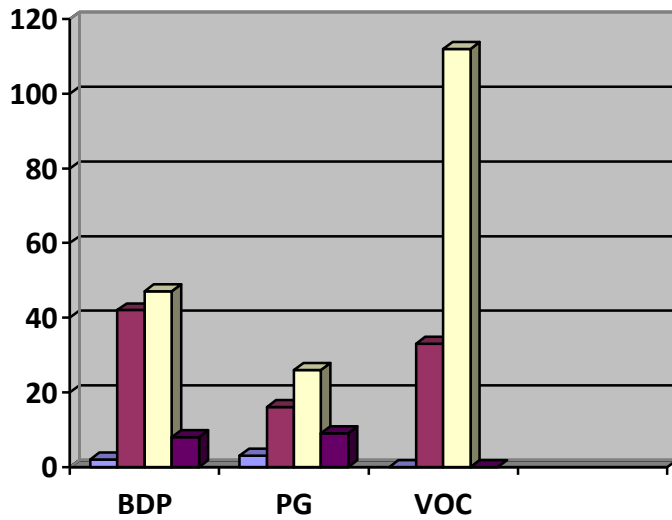
	D	PD	PS	NM
BDP	2	42	47	8
PG	3	16	26	9
VOC	0	33	112	0

(xv) **Overall impression about the competence of the counsellor?**
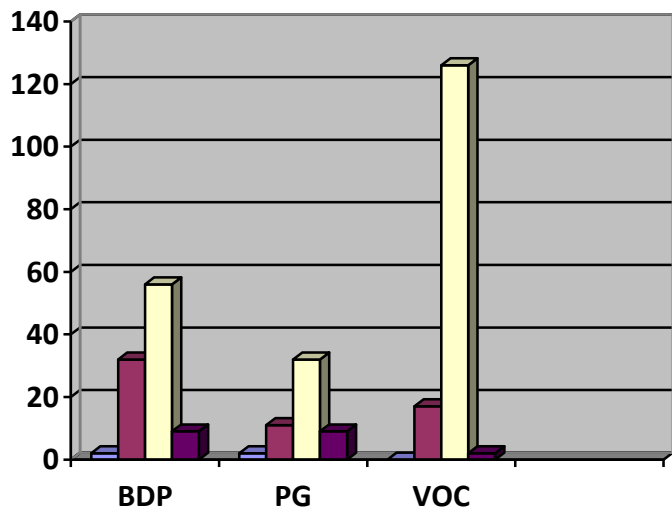
	P	A	G	NM
BDP	2	32	56	9
PG	2	11	32	9
VOC	0	17	126	2

(xvi) How good was the level of interaction of the counsellors with the learners?
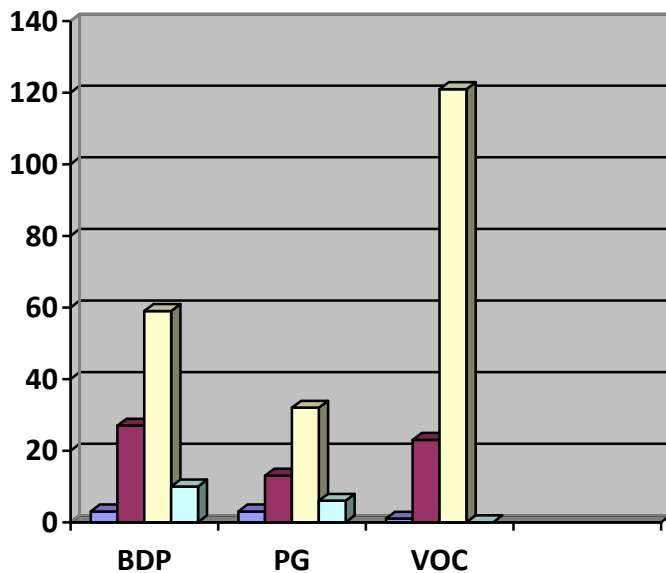
	P	A	G	NM
BDP	3	27	59	10
PG	3	13	32	6
VOC	1	23	121	0

(xvii) How punctual was the counsellor to attend the classes?
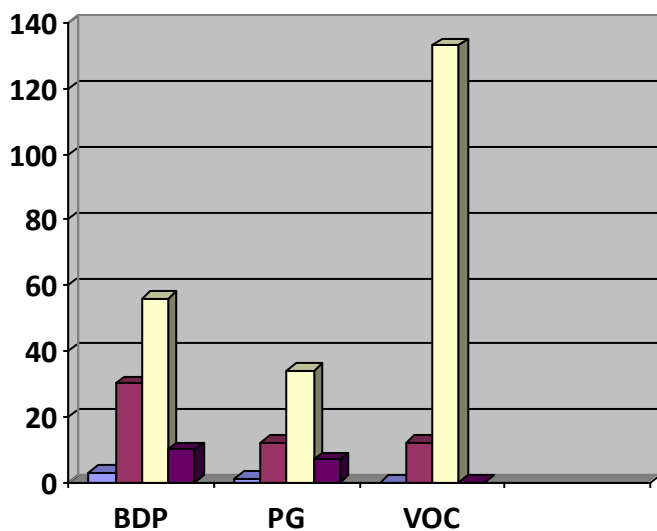
	P	A	G	NM
BDP	3	30	56	10
PG	1	12	34	7
VOC	0	12	133	0

(xviii) Have you ever appeared in any laboratory counselling?
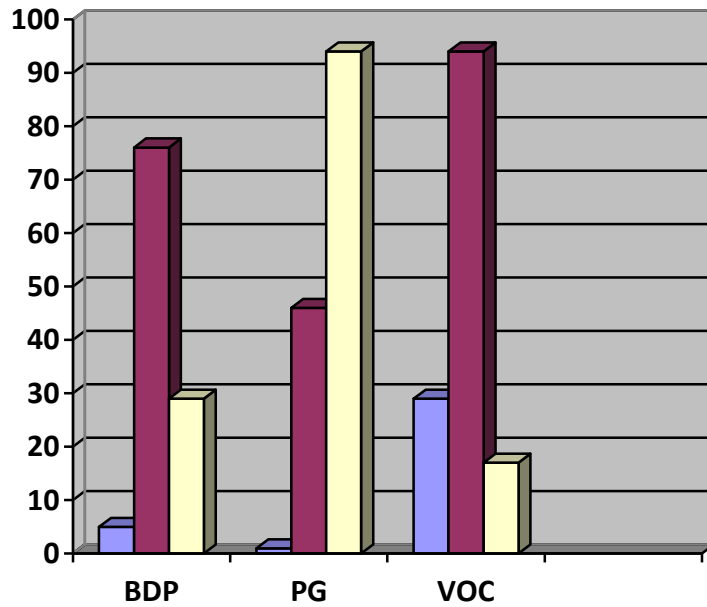
	YES	NO	NM
BDP	5	76	14
PG	1	46	6
VOC	29	94	17

(xix) Do you prefer online lectures over attending counselling sessions?
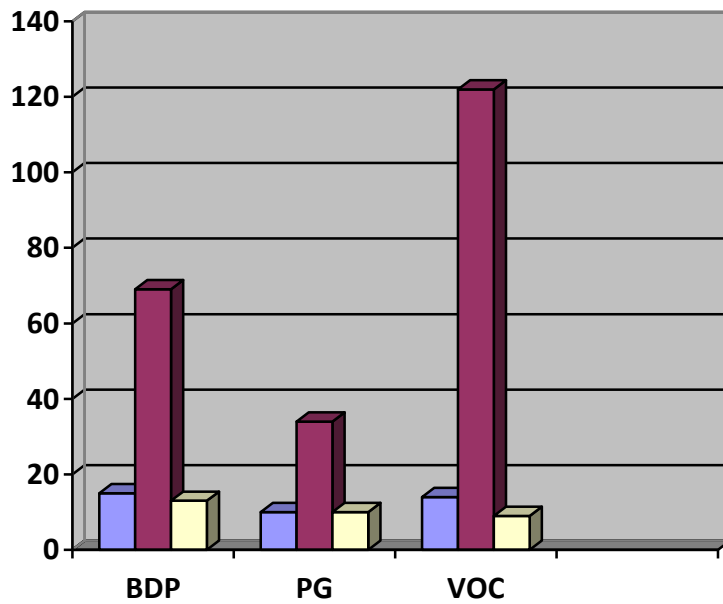
	YES	NO	NM
BDP	15	69	13
PG	10	34	10
VOC	14	122	9

(xx)   Do you attend tuition classes besides personal contact programs (PCP's)?
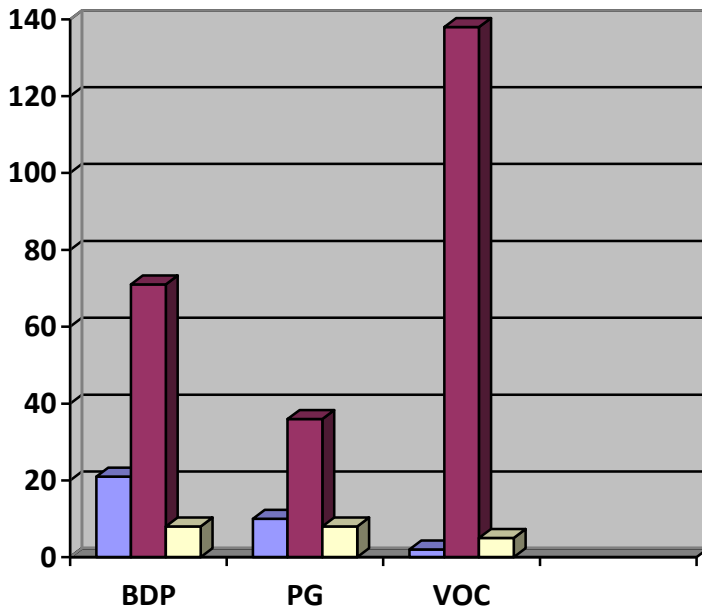
	YES	NO	NM
BDP	21	71	8
PG	10	36	8
VOC	2	138	5

(xxi)   Do you take outside help for writing assignments?
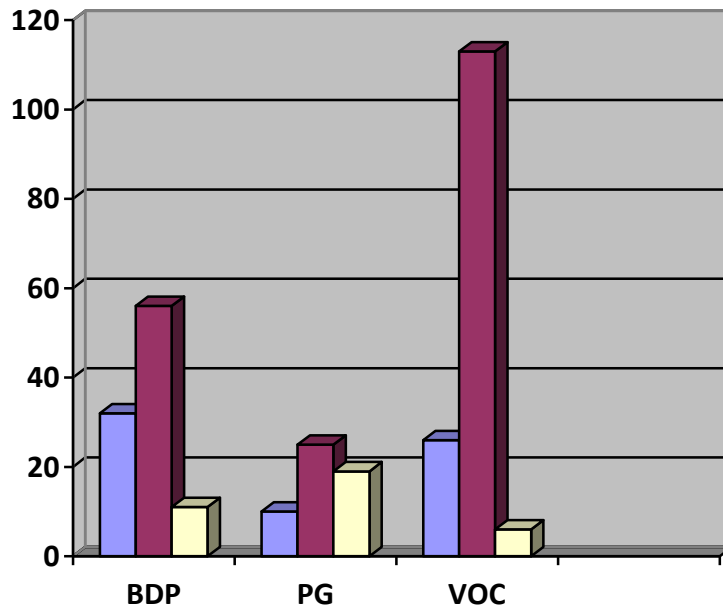
	YES	NO	NM
BDP	32	56	11
PG	10	25	19
VOC	26	113	6

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This study attempted to review from multiple aspects to be considered for learners among the various aspects that must be taken into account by the University for its development and to enhance its competitiveness. Specifically, this study tried to make a more concrete approach in 8 areas including the personal information of the learners, along with their Family Background, Local Environment, Employment Data, Academic Data and thereafter their opinion about the Examination and the Study Centre and regarding the Students' Support Services of the University.

It is due to this reason that a questionnaire survey was conducted between August 2015 to December 2015 (around 4 months) using the primary data collection method by visiting the Study Centres and interacting with the students directly. The questionnaire survey targeted 500 students through the random sampling method, 300 of whom responded to the questionnaire. (response rate is of approximately 60%). Based on the statistical data of the respondents, comparisons of data over the years were performed on the characteristics and major variables of the learners. This, being the main thrust of the survey, were dealt in with details.

With the sole motive of clearing the basic fundamental concepts and certain frequently confused keywords, relating to the functioning of the open and distance education, we introduced them in an orderly fashion in the beginning, so that it will be readable even to a non-professional person in this field.

In Chapter 1, we have discussed the overlapping and frequently confused words of "open education", "distance education" and "correspondence education" and tried to evaluate the basic point of difference among them, in the form of tabular and graphical representation. Thereafter, we highlighted the historical background of the open leaning and distance education system since its inceptions, which way back predominantly to 19th Century, in the western world. Further, the evolution of open and distance learning in the developing countries including India were discussed, from the process of infrastructure building phase to a much-awaited system of administration and infrastructure. We could observe that much of it has changed from what and where it was few decades ago. This entire evolution of distance learning from global to local scenario were mainly described in the first chapter.

In Chapter 2, we described the year-wise establishment of the open universities in India; their aims and objectives and the mission they aspire to accomplish. After elucidating the legislative framework that was undertaken at the time of the commencement of Open universities in India in the previous chapter, we have considered to highlight into the implementation part through the establishment of 14 state open universities along with IGNOU, the central open university, in this chapter. It mainly describes the year of establishment, the jurisdiction of that particular university, its main objective and the unique features that was introduced by the university which, in turn, acts as a benchmark, in the arena of open learning. It may also be noted that, at the end of this chapter, a table is enclosed which gives us an estimate of the students' volume and a bit of demographic details of a particular year (2009-10), of each of 13 open universities, as Odisha State Open University is the very recently established (2015), hence no data is available).

In Chapter 3, we discussed regarding the students' enrolment ratio of Netaji Subhas Open University over the years. It developed through the growth of Students, resulting in the growth of Study Centre and number of Courses. We have analysed these parameters as it grew throughout the years in the form of detailed tabular and graphical representation. It can be concluded that the growth of distance learning systems has increased manifold and are gaining huge popularity due to its democratic approach. Emphasis are not only given in terms of academics but also in vocational and job-oriented professional courses. These courses are gradually becoming popular in all the nook and corner of West Bengal. In the latter half of the chapters, we can see that the demographic distribution of the students is divided on the basis of their Gender and Caste, horizontally divided along the course stages like in BDP, PG and Vocational Courses. The overall percentile is being shown in this chapter. (However, we can refer to the original data in the appendix for further references.) We can further conclude here that Netaji Subhas Open University has a great role to play as the premier State Open University in West Bengal, for the emancipation of Female or Women Higher Education in the state. The present scenario of Women Higher Education and Empowerment are also discussed herein. The forms and methods that is ideal for ensuring this purpose is highlighted in this chapter.

In Chapter 4, we studied the actual conditions of the enrolled students in the University highlighting very nook and corner aspects that is required to analyse the socio-economic and

cultural background of the students with the priority of upgradation and improvement to the policy-making level of the University. The students' feedback will eventually act as an input mechanism for producing output that is more relevant and largely concerns the interest of the students as a whole. Some general observations can be found out that there are considerably good number of female students which stabilizes the gender equilibrium of the University and defines it as a truly democratic university. This system is observed to be highly beneficial to the married women learners. Further, we see that contrary to the popular belief, the students are not that much 'disadvantaged'. It is because people in the age group of 18-25 years are seen to be more interested in pursuing courses from this University. The students are found to join the courses cutting across income boundaries. "Learning while Earning" thus, comes into action. The actual conditions of the learners are depicted in this chapter. It describes the place of residence, falling under the jurisdiction of the concerning local authority (Panchayat, Municipality and Corporation). Their mode of commuting to the study centre from their residence, including the facilities they get access to, are also discussed in this chapter with percentage of learners falling in this category. The academic and employment background of the students are also discussed. Lastly, the students' support system and information about the examination and the study centres, divided on the basis of course stages (BDP, PG and Vocational) solely functions as an input loop for further improvement in policy-making of the University, as mentioned earlier. It is through this section we will know how the University turned out to be popular for democratizing higher education in a large scale in the state of West Bengal.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Subject and demographic break-up of BDP students (2012-2015).

		BDP			
		2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
	TOTAL	**6188**	**7542**	**10752**	**14053**
	MALE	3485	4196	6170	8193
	FEMALE	2703	3346	4582	5860
BENGALI	**GENERAL**	4028	4503	6055	7585
	SC	1274	1678	2477	3361
	ST	322	436	553	712
	OBC	564	925	1667	2395
	TOTAL	**1036**	**1452**	**2046**	**2776**
	MALE	680	959	1360	1815
	FEMALE	356	493	686	961
ENGLISH	**GENERAL**	715	908	1232	1625
	SC	170	296	441	547
	ST	26	76	89	93
	OBC	125	172	284	511
	TOTAL	**3266**	**3984**	**5581**	**6830**
	MALE	2201	2684	3833	4934
	FEMALE	1065	1300	1748	1896
HISTORY	**GENERAL**	2083	2377	3002	3490
	SC	784	949	1442	1997
	ST	136	202	337	32
	OBC	263	456	800	1311
	TOTAL	**35**	**35**	**48**	**73**
	MALE	27	31	44	58
	FEMALE	8	4	4	15

ECONOMICS	**GENERAL**	29	23	32	41
	SC	6	9	5	14
	ST	0	0	6	6
	OBC	0	3	5	12
	TOTAL	**474**	**451**	**657**	**832**
	MALE	331	303	466	591
	FEMALE	143	148	191	241
POL.SC	**GENERAL**	328	293	380	482
	SC	87	89	152	181
	ST	29	37	45	52
	OBC	30	32	80	117
	TOTAL	**111**	**142**	**136**	**197**
	MALE	83	117	98	138
	FEMALE	28	25	38	59
PUB. AD.	**GENERAL**	77	100	100	139
	SC	25	24	18	27
	ST	1	2	4	11
	OBC	8	16	14	20
	TOTAL	**849**	**1024**	**1222**	**1666**
	MALE	488	564	680	990
	FEMALE	361	460	542	676
SOCIOLOGY	**GENERAL**	582	672	775	1043
	SC	146	208	242	323
	ST	42	59	66	75
	OBC	79	85	139	225
	TOTAL	**592**	**655**	**678**	**951**
	MALE	534	593	601	828
	FEMALE	58	62	77	123
COMMERCE	**GENERAL**	492	551	557	775
	SC	68	75	73	112
	ST	9	10	9	7
	OBC	23	19	39	57

	TOTAL	**144**	**158**	**245**	**331**
	MALE	128	135	224	280
	FEMALE	16	23	21	51
PHYSICS	GENERAL	106	104	147	184
	SC	19	30	46	72
	ST	3	3	4	13
	OBC	16	21	48	62
	TOTAL	**104**	**142**	**192**	**250**
	MALE	91	114	163	208
	FEMALE	13	28	29	42
CHEMISTRY	GENERAL	70	87	117	152
	SC	19	37	28	49
	ST	13	4	3	2
	OBC	2	14	44	47
	TOTAL	**354**	**441**	**556**	**785**
	MALE	291	377	464	642
	FEMALE	63	64	92	143
MATHS	GENERAL	215	249	303	544
	SC	77	95	107	59
	ST	4	8	16	13
	OBC	58	89	130	169
	TOTAL	**84**	**97**	**147**	**221**
	MALE	64	68	111	157
	FEMALE	20	29	36	64
BOTANY	GENERAL	53	59	73	114
	SC	17	20	31	43
	ST	7	8	5	16
	OBC	7	10	38	48
	TOTAL	**439**	**497**	**754**	**885**
	MALE	327	375	528	598
	FEMALE	112	122	226	287
ZOOLOGY	GENERAL	295	300	484	515
	SC	90	123	131	180
	ST	12	11	24	23

OBC	42	63	115	167
TOTAL	**1097**	**1126**	**1644**	**1793**
MALE	783	822	1193	1242
FEMALE	314	304	451	551
GEOGRAPHY **GENERAL**	689	603	878	883
SC	221	297	395	444
ST	57	56	86	70
OBC	130	170	285	396

Source: Central Database of NSOU.

Appendix 2: Subject and demographic break-up of PG students (2012-2015).

		PG			
		2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
	TOTAL	**1208**	**2565**	**3302**	**5053**
	MALE	532	1063	1566	2120
	FEMALE	676	1502	1736	2933
BENGALI	**GENERAL**	778	1526	1658	2348
	SC	229	556	778	1227
	ST	49	96	173	244
	OBC	152	387	693	1234
	TOTAL	**328**	**898**	**1253**	**1947**
	MALE	196	520	762	1101
	FEMALE	132	378	491	846
ENGLISH	**GENERAL**	206	581	630	1008
	SC	56	143	316	430
	ST	15	22	39	51
	OBC	51	152	268	458
	TOTAL	**739**	**1442**	**2115**	**3041**
	MALE	388	771	1210	1624
	FEMALE	351	671	905	1417
HISTORY	**GENERAL**	480	786	962	1328
	SC	136	350	564	811
	ST	25	68	127	141
	OBC	98	238	462	761
	TOTAL	**174**	**330**	**428**	**656**
	MALE	90	175	250	382
	FEMALE	84	155	178	274
POL. SC.	**GENERAL**	113	212	252	320
	SC	34	58	80	161
	ST	6	6	18	23
	OBC	21	54	78	152
	TOTAL	**443**	**1011**	**1788**	**2937**
	MALE	270	584	1111	2124
	FEMALE	173	427	677	813
EDUCATION	**GENERAL**	291	642	1031	1295

	SC	87	198	380	720
	ST	12	29	62	104
	OBC	53	142	315	818
	TOTAL	**39**	**94**	**85**	**1286**
	MALE	22	60	56	992
	FEMALE	17	34	29	294
PUB. AD.	**GENERAL**	30	67	48	676
	SC	7	14	21	220
	ST	0	2	2	5
	OBC	2	11	14	385
	TOTAL	**551**	**906**	**944**	**1465**
	MALE	278	416	441	668
	FEMALE	273	490	503	797
SOCIAL WORK	**GENERAL**	411	615	615	862
	SC	79	125	160	295
	ST	6	15	18	33
	OBC	55	151	151	275
	TOTAL	**173**	**397**	**361**	**503**
	MALE	128	278	268	382
	FEMALE	45	119	93	121
COMMERCE	**GENERAL**	146	328	269	383
	SC	12	40	46	61
	ST	1	3	4	6
	OBC	14	26	42	53
	TOTAL	**38**	**57**	**70**	**88**
	MALE	28	39	52	58
	FEMALE	10	18	18	30
PGEL	**GENERAL**	28	44	48	51
	SC	7	8	10	12
	ST	0	1	1	13
	OBC	3	4	11	12
	TOTAL	**62**	**78**	**76**	**107**
	MALE	40	43	41	66
	FEMALE	22	35	35	41
GEOGRAPHY	**GENERAL**	35	38	34	32
	SC	13	27	31	38
	ST	4	4	3	7

	OBC	10	9	8	30
	TOTAL	**188**	**439**	**673**	**1176**
	MALE	146	308	507	882
	FEMALE	42	131	166	294
MATHS	**GENERAL**	117	291	410	566
	SC	34	59	91	220
	ST	1	1	2	5
	OBC	36	88	170	385
	TOTAL	**68**	**86**	**68**	**87**
	MALE	28	45	38	36
	FEMALE	40	41	30	51
ZOOLOGY	**GENERAL**	49	53	46	47
	SC	10	21	12	15
	ST	1	2	1	3
	OBC	8	10	9	22
	TOTAL	**301**	**347**	**385**	**474**
	MALE	191	194	198	262
	FEMALE	110	153	187	212
MLIS	**GENERAL**	179	236	259	305
	SC	62	47	49	81
	ST	0	7	4	6
	OBC	60	57	73	82

Source: Central Database of NSOU.

NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY
DD-26, Sector-I, Salt Lake, Kolkata-64

QUESTIONNAIRE
for the RESEARCH PROJECT entitled

"A Study on the Actual Status of the Enrolled Students of Netaji Subhas Open University"

NAME --

YOU ARE ENROLLED FOR-   BDP / PG / VOCATIONAL
(TICK) | I   I |

NAME OF YOUR STUDY CENTRE- -------------------------------------

SUBJECT- ---

YEAR OF ENROLLMENT- ---

This is to declare that the data of this research project will be used only for academic purpose and the identity and other personal information of the respondent will be kept confidential as far as practicable.

The learners are requested to fill in the questionnaire with care and sincerity so that the outcome of the research may help to gauge the impact of the university on them. This study is designed to identify the problems and deficiencies of the university, if any, so that the university may try to address and improve the learner support service and other relevant factors.

The researchers request the active help and cooperation of the study centre coordinator and officials for getting this survey completed.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Anirban Ghosh
Project Assistant: Ms. Unmana Dhar

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*Respondents may write either in **Bengali** or in **English***

SECTION-1: - (Your personal information)

Please put a tick mark (✓) in the appropriate box wherever necessary.

1. **Sex:**   Male   ☐   Female   ☐
2. **Religion:** Hindu ☐   Muslim ☐   Christian ☐   Others ☐

3. **Caste:**   General ☐   S.C. ☐   S.T. ☐   OBC ☐
4. **Age:**   ☐   years completed
5. **Marital status:** Single ☐ Married ☐

If yes, then the **no. of children**   ---------

SECTION-2: (Family Background)

1. **No. of members in the family:**   ---------------
2. **Family structure of the respondent:** (Joint / Nuclear) ------------------

Relation	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Monthly Income

SECTION-3: (Local Environment)

1. **Place of residence:**   Village ☐   Town/ city ☐

2. **Under the Jurisdiction of:** Panchayat ☐ Municipality ☐ Corporation

3. **Distance from your residence to your study centre:** ☐ km

4. **Mode of commuting:** On foot ☐ Bicycle ☐ Bike ☐

   Car ☐   Train ☐   Bus ☐   Auto ☐   Others ☐

5. **Approximate conveyance charge for each day commuting (Rs):** ------------

6. **Time taken for commuting:**

(a) Residence to Study Centre: ---------- (b) Study Centre to Residence: ---------

7. **Facilities available at residence:**

   (Please tick one or more of the following that is appropriate to you)

➢ **Vehicles:** Bicycle ☐   Motorbike ☐   Car ☐

➢ **Communication:** Landline telephone ☐   Cell phone ☐

➢ **Electricity:** ☐

➢ **Safe drinking water:** ☐

➢ **Magazine:** ☐   **Newspaper:** ☐ **Radio** ☐ **TV** ☐

➢ **Computer: Desktop** ☐ **Laptop** ☐ **Internet (Mobile/PC)** ☐

➢ **Cooking gas:** ☐

➢ **Refrigerator**: ☐ **Washing machine:** ☐

8.   **Local facilities:**

   a. Nearest Railway Station ☐ km

   b. Nearest Post Office ☐ km

   c. Nearest Bank ☐ km

   d. Nearest Public Library ☐ km

e. Nearest telephone booth ☐ km

f. Nearest Police Station ☐ km

SECTION- 4: (Employment data)

1. **Current status:** Employed ☐ Unemployed ☐

2. If employed, please state:

Type of occupation (may be more than one) - please tick.	Monthly income (Rs.)	Working hours/day
Govt. Service		
Private Service		
Business		
Agriculture		
Private tuitions		
Mason		
Labourer		
Rickshaw puller		
Tractor /Car/ truck/ bus driver		
Other (specify)		

First employment: - Type ------------------------------- Salary---------------------

SECTION- 5: - (Academic data)

1. **Completed HS in the year** [   ]

2. **Percentage of marks at HS exam**. [   ] %

3. **Elective Subject in BDP:** ---------------------------------------

4. **Subsidiary subject:** --

5. **Year of admission: -------------------------------------**

8. **Expected year of course completion: ---**

9. **Reason for pursuing education through distance mode:**

❖ Time constraint [   ]

❖ Financial constraint [   ]

❖ Distance constraint [   ]

❖ Shortage of required marks for admission to a traditional institution [   ]

SECTION-6: - (Gyan-Vani & Gyandarshan programmes)

1. **Do you listen to Gyan-Vani programme on the FM radio?** Yes [   ] No [   ]

   IF YES THEN,

   How much time you devote in a week on the average? [   ] Hours

2. **Do you watch Gyandarshan TV channel conducted by IGNOU?**

   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

   IF YES THEN,

   How much time you spend a week on the average for it? [   ] Hours.

3. **Do you watch any educational programme on television?** Yes [   ] No [   ]

IF YES THEN,

how many hours a day? ☐ Hours.

SECTION-7:(Information on Examination & Study Centre)

1. Did you receive your enrollment number in time?   Yes ☐   No ☐
2. In how many term end examinations you have appeared for? ☐

3. In how many papers you have appeared for? ☐

4. Have you received the results of all these papers?   Yes ☐   No ☐

    IF NO THEN,

    Results of how many papers are awaited? ☐

5. Do the term-end papers have similarity with that of the assignment papers?
    Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Do you receive your assignment question papers in time? Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Are you happy with the distribution of marks to every questions and their pattern in term end/Assignment papers?   Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Do you have any access to library at your study centre?   Yes ☐ No ☐
9. For how long does your study centre remain open in a week?

    Up to 4hrs ☐   5 to 8 hrs ☐   9 to 12 hrs ☐

10. Where from you get important academic information or updates?

    (Tick whichever you find correct)

    Notice board ☐   Counsellors ☐ University website ☐
    Friends ☐   Office staff ☐   All of the above ☐
11. Do you take help from internet for reference work?   Yes ☐   No ☐

12. Do you consult outside books for references in order to supplement your study material?   Yes ☐   No ☐

13. Have you registered for the first time?   Yes ☐ No ☐

IF NO THEN,

State the reason for the same--

SECTION-8: - (Evaluation of the Learner Support Service)

1. A set of questions is given below. Respond to each of the questions by tick marking the appropriate)

i)Are the study materials duly self explanatory and rigorous?

Dissatisfied   Partly Dissatisfied   Partly Satisfied   Satisfied

ii)Are the study materials voluminous in nature?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

iii)Are the study materials learner-friendly?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

iv)Is the language used in the study materials easy to understand?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

v) Is the learner allowed to work at his/her own pace?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

vi)Are the ideas of different concepts properly organized?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

vii)Did you receive the study material in your centre before counselling?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

viii)Is the study centre cordial, sympathetic and helpful?

Disagree   Partly Disagree   Partly Agree   Agree

ix)How much you are benefitted from counselling at the study centre?

Dissatisfied   Partly Dissatisfied   Partly Satisfied   Satisfied

x)How good was the Counseller to answer all queries of the learners on the whole?

Dissatisfied   Partly Dissatisfied   Partly Satisfied   Satisfied

xi)Does the study material contains sufficient illustrations and worked out examples?

Poor   Average   Good

xii) Give your opinion about the quality of the study material

Poor   Average   Good

xiii) What is your opinion regarding the print quality of the study material?

Poor   Average   Good

xiv) How effective was the Counselling session to you?

Poor   Average   Good

xv) Your overall impression about the competence of the Counseller

Poor   Average   Good

xvi) How good was the level of interaction of the Counseller with the learners?

Poor   Average   Good

xvii) How punctual was the Counselor to attend the classes?

Poor   Average   Good

xviii) Have you ever appeared in any laboratory Counselling?

Yes ☐ No ☐

IF YES THEN,

how much satisfied are you?

1	2	3	4	5

xix) Do you prefer online lectures over attending Counselling sessions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

xx) Do you attend tuition classes besides Personal Contact Programmme (PCP)?
Yes ☐ No ☐

xxi) Do you take outside help for writing assignments?

Yes ☐ No ☐

SECTION- 9: (Remarks / Suggestions)

1. A set of questions is given below. Answer to each of them in brief.

   a) Why you have registered yourself as a student of NSOU and not of any other university?

   b) What made you to take this subject as your degree subject?

c) If you have any remarks about any Counsellor(s), please state.

d) Please give your suggestion for improving the counselling sessions.

e) If you have any specific comments about your study centre / university, please state.

Thank you------- Thank you------- Thank you------- Thank you------ Thank you

The researchers sincerely thank the respondent for his / her kind cooperation and valued opinion/ remarks. They also express their indebtedness to the study centre coordinator and other officials without whose help this survey could not have been completed.

-------------------------------THE END---