UNIT 1: GROWTH OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

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1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of distance education
- explain the growth of distance education in the world and the history of distance education in India
- discuss the growth and relevance of distance education in India

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Education is a life long process from which people gather life experiences that are needed for a meaningful existence in society. Therefore, education is termed as the most important pillar of a society's socio-economic development. Education provides knowledge to the people, equips them with some need based skills, and leads their attention in a positive direction. It is for this that education is a vital pre-requisite for the development of a country as it is necessary to bring about the welfare of the people as a whole.

Besides, education is the main indicator of human capital formation. At present, India, as a developing country, has the basic motto to accelerate

human mobility. Although demographically India as a whole has great potential, the growth of manpower and the level of its engagement in productive activities are yet to be fully harnessed. The literacy rate in India is rather low compared to that of the developed countries and even compared to many of the developing countries like Sri Lanka, China etc. Even within India there are considerable differences among the states and regions in terms of employment, gender differences in all stages of education, regional disparities in Gross Enrolment Ratio and literacy level etc. Besides, we have to achieve the target of inclusive growth, the progress towards millennium development goals and the target towards the formation of human capital. Education is the only way to achieve these goals as per our needs and desire. Because, educated and trained people are generally better productive workers. They can use the resources more effectively, adopt new technologies and learn from their mistakes. To have access to education is one of the important human rights for everyone living in our country. Therefore, it is an urgent need to disseminate information and knowledge to the people through the various modes of education. Open and distance learning is the most viable option for making education as accessible as possible for all. It has emerged as an effective means to bring education to the door step of those who are deprived of the educational opportunities in the conventional mode in the mainstream educational institutions. This system offers opportunities to millions of underprivileged learners including those like the self-employed and the housewives who desire for an enlightened and productive way of life. Under these circumstances it has become necessary to discuss the various aspects of the ODL system in an effort to remedy its shortcomings, if any, and to highlight its strength. The following content of this unit is designed to meet this objective.

1.3 CONCEPT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education means a mode of learning through which education can be accessed by the people irrespective of geographical

barriers, physical existence of teachers, space, time, age etc. In a knowledge-based society, open and distance learning is the most demanding medium of education for the people. The 11th Five Years Plan of the Government of India has made a target to covering around 40% the total number of students under open and distance learning system. Today, for its flexibility, this system is considered indispensible as far as the 3As of education is concerned i.e. getting education at any time, anywhere and for any one. The basic objective of this system is to make democratization of education possible in India. Better access, lower costs, greater flexibility, high quality are some of the objectives of Open and Distance Learning. In the words of Perraton (1981), distance education is "an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space/ or time from the learner". According to Ochoa (1981) "distance education is a system based on the selective use of instructional media both traditional and innovative that promotes the self-teaching learning process to achieve educational objectives, with a potentially greater geographic coverage than the traditional face-to-face system of education".

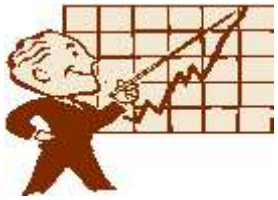
Thus, from the above definition it is clear that distance education means:

- Separation of teachers and learners
- Institutional accreditation
- Use of mixed-media courseware
- Two-way communication
- Possibility of face-to-face meetings
- Use of industrialised processes

The ODL system is the only corridor through which those sections of population who were once deprived from the purview of higher education in conventional system for one reason or other, can pursue life-long learning in a flexible and cost-effective mode. These sections of population include, inter alia,

- those who dropped out from schools and colleges on economic compulsions and are now engaging themselves in trade, business etc;

- those women who got married early and discontinued their education in schools and colleges;
- those who work in offices and industries without completing degrees, diplomas required for their professions ;
- those persons including housewives who simply could not carry on their studies in the conventional system in time and now they are desirous to pursue education;
- those who want to get further education for their better employability in future;
- Besides, the ODL system enables the in-service persons or professionals to enhance their professional qualifications and training while on the job.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is meant by distance education?

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Q 2: Why do you think that distance education is important?

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1.3.1 Growth of Distance Education in the World

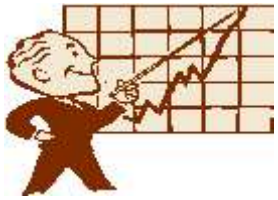
Distance education has a long history. Earlier, it was known as correspondence education. Correspondence education refers to the teaching learning situation where the teacher and the learner have no face to face contact. They interact only through postal correspondences. Print is the only medium of instruction and the printed lessons are the only source of learning for the learner. The correspondence education took formal shape in England in 1840 through Issac Pitman who started using postal tuition to teach

shorthand to many of his students spread all over England. At the international level, distance education was started in 1883 when a private tutor taught English composition to his students by post providing two-way communication. Later, the scope of Correspondence education was widened terming it as distance education under which various forms of Learner Services are provided for effective teaching-learning process. In distance education, student support services and a variety of evaluation methods are an important component. It is a learner-based approach. Apart from the print media it includes the non-print media such as radio, telephone, audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer and other electronic media.

Open learning was named in one of the issues of the Pitman's Journal in 1929 (Rowntree, 1992) long before the first open university in the world (UKOU) was established in U.K. in 1969. Pitman was the pioneer who introduced the shorthand education through correspondence system for the first time. Open learning and open education are closely associated. Today, the open and distance learning is the most popular media of learning through which people can easily access the global learning in his or her own door step.

Common Wealth of Learning (COL) is an organisation that helps the Commonwealth Member States to harness the potential of distance education and technology to enhance the people's access to learning that contributes to development. One of COL's priorities is providing equitable access to quality learning. COL first started its operations 1988 when there were only 10 open universities in the Commonwealth countries and in 2008, the number increased to 27. This shows the huge expansion in dedicated ODL institutions, linked to the phenomenon of the massification of higher education, especially in the developing Commonwealth countries. Asia has the largest number of adult ODL learners in the world with over 70 open

universities, 13 of which are mega-universities! India alone has a growing network of 16 open universities, about 14 open schools and nearly 112 dual-mode institutions which collectively cater to over 7 million learners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What do you mean by correspondence education, distance education and open learning?

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1.3.2 History of Distance Education in India

In India there were only 20 conventional universities and about 500 affiliated colleges at the time of independence. After Independence, the need for horizontal and vertical expansion of higher education was very much felt keeping in view the need of the economy and aspiration of the people. In 1961, a ten-member Commission headed by Dr D S Kothari was constituted by the government of India to suggest, the ways and means to increase the access of people to higher education and the Commission recommended the introduction of Correspondence Courses at the university level with equivalent status of conventional study. Accordingly, the University of Delhi established the School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in 1962 as a pilot project which received a favourable response of the aspirants. Subsequently, several conventional Universities set up their own Directorates of Correspondences Courses. To-day there are more than 112 Universities that have Directorates of Distance Education offering programmes through distance mode.

The full-fledged form of Open and distance learning (ODL)

started globally after the establishment of the first Open University in United Kingdom, namely the Open University, UK in 1969. This had its bearing in India too. Subsequently, the first Sate Open University in India, namely, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Hyderabad, (formerly Andhra Pradesh Open University) was established by an Act of State Legislature on August 26, 1982 on the line of the British Open University. The first Indian Open University's mandate was to provide educational opportunities to adult learners who could not get a chance of pursuing higher education in the conventional universities and to democratise higher educational opportunities to the disadvantaged sections of the society.

The second Open University to be established was the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in 1985 by an Act of Parliament as National Open University, with its jurisdiction throughout the country. Following this trend, Kota Open University (2002), Nalanda Open University (1995) Yashwant Rao Chawan Maharastra Open University in Maharastra (1989),etc were established as the State Open Universities by the respective State Governments and the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University was established in 2006 by the Government of Assam. Odisha State Open University is the most recent one being established in 2015 by the Government of Odisha. At present there are fourteen State Open Universities in India besides the only national Open University, IGNOU. The basic motto behind the ODL institution is to make democratization of education in India. At present, distance education constitutes about 11.45% of the total enrolment in higher education. (AISHE, 2021).



LET US KNOW

National Open University in India:

1. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), 1985

State Open Universities in India:

1. Andhra Pradesh: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University , Hydrabad1982
2. Maharashtra: Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, 1989
3. Madhya Pradesh: Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, 1991
4. Gujarat: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, 1994
5. Bihar: Nalanda Open University Nalanda Open University, 1995
6. Karnataka: Karnataka State Open University, 1996
7. West Bengal: Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata , 1997
8. Uttar Pradesh: U. P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University, 1999
9. Rajasthan: Vardhman Mahaveer Open University (Previously Kota), 2002
10. Tamil Nadu: Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai, 2002
11. Vihar (Chattisgarh): Pt. Sunderlal Sharma (Open) University, Chattisgarh, 2004
12. Uttaranchal: Uttaranchal Open University, 2006
13. Assam: Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, 2006
14. Odisha State Open University, 2015



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Fill in the blanks:

i. In the world, the first open university was established in the year of ……

ii. At present in India, there are ……state open universities and ……central university

iii. Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in the year……..

iv. Krishan Kanta Handiqui State Open University was established in the year of …….

v. Delhi established the School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in……..

1.3.3 Growth and Relevance of Distance Education in India

Whenever we talk about the growth and development of distance education it has passed through many stages. In this connection, Prof. James C. Taylor had divided distance education into five generations, which are as follows:

- Correspondence model based on print technology
- Multimedia model, based on print, audio and video technology
- Tele-learning model, based on applications of telecommunications technologies providing synchronous communication
- Flexible Learning model, based on online delivery via Internet
- Intelligent flexible learning model, based on advanced online technologies

Today the pedagogy of ODL includes:

- Delivery Interactive multimedia, CD-ROM Internet based tutoring
- Learner Support Enhanced quality interaction anywhere, anytime
- **Synchronous & asynchronous** communication
- Equal opportunity for learners to participate/contribute
- Interpersonal interaction- tutor, learner, peers
- Social Networking and Collaboration

Thus it has seen that the open and distance learning in our country has already crossed many phases but still it has a long way

to go in providing quality education to all. The following table shows the trend of the growth of distance educational institutions and the number of learners in our country.

Table 1: Growth of Open and Distance Learning Institutions in India: 1962-2022

Year	Dual Mode Universities	Single Mode Open Universities	Total Distance Education Institutions
1962	1	-	1
1975	22	-	22
1982	34	1	35
1985	38	2	40
1990	46	5	51
2000	70	9	79
2005	106	13	119
2010	242	14	256
2017	117	15	132
2021	112	16	128

Source: Distance Education Breau, UGC

From the above table it has been observed that the trend of establishing open and distance universities and institutions is moving fast and thereby the ODL system is contributing significantly to making education accessible to a large number of people in our country. Table 2 also shows the enrolment trend of the learners in distance education.

Table 2: Growth of Enrolment in important Programmes at UG level

Programmes	2016-2017	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
BA	1709598	1651499	1745018	1890920	1877809
B.Sc.	243606	222128	217942	251489	184916
B.Com.	507441	464807	458889	496244	531777
MA	708599	677641	613161	656154	720181
MBA	127275	156911	125980	155337	130731
M.Com	171101	171093	128801	144284	223231
M.Sc.	113938	105507	74103	109459	99948

Source: Distance Education Bureau, UGC

Table 2:

Thus, open and distance learning is a viable option through which it has been possible to make accessible to all without any social, economical and cultural discrimination.

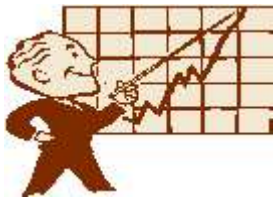
Open Learning system aims to redress social and educational inequalities and to offer opportunities to those who are deprived of getting education as well as to those who want to continue their education. Open learning facilities the removal of the barriers and restrictions sometimes placed on students in the conventional education system. It does so by opening up learning opportunities to a wider range of people, and enabling them to learn more congenially and periodically.

ODL is a cost-effective way or providing education. It is effective as the learning materials-both print and multimedia are produced one time and of course subsequently modified, reprinting the learning materials for number of batches. The benefit of low cost of production of SLM is perculated down to the learners and so the total cost of education in ODL is much lower and affordable compared to the conventional system. The conventional system, again, is basically teacher-centred rather than learner-centred. Open schools and open universities play a vital role in promoting the accessibility of education to all. The basic purpose of the Open University and Open School is to provide instruction to the learners at their doorsteps through various media and technologies. The mode of open and distance learning is also called 'Independent Learning', 'Flexible Learning' as well as 'Self-Learning'. Open and Distance Learning has greater scope to innovate and to put flexibility into the system in order to cater for the needs of heterogeneous learners keeping in view the changes of time and need and requirement of the society. Therefore, today, the open and distance learning is gaining more importance in the entire world. Choice-based credit system and convergence approach are two advantages of open and distance mode of learning which at a higher level, can play a pivotal role in bringing multifaceted human resource

development, enabling the learner's absorption in the job market and self-employment. By taking innovative and flexible ideas it is responding to the paradigm shift in education today. In the context of India as a whole and the North Eastern Region in particular, distance education is becoming a viable option for the people who want to acquire quality education.

In North East India, the ODL system was introduced in 1986 when IGNOU established its first study centre in the Gauhati University campus. Currently its operation in the NE region is made through Regional Centres set up at all State capitals of the NE States besides having its study centres in a number of colleges and educational institutions of the region. Besides the National Open University, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is only one State Open University (established in 2006) in the whole of North East Region located at Guwahati (Assam) and there are other Directorates of Distance Education attached to Gauhati University in 1998 (State University), Guwahati (Assam); Dibrugarh University in 2001(State University) , Rajib Gandhi University (Central University) in 2005, Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); North Eastern Hills University (Central University) in 1996 , Shillong (Meghalaya), Tripura University (Central University) in 1996, Agartala (Tripura) and Tezpur University (Central University) in 2011, Assam. All the above mentioned Universities are managed by Central/State Governments. Recently, private Universities have been set up in NER that have also introduced programmes through distance mode, namely, Sikkim Manipal University, Gangtok (Sikkim), ICFAI University, Agartala (Tripura) and ICFAI University, Aizwal (Mizoram). Besides the above mentioned private universities, there are a number of universities located in other States of India that are functioning in the NER through their Study Centres and have enrolled people from this region (Srivastava & Basu, 2010). However, these outside Universities are operating their study centres in the N.E. region against the

judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on territorial jurisdiction and in clear violation of the circulars of University Grants Commission issued from time to time. Because of latest UGC's notification on territorial jurisdiction, the operation of ODL programmes of universities located in rest of the country has been discontinued in the NE region. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University has performed a unique role in providing education to the inmates of Jail of Assam. Even, this university plays a vital role in growing inclusive education by providing free education to the blind learners and differently-abled learners in the State.Thus, the ODL system through its flexible and non-formal approach has ensured basic human right like the right to education for the people and has emerged as a convenient mode of education system that would benefit the country as a whole.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What are the relevance of open and distance learning?

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Q 6: What are the ODL institutions situated in northeast of India?

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1.4 LET US SUM UP

- Education is termed as the bedrock of the socio-economic development of a country.
- Education provides knowledge to the people, acquaints them with some need based skills, and directs the attention in a positive direction.
- Demographically India as a whole has great potential, but the growth of manpower and the level of its engagement in productive activities are yet to be fully harnessed.

- Even within India there are considerable differences among the states and regions in terms of employment, gender differences in all stages of education, regional disparities in Gross Enrolment Ratio and literacy level etc.
- Besides, we have to achieve the target of inclusive growth, the progress towards millennium development goals and direct our effort towards the formation of human capital.
- Education is the only way to achieve these goals as per our needs and desire. Because, educated people are generally better productive workers, who can use the capital more effectively, can adopt new technologies and learn from their mistakes.
- To get access to education is one of the important human rights for everyone living in our country. Therefore, it is an urgent need to disseminate information and knowledge to the people through the various modes of education.
- Open and distance learning is the most viable option for making education as accessible as possible for all.
- Distance education means a mode of learning through which education can be accessed by the people irrespective of the geographical barriers, the physical existence of the teachers, space, time and age etc.
- The 11th Five Years Plan has made a target to covering around 40% the total numbers of students under the Open and Distance Learning system.
- Today for its flexibility, this system is considered suitable for attaining the 3As i.e. getting education at any time, anywhere and for any one.
- The ODL system provides an opportunity of pursuing life long learning in a cost effective mode to those who find themselves deprived of higher education in the conventional system for one reason or the other.
- This system of education was earlier known as correspondence education. Correspondence Education means the teaching learning situation where the teacher and the learner have no face to face contact. They interact only through postal correspondences. Print is the only medium of instruction and the printed lessons are the only source of learning for the learner.
- The correspondence education took formal shape in England in 1840

through Issac Pitman who started using postal tuition to teach shorthand to his many students spread all over England.

- Later, the academicians thought that 'distance education' was a more appropriate term than the term 'correspondence'. In distance education, student support services and a variety of evaluation methods are an important component. It is a learner-based approach. Apart from print media it includes the non-print media such as radio, telephone, audio cassettes, video cassettes, computer and other electronic media.
- Today distance education is commonly known as open and distance learning. Open learning was named in one of the issues of the Pitman's Journal in 1929.
- Open learning and open education are closely associated. Open University was first established in UK in 1969.
- Today, the open and distance learning is a very popular system of learning through which people can easily access various facets of global learning at his or her own door step.
- At present in India there are Fifteen (15) State Open Universities and One National Open University i.e. IGNOU
- ODL system has passed through many stages or phases to come to use the present day online technology.
- The trend of establishing open and distance universities and institutions are fast increasing and thus it contributes significantly towards making education accessible to the people.
- Open learning includes removing the barriers and restrictions placed on students as evident in the conventional education system by opening up learning opportunities to a wider range of people, and enabling them to learn more congenially and periodically.
- ODL is a cost-effective way covering a wide section of the people in a society at one time cost.
- The printed materials prepared by an ODL institution require expenditure to be spent only once as its cost of production and the same materials are used for many years.
- The mode of open and distance learning is also called 'Independent Learning' 'Flexible Learning' and 'Self-Learning'.
- Open and Distance Learning has greater scope to innovate and to put

flexibility into the system in order to cater for the needs of heterogeneous learners keeping in view the changes of time and need and requirement of the society.

- In North East India, the ODL system was introduced in 1986 when IGNOU established its first study centre in the Gauhati University campus.
- Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is the only State open university in the NE region and has the unique distinction of providing education for the learners among the inmates of Jail of Assam and differently-abled learners.



1.5 FURTHER READINGS

1) Baruah, Srinath (2011): "Education Beyond Barriers: Role of Open and Distance learning with special reference to Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University", Horizon, The Newsletter of KKHSOU, Vol-V, No II, July 2011

2) Kanwar, Asha (2011): "Crisis in ODL: What is the response?", Lecture presented at Symbiosis International Conference on ODL, 23rd February, Pune, India

3) Srivastava, Manjulika and Swaraj Basu, " Distance Learning in North East : An Overview ", University News, 48 (38) September, 2010

4) STRIDE Handbook on Distance Education, IGNOU



1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q N. 1: Distance education means a mode of learning through which education can be accessed by the people irrespective of the geographical barriers and the physical existence of teachers, space, time, age etc. This system offers opportunities to millions of underprivileged learners including those like the self-employed and the housewives who desire for an enlightened and productive way of life.

Ans to Q N. 2: The ODL system is the only corridor through which those sections of the population who were once deprived of the benefit of higher education in the conventional system for whatever reasons can

pursue life-long learning in a flexible and cost-effective mode. It is very helpful for those:

- who dropped out from schools and colleges on economic compulsions and have now engaged themselves in trade, business etc ;
- women who got married early and had to discontinue their education in schools and colleges ;
- who work in offices and industries without completing degrees, diplomas required for their professions ;
- persons including housewives who simply could not carry on their studies in the conventional system in time and now wish to pursue education;
- who want to get further education for their better employability in future
- Besides, the ODL system enables the in-service persons or professionals to enhance their professional qualifications and training while on the job.

Ans to Q N. 3: Correspondence education means that the learners can study at their place of work or of living with the help of the lessons supplied by the educational institutions through postal correspondence. Distance Education is a method of learning where content is delivered through the use of media. In this system, teacher and learner occasionally meet to solve academic, administrative, technical & personal problems. Teacher-Learner communication is possible by using media and technology.

Open Learning is a system of learning that goes beyond the traditional convention of teaching-learning. Flexibility in terms of admission rules, number of seats, attendance, examination, course duration, subject combination etc. are some of the criteria of open learning. In 1929, Pitman's Journal introduced the term 'Open Learning'. It is an educational system accessible to every individual with minimal restrictions. Due to the nature of flexibility in this system, education can be accessed by

the people irrespective of the geographical barriers, physical existence of teachers, space, time, age etc.

Ans to Q N. 4:

i. 1969

ii. 15 State Open Universities and 1 Central University

iii. 1985

iv. 2006

v. 1962

Ans to Q N. 5: The relevance of open learning basically indicates the following things, which are:

- The open learning system is very important in the present society because it aims to redress social or educational inequalities and to offer opportunities to those who are deprived of getting education as well as to those who want to continue their desired education. Open learning includes removing the barriers and restrictions placed on students in the conventional education system. It opens up learning opportunities to a wider range of people, and enables them to learn more congenially and periodically.
- ODL is a cost-effective way covering a wide section of the people in a society at one time cost. For instance, in online courses, the expenditure is a one-time cost for preparing it, which covers a large number of people for many years. The printed materials prepared by an ODL institution require expenditure to be spent only once as its cost of production and the same materials are used for many years. In this sense the ODL system is more cost effective and gives more cost benefit compared to the conventional system which attracts heavier school fees from the students
- Open and Distance Learning has greater scope to innovate and to put flexibility into the system in order to cater for the needs of heterogeneous learners keeping in view the changes of time and need and requirement of the society. Therefore, today, the requirement of the open and distance learning mode is gaining more importance everyday in the entire world

Ans to Q N. 6: In North East India, the ODL system was introduced in 1986 when IGNOU established its first study centre in the Gauhati University campus. Currently IGNOU's operation in the NE region is made through Regional Centres set up at all State capitals of the NE States besides having its study centres in a number of colleges and educational institutions of the region. In addition to this the national Open University and Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, only State Open University in Assam(established in 2006) located at Guwahati. There are other Directorates of Distance Education attached to some universities of the region namely: Gauhati University in 1998 (State University), Guwahati (Assam); Dibrugarh University in 2001 (State University), Rajiv Gandhi University (Central University) in 2005, Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); North Eastern Hills University (Central University) in 1996 , Shillong (Meghalaya) ,Tripura University (Central University) in 1996, Agartala (Tripura) and Tezpur University in 2011. All the above mentioned Universities are managed by Centra/State Governments. Recently, some private Universities have been set up in NER that have also introduced programmes through distance mode. These are: Sikkim Manipal University, Gangtak (Sikkim), ICFAI University, Agartala (Tripura) and ICFAI University, Aizwal (Mizoram).



1.7 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions (Answer each question in around 150 words).

Q 1: Why is education important?

Q 2: What is meant by distance education?

Q 3: Why is distance education important?

Q 4: What is the relevance of distance education?

Q 5: What do you mean by the growth of distance education?

B. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: Why do you think that open and distance education is very important in the present situation? Explain.

Q 2: What do you mean by correspondence education, distance education and open learning or open education? Explain

Q 3: Write briefly about the growth of distance education in the world.

Q 4: Explain the history of distance education in India.

C. Long Questions. (Answer each question in around 300-500 words)

Q 1: Highlight some of the basic advantages of open and distance learning system in India. Discuss

Q 2: Explain the growth and the relevance of distance education in India.

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