Distance Learning: History, Problems and Solutions

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Abstract: *Distance learning and its relationship to emerging computer technologies have together offered many promises to the field of education. This paper discuss about the problems which hinders the users to learn from distance education in best possible way and also give its solutions.*
The first section of this paper shows the brief history of distance education from 18th century to 21st century. It also tells what are the things that led to change in the methods of distance education.
The second section define the conceptual framework for distance education.
The third section shows the problems in distance education from maintainance of academics to communication problem and all other problem related to distance education.
The fourth section shows the solutions which are possible to resolve these problems, to these problems.
The next part of this paper shows a real world example of a life of children in developing and underdeveloped countries when he/she have not taken the classroom program.
The last part is based on future possibility of distance education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies are the important part of life ,but what happen when a student is not getting sufficient study material as per his requirement ,or if the student is not allowed by the society to go to a institution to carry on his studies(as in some countries women are not allow to study, and physical diability).Also what would happen when one is not having enough money to pursue his studies in the college ,or there is no teaching institution in one's area provided that one is not having enough money to move to other place and study there. It led to the need of education in which there may be no require to go anywhere and it led to the development of distance education. Started in 18th century ,distance education is made with the motto of **"education to all"** at whatever distance is he/she is present.

The insight of our paper are;

1. To study the problems faced by distance learners.
2. To find out problems associated with distance education.
3. To suggest solutions for these problems.

2. HISTORY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Across 1800: It was started by an advertisement in a Swedish newspaper in 1833 touted the opportunity to study "Composition through the medium of the Post." In 1840, England's newly established penny post allowed Isaac Pitman to offer shorthand instruction via correspondence. Three years later, instruction was formalized with the founding of the Phonographic Correspondence Society, precursor of Sir Isaac Pitman's correspondence colleges. In Germany it was established by Charles Toussaint and Gustav Langenscheidt, who taught language in Berlin. Correspondence study crossed the Atlantic in 1873 when Anna Eliot Ticknor founded a Boston-based society to encourage study at home. The Society to Encourage Studies at Home attracted more than 10,000 students in 24 years. Students of the classical curriculum (mostly women) corresponded monthly with teachers, who offered guided readings and frequent tests. From 1883 to 1891, academic degrees were authorized by the state of New York through the Chautauqua College of Liberal Arts to students who completed the required summer institutes and correspondence courses. At the University of Wisconsin, the development of the "short course" and farmers' institutes in 1885 formed the foundation for university extension. Six years later, the university announced a program of correspondence study led by eminent historian Frederick Jackson Turner. However, as at the University of Chicago, faculty interest waned. William Rainey Harper, the Yale professor who headed the program, was effusive in his support of correspondence study, and confident in the future viability of the new educational form: The student who has prepared a certain lessons in the correspondence school knows more of the subject treated in those lessons, and knows it better, than the student who has covered the same ground in the classroom. Correspondence study continued to develop in Britain with the founding of a number of correspondence institutions, such as Skerry's College in Edinburgh in 1878 and University Correspondence College in London in 1887. At the same time, the university extension movement in the United States and England promoted the correspondence method. Among the pioneers in the field were Illinois Wesleyan in 1877 and the University Extension Department of the University of Chicago in 1892. Illinois Wesleyan offered bachelor's master's and

doctoral degrees as part of a program modeled on the Oxford, Cambridge, and London model. Between 1881 and 1890, 750 students were enrolled. However, concerns about the quality of the program prompted a recommendation that it be terminated. The correspondence study department of the University of Chicago was successful, at least in terms of numbers. Each year, 125 instructors taught 3,000 students enrolled in 350 courses. Nevertheless, enthusiasm within the university for the program waned, partly for financial reasons. Moody Bible Institute, founded in 1886, formed a correspondence department in 1901 that continues today, with a record of over 1 million enrollments from all over the world. Correspondence study/distance education has had a significant impact on religious education that emphasizes the social context within which a student lives.

Across 1900: This is the main development step of distance education. The International Correspondence Schools, a commercial school whose enrollment exploded in the first two decades of the 20th century, from 225,000 in 1900 to more than 2 million in 1920 Distance education began to enrich the secondary school curriculum in the 1920s. Moody Bible Institute, formed a correspondence department in 1901 that continues today, with a record of over 1 million enrollments from all over the world. Students in Benton Harbor, Michigan, were offered vocational courses in 1923, the University of Nebraska began experimenting with correspondence courses in high schools. The original target groups of distance education efforts were adults with occupational,

social, and family commitments. This remains the primary target group today. In the United States, advances in electronic communications technology helped determine the dominant medium of distance education. In the 1920s, at least 176 radio stations were constructed at educational institutions, although most were gone by the end of the decade. The surviving stations were mostly at land-grant colleges. In the early 1930s, experimental television teaching programs were produced at the University of Iowa, Purdue University, and Kansas State College. However, it was not until the 1950s that college credit courses were offered via broadcast television. Western Reserve University was the first to offer a continuous series of such courses,

beginning in 1951.

. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the development of fiber-optic communication system lead to the development of distance education ,to a major extend. Tens of thousands of networks are connected to the Internet, with millions of people using the Internet worldwide (Ackermann, 1995). Both credit and noncredit courses have been offered over computer networks since the mid-1980s. In addition, computer networks are a convenient way to distribute course materials to students around the world. Many faculty members now use the convenient user interface of the World Wide Web to make course materials available to their students.The British Open-University, Fern University of Germany, are some of the leading providers of online courses in Europe. In the United

States, the American Open University, Nova Southeastern University, and the University of Phoenix have been traditional leaders in providing distance education. They, along with many other universities, offering hundreds of courses online.

2.1 Electronic Communications

Europe experienced a steady expansion of distance education, without radical changes in structure, but with gradually more sophisticated methods and media employed. Audio recordings were used in instruction for the blind and in language teaching for all students. Laboratory kits were used in such subjects as electronics and radio engineering. Virtually all large-scale distance teaching organizations were private correspondence schools. In the United States, advances in electronic communications technology helped determine the dominant medium of distance education. In the 1920s, at least 176 radio stations were constructed at educational institutions, although most were gone by the end of the decade. The surviving stations were mostly at land-grant colleges Western Reserve University was the first to offer a continuous series of such courses, beginning in 1951. Sunrise Semester was a well-known televised series of college courses offered by New York University on CBS from 1957 to 1982.Satellite technology, developed in the 1960s and made cost-effective in the 1980s,enabled the rapid spread of instructional television. Federally funded experiments in the United States and Canada, such as the Appalachian Education Satellite Project (1974–1975), demonstrated the feasibility of satellite-delivered instruction. However, these early experiments were loudly criticized for being poorly planned. More recent attempts at satellite-delivered distance education have been more successful. The first state educational satellite system, Learn/Alaska, was created in 1980. It offered 6 hours of instructional television daily to 100 villages, some of them accessible only by air.The privately operated TI-IN Network, of San Antonio, Texas, has delivered a wide variety of courses via satellite to high schools across the United States since 1985.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education is the general term that includes the range of teaching and learning strategies used by Correspondence colleges, Open universities, Distance education departments of conventional universities and Distance education training units of private sector organizations. Thus, the term is used to refer to the education of those who, for one reason or another, choose not to attend conventional schools, colleges, or universities but study at home. attend conventional schools, colleges, or universities but study at home. One of the most comprehensive definition is by Keegan (1996) in which six basic defining elements of distance education were suggested. He observed that distance education is characterized by the

separation of learner and tutor as opposed to face-to-face teaching, the influence of an educational organisation which distinguishes distance education from private study, the use of technical media, e.g. print, audio, or website to unite tutor and learner, the provision of a two-way communication so that the student may engage in dialogue with the tutor, the possibility of occasional meetings for purposes of interaction and the self-directed nature of the learner's involvement.

UNESO (in 2002) gives the more concise definition "distance education is characterized by its focus on open access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners. There is two-way communication between teacher and student, which is facilitated by the organizing 'institutions. The institution develops self-instructional material (SIM) with the help of subject experts and specialists get it printed, send it to learners bypost. Here, this communication between teacher and students can be termed as indirect interaction, which takes place generally through mails and can be supplemented by the electronic media also. But the media either print or electronic is necessary for communication. The third characteristic feature of distance education is either contact sessions or counseling sessions aimed to solve the queries of learners generated after studying the SIM. Distance mode of education play an important role in meeting the need of such persons who are in great demand of education but can't complete their education from the formal or regular system of education. They may be- In service persons due to certain reasons could not complete their educational qualifications without disturbing their jobs, inferior from of socio-economic conditions but wants to enhance their education status, such persons who want to learn and earn simultaneously, such persons who are residing far away from the big cities or in remote areas and do not have colleges and universities for higher education, overflow from colleges/universities due to fix number of seats or merit, dropouts due to some personal reasons, now again motivated to study, such persons who always want to add something new in their knowledge or update their knowledge or something training, such women who are housewife but do have their for knowledge, some very active retired persons who still want to know about their changing environment and such students who cannot fulfill the basic qualification for entrance of the university.

4. PROBLEMS ARISES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

I have tried to mention the common problems that arises in distance education. These may be either due to any means ,but they are the real problem in this form of education over the classroom program.

1) **Nature of Study Material**.: This problem is common with newer distance students. Study materials must take into account the significant proportion of students who enroll with little or no experience of distance study. The background of the learner is important in the preparation of the learning materials. It is difficult to prepare lessons according to the individual differences of the learners. Moreover we are providing similar material to rural and urban students having different needs, experiences and learning environment. If a student is more technical then he won't retain in distance education.

2) **Lack of Multi-Media Instruction**: There is more stress on sending of printed materials. But there is a death of facilities of multi-media instruction. The variety in the learning materials also improves the quality of learning. The lessons written for the students usually are written by the teachers belonging to the traditional system and therefore these materials normally lack in itself instructions methodology.

3) **Insecurities about learning**: More so than traditional students, distance learners are more likely to have insecurities about learning (Knapper, 1988). These insecurities are found in personal and school related issues such as financial costs of study, disruption of family life, perceived irrelevance of their studies and lack of support from employers. These pressures often result in higher dropout rates than among traditional students (Sweet, 1986).

4) **Lack of feedback or contact with the teacher** : Because there is no daily or weekly face to face contact with teachers, students may have trouble in self-evaluation and consequently, such students would be more likely to drop out (Sheets, 1992).

5) **Lack of support and services**: Talking of this with the real life example. You all know about "university of Berkeley" and also u can easily find its open courseware but still only 20% of its book are online. So, student services such as library services, admissions and financial aid is a critical aspect of any distance learning program. The isolation that results from the distance learning process can complicate the learning process for adult students.

6) **Lack of Social Interaction**: Students involved in distance education are not social and cannot tell the answer of the social evnt or thing. I have heard a real example once and in that the speaker asked the boy of distance education "What do you know about taxes" ,and teacher became shocked by his answer. His answer is "raising taxes is bad".

7) **Lack of student training:** All of us know that what we read in bachelor in any regional college the same sylabbus is read in Stanford or MIT then why they are called as scientist and we are in search of job. That must be the lack of training ,these colleges are known for its labs/researches if I take a machine learning course from 'COUSERA' ,then I wont get into the skill that will come on working with the team at Stanford.

4.1 Problems Associated With Distance Education

1) **Lack of the presence of a teacher:** One may say in this matter that teacher will reply for the e-mail of the students ,but if we think of it then how the teacher could reply the 1000 of students who post their query through e-mail.

2) **Low Status of Distance Education Institutes :**Lots and lots of institutes have been opened for distance education today. For a new person its being very hard to know which student is better ,if it provide the better education, what the recruiter think about that institute.

3) **Rigidity Imposed by University Regulations:** Distance education departments have to function within the rules and regulations of the universities thus leaving little scope for experimentation, the faculty in regular departments try to put hurdles in the working of these departments. For example, the frequent revisions of syllabus without consulting distance education departments. Both campus-based and distance education have much to gain from fuller integration in terms of expanding the range of courses available to distance education students, economizing on teaching functions and allowing campus –based students greater flexibility in choosing from a range of resources and strategies for learning

4) **Misconception about the Role of Distance Education departments:** University authorities and facilities of regular departments think that the main function of distance education departments is to mobilize resources for meeting the deficit of the University. This is fallacious and wrong impression. Distance education can provide services at less cost but cannot be like coaching academies.

5) **Discrimination with the Product of the Distance Education Departments:** Inspite of great success of distance education still the recruiters in the developing and un-developed countries think that students doing distance education course are weak that doing the tradational students.

6) **Lack of support by the faculty:** Its can easily be thought that faculty won't reply the several number of students and some students can also miss in reply ,also the single instructor can reply for only a limited number of students.

5.   SOLUTION FOR THESE PROBLEMS

1) **Nature of Study Material:** Main thing in distance education is is study material ,its given according to the need and performance of student. the student must also aware about his/her future in this matter.

2) **Lack of Multi-Media Instruction:** Instead of providing the paper material the material must be in digitilazed form ,which led student to learn easily.

3) **Insecurities about learning:** According to my research the institutes which have their own campus are better and employer take the students read from these colleges easily.

4) **Lack of feedback or contact with the teacher:** How single instructor reply lots of students? Answer is that he may make a team of volunteer from his student team and they help the students in solving their problems.

5) **Lack of support and services:** There are lots of library online and books are present online free of cost ,student taking the course can take the books from internet.

6) **Lack of Social Interaction:** Teacher/instructor should make the study group on social networking sites along with the start of group and should make a meeting once a week/month.

7) **Lack of student training:** By regular meetings.

5.1 Solution Associated With Distance Education

1) **Lack of the presence of a teacher:** In distance education student must be commited to his/her success. traditional classroom environment carries with it a certain level of social pressure: the teacher and other classmates expect each student to come to class every week, complete the assignments, answer the teacher's questions and actively participate in group projects. In a distance-learning class, these behaviors are expected as well, but the social pressure to comply is absent. Student self depend on his/her success.

2) **Low Status of Distance Education Institutes:** The institutes who are selling degrees on the name of distance education must be closed.

3) **Rigidity Imposed by University Regulations:** One should take the online attendance by biometric mean to check the presence in class.

4) **4)Misconception about the Role of Distance Education departments :**It is seen that many of the student taking the course leave it in the middle. It is due to the misconception about the distance education. So institutes must first told the importance of courses of distance education.

5) **Discrimination with the Product of the Distance Education Departments:** It is seen that instates which have their self building are better than online made colleges.

6) **Lack of support by the faculty:** Volunteer team should be made to resolve this problem.

6.   REAL LIFE EXAMPLE TO ILLUSTRATE THE LIFE OF STUDENT WITHOUT CLASSROOM PROGRAM IN POOR COUNTRIES

Talking about the undeveloped and developing countries still in these are the student rise with the dream of becoming rich one day and he/she start study for that, even they work hard day and night in that. If the whole world is digitalized then it will cause many problems. Some of the problems are :

1) There are still some places where there is no internet facilities ,so it is also a big problem.

2) The students still don't know about computers in some areas ,so if they want to read physics then first they have to take the computer course.

3) Still in villages people don't have proper electricity ,how can he/she may do study from correspondence course.

4) In some areas still people don't have enough money to take the course ,and there is no instructor to teach them what is computer.

5) If no instructor is there student did not read from distance education.

6) If a child take distance course in the developing country then all her/his dream will get vanish and he/she lost her child and teenage.

Solution to this is that no degree should be given through distance education and only diploma courses should be given online, and I assure you that if it is done then no problem is there.

So conclusion of this example is that correspondence course is only given to the persons who require some specialization in particular field for the promotion. Most importantly it should not be given to any of the students as it will not make the over-all development of the students. And most importantly no degree should be provided in the distance education course only the diplomas should be provided for the distance education.

7. MAIN TEXT

1) No degrees should be provided in the distance education only diploma courses are done on the distance education.

2) All the low profile institutes should be banned ,who are selling degrees for some money.

3) A personal meeting should be done once a month between the teacher and students.

4) Teacher should distribute her/his work by making voulunteers in the course ,who helps students when they needed.

5) There should be facility of concession in the fees for the students who cannot pay so high amount of fees.

6) All student must be aware of their college, from where he/she is taking course.

Inspite of all these things still there is no solution to the problem of training among the students, it depends upon how much student is crazy about the course. The students are cannot be trained to face the real life challenge.

The survey done by www.westga.edu shows distance take correspondence and compare them with the college going student. results are:

Table 1: Class participation

	Little	Average	Frequent
How would you characterize your	0.0%	39.3%	60.7%

level of class participation			

Table 2: Peer to peer Interation

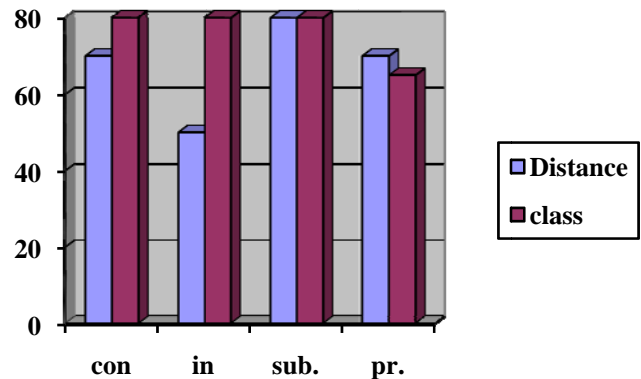| Question	None	A Little	Frequent	Alot
How much do you have interaction with fellow students.	18.6%	60.5%	16.3%	4.7%

Chart 1. This is survey based chart on the various students MJPRU ,Bareilly by taking their experiences..
Con=Confidence
In=Interaction
Sub.=Subject knowledge
Pr.=Practice

8. FIRST-ORDER HEADINGS

Introduction, History of distance education , Conceptual framework of distance education, Problem arises in distance education, Solution of these problems, Main Text, Acknowledgement, References.

8.1 Second-order Headings

Electronic communication, Problems arises in distance education,

8.1.1 Third-order Headings. Nature of Study Material.: Lack of Multi-Media Instruction, Insecurities about learning, Lack of feedback or contact with the teacher, Lack of support and services, Lack of Social Interaction, Lack of student training, Lack of the presence of a teacher, Low Status of Distance Education Institutes, Lack of support and services, Lack of Social Interaction, Lack of student training , Lack of the presence of a teacher, Low Status of Distance Education Institutes, Rigidity Imposed by University Regulations, Misconception about the Role of Distance Education

departments, Discrimination with the Product of the Distance Education Departments, Lack of support by the faculty etc.

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