ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROVISION OF TERTIARY LEVEL DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN TIGRAI REGIONAL STATE

BY
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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Appendices</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations/Acronyms</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

1.2. Statement of the Problem

1.3. Significance of the Study

1.4. Delimitation of the Study

1.5. Limitation of the Study

1.6. Research Methodology and Procedure of the Study

1.7. Definition of Terms

1.8. Organization of the Study

#### CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Distance Education: An Overview

2.1.1. Definition of Distance Education

2.1.2. Distance Education versus Conventional Education

2.1.3. Significant Aspects of Distance Education

2.2 Historical Development of Distance Education

2.2.1. Distance Education in Advanced Countries

2.2.2. Distance Education in Africa
2.2.3. The Potential and Status of Distance Education in Ethiopia .................................................20

2.3 Planning and Management of Distance Education .................................................22
2.3.1. The Need for Policy and Strategy for Distance Education ...........................................22
2.3.2. Institutional Models in Distance Education ...............................................................24
   • Single-Mode Institutions .........................................................................................24
   • Dual-Mode Institutions .........................................................................................24
   • Franchised International Program .........................................................................24
   • Direct Un-Franchised International Provision .........................................................25
2.3.3. Staffing and Facilities Requirement for Distance Education .....................................25
2.3.4. Establishing Regional and Study/Tutorial Centers ..................................................26
   • Regional Centers ....................................................................................................26
   • Study/Tutorial Centers ..........................................................................................28

2.4 Instructional Materials Development for Distance Education ....................................29
2.4.1. Print Materials in Distance Education ...................................................................29
2.4.2. Self-Assessment Questions in Distance Education ................................................31

2.5 Student Support Services in Distance Education ......................................................32
2.5.1. What is Student Support Service? ..........................................................................32
2.5.2. Characteristics of Distance Learners ......................................................................33
2.5.3. Basic Types of Student Support Services ..............................................................34
   • Counseling Service .................................................................................................34
   • Tutorial Service ........................................................................................................35
   • Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) ..........................................................................36
   • Types and Significance of Tutor Comments ............................................................37
   • Library Service .........................................................................................................39
2.5.4. Problems in the Provision of Student Support Services .........................................40
2.6 Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Distance Education
   2.6.1. The Internet in Distance Education
   2.6.2. Distance Education and the World Wide Web (WWW)

CHAPTER THREE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA
   3.1 Characteristics of the Study Population
   3.2 Analysis of the Findings of the Study

CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
   4.1 Summary
   4.2 Conclusions
   4.3 Recommendations

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Appendices
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General background of learners and tutors</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Monthly income, work place, employment and work experience of learners</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. General background of tutors</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. General background of Regional and Study/tutorial center coordinators</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The distribution of the course materials and their content</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The availability of additional materials distributed to learners</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Comments/feedback on Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Tutors recruitment and remuneration</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Provision of training and ‘Tutors Guide’ and preparedness of tutors for the face-to-face sessions</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Problems observed in Tutor Marked Assignments</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tutorial service in distance education program</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Participation of learners and tutors for tutorial programs</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Preparation of tutors for the tutorial programs</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Preparation of learners for the tutorial sessions</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Provision of counseling service in distance education</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Provision of library service in distance education</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Availability of relevant reference materials in the library</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. End Course Exams and grading in distance education</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Learners observation on issues related to organization and management of Distance Education</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire to be filled by learners
Appendix B: Questionnaire to be filled by tutors
Appendix C: Structured interview for regional/study center coordinators
Appendix D: List of visited centers
Appendix E: Enrollment of distance education learners and tutors
Appendix F: Academic Calendar of Ethiopian Civil Service College
Appendix G: Calendar of Alpha University College
Appendix H: List of interviewees
LIST OF ABRIVATIONS/ACRONYMS

AAU----------Addis Ababa University
CTVET--------Council of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
DIY----------Do It Yourself
ECSC---------Ethiopian Civil Service College
EMA----------Ethiopian Mass Media Agency
ESDP---------Education Sector Development Program
FDRE---------Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GER----------Gross Enrollment Rate
HERQA--------Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
IGNOU--------Indira Gandhi National Open University
IICBA--------International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
ITQ----------In Text Questions
MBA----------Management of Business Administration
MOE----------Ministry of Education
MU----------Mekelle University
OU----------Open University
OUUK--------Open University of United Kingdom
PESC---------Political, Economical, Social and Cultural
SAQs---------Self Assessment Questions
TEB----------Tigrai Education Bureau
TEG---------Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TMAs--------Tutor Marked Assignments
TRCSC--------Tigrai Region Civil Service Commission
STRIDE------Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance education
TVET--------Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK----------United Kingdom
UNESCO------United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNISA-------University of South Africa
USA---------United States of America
WWW---------World Wide Web
Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to undertake a systematic assessment of the provision of tertiary level distance education programs in Tigrai Regional State focusing on the identification of the strength and weakness of the program and eventually provide alternative solutions to the problems. The basic questions of the study revolves around issues related to policy and management of distance education, current organization of student support service and short comings of tertiary level distance education.

The research methodology employed in this study was descriptive survey. Accordingly, two sets of questionnaires, were prepared, pilot tested and administered on 300 learners and 80 tutors. Where by an aggregate of 80.5% of the questionnaires were properly filled out and returned.

Structured interview was conducted with five regional and 9 study/tutorial center coordinators as well as two officials from HERQA and other two officials of CTVET respectively. In addition to these, relevant documents were reviewed.

Using descriptive survey research approach, qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. The findings of the study showed that the program was exposed to multiple problems such as: delay in providing TMA's and exam results, non existence of written feedback on the assignments, the inconvenience location of the tutorial centers, irregular attendance of learners, lack of tutors preparedness as well as unavailability of tutors during the tutorial sessions, weak student support service, non existence of library, counseling service, and lack of adequate support from the regulatory bodies.

Based on the research findings, some recommendations were also forwarded in the interest of addressing these issues. Included: taking proper care and attention to provide well organized student support services; providing training to coordinators and tutors; establishment of different resource centers, employment of ICT as well as proper care and attention from the government side regarding the provision and organization of distance education programs.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Education plays a significant role in enhancing social transformation and development by bringing about changes in the social consciousness of people. Social transformation necessitates changes in the economic, political and social development of the people. Whereby Education plays a pivotal role to bring about the designed social changes that guarantee the development of all rounded personality.

In the developing countries, the growth of school age population has been so high, that these countries have had difficulty in keeping enrollment high. The problem is grave especially at the tertiary level. It is here where different professionals who can help the country's progress by joining different kinds of work in different fields are produced. The rapid enrollment growth in higher education coupled with the declining resource has significantly lowered the quality of education (Daniel 1996: 11).

Because of these, in most developing countries the conventional face-to-face mode of delivery has failed to keep up with the growing demand of education. Studying the seriousness of the problem, the World Bank in Ramanujam (2000:88) states that because of the invidious combination of rapid population growth and economic stagnation, the gap between sub-saharan Africa and the rest of the world tends to get wider and wider unless serious measures are taken.

This implies that conventional educational systems are unable to accommodate the needs and aspirations of society in developing countries. Shrestha (2000:4) further states that, the present day educational challenge cannot be met with traditional means alone. Most countries of the world need educational systems, which can accommodate a very large numbers of students at a time (Holmberg, 1995:38). Therefore, searching for effective and efficient alternative means of providing education is a necessity. It is in this context that distance education is assumed to play significant roles in the provision of educational opportunities for adults based on flexible and accessible approaches.
Distance education, as the very name suggests, is a means of providing instruction at a distance. Like formal conventional education, distance education is a mode of imparting and acquiring knowledge, developing skills and attitudes, but learners and teachers are separated in time and space for most of the study time. Distance education is a non-residential non-contiguous program designed to provide educational opportunities to a larger segment of the population of a country. It enables learners, particularly adult ones to pursue their education whilst earning their living and learning at their own pace and at home (Holmberg, 1995:8).

Distance education is organized and well structured system of education. The potential benefits associated with an expanded use of distance education are numerous. If adequately managed:

- **distance education could enable an expansion of tertiary enrollments at least cost per student than under the traditional residential campus system;**
- **greater flexibility in the design and delivery of curriculum content than is normally associated with classroom teaching enables distance education courses to adapt to specific student needs or work requirements, thereby enabling greater relevance;**
- **distance education also accommodates the growing demand for life-long learning more easily than do residential programs;**
- **can effectively reach those learners who have been denied access to tertiary education; for example, women who are not able to attend traditional educational programs because of household responsibilities or cultural constraints, economically marginalized groups and refugees (http://www.uidaho.edu/eo/html.).**

These benefits have made tertiary distance education the world's fastest growing educational sector. Asia now of having 3.5 million tertiary distance education students, with China alone accounting for 1.4 million. Latin America has more than one million tertiary level distance education students with particularly active programs in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. In comparison, the United States of America possesses over 2 million students; while Canada has half a million (Saint, 1999:45).

In Anglophone Africa, the University of South Africa (which has an enrollment of, 117,000 began in 1946 as a correspondence university) has evolved as one of the World's largest open distance learning universities. Since the 1960's Botswana, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia have used distance education for teacher training. By 1985 the Anglophone countries of Africa
contained 25 state-funded distance education institutions. Over 140 public and private institutions currently provide tertiary distance education services within Sub-Saharan Africa (Saint, 1999:46).

According to Rumble (1992: 37), distance education institutions can vary based on their purpose, structure, technologies, services, underlying philosophies, and media selection. All of these differences have an effect on why they are set up and how they are managed. The planning and managing of a distance education system and the characteristics of their learners must also take into account before they commit resources.

Distance education institutions and distance learners have their own unique characteristics; and they need different organization and management approaches, which can satisfy their unique characteristics. The organization and management needs to provide more flexible and individualized education. Tertiary level distance education institutions exist in two principal forms: either a dual mode, which offers a distance education program in addition to conventional classroom teaching or a single mode, which is solely devoted to teaching at a distance.

The planning and management of distance education is different from the conventional universities or colleges. This is because of the peculiar features of distance education. Furthermore, while the conventional educational system operates mainly through two subsystems, academic and administrative subsystem, the distance educational system operates through three subsystems, namely, administrative subsystem, academic subsystem and student support subsystem (Keegan, 1996: 154 - 58).

In order to make use of distance education for development, putting appropriate organizational and management structures in place is essential. Such programs must be carefully planned and organized. Planning is essential because it ensures the most efficient use of scarce resources. Planning should include such things as: developing program objectives, determining program scope, establishing staff size and qualification, budgeting, securing funds, and specifying course content. It must also take into account such factors as equipment, materials, supplies, travel costs, and salaries. Programs should also be based upon the needs and human power requirements of the public and private sector.
In distance education system, learner support service play an important role in making two-way educational communication possible. The term learner support means the range of activities, which complement the mass-produced materials, which make up the most well known elements in distance learning. They cover a wide range of functioning, starting from producing learning materials and making them available to distance learners up to arranging contact/face-to-face programs and conducting examinations and providing the final result (Ramanujam, 2000:8).

The Student support systems are designed to respond as far as possible to individual needs, and typically include the provision of support through tutors (Mentors), counselors (advisors, guidance counselors) and center-based staff (academics, librarians, computer specialists and so on). The services are incorporated within the self-learning materials the learning system and assignment marking (Thorpe, 1988:75).

The student support service includes: tutoring and counseling, whether face-to-face, by correspondence, by telephone or electronically, interactive teaching through television and radio and other similar activities. These activities have the key conceptual component of supporting the individual learning of the distance learner (Tait, 1995:60).

According to Keegan (1989:78), it is the provision of learner support services that distinguishes distance education from private study and teach-yourself programs. The main objective of this support service is to motivate learners, keep them on the right track, and encourage them to make use of the facilities provided and above all facilitate their learning.

The organization and management of distance education needs to define its institutional mission. Allocating human and financial resources among competing student demands and market issues is important as are a well-established communication network to provide and/or receive the necessary feedback to/from centers and students. In general, the effectiveness of distance education is contingent upon many factors of which clear policy, clear institutional goals, adequate material support, and adequate human resources are the major ones.
Distance education, which is potentially economical and can be cost effective, has been unutilized in Ethiopia. Accordingly, in the last few years, it seems that distance education has gained its place in the education system of the country. Several government and private institutions are opening and providing distance education programs to the public. At present the conventional higher educational institutions cannot accommodate the educational needs of school age children and adults. This is because the school facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, cafeterias, dormitories, workshops, financial and human resources are inadequate to meet the demands.

Recently, distance education mode has been adopted as an alternative means of educating and training the public. The Commercial College of the Addis Ababa University, in collaboration with the British Open University, provides diploma and MBA programs to government officials. Different government universities such as Haramaya University, Bahir Dar University and Mekelle University are providing tertiary level distance education programs to up-grade the educational qualification of teachers. The Ethiopian Civil Service College is also providing tertiary/diploma level distance education program in Public Sector Administration, Public Sector Accounting Finance, and Law to Civil Servants in all the regions except Oromia Regional State.

Alpha University College, Admas College, St. Mary’s University College, Unity University College, PESC Information Systems College, Ethiopis College, etc...are among the private higher educational institutions providing distance education programs in the country. It is observed that distance education is a steadily growing education in Ethiopia. However, unlike the formal and conventional system, research in this mode of education is rather limited. There is need for conducting research on distance education since it provides empirical data and information for the development of the system. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to assess the provision of tertiary level distance education programs and forward possible solutions to the problems.

1.2 Statement of the Problem
Tigrai is the north most region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. It is bound to the north by Eritrea, to the West by the Sudan and to the East and South by the Afar and Amhara regional states. Tigrai covers a little more than 80,000 square Km. and 2,000 meters
above sea level. In Eastern, Southern and North areas mountains reach above 35,000 meters and towards the West, low lands of Sudan’s savanna belt. The population of Tigrai is 4,335,000 and the ratio of male to female is approximately 50:50. Most of the population is concentrated in the highlands. The low lands are more sparsely populated due to the prevalence of endemic disease such as malaria (BPED 1998:7).

In the region, there is one government-run university, which is administrated under the Federal Ministry of Education and four colleges, administered by the regional state. As to the private sector, there are seven colleges most of which are concentrated in Mekelle, the capital city of the region. Moreover, there are public and private institutions like Admas College, Alpha University College, Mekelle University, New Millennium College, Sheba College, St. Mary’s College and Unity University College which provide tertiary level distance education in the region. With these limited number of higher education institutions the educational demand of the region could not be fulfilled only through the conventional system.

For example, if we see the educational sector of this region, there were 7,664 primary school teachers, out of these 205 are without certificates. In the secondary schools there were 2,330 teachers, of these only 241 have the first degree and the rest with diploma in 2003 (Tigrai Education Bureau 1995: 39-53). A data obtained from Tigrai Region Civil Service commission shows that, among the 32,077 civil servants in the region, those who have an educational level of diploma and above counts only 8,796 (27%) of the total employee (TEB 1995: 39-53 E.C.).

From this data we can understand that there is a need for devising a mechanism that can provide educational opportunities to those who cannot pursue their education on regular/conventional bases. Distance education has, thus, an important role in the provision of tertiary level distance education opportunity for government employee, secondary school leavers and other individuals who want to pursue their education.

The main purpose of this study is to assess the provision of tertiary level distance education programs in Tigrai Regional State. Therefore, the study will attempt to give response to the following basic research questions:

1. What are the policy issues that affect the provision of tertiary level distance education programs?
2. What are the different planning or management problems the tertiary level distance education institutions face?

3. To what extent available infrastructure facilitate the provision of tertiary level distance education programs?

4. Does the current organization of student support service facilitate distance learners education in the region?

5. What are the major shortcomings of tertiary level distance education programs as experienced by the learners?

The prime objective of this study was therefore, to assess the extent of provision of tertiary level distance education programs. More specifically, the study will try to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Assess the current status of provision of tertiary level distance education in Tigrai.
- Identify the internal and external factors that affect the provision of tertiary level distance education programs.
- Forward possible recommendation that could assist in solving the problems encountered in the provision of tertiary level distance education programs.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Distance education has its own unique characteristics, which is different from any other forms of education. For most of the time, learners study in their work place, or at home and the face-to-face interaction with their tutor is minimal. Therefore, the organization and management of distance education should consider these unique characteristics and be able to provide the necessary support to enable students solve problems they face. Therefore, this study has the following significances:

1. It will enable us to learn from best practices and think ahead about the problems that other distance education programs in the country may face;
2. The study may provide an up-to-date picture on the status of the provision of tertiary level distance education programs in the region;
3. When the copy of the research output is provided to the managers and coordinators of tertiary level distance education providing institutions, the study may make them
aware of the problems and may provide them with clues about what factors they should consider during planning and implementation of the program;

4. As to the knowledge of the researcher there are no considerable studies done on the assessment of provision of tertiary level distance education in Tigrai Regional State. Thus, the study can serve as a resource for educational institutions, which strive to launch distance education programs in the region and in the country;

5. The study may encourage other researchers to carry out studies in depth that could cover broader aspects of the program.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

Due to scarcity of necessary resources the study was delimited to the assessment of provision of tertiary level distance education programs of two public colleges: The Ethiopian Civil Service College and Mekelle University, and three private tertiary level distance education program providing institutions: Alpha University College, Sheba College and St. Mary’s University College in three zones of Tigrai regional state.

1.5 Limitation of the study

The study was strongly limited with lack of necessary resources. The study fund earned from Addis Ababa University was not adequate enough to conduct research in a region and zones very far from Addis Ababa. The other limitation the researcher faced was in the process of data collection from tutors and learners. Tutors and learners were only available during the different days of the tutorial sessions of the different institutes under study. Therefore, the researcher was forced to conduct frequent travel to the study centers to collect the necessary data and this was consuming both time and financial resources.

1.6 Research Methodology and Procedures of the Study

The research methodology employed for this study was descriptive survey research method. This method is more appropriate to gather several kinds of data related to the problem under study. This method would help to obtain an accurate description of the current status of the provision of tertiary level distance education programs in Tigrai regional state.
1.6.1 Sources of Data
The study covers two public and three private tertiary level distance education providing institutions: Alpha University College, The Ethiopian Civil Service College, Mekelle University, Sheba College and St. Mary’s University College. The sources of information were regional and study/tutorial center coordinators of the distance education providing institutions, tutors and distance learners who were attending in the institutes under study. In addition to these, Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) at the MOE and Tigray National Regional Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) were also covered as source of data for the study.

1.6.2 Sample and Sampling Techniques
A total sample of five higher education institutions offering distance education program in the three zones were included in the study. There were 158 tutors and 4,757 learners in the institutions under study. Of the total population of 158 tutors 80 were selected and out of the 4,757 learners, 300 were randomly selected to complete the questionnaires when they were coming to the tutorial/study centers for face-to-face/tutorial sessions.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to select tutors and learners in order to provide every individual in the study with an equal chance of being represented in the sample. Available sampling method was used in selecting regional/study center coordinators and HERQA and CTVTE officials for interview.

1.6.3 Instruments for Data Collection
The instruments employed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data were questionnaires, structured and unstructured interviews, and available documents. The questionnaires were used to obtain information form learners and, tutors. The interviews served to obtain the required data from regional/study center coordinators and HERQA and CTVTE officials.

In order to obtain the necessary information two sets of questionnaires were prepared in English. The first set for the learners and the second for the tutors. In all cases, bio-data of the respondents and general information were included. The questionnaire consists closed and very few open-ended question items.
1.6.4 Procedures of the study

The data were collected using questionnaires. Two sets of questionnaires were prepared and distributed to respondents that comprise 300 distance learners and 80 tutors. The questionnaire has both closed and open ended items. The questionnaires were pilot tested on potential respondents to make the data collecting instruments objective, relevant, suitable to the problem, and reliable. In addition to this, about six colleagues of the researcher checked the questionnaires for improvement.

Based on the feedback obtained, necessary corrections and amendments were made. For example, some questions were repeatedly asked; others were vague, and not targeted. Finally, the improved version of the questionnaire was printed, duplicated, and dispatched to the target population.

The questionnaires were administered to learners and tutors by the researcher during the tutorial sessions where learners and tutors were available for the face-to-face program. This was the best time to get learners and tutors. Regarding the interview, it was conducted at different times depending on the wish of the interviewees. In order to make the study complete necessary documents were reviewed.

The researcher also made a series of observations on the regional and the study/tutorial centers (offices). The tutorial classrooms where the face-to-face sessions are conducted were observed. The focus was regarding their facility and training equipments.

1.6.5 Method of Data Analyses

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods have been employed to arrive at some findings to reach conclusions, and forward practical solutions to solve the existing problems in the program. Questionnaires with closed and open ended items were used to collect data from learners and tutors. Structured interviews were also employed to collect data from regional and study center coordinators and unstructured interview was used to collect information from HERQA and CTVET officials. Different statistical techniques: percentage and chi-square were employed to describe and draw inferences from the data collected. Finally, the implications of the results were discussed. The final result was compared to the relevant literature.
1.7 Definition of Terms

**Distance Education:** Refers to teaching and situations in which the instructor and the learner or learners are geographically separated, and therefore, rely on electronic device and print materials for instructional delivery (Portway & Lane 1994:295).

**Open Education:** is an umbrella term for any scheme of education or training that seeks systematically to remove barriers to learning, whether they are concerned with age, time, place or space. With open learning, individuals take responsibility for what they learn, how they learn, where they learn, how quickly they learn, who helps them they have their learning assessed (http://www.distance-learning.co.uk/whatis/dlvol.htm).

**Student Support Service:** The range of activities, which complement the mass-produced materials, which make up the most well known elements in distance learning. They cover a wide range of functioning, starting from producing learning materials and making them available to distance learners up to arranging contact programs and conducting examinations and providing the final result (Ramanujam, 2000:8).

**Tertiary Education:** Tertiary education broadly refers to all post-secondary education, including but not limited to universities. Universities are clearly a key part of all tertiary systems, but the diverse and growing set of public and private tertiary institutions in every country – colleges, technical training institutes, community colleges, nursing schools, ...etc that support the production of higher-order capacity necessary for development.


1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, brief introduction on the nature of the problem, and the approach followed to collect, analyze, and interpret the results. The second chapter addresses the review of related literature, which is an overview of the distance education. It also discusses principles and experiences of distance education system in different countries.

Chapter three focuses on overall presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, chapter four winds up the study by summarizing the major findings. On the base of this it draws a conclusion and feasible recommendations are then forwarded that could help in improving the existing condition of distance education programs in the region. As end material, the appendices and selected reference materials are also included to make the thesis comprehensive.
CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is devoted to the review of literature on different aspects of distance education. It comprises of an overview of distance education, significant aspects of distance education, historical development of distance education, planning and management of distance education, instructional materials development for distance and information technology in distance education.

2.1. Distance Education: an Overview

2.1.1. Definition of Distance Education

Distance education, simply and broadly defined, is the system of education in which education is imparted to students from a distance. It contains two basic elements: the physical separation of teacher and learner; and the changed role of the teacher, who may meet the students only on selected tasks such as counseling, giving tutorials or solving students’ problems.

Distance learning lends itself to a variety of interpretations which empowers it as a concept. “Distance education” is an umbrella term which indicates tangible distance between the learner and the teacher where the process of teaching and learning is not confined within the four walls of the classroom any more. Distance education transcends the barriers of time, space, sex, creed, community and religion, thus breaking the myth of elitism in conventional higher education. Distance education methods can be successfully used for relating groups who, for geographical, economic, or social reasons, are unable or unwilling to make use of conventional provision of education (Manjulika & Reddy, 1996: 3).

Distance education has different nomenclatures given to it by different authorities in different countries. Moore (1975) names it “telematic teaching”; Delling (1976) calls it “distance study”; Sims (1977) as “correspondence education”; Holmberg (1977) as “distance education”; and so
on. The terms ‘Distance education’ and ‘Home study’ are used in Europe and a few places in Canada and the USA; ‘Independent study’ is used in North America; ‘Off-campus study’ in Australia, the Pacific Region, and South-East Asian countries; and ‘Extra-mural system’ in New Zealand, etc. However, all definitions of distance education usually emphasize that it is distinct from conventional education (Manjulika & Reddy, 1996: 3).

In an article published in 1980, on defining ‘distance education’ (Keegan 1980) a number of definitions were brought together and analyzed. Six basic defining elements of education were proposed:

- **a.** the separation of teacher and learner, which distinguishes it from face-to-face learning,
- **b.** the influence of an educational organization, which distinguishes it from private study,
- **c.** the use of technical media, usually print, to unite teacher and learner and carry the educational content of the course,
- **d.** the provision of two-way communication so that the students may benefit from or even initiate dialogue, which distinguishes it from other uses of educational technology,
- **e.** the teaching of students as individuals and rarely in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes, and
- **f.** the participation in a more industrialized form of education which is accepted, contains the genus of radical separation of distance education from other forms within the educational spectrum (Keegan 2004: 44).

According to Rumble (1986:15-21), the basic characteristic of this form of education is the separation of teacher and learner which distinguishes it from conventional education. In this sense, distance education is non-contiguous education. This sense of non-contiguity is apparent in Moore’s definition of distance teaching as:

*The family of instructional methods in which the teaching behaviors are executed apart from the learning behavior, including those that in a contiguous situation would be performed in the learner’s presence, so that communication between the teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical or other devices* (Moore, 1973: 666-679).
2.1.2. Distance Education versus Conventional/Face-to-Face/Education
Kaye and Rumble (1979:22), describe conventional/face-to-face education as a system that operates within the four walls of a classroom setting. It is a term applied to formal classroom-based instruction in school, college, or university setting, where teachers and students are physically present at the same time at the same place. It is the oldest and still the most dominant system of the teaching learning process.

Distance education, is a recent system developed as a result of the innovation of information communication technologies. As Garrison and shale (1987 in Jeffries 2001:4) proposed, distance education implies that the majority of educational communication between teacher and student occurs non-contiguously, involves two-way communication between teacher and student for the purpose of facilitating and supporting the educational process and uses technology to mediate the necessary two-way communication.

Research done by Moore and Thompson (1990) and Verduim and Clark (1991) indicate that teaching and studying at a distance can be as effective as conventional/traditional instructions, when three conditions are met. That:

1. the methods and technologies used are appropriate to the instructional tasks;
2. there is student to teacher interaction in tutorial and counseling sessions;
3. there is timely teacher to student feedback through assignments;

2.1.3. Significant Aspects of Distance Education
Both developing and developed countries are using distance education extensively for various purposes. However, because of the increased demand of the various sectors for trained and educated manpower, developing countries need to run distance education widely and effectively. Mehrotra, Hollister and McGahey (2001 in Zenebe, 2005: 79) argue that there are several factors apart from advancement in communications technology that contributed to the expansion and development of distance education. These factors could be related to the following:

1. Increased requirements for higher education for career advancement,
2. Demand for flexible schedule to learners,
3. Growing market for personal fulfillment in lifelong learning,
4. Growing requirements in many professionals for renewal of licenses through enrichment of their existing knowledge and skills,

5. Need for democratization and individualization of education so that this develops learner autonomy allowing learner-centered approach rather than teacher-centered approach,

6. It is one means of considering individual difference that fits to the needs of individual learner's style of learning. It may cater for persons of disabilities, cultural difference, and dislike for classroom interaction,

7. It allows maximum utilization of scarce resources in collaboration with the existing public institutions, which is the need of governments especially in the context of developing countries.

Regarding tertiary level, distance education is practiced in many parts of the world. There are many independent, autonomous, full-fledged distance teaching higher education institutions that can be representative of higher educations offering distance education at tertiary level such as: the Open University of the United Kingdom (OUUK), the Fern Universitat of Germany, Athabasca University in Canada, Universidad Estatal a Distanciain Costa Rica, University of Air in Japan, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India, and the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Zenebe 2005: 69-70).

The benefits gained, made tertiary distance education the world's fastest growing educational sector. According to the document of the World Bank (1998) and UNESCO (1998), Asia boasts 3.5 million tertiary distance education students, with China alone accounting for 1.4 million. Latin America has more than one million tertiary level distance education students, with particularly active programs in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela, the United States possesses over 2 million students, while Canada has half a million.

Over 140 public and private institutions currently provide tertiary distance education services within Sub-Saharan Africa (Roberts & Associates 1998:9). These programs rely mainly on print media, supplemented by written assignments and face-to-face tutoring (Murphy and Zhiri 1992:36). A recent survey of 143 tertiary distance education programs in Africa found that 52% of Anglophone programs and 67% of francophone programs targeted teachers and school
administrators. Notably, 12% of programs in both language areas were aimed at university students (Roberts & Associates 1998:13).

2.2. Historical Development of Distance Education

2.2.1. Distance Education in Advanced Countries

Distance education has a surprisingly long history. Distance education as we know of today can be traced back to as early as the eighth century. The invention of printing, the advent of a publishing industry and the development of the modern postal services boosted the utilization of correspondence for educational purposes (Sarah 1999: 3).

Isaac Pitman, in a way planted the seed of the modern correspondence education when he started offering postal tuition on short-hand in 1840 in Britain. Pitman would not have imagined that after a century his small educational venture would grow into a significant mode of education spread in many forms in the United States of America, Australia, Western Europe and Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Dinsdale, 1953 in Tilak and Esirgene 1983:3).

Distance education as a form of higher and continuing education offered by universities has existed since the early half of the nineteenth century. As reviewed by Bell and Tight (1993), the University of London, which got its Royal Charter as a distance examining body in 1836, enabled students studying in private correspondence colleges in any part of the British Empire to take its examinations. From 1858 it opened all of its non-medical examinations, from matriculation level upwards, to candidates anywhere in the world, regardless of their method of preparation. St. Andrews University, which was the oldest Scottish University, offered between 1877 and 1931 an external, higher education degree designed specially for women scattered in over one hundred centers world-wide and in places as diverse as China, Palestine and Kenya.

The foundation of a correspondence program at Illinois State University in 1874 can be taken as the start of distance education at university level in the USA (keegan and Rumble 1982: 16). In 1883 the State of New York authorized the Chautauqua Institute to award degree through this method. The University of Chicago under William Harper offered the first university-sponsored correspondence course in 1891; and the University of Wisconsin offered an extension course in
1892 (Verduim and Clark 1995). Distance education at university level was initiated in Canada at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario in 1889. Many of the Canadian universities operate correspondence and distance education programs (Sarah 1999: 3-4).

In Russia, distance education was born in the post-1917 revolution period out of the necessity to train thousands of volunteers who offered to teach illiterate adults throughout the country where about 76 percent of the population was illiterate in the early 1920s. As a result of this massive campaign, illiteracy was completely eradicated within two decades (Ilyin 1983).

According to Perraton, H. (1978:1-4), the French Government set up the Government correspondence college, now the center National De Tel-Enseignement, with the objective of providing education of school children in 1939. After 1945 the center continued as a regular part of the state educational systems.

### 2.2.2. Distance Education in Africa

Developing countries cannot satisfy the educational needs of their population because of limited resources to build more schools, equip the schools with the necessary facilities and hire teachers as required. The high population growth coupled with the declining of their economy frustrates them to meet the demand of their population for education through the conventional educational system alone. Distance education is, thus, a viable option for developing countries to train their human power requirements and to reach the unreached segments of their population (Rumble 1997:1).

The University of South Africa (UNISA) began in 1946 as a correspondence university and has evolved into one of the world’s largest open distant learning universities. It is told to be the first full-fledged autonomous distance teaching university. It was based on the model of the University of London as an external examining board. It started teaching at a distance in 1946. In 1962 it was officially established as a distance teaching university through a governmental decree. According to John (1996: 50-57), since the 1960s Botswana, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia have used distance education for teacher training programs. By 1985 the Anglophone countries of Africa contained 25 state-funded distance education institutions (Murphy & Zhiri 1992:7).
Saint (1999:12) discloses that the first francophone experience in distance learning involved correspondence courses offered in 1970 by Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville. During the 1980s and 1990s teacher upgrading through distance education programs has been undertaken in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali and Togo. An experienced non-governmental organization, INADES-Formation, established by Jesuits in 1962 and headquartered in Abidjan, now offers practical skills development for poor rural populations through distance education programs in 20 African countries.

The same writer asserts, Namibia and Ghana have formally declared dual-mode instruction to be their national policy. Botswana, Cameroon and Zambia are using a university-based Internet system to support interactive regional study centers for distance learners. Tanzania, Botswana and Zimbabwe have established new tertiary institutions wholly dedicated to distance education. The Zimbabwe Open University launched Master’s degree in education for in-service teachers. Uganda enrolls students in a Bachelor of Commerce course given at a distance. Nigeria’s Centre for Distance Learning offers tertiary level programs. Madagascar has pioneered the use of audio cassettes for university programs in law and the social sciences. Côte d’Ivoire, Congo, Togo and Benin are in various stages of setting up university-based distance education programs. In Senegal, distance education supports teacher training and master’s degree programs in health and law. Currently several African countries are using distance education programs to build the capacity of their citizens.

**Potential Benefits of Tertiary Distance Education for Africa**

As the most modern form of educational provision, distance education at the tertiary level offers Africa the possibility of leap-froging certain phases in educational development. Additionally, it creates the possibility of increased access to tertiary education at more cost effective levels. According to Saint (1999), tertiary distance education holds forth the promise of three primary benefits for Africa: increased access to education, improved educational quality, and more efficient use of limited resources.

**Increased access to education:** Distance education programs can increase educational access by reaching out to different groups in any society: secondary school graduates who fail to gain
admission to the university, married women with household responsibilities, geographically isolated or uprooted students (e.g., refugees), and economically disadvantaged communities. Of these, the largest and most rapidly growing group is composed of secondary graduates who were unsuccessful in the competitive admission process for tertiary education. Low tertiary enrollment rates mean high levels of exclusion. For example, in Ghana only 6,088 students were admitted to the universities in 1996 out of 22,477 qualified applicants (27%). In Uganda, just 6,000 out of 11,000 secondary school graduates who qualified for admission in 1996 were able to gain university entrance (54%). In Ethiopia, it is clearly observed that enrollment at tertiary level increased to a large degree as compared to the preceding years. However, Ethiopia's tertiary level gross enrollment ratio (GER) 1.5% is still low even to the Sub-Saharan standard which is 5% (ESDP III/2004: 12).

In Nigeria, less than 20% of the 475,923 candidates for university admission in 1996/97 were successful. So in general, distance learning can extend tertiary education opportunities to students in rural areas, small towns or refugee camps who do not have convenient access to tertiary institutions. For the distance learner, the saving can be considerable: travel time, travel expense, and the continuation of work income while studying (Saint 1999:16).

**Improved educational quality:** Distance education fosters educational quality and relevance in several ways. Saint (1999:18) says, because teacher and student are separated by distance, successful curriculum design requires clarity of communication, coherent logic and good organization in its presentation. This increases the effectiveness of its pedagogy and, often contributes to improved face-to-face instruction as well. Educational quality can also be enhanced by the prudent use of new information technologies to support classroom teaching in direct or indirect ways.

**Efficient use of limited resources:** According to Saint (1999:21-22) distance education is cost-effective in six ways: First, it lowers the costs of tertiary education for students. They do not have to give up income from employment in order to study. They pay no residential fees or commuting costs. Second, distance learning often operates at more efficient staff/student ratios, thereby reducing the proportion of institutional budgets dedicated to staff salaries.
Unlike the conventional model, tertiary distance education offers declining marginal costs. As enrollments rise, the cost per student goes down. Distance learning is cost-efficient because it employs a modular approach. Course materials can be updated or modified to suit particular types of students without the need to reproduce them in their entirety.

For the most part, distance education makes use of existing staff and facilities and therefore does not require major staff recruitment or expensive building campuses. Likewise, tutoring and academic support for students can be arranged by contracting experienced local teachers or other professionals on a part-time basis and by renting community educational facilities on evenings and/or weekends. New information and communications technologies can contribute to making distance learning programs more manageable. Computerized management systems are also essential for the administration of student records such as registrations, scheduling, grades, assessments, credits acquired, and learning history.

What really distinguishes the distance education of the developed countries from that of the developing world is the overall aim set for it. In the developed countries the broad aim is to provide education to individuals who need it at different levels with different individual needs. In the developing countries the aim becomes a collective one such as nation building, eradication of illiteracy, rural development, health education, women's education, tribal education, education of the socially disadvantaged etc., besides the usual academic, technical and vocational programs. The very magnitude of the aims/goals set before distance education in the developing countries makes the educational operations very complex and demanding.

2.2.3. The Potential and Status of Distance Education in Ethiopia

The first correspondence education entitled 'Directed Study for Teachers', introduced to the education system of the country was intended to train teachers. It was under the extension division of the Addis Ababa University. The program was designed to run jointly by Ethiopian Government and the United States of America, but it had discontinued before it was put into action for lack of resources and expertise in distance education (Solomon, 1992:13).

Scattered literatures indicate that the British Tutorial College was the first pioneer of correspondence education in Ethiopia. The college which had a base in Kenya opened an office in Addis Ababa. In 1967 it was offering correspondence education courses in Ethiopia. In
About ten years time, 1967-1976, about 7,000 students were reported to have graduated from the college. Nevertheless, the college discontinued its program for lack of accreditation. Other private institutions such as *International Correspondence School* (1972) and *Trans World Tutorial College* (1980) were opened and used to teach vocational and other courses by correspondence. These two universities also discontinued their program for the same reason mentioned previously.

In 1967, the MOE established a distance teaching unit under the Department of Adult and Continuing Education and ultimately transferred to Educational Media Agency (EMA). EMA has been providing certificate courses by correspondence to individuals who were unable to complete their secondary education for any array of reasons (Tilson & Getachew, 1998:79). EMA had been providing education to primary and junior secondary schools through radio and television to supplement the conventional education.

Ethiopia renewed its pledge to deliver education using distance methodologies in 1990s. During this period, distance education aimed not only at raising student enrollment at secondary level, but also to cover both primary and tertiary levels of education (Teshome, 2001:17). Currently there are public and private institutions providing distance education programs in the country. The summer programs being offered by the MOE to upgrade the qualification of teachers to a degree level at Addis Ababa University, Bahir Dar University, Mekelle University, Dilla College of Education etc are supplemented by distance education courses. The Ethiopian Civil Service college is also providing tertiary level distance education programs to upgrade the qualification of the Civil Servants of the country.

Regarding private institutions, Admas College, Alpha University College, PESC Information Technology College, St. Mary’s University College, Unity University College, 2020 Open University College, etc. are among the tertiary distance education providing institutions in the country. The African Virtual University, the Open University of United Kingdom (OUUK) in collaboration with AAU, and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in collaboration with UNESCO, International Institute for Capacity Building for Africa (IICBA) are providing tertiary level distance education programs in Ethiopia.
2.3. Planning and Management of Distance Education

In order to reap the benefits of distance education the role of management has paramount importance. Management is about directing the energies and resources of organizations to purposeful, coordinated and goal-oriented activities. Distance learning programs generally require better management skills than traditional tertiary programs. With scattered students, dispersed part-time tutors, far-flung logistics, unreliable communication services, time-sensitive production and distribution of learning materials, and detailed student records, successful distance education programs require a management team with adequate skills in organization, logistics and problem-solving.

The core functions of an educational institution are related to teaching learning. To perform these functions, it is necessary to prepare the programs and courses for study, design and develop the curricula for them, establish the instructional system as well as its methods and practices and set out the learning outcome (STRIDE, IGNOU 2001: 55-56).

2.3.1. The Need for Policy and Strategy on Distance Education

The purpose of national policy is to define public goals for a given sector and to chart a course for attaining them. Although very few African nations possess a formally articulated policy to guide tertiary distance education, the existence of a publicly accepted strategy in this area has proven essential for setting priorities, marshalling resources, and launching a meaningful initiative. Countries that have developed policy frameworks for tertiary distance education include South Africa, Madagascar, and Mauritius (Saint, 1999: 23).

Countries interested in developing their capacities to provide tertiary distance education will need to formulate policies to shape this particular sub-sector, policies to guide teaching and learning, and policies for institutional development and capacity-building. A viable educational policy is the focal point that can guide and advance education towards the right direction and help tackle the prevailing gap and subsequent limitations. A policy, for an institution, is perceived as a legal and conceptual framework for action in a system of complex entity (Zenebe, 2005:62-63).
Regarding distance education provision Saint (1999: 23-26), identified four common questions that all policies need to address:

i. Should distance learning be a separate or integrated part of the conventional system?

ii. Should access be open or conditional?

iii. What technology should be employed? and

iv. How can distance education be financed?

i. Should distance learning be a separate or integrated part of the conventional system?

Experience teaches that there is the value of integrating distance education fully within the existing conventional/formal education system. Full integration helps to reduce inevitable resistance to innovation within existing tertiary institutions and does much to overcome the perception that distance education is somehow an inferior product when compared with residential instruction. Integration works best when some distance learning is undertaken by most students in most departments.

ii. Should access be open or conditional?

The multitude of aspirants to tertiary education in Africa, when coupled with reports of widely varying quality in educational preparation at the secondary level, suggest that admission to tertiary distance education programs should be selective, at least for the near term. Selectivity based on student qualifications or assessment of ability will make student numbers more manageable and enable higher pass rates, thereby contributing to the cost-effectiveness of these programs.

iii. What technology should be employed?

Selection of appropriate media for the use of distance education is very critical issue in distance education. It is true that, multiple media appear to be more effective than a single medium. Application of multi-media enhances interactivity between students and tutors. In choosing technology cost, maintenance, accessibility, affordability and user friendliness should be considered.

iv. How can distance education be financed?

In many African countries, some degree of cost-sharing for tertiary distance education programs between students and government is an established precedent. Currently private sector involvement is also observed in the provision of distance education. In a context of limited government resources and technical capacities, such
private programs can play an important role in expanding access to tertiary education, if educational quality can be assured.

2.3.2. Institutional Models in Distance Education

There is no unique structure for a distance education system and that the organization and management can be shaped and developed according to the needs and circumstances of environment.

Mugridge (1992:154) and Saint (1999:31) identify four institutional models of distance education:

i. single-mode,
ii. dual-mode,
iii. franchised international program, and
iv. direct un-franchised international provision.

I. The Single-Mode Institutions: are wholly dedicated to distance learning. Student admissions are not selective; this model is usually called an “open university.” Its advantages include a strong specialist staff, the absence of institutional resistance to a new and different form of pedagogy and the institution’s potential to serve students from different places. Its principal drawbacks are that it requires a sizable initial investment to be properly established.

ii. Dual-Mode Institutions: offer both conventional and distance education programs. This mode possesses numerous advantages. It makes use of and is supported by an existing academic community and research capacity. Conventional and distance learning are based on common materials. Where an academic credit system is employed, students can move back and forth between distance and conventional, or pursue a combination of the two. Limited management autonomy and lack of program flexibility could be the disadvantage of this mode.

iii. Franchised International Program: a foreign provider of distance education programs enters into partnership with a local tertiary institution to offer these programs on a joint basis. This is often done as a commercial venture. The local institution uses course materials developed and copyrighted by the foreign provider, but takes responsibility for local logistics, student support, and management. Fee income is shared between the two institutions. The franchise approach possesses three main advantages: It does not require a lot of local expertise in order to get started; the course content may be more attuned to international trends and
requirements; and it can be supported by international technical (and possibly even financial) assistance. Among its disadvantages are that it may be less adapted to local needs, it may not be very accountable to local quality assurance mechanisms, and it may be more expensive than locally developed programs. One example could be the Master's program in Business Administration (MBA) contracted from the Open University in the United Kingdom by the government of Ethiopia for senior civil servants (Bennell and Pearce 1998).

iv. Direct Un-Franchised International Provision: is only just beginning to emerge. In this case, an established distance learning facility or "virtual university" offers courses internationally, generally using the Internet and interactive e-mail. In this case, all that the student requires in order to gain access is a computer, a modem, and Internet connection.

The advantages of this model are that little or no action is required by local institutions, and that students can study without leaving home or job, and without having to raise funds necessary to study abroad. Its disadvantages are its possible lack of quality control and the associated risk of disreputable providers, possible differences in "educational culture" between sending and receiving societies, the absence of local tutorial support, and fee scales which may prevent access by all but the wealthiest students (Moore 1994:189).

With these models of institutions in management categories, there are debates regarding their advantages and disadvantages. The important issue here is not the classification of institutions into different categories. Rather it is the capabilities of these institutions to provide access to education for the majority of the population with scarce resource and affordable technology the country can offer (Zenebe, 2005: 86).

2.3.3. Staffing and Facility Requirements for Distance Education
Distance education requires the integrated efforts of several participants including faculty, facilitators, support staff, and administrators. When effectively integrated, each brings a unique capability to the distance education institution. Similarly the absence or under-involvement of critical participants can dilute or derail the integrated efforts of the contributors (Willis 1993:25). To a great extent, the success of any distance education effort rests on the shoulders of the academic faculty. Goel, (2000) in Zenebe (2005:87) describes the essential academic
activities in distance education to which the management has to contribute and control. These include:

- **preparation of study materials**: popularly known as lecture scripts;
- **personal contact programs**: teaching for short duration to maintain personal contacts;
- **student assignments**: evaluating the response sheets;
- **electronic media**: preparing materials suited to broadcast through the medium of radio, TV, video, teleconferencing, and accessing the computer, etc. on selected topics;
- **study centers**: availing an institution building; and
- **personal guidance**: casual visit by the student to meet faculty to clear their doubts (academic or administrative).

Efficient administrative leadership and provision of continuing support are essential to the growth of distance education programs. Effective administrators are consensus builders, decision-makers, and facilitators. They maintained control on any resources and effectively deployed to further the institution’s mission. At the same time, they lead and inspire faculty and staff members in overcoming obstacles that arise. Most importantly, they maintain an academic focus, realizing that meeting the instructional needs of distant students is their ultimate responsibility.

### 2.3.4. Establishing Regional and Study/Tutorial Centers

Distance teaching institutions cover a vast area; there is a need for establishing regional and tutorial/study centers to provide strong support to distance learners.

#### Regional Centers

A Regional Center in distance education is intermediate between the central institution and local study centers. In the three-tier structure, the regional centre is the second-tier which is established for the purpose of coordination and supervising the work of the study centers coming under its jurisdiction and to act as a link a between the study centers and their headquarters.
Regional centers have important administrative functions, in particular organizing the operation of the study centers and the teaching process conducted at the local level. They encompass functions pertaining to admission, evaluation, student records, selection, appointment and orientation of tutors and counselors, research and development of academic programs. They also organized academic seminars, workshops, monitoring of counseling and assignments and conduct intensive contact programs and providing library services. The Regional centers also carried out promotional activities which include adequate publicity of the educational system within the region. The degree of responsibility will depend on the level of autonomy granted by the central institute (STRIDE, IGNOU 2000:58).

**Staffing Pattern of Regional and Tutorial/Study Centers:** The regional center is headed by the Director/coordinator who is in overall charge of activities and acts as a liaison person for the distance teaching institute within the region. The principal responsibilities of the director/coordinator are to direct and monitor academic operations and to coordinate the working of the study centers. He/she is assisted by both academic and non academic staff, i.e., a full time staff for discharging academic and administrative responsibilities of the regional centre.

In order to operate effectively, coordinators are needed at the study centers. In addition, part-time academic staff is needed to hold the tutorial programs. A study center also needs support staff as laboratory technicians, clerical assistants or caretakers. Usually, such staff is shared with the host institution (STRIDE, IGNOU 2000:60).

**Equipments that should be found in the Regional Centers:** The choice of equipment at a regional center depends on the functions of the regional center and the resources provided by the concerned distance teaching institute. The following facilities and equipments are required to be available in the regional and study/tutorial centers. These are:

- **Well organized Library, or Reading Room**
- **Audio-Video room and Audio-Video equipment,**
- **Internet and E-mail connectivity,**
- **Stationery and Office equipments: Computers, Fax, Printer, Copier, Duplicator, etc.**
- **Training equipment and materials, etc.**

27
Study/Tutorial Centers

Study center is part of an overall system of support for learners. It is a place which is regularly open to learners who wish to attend. Learners may come for tutorial programs, private study or individual meetings with a tutor or counselor, or to meet with other learners. When distance-teaching institutions set up a network of study centers, it has to decide on what criteria to locate them. A major consideration will be the proportion of learners that can attend. The institution will look for a way to enable as many learners as possible to attend, in so far as this is desirable. One criterion might be travel time of the learner to the study center (STRIDE, IGNOU 2001: 58).

Role and Functions of Study/Tutorial Centers: Study/tutorial centers are located in existing educational institutions like universities; colleges, libraries, etc. As they function in the evenings, on holidays and during vacation, if properly managed they do not hinder the normal work of the host institution. For administrative purpose such centers remain attached to the regional centre, and functions as a part of it. Study/tutorial centers are located for widening the student support services and their main functions such as:

- Conducting tutorial programs for students employing academic tutors/counselors and locally available academics/experts;
- Receiving Teacher Marked Assignments (TMAs) from students and pass it to tutors and return the marked and graded assignments to learners;
- Provide information for potential students and the public;
- Providing feedback to the distance teaching institute;
- provide learners with relevant course materials, reference books, audio-visual aids integrated with the course material;
- Serve as centers for holding ‘Term-End’ examinations and ‘Entrance Test’ for existing and prospective students (STRIDE, IGNOU 2001: 59).

In order to effectively serve its learners, the study center will normally need some equipment and facilities. How much facilities are actually needed will depend on what functions are allocated to a particular center. Therefore, the following resources are essential:

- Books (course texts, references books, background reading books);
Laboratory equipment and supplies for science subjects, and equipment and supplies for any other subjects with a particular component;

Audio-visual or computing equipment (video playback or television set, radio set, audio-cassette playback, language laboratory equipment, slide projector, computer, VCD and DVD player, etc.);

Information leaflets, (on the distance teaching institutions and its facilities, on career possibilities for graduates, etc.);

Basic office equipment (typewriter, computer, printer, duplicator, photocopier, scanner, binder, etc.), Stationery and office supplies;

Classroom equipment (overhead projector, LCD projector, blackboard, whiteboard, chart stand, etc.);

Cupboards and filing cabinets to store many of the above items etc (STRIDE, IGNOU 2001: 59).

2.4. Instructional Materials Development for Distance Education

Distance education program providers utilize a number of instructional materials to communicate with their students. Experience indicates that, there are several alternatives to deliver distance education and that no hard and fast rules can be made to determine which best method to use for distance education programs. A literature review by Nettleton, G. (1991) however, summarizes that the following methods are used for delivering distance education: print, audio, broadcast TV, Non broadcast Audiovisuals, face-to-face/tutorials and student support services, and advanced technologies including computers and telecommunications.

Many courses use the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) to distribute instructional material and to communicate with learners. Some institutions also use video recordings for distance learners. In some other institutes audio and video cassettes are used as a supplemental instructional resource. Still some materials are also recorded to CD-ROMS and DVDs.

2.4.1. Print Materials in Distance Education

Print is the foundation of distance education and the basis from which all other delivery systems have evolved. The first distance-delivered courses were offered by correspondence study, with print materials sent to students by mail. While technological developments have added to the
repertoire of tools available to the distance educator, print continues to be a significant component of all distance education programs (Tilak and Esirgene 1983:1).

In a distance education system the learning materials and the contents are designed and produced, taking into account from the very beginning, the disjunction between learner and teacher, as well as the adult nature of the former; as a consequence, a distance education course should have the intrinsic characteristics of being self-instructional. This means, it should be accessible for individual study without the support of a teacher. It can be self-contained or can be a guide to the studying of set, or alternatively suggested, texts (Holmberg 1985: 2).

Rowntree D. (1996:11), points out significant difference between self-instruction and a conventional one:

> Self-instruction... depends on materials specially written-or at least specially selected and modified - with particular course objectives in mind. Furthermore, they will be structured in such a way that learners can do most, if not all, of their learning from materials alone. The materials must carry out all the functions a teacher would carry out in the conventional situation - guiding, motivating, intriguing, expounding, explaining, provoking, reminding, asking the questions, discussing alternative answers, appraising each learner's progress, giving appropriate remedial or enrichment help ... and so on.

The merits of self-learning materials are measured to the extent that they try to build the teacher in the text, and try to simulate classroom situation. The kind of writing required for such material is quite different from that used in writing a text for conventional use. In distance learning situations, what is most vital is to keep the ‘learner’ in mind and imagine that we are tutoring an individual learner. Therefore, the materials/modules for distance education should:

- help the individual learners find their way into and around the subject by repeating content in different ways and at different stages;
- tell them what they need to do before going through the material;
- make clear what learners should be able to do on the completion of the material (i.e., in terms of objectives);
- advise learners how to tackle the work (i.e., how much time to allow for different sections, how to plan for an assignment, etc.);
• explain the subject-matter in such a way that the learners can relate it to what they already know;

• encourage them sufficiently to make whatever effort is needed in coming to grips with the subject;

• engage them in exercises and activities that make them work with the subject-matter rather than merely read it;

• give the learners feedback on these exercises and activities enabling them to judge for themselves whether they are learning successfully; and

• help them to sum up their learning at the end of the unit (STRIDE, IGNOU 2000: 8-9).

2.4.2 Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) in Distance Education

In conventional classroom, learners have regular feedback from teachers and above all they can compare their progress with each other's. On the other hand distance learners wish to find out how well (or otherwise) their studies are going before subjecting themselves to more formal judgment based on assignments and tutor feedback or before going in for exams. That is where self-assessment questions come in. There are several other names for self-assessment questions: Exercise, Activity, Do it yourself, In text questions, Check your progress, Self test. Self-assessment questions ask learners to recall something they already learned from the materials or textbooks. There are many sorts of self-assessment questions, going far beyond more recall, and serving many purposes. The greatest need of distance learners working on their own is that of knowing how they are getting on—self-assessment performance is at the heart of any good distance learning package (Race, 1994: 81).

In distance learning, student evaluation should be addressed as part of the instructional development process. First, since students frequently do not have the same contact with an instructor as they do in conventional class environments, special attention should be given to developing formative as well as summative evaluation activities. Formative evaluation is defined simply as enabling or assisting students to learn from the evaluation activity, while summative evaluation basically assesses whether students have mastered the content or skill. The essence of self-paced questions, which is a fundamental aspect of many distance learning
programs, requires students to know that they have mastered the content before moving on to
the next module or lesson (Picciano, A. G. 2001:83).

The distance learner who attempted self-assessment questions must get response from tutors. According to Race (1994:84-86), self-assessment questions have the following key purposes:

- give learners the opportunities to learn by doing,
- confirm to learners what they have already mastered,
- help learners 'catch' things before they slip,
- help learners see what is important,
- 'translate' the intended learning outcome,
- develop learners' confidence,
- give learners practice at responding to questions,
- prevent learners getting bored or passive,
- show learners 'where they are at,'
- help learners choose the right pace.

2.5. Student Support Service in Distance Education

2.5.1. What is Student Support Service?

Student support service is the glue that keeps the distance learner and the distance education institute together. Student support service is the most important factor for successful learning in distance education. Timely feedback to students on their performance, on-site tutoring, and access to library and laboratory materials are essential for student achievement in distance education programs. Without it, student drop-out rates will rise and eliminate any advantages of cost-effectiveness for distance learning (Keast, 1997:39-55, Moore and Kearsley, 1996).

Effective distance learning programs depend upon the "three legs" of good learning materials, effective student support, and efficient logistics. Study materials must be distributed in timely fashion. Feedback on student performance (e.g. grades, comments) should be communicated without delay in order to sustain student motivation and guide learning. A well-managed system of student records provides a solid foundation for efficient logistics. Fortunately, computerized management information systems today make these tasks much easier and more accurate than when these records were maintained by hand (Daniel, 1996:40).
2.5.2. Characteristics of Distance Learners

A fundamental step in designing any academic program is determined by the nature of learners. When academic programs are designed, the basic characteristics of students, including their age, interests, skill levels, academic preparedness, and career goals are considered. Distance learners are people who, because of time, geographic, or other constraints, choose not to attend a conventional/traditional classroom. Financial considerations, family obligations, or work requirements may point to distance education as an appropriate way to meet their educational goals. Distance learning is student-centered learning; thus, knowing the characteristics of the distance learners helps to understand the potential barriers to learning.

According to Koul, (1989), generally, we find three categories of learners in distance learning system. The first category is that of learners who have confidence in their ability to work on their own. They are confident enough to think that they can succeed without any guidance from tutors and counselor. The second categories of learners are those who actually need someone talking to. Having someone to help in solving their problems gives them about the system as well as builds a little more confidence in them. For them a face-to-face support system can make all the difference between withdrawing from the course and completing it. The third categories of learners, who fall between the above two types, are the ones who are really sitting on the wall. If only they run into intractable problems they approach the tutor or counselor for help.

Knowles (1980) explained that learners' behavior is influenced by a combination of the learner's needs plus the learner's situation and personal characteristics. Knowing these personal characteristics is an important aspect of planning distance learning courses and strategies. More importantly, knowing the learners can help drive program planning and policy formation, factors that are important to participation and success in distance learning. In considering student support services, any institution that offers courses through distance learning must address the question of who their learners are and what their needs are. The institution must then determine how those needs can be met with regard to constraints of costs, technologies, geography and etc.
2.5.3. Basic Types of Student Support Services

Distance learning programs need to provide support and student services comparable to those provided in conventional programs. Basic services such as admissions, registration, financial aid, counseling, and advancement are just as important as direct support services such as library, media, and access to technology (Picciano, A. G. 2001: 106).

Different functions such as duplicating and distributing materials; ordering and distributing textbooks; sending and receiving grading reports; admission and records; providing media and production services; scheduling and troubleshooting technical resources; resolving credit transfer issues; scheduling rooms, etc are among the services that should be provided to distance learners (Wills, 1993: 33).

Student support services are designed to respond as far as possible to individual needs, and typically include the provision of support through tutors, counselors, and center based staff (academics, librarians, computer specialists, and so on). In broad terms tutors provide distance learners with academic support while counselors provide them with personal, or non-academic, forms of support (Melton, F. 2002: 110-111).

According to Tilak, R. and Ruhi Esrigen (1998: 102), the basic three types of services are: instructional support, student support, and communication support. Instructional support includes such activities as individual and group tutoring, discussions, academic advising and library services. Student support includes activities such as career guidance, diagnostic testing, and counseling. Where as, Communication support refers to written communication to students which may be in the form of feedback, telephone office hour, e-mail, computer counseling and traveling tutors.

**Counseling Service**

Distance education poses its own unique problem because of the physical separation of the learner from the school. While high attention for distance learners might relate to pressure of time, employment, or family, institutions should not accept this as a natural out come of distance education. On the contrary, distance learning providers must consider support service such as advisement and counseling that might help them increase rate of attrition of distance education.
A responsible distance education providing institution will provide capable readily available advisement and counseling service to help learners through a problem, crisis, or difficulty in completing a course or program.

Counseling is one of the sub-systems of distance education. Counseling helps learners to clarify their needs, feelings, or motivations so that they can make an appropriate decision for themselves. So it is entirely learner-dependent rather than knowledge-dependent. Supporting this, Bond (1993:210), said that the overall aim of counseling is to provide an opportunity for the student to work towards living in a more satisfactory and resourceful way.

Counseling according to UNESCO (1999:156), is:

a process of rendering services to students who need assistance in making decisions about certain important aspects of their education such as choice of course and studies decision on interest and ability, choice of college, etc. Counseling increases students’ knowledge of educational opportunity.

For a counseling service to be effective the following principles forwarded by Stoops (1981:220) should be made practical by those who are involved in counseling services:

- counseling services should be continuously available to all individuals so that when problems arise, help can be secured;
- all counseling activities should focus upon the better containing adjustments of the learner;
- counseling process must be democratic; the individual to be guided should always make final decisions;
- the counseling client should become increasingly able to guide himself;

Tutorial Services

Tutoring is an age-old practice. Humans have been tutoring each other since the dawn of history. How else was the making of fire learned and passed on? Interaction between students and the instructor is a vital component of any educational program, but it takes on unique characteristics in distance education. Tutoring refers to a process through which a student receives additional assistance with his/her coursework or remedial instruction from either a trained student or professional. There is great variety in the way distance students interact with
their instructors, depending on the structure of the course. One way of interaction made between the tutor and the learner is tutorial service (Holmberg: 2000:106).

Tutoring is a strategy for strengthening a learner's study skills and ability to learn. It is the process of helping a learner acquires the tools s/he needs to be successful with academic assignments. Tutoring could be carried out in different formats: by telephone, fax, electronic mail, by post, face-to-face, etc depending on the availability of the infrastructure facilities. The main purpose of tutoring is to inspire, maintain and stimulate learning process and to help students help themselves, or to assist or guide them to the point at which they become an independent learner. Having tutors in a distance education system greatly improves student completion rates and achievement (Race 1994: 167-168).

To be effective the tutor must master curricular structures and have experience about counseling students. He also has to follow the academic performance of the student. Therefore, the tutor should:

- have the proper knowledge of his course subject;
- communicate with students at the proper level;
- stimulate students to develop their analytical, judgment and reflexive skills;
- pinpoint learning problems early to handle them properly;
- avoid paternalistic tutoring;
- motivate his students taking into account their personal characteristics;
- keep pace with the latest developments in his field of knowledge (STRIDE, IGNOU, 2000:29-31)

Successful tutor demonstrates a caring attitude. Caring consists of being organized for the tutoring session, being punctual, establishing a learning relationship with the learner, developing unique teaching strategies, and becoming familiar with distance learning process.

**Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)**

In conventional teaching, assignment marking is primary seen as an indication of student performance. While the teacher may comment on assignments to support students learning, there is other ways for students to review and learn from their completed assignments. Students can discuss the marked assignment with each other and with the teacher if they have concerns
and report common problems to the class. Whereas, in distance the above indicated advantages are not available to distance learners and could be enhanced only through tutor-marked assignments (Race 1994:132).

TMAs are at the sharp end of distance learning. They are the milestones along the distance learner's journey. To reduce the distance in distance education, TMAs are the major mechanism by which distance students receive feedback on their academic progress. According to Race, (1994:133), teacher marked assignment in distance education:

- is a base for communication between learners and their tutors
- give students feedback about progress in the subject through comments provided by the tutor,
- help learners prepare for formal/final exams (where relevant), give learners feedback, comment on their work, and develop their self-confidence,
- give learners a measure of how successful or otherwise their work is (for example, in relation to exam standards),
- provide learners with deadlines and stages to help them structure the timing of their work, and
- maintain and develop learners' motivation and commitment to their studies.

Types and Significance of Tutor Comments

Assignment marking has a special role in distance education. In addition to indication of performance, marking should provide students with feedback about their work. Tutors should spend significant time writing constructive and supportive comments to each learner. Learners who did well need to know why they did well and how they could further improve their work. Students in difficulty need advice on how to improve their work.

It should be noted that the success and quality of distance teaching materials, still depends on the tutor despite the quality control measures put into its production. What the tutor says or writes on the assignment will have a deep effect on the learner. Learners can easily be misled by casual remark. Negative comment, for instance, will often produce an intense reaction. The written comments are the most valuable part of a distance course for the students. In marking assignments, as in phone calls and letters, the tone must be positive and friendly. The danger is
that the written comments can be interpreted in ways completely unintended by the tutor when writing them. An Open University in India identifies different type of comments which could improve the understanding of the what and the how of tutor comments:

- **Harmful comments**: such comments are "Rude" by them selves: - They fail building a purposeful rapport between the distance learner and the tutor.

- **Hollow comments**: they are nothing more than words. They read like sentence with meanings, but those meaning are hollow, for one cannot make anything out of them.

- **Misleading Comments**: tutors sometimes make comments, which put the learner on the wrong track. The learner is asked do something which does not serve any purpose.

- **Null Comments**: these comments which do not confirm or question, illustrate or explain, refute or approve of anything, are called "null comments," These comments include all types of non-verbal remarks.

- **Negative Comments**: such comments are with negative facts, concepts, explanations, illustrations, elaborations and the relevance of the content of an answer, or the very approach to a particular problem presented by the distance learner in the assignment response may be formed "negative comments".

- **Positive Comments**: positive comments approve of the stand taken by the distance learner. They indicate that learners' answer is up to the mark, or excellent, or that in spite of same flows in the answer, it is original or even brilliant. Such comments encourage the distance learner to repeat and better his/her performance, because of the realization that he/she is on the same "wave length" as the tutor.

- **Constructive Comments**: these types of comments do not negate what the learners have written, nor do they approve of it. Instead, they offer constructive suggestions as to how the answer could have been improved, so we call them "constructive" comments. They are immensely helpful in effecting purposeful dedicative communication (STRIDE, IGNOU 2000:15-20).

The tutor is strategically placed between distance learner and the institution. On the one hand, the tutor is expected to have adequate knowledge of methods and the philosophy of the institution which provides distance education, and also be informed on the effectiveness of the service delivery in meeting work and career needs of the learner, on the other. Therefore,
tutorials and general students support provisions provide an avenue for quality assurance intervention in distance education.

To be effective the tutor must master curricular structures and have experience about tutoring distance learners. He/she also has to follow the academic performance of the student. Therefore, the tutor should:

- understand more about how distance learners learn and respect the learners own existing knowledge of structure;
- have the proper knowledge of his course subject;
- communicate with students at the proper level;
- be committed to improve their tutorial in order to better assist their learners and have strong interest in strengthening the tutorial system as a whole;
- stimulate students to develop their analytical, judgment and reflexive skills;
- pinpoint learning problems early to handle them properly;
- avoid paternalistic tutoring;
- motivate his students taking into account their personal characteristics;
- keep pace with the latest developments in his field of knowledge

(STRIDE, IGNOU, 2000:29-31)

Thus, successful tutor demonstrates a caring attitude. Caring consists of being organized for the tutoring session, being punctual, establishing a learning relationship with the learner, developing unique teaching strategies, and becoming familiar with the learning process.

**Library Service**

Learners can not acquire knowledge through textbooks or classroom lectures alone. They should refer to other books also, for then only will their knowledge widen. The library is of great help in the fulfillment of learners' wishes, ambitions and inclinations for it provides ample opportunities for acquiring knowledge (Chaube & Chaube, 1996: 169).

The entire environment of the school contributing towards education and the library is of great help in creating a suitable environment for education. Carroll (1981:103) supports this idea by saying, "a school library is a learning laboratory where the use of the resources individualized the educational experience." It is also the function of the school library to help and guide students in how to read, how to listen, and how to view with profit and satisfaction (Davies
1969: 22). Another function which is described by Trehan & Malhan (1980:9) emphasizes its social function as follows:

The role of the school library in promoting good citizenship, and unity is improvement, in view of the emphasis of the present day education upon the development of the learner. The library provides good materials in the matter of training of citizenship and materials in personality development.

Elsebree (1959: 380) identifies the characteristics of good library that could encourage students and teachers to use and enjoy it. Among these notable ones are:

i. The physical arrangement should be, so far as possible, comply with minimum standards. The library room should be centrally located so as to be accessible to the largest number of pupils. The room should be placed where it receives the maximum light and where there is a minimum disconcerting noises.

ii. Space and equipment should be adequate. There should be a well-balanced book supply, in sufficient number and adequate variety. And it should be administered as to become an integral part of the entire school program.

iii. It should be open during the entire day, and before and after school.

iv. The library should be in charge of a person trained adequately both in teaching and the library services.

2.5.4. Problems in the Provision of Student Support Services

Problems and barriers encountered by the student fall into several distinct categories:

i. Costs and motivators,

ii. Feedback and teacher contact,

iii. Alienation and isolation, and

i. Costs and motivators: more than conventional students, distance learners are more likely to have insecurities about their 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 (Sweet, 1986).

ii. Feedback and teacher contact: lack of feedback or contact with the tutor is another concern for the distance learner. Because there is not daily or weekly face-to-face contact with tutors, students may have trouble in self-evaluation. Keegan (1986:120) believes that the separation of
student and teacher imposed by distance removes a vital "link" of communication between these two parties. The link must be restored through overt institutional efforts so that the teaching-learning transaction may be "reintegrated". Students who did not receive adequate reintegration measures would be less likely to experience complete academic and social integration into institutional life. Consequently, such students would be more likely to drop out (Sheets, 1992).

It is important that the student receive prompt feedback in distance learning where the learner is impaired by the lack of casual contact with the tutor and other students. This is especially important for those students who live in rural areas. They may not have access to reliable telecommunications, computers, and postal mail. The frustrations resulting from problems with communication between student and academic institution are factors of which distance education planners should be well aware (Wood, 1996).

iii. Alienation and isolation: the isolation that results from the distance learning process can complicate the learning process for adult students. Support for distance learners should not be overlooked when planning distance programs. Students need tutors and academic planners to help them to complete their courses (Oaks, 1996).

Distance students believe that having a good tutor is vitally important in helping them get the most out of a course and achieve a credit. Geographical isolation has been identified as one of the major problems for distance students (Meacham and Evans 1989). In addition to the practical problems of contacting academic and administrative staff, obtaining study materials and borrowing library books, distance students suffer from the disadvantage of being unable to interact with other students and are often denied of getting different services. This may lead to feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, and a lack of confidence in their own abilities (Wood, 1996).

2.6. Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Distance Education
Communication technology plays a significant role in distance education by supporting the system in a variety of ways. Modern communication technologies have given the facilities to reach a large number of people who can learn in their own place, pace and time. It can be seen as a set of instructional methods based largely on mediated communications capable of
extending the influence of education beyond the formal institutional setting for the purpose of benefiting the learner through appropriate guidance and support. Without the use of technology, distance education would not exist (Garison 1987).

In its earliest form, distance education meant study by correspondence, as new technologies developed, distance instruction started to be delivered through such media broadcasting, and satellite transmission. Microcomputers, the Internet, and the World Wide Web (WWW) are the current generation of distance learning, and virtual reality, and knowledge system may be next (Bates 1995 and wulf 1996).

2.6.1. The Internet in Distance Education
The use of effective technologies is critical to distance education programs. Multimedia incorporates text, graphics, and audio media (often with real video or animations) and combines them, using a computer. Almost every personal computer built today is capable of delivering multimedia presentations for entertainment, advertising, or education.

The ‘Virtual Classroom has evolved from several technological advances such as: Computers, modems mainframes, the Internet, soft wares and telephone lines. “Virtual” is defined by Langdom and Winner as coexisting in effect but not in actual fact. Basically in virtual classroom system, one does not actually have to go to school in order to be in class. In fact student does not have to live in the same city, state, or country in which the class is being conducted to attend the class. The computer with a modem or direct Internet connection is the sole tool for all classroom activities. The virtual classroom has no walls or boundaries, and therefore, the students and the professor are meeting in what is called “cyberspace” Tilak K. Kem and Ruhi Esirgen (1998:45)

The Internet is the world’s largest, most powerful computer network connecting personal computers, sophisticated main frames, and high speed supercomputers around the globe. "Internet" refers to the global information system that has revolutionized the computer and communication world like nothing before. The Internet is at once a world-wide broadcasting capacity, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard geographical location.
Internet does not just connect computers around the world, but also humans, learning environments for Internet appear to be intelligent, in the sense that there is a high likelihood for some one to almost always find human online to talk to, when in need of help (Kochmer, 1995).

2.6.2. Distance Education and the World Wide Web (WWW)

The World Wide Web (WWW) is an Internet application build upon the existing internet foundation and capabilities. Most universities and large school systems have established web sites. These sites act as information centers and include information about programs of study, products, services, event, and materials, available. Each student has an enormous range of resources available, free from limitations of time and space. These resources are reconfiguring the ways in which students learn, and new approaches to networked learning are evolving (Tilak K. Kem and Ruhi Esirgen (1998:55)

The same writers also describe that the Web potentially offers a worldwide forum to teach courses. One can assume, for example, that each student at any time has an excellent encyclopedia at his or her disposal. Course text, examples and exercises can be interactive in the sense of immediately illustrating equations with graphs, changing parameters and seeing the results, linking to other web-sites according to the interests of the student. The Web-based learning model is essentially free from limitations of space and time while it reaches students around the world with great ease. In addition, the Web-based learning model offers students a wealth of information that was never possible in the classical model.

So one can say that the web is as a global word processing system which allows individuals to access files stored on all the computers connected via the internet. This means that every computer in the world can both access and create web documents. Perhaps more than any other distance media; the Internet and the web help overcome the barriers of time and space in teaching and learning (Wulf 1996:50-55).

According to Tilak K. Kem and Ruhi Esirgen (1998:51), most universities as well as major corporations and government agencies, and large school systems have established web sites. These web sites act as information centers and include information about programs of study, products, services, events, facilities, and materials available.
CHAPTER THREE

3. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA
This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the findings of the research. It comprises two main parts. The first part presents the characteristics of the respondents of the study, which discusses the study population in terms of sex, age, martial status, working place and work experience, monthly income, program enrolled, employment base, educational level, etc.

Part two, on the other hand, deals with the analysis of the findings of the study. In this part, the reflections and opinions of the respondents on the following main variables were organized and analyzed:

1. Course materials content and materials/modules distribution to learners;
2. Student Support Services: (TMAs, tutorial services, library service, and counseling service);
3. End course examination;
4. Office facilities and equipments;
5. Policy issues and management of distance education

The data collected from the respondents through closed and open ended questionnaires were organized in to tables and frequencies and percentages were computed and presented from each data entry.

3.1 Characteristics of the study population
As previously mentioned in the research methodology section of chapter one the questionnaire and the structured interview were the two major data collection instruments used in the study. The questionnaires were distributed to 300 distance learners and 80 tutors. Five regional and 12 study/tutorial center coordinators were interviewed. Out of 300 distance learners 273 (91%) and 70 (87%) of tutors filled and returned the questionnaires.
Therefore, the characteristics were examined based on the data obtained on the biographical section of the returned questionnaires and the structured interview. The following four tables are devoted to this purpose.

Table 1. General background of learners and tutors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>A. Male</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Female</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>A. 20-30 years</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. 31-40 years</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. 41-50 years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. 51 &amp; above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Martial Status</td>
<td>A. Married</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Single</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Divorced/widowed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Program enrolled</td>
<td>A. Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Diploma</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from item 1 of Table 1 we find that 201 (74%) of learners and 65 (93%) of tutors respectively were male respondents. It can be inferred from this that the participations of female learners and tutors in this program is extremely low reflecting the low participation rate of females in Ethiopian education system particularly at tertiary level.

In terms of age, item 2, of Table 1 shows that 45% of the learners and 47% of the tutors fall under the same age bracket (20-30 years). The table also shows that 32% of learners and 53% of tutors fall at the age range (31-40 years).

Item 3 of Table 1 also depicts that most of the learners (68%) were married. This can indicate that distance learners have family commitment and burden that could affect their learning. The above table also reveals that almost two third (62%) of the learner respondents were enrolled for diploma program and the remaining 38% for degree programs.
Item 1 of Table 2 shows that majority (60%) of respondents monthly income ranged from Birr 531-895 and 17% of them earned from Birr 235-530.

Regarding their work place, item 2 of Table 2 shows that 61% of respondents were working in rural areas and the rest 39% in urban areas. This will force learners to travel long distance to where study/tutorial centers were located in urban areas.

As to their employment condition overwhelming majority (85%) of the learner respondents were government employees. Again 11% were private employees and the remaining 4% were self employed. In the open ended part of the questionnaire, learners indicated that those learners who were not from educational institutes faced problem in getting permission from their employers for the tutorial sessions.

Item 4 of Table 2 shows that vast majority (52%) of the respondents, for example, have 11-20 years of service and 24% of the respondents have years of service ranging from 6-10 years. Employees whose service years range from 0-5 years and who have a service of more than 21 years count 12% each. This implies that the more service a
distance learner has, the more experience he/she could have that can bring positive influence in ones education.

Table 3. General background of tutors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>A. BA/BSC/LLB</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. MA/MSC/LLM</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regular work place</td>
<td>A. Government educational Institution</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Non government educational Institution</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Government other sector</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Private sector or NGO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work experience in regular work place (in years)</td>
<td>A. 0 – 5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. 6 – 10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. 11 – 20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. 21 and above</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Experience as tutor (in years)</td>
<td>A. 0 – 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. 3 – 4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. 5 – 6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. More than 6 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Employment base as a tutor</td>
<td>A. On full time base</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. On part time/contract base</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to item 1 of Table 3, the vast majority 67(96%) of tutors were first degree holders, while the remaining 3(4%) had second degree. This shows that those employed to conduct the tutorial service were qualified at least to teach under graduate level and is assumed to have the necessary knowledge on the subject they were tutoring.

The same table shows that more than half (68%) of tutors were regularly working in government educational institutions and 4% of them in non governmental education institutions. The rest 26% and 2% of the tutors work in government other sector and in private sector or NGOs respectively. Thus, the tutors coming from educational institutions could better help learners in their tutorial program.
Regarding their total work experience the above table depicts that 43% of the respondents had a total work experience ranging from 0-5 years and 17% of them had an experience of 11-15 years. The later could be taken as an advantage since tutors with high work experience could have accumulated proven experience and a wealth of knowledge to share to their learners.

Item 4 of Table 3, shows that 13% of tutors have 0-2 years of experience in tutoring distance learners. Whereas 54% of the tutors have 3-4 years and 30% the tutors have 5-6 years of experience as tutors. The remaining 3% of the tutors have more than 6 years of experience in tutoring distance learners. Those with more experience of tutoring can be taken as an asset that the tutors could have accumulated experience that could help distance learners.

Even though, the distance education institutions provide conventional programs, item 4 of Table 3 shows that only 20% of the tutors were on full time and the remaining 80% of the tutors were found to be employed on part time bases. This condition indicates that part time tutors could have different commitment to accomplish and this could minimize their support to distance learners.
As can be seen from item 1 of Table 4, all (100%) of the regional coordinators and 8 (89%) of the study center coordinators were male respondents. Thus, it could be inferred that the participation of female as coordinators is almost non-existent. In terms of age, 40% regional coordinators and 44% of the study center coordinators fall under
the same age bracket 20-30 years. The table also shows that 60% of regional coordinators and 56% of study center coordinators fall at the age range from 31-40 years. Thus, both coordinators were matured enough to handle responsibilities.

The educational level/qualification of regional coordinators, item 3 of Table 4 reveals that both BA/BSC and MA/MSC degree holder accounts for 40% each. Only one of them was diploma holder. A composition of coordinators with BA and above could have the required academic competences to do the job of organizing and coordinate the distance education programs at the centers. In the case of the diploma holders, there could be a problem in managing and coordinating the program.

Regarding the educational level of study/tutorial center coordinators, while 5(56%) were first degree holders, 3(33%) had diploma and 1(11%) completed 12th grade. As to the field of study of regional coordinators, two were Accounting, two Educational Planning and Management and the remaining one was Chemistry majoring. This shows that some center coordinators lack the necessary competence and there could be coordination and management problem.

In relation to work experience in distance education coordination, 40% of the regional and 33% of the study/tutorial center coordinators had the experience of 0-2 years in distance education. While 40% of the regional and 56% of the study/tutorial center coordinators had the experience of 3-4 years of service in distance education, 20% of the regional and 11% of the study/tutorial center coordinators had the experience of 5-6 years of service in distance education.

Item 6 of Table 4 shows that 40% of regional and 2 (22%) of study/tutorial center coordinators have got training in Distance Education Management. But, the rest 60% of regional and 8 (78%) of study/tutorial center coordinators did not receive any training related to Distance Education Management. Thus, lack of training could be an obstacle to coordinate and manage the distance education programs effectively and efficiently.
Regarding the responsibility of the coordinators, three were regional coordinators and two were assistant regional coordinators. At the study/tutorial center level, seven were coordinators and two were Liaison persons. The liaison persons were part time employees.

A policy is a position or stance developed in response to a problem devoted towards a particular objective. To this effect, The Transitional Government of Ethiopia issued Educational Policy to ensure the provision of quality education in the country. Improvement of the quality of education begins with having an objective, goal-oriented and efficient structure. The education sector need to be reoriented and the existing structure modified. The current educational structure constitute of basic, general, higher and specialized education on a formal and non formal basis. Distance learning, in collaboration and coordinated with the rest of the educational system is taken as one component of the strategies of the educational system (TGE, 1994: 14).

The study was conducted in five distance education providing institutions. Three private and two public higher education institutions: Alpha University College, St. Mary's College and Sheba College are private; Mekelle University and the Ethiopian Civil Service College are public institutions. The distance education providing institutions under study have different management and organizational set up.

Alpha University College and St. Mary's College have their main office in Addis Ababa and regional coordination office in Mekelle. Though they were not in sufficient number, the coordination office was staffed with full time employees. At the study/tutorial centers out side the capital, they have coordinators who are mostly one person staff. Sheba College provides conventional and distance education programs making its main campus in Mekelle. It has Coordination offices in selected towns of the region.

Mekelle University has two additional tutorial centers in Axum and shire. The main campus is in the regional capital. Tutorial center coordinators for Mekelle University were principals of schools where the tutorial sessions were conducted. As to the Ethiopian Civil Service College (ECSC), its main campus is in Addis Ababa and has regional coordination office in Mekelle and study/tutorial centers in selected towns. At
the regional office it is staffed with fulltime employees and at the study/tutorial centers there were liaison persons who are principals of secondary schools where tutorial service is conducted. All the institutions under study have one common characteristic, i.e., they all are dual mode institutions because they provide conventional and distance education programs simultaneously.

3.2 Analysis of the Findings of the Study

Respondents of the study were asked different questions pertinent to course materials/modules content and distribution. Their responses are organized in the following tables.

| Table 5. The distribution of course materials/modules and their content |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | Question items | Response items | Respondents | df | p-value |
| | | | Learners | Tutors | |
| | | | F | % | F | % | |
| 1 | There is timely distribution of course materials? | A. Yes | 231 | 85 | 66 | 94 | 1 | 0.34 |
| | | B. No | 42 | 15 | 4 | 4 | |
| | | Total | 273 | 100 | 70 | 100 | |
| 2 | If “No”, what was the time gap? | A. Less than 2 weeks | 23 | 55 | 4 | 100 | |
| | | B. 2 to 3 weeks | 11 | 26 | - | - | |
| | | C. 4 to 8 weeks | 8 | 19 | - | - | |
| | | D. More than 8 weeks | - | - | - | - | |
| | | Total | 42 | 100 | 4 | 100 | |
| 3 | Adequacy of exercises in the course materials | A. Very sufficient exercise | 196 | 72 | 62 | 89 | 341 | 0.004 |
| | | B. Sufficient exercise | 77 | 28 | 8 | 11 | |
| | | C. Not sufficient exercise | - | - | - | - | |
| | | Total | 273 | 100 | 70 | 100 | |
| 4 | Difficulty level of the study materials | A. Easy to follow | 26 | 9 | - | - | |
| | | B. Fairly easy to follow | 29 | 11 | - | - | |
| | | C. Difficult to follow | 161 | 59 | - | - | |
| | | D. Very difficult to follow | 57 | 21 | - | - | |
| | | Total | 273 | 100 | - | - | |

According to item 1 of Table 5, majority of the respondents (85%) learners and 94% tutors confirmed that they received the course materials on time. This could help learners to study the material starting from the beginning of the semester. The same was also true for the tutors. But, the associated p-value 0.34 of chi-square test also revealed the existence of slight difference between the opinions of the two groups.
Regarding the availability of adequate exercises in the modules, 72% of learners and 89% tutor respondents responded that the modules contained very sufficient exercises. The response of 77 (28%) learners and 8 (11%) tutors confirmed that the modules had sufficient exercises. From this we can infer that the modules could help learners in doing exercise from the modules.

Learners were asked to make their reflection regarding the simplicity or difficulty level of the modules. While 99% of the respondents said that the modules were easy to follow, 11% of them responded that the modules were fairly easy to follow. Whereas, more than half (59%) of the learner respondents indicate that the modules were difficult to follow.

Table 6. The availability of additional materials distributed to learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question and response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What additional materials are you receiving from your institute?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Cassette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video Cassette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floppy (Diskette)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course calendar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Booklet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes received</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 depicts that only 24% of respondents confirmed that they were supplied with Audio cassette. According to the interview conducted with regional and center
coordinators the audio cassette was a supplementary material for language courses. All of the respondents make assure that they did not receive video cassette, CD-ROM, Floppy/diskette and other reference materials as additional resource for their study. Thus, we can say that the distance education program was highly dependent on printed materials only.

It was also assured by 77% respondents that they received course calendar. The availability of information Booklet was also confirmed only by 22% of respondents. These were very useful practices that it could help learners to plan their activity so that their learning could not be interrupted.

The respondents were also asked to give their opinion regarding the requirements of TMAs in their study, number of assignment per course, its submission, feedback from tutors, grading and possible problems associated. The responses given to these questions are presented in following five tables.

Table 7. Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Working assignments are required in the institution.</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If “Yes”, when did you receive the assignments (Questions)?</td>
<td>A. Along with the course materials</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. After receiving the course materials</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How many assignments do you submit in a course?</td>
<td>A. Three</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Two</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. One</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. None</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do learners respect the due date for the submission of assignments?</td>
<td>A. Always</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Never</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in item 1 of Table 7, majority (85%) of respondents confirmed that working assignments were requirement in most of the distance education providers. But 15% of
the respondents asserted negative response. In the interview conducted with coordinators it was assured that working assignments were a requirement in the distance education programs. Only in one institute, instead of working assignments learners were required to take two tests per course. Therefore, those who replied 'assignment was not required' could be learners attending in the institute where working assignment is not required. It was also assured by 93% the respondents that the questions for assignments were distributed to learners along the course material. This practice could help learners to get ample time to work in their assignments.

Regarding the number of assignments, 28% of learner respondents replied that they were submitting two assignments per course. The remaining 72% responded that they were submitting only one assignment per course. This shows that there was no uniformity in the distance learning institutions in this respect.

Respondents were also asked whether learners respect the due date for the submission of TMAs. In this regard, 9% of respondents replied that they always respect the due date but a very significant number (85%) replied that they sometimes respect the due date and 65% of respondents reported that they never respect the due date of submission of assignments. In the interview conducted with coordinators, delay of submission of assignments was identified as major problem in this regard.
Table 8. Comments/feedback on Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assignments are corrected in time</td>
<td>A. Always</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Never</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comments/feedback are written on the assignments</td>
<td>A. Always</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Never</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If your answer is “A” or “B”, how useful are the comments of your tutor?</td>
<td>A. Very useful</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Quite useful</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Not at all useful</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If “Not at all useful”, what are the reasons?</td>
<td>A. No relation between the marks/grade awarded and comments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. The comments are vague and unclear</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. The comments do not help me to improve my study</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. The comments are discouraging</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How much are you satisfied with the mark/grade assigned to your assignments?</td>
<td>A. Fully</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. To large extent</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. To some extent</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Not at all</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 of Table 8 reveals that 20% of respondents indicated that TMAs were always corrected in time. Whereas, 37% of the respondents replied that assignments were sometimes corrected in time. But the remaining 43% confirmed that TMAs were never corrected in time. Interview made with coordinators revealed that in some institutions TMAs were not corrected in the regional/study centers. Instead they were sent to the main office in Addis Ababa. This could be a reason for the delay of the corrected TMAs to reach the distance learners. This indicates that learners were unable to check their own progress and improve their shortcomings in time.

Moreover, the way the TMAs are corrected also matters. In this regard 10% of the respondents replied that comments were always written on the assignments and 24% of the respondents replied that comments were sometimes written on the assignments.
But very significant number (66%) of the respondents replied that feedback/comments were not written in the TMAs.

Regarding the usefulness of the comments, 25 (31%) of the respondents replied that the comments were very useful and 48 (58%) reported that the comments were quite useful. But, 9 (11%) of the respondents confirmed that the comments were not at all useful because of different reasons such as: they could not observe any relation between the comments and the grade assigned 22%, comments were vague and unclear (67%) which they said not in encouraging them, (11%). Thus, the major advantage lied on TMAs in distance education was missed due to ineffective and inefficient management of TMAs correction and provision of feedback.

Respondents were also asked to give their opinion on how much they were satisfied with the mark/grade assigned to their assignments. Some 14% of the respondents assured that they were fully satisfied with the grading, while a quarter (25%) of them replied that they were satisfied to large extent, more than half (60%) of respondents replayed that they were satisfied to some extent. In general, the overall picture of Table 8 reveals that TMAs were not adequately corrected and returned to learners on time with encouraging and constructive comments or feedback on them.

Table 9. Tutors recruitment and remuneration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. With criteria</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. With out criteria</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How are you recruited to be a tutor?</td>
<td>A. Very sufficient</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sufficient</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. not sufficient</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutors were required to reflect upon their recruitment and the remuneration they received for the service they rendered. Accordingly, 76% replied that they were recruited with criteria and 24% replied that their recruitment was without criteria. Interview conducted with coordinators revealed that in some study centers they faced
shortage of tutors for some subjects. Therefore, coordinators will simply identify and accept the available tutors.

Regarding the remuneration they receive, 18% of the tutors responded that the remuneration was very sufficient but more than half (59%) of the respondents replied that it was sufficient. The remaining 23% replied that it was not sufficient. Thus, the insufficient remuneration could lead to the dissatisfaction of tutors in their work.

Table 10. Provision of training and ‘Tutors Guide’ and preparedness Of tutors for the face-to-face session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Areas of training</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have you got training related to distance education?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If “yes”, what are the training areas?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of Distance Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes trained</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Receipt of Tutor’s Guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How often do you prepare for tutorial sessions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Always</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Very rarely</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Never</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutor respondents were asked if they have received necessary training related to delivery of distance education. In this regard, very few (20%) of the respondents reported that they have got short training on the overview of distance education. But overwhelming majority, (80%) of respondents replied that they did not get any training related to distance education. Those who said that they have got training informed that the training was short focusing on ‘overview of distance education’ only. They were not given a training that can support their responsibilities and best ways of delivering distance education to learners. During interview with regional coordinators it was confirmed that necessary training was not provided to the tutors in all the institutions.
Thus, untrained tutors could not be expected to help distance learners because it needs different way of handling adult distance learners.

Item 3 of Table 10 indicates that all (100%) tutor respondent replied that they did not receive tutor's guide. This could have negative impact in the preparation and presentation of tutors’ for the tutorial service.

Tutors were asked to give their opinion on how often they prepared for the tutorial sessions. As indicated in item 4 of Table 10, more than half (56%) respondents assured that they sometimes prepared for the tutorial sessions. Whereas, 40% of the respondents replied that they prepared always for the tutorial sessions. Very few (4%) of them responded that they never prepared for the tutorial sessions. Thus, those who prepare always for the session could help learners to get necessary clarification. Where as those who did not prepare could not be in a position to help distance learners to their best.

Table 11. Problems observed in Tutor Marked Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. Delay in submission of assignments</td>
<td>19 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Incompleteness of assignments</td>
<td>10 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Copying from one another</td>
<td>23 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Getting it done by others</td>
<td>11 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Major problems encountered by learners in dealing with assignments?</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>63 100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do students complain regarding marking/grading of assignments?</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>22 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>41 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>63 100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutors were asked to identify major problems related to assignments. In this regard, (37%) of the tutors ascertained that copying from one another was identified as major problem. Yet, other (30%) respondents identified delay in submission of assignments as a major problem. Still 17% of respondents indicated that students got their assignments done by other people as major problem. Regarding this issue interview conducted with coordinators revealed an agreement with the above comments given
by tutors. It can be inferred from this that working assignments were with serious problems and could not accurately evaluate learner's performance.

Item 2 of Table 11 shows that majority (65%) of the respondents denied the existence of an arrangement to submit any complain regarding to assignments. But a significant number of respondents (35%) assured the existence of complaint receiving bodies regarding assignments.

Table 12. Tutorial service in distance education program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th></th>
<th>Tutors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tutorial service is provided in your study center.</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If “Yes”, the distance from your home to study center is (in kms)</td>
<td>A. 1-5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. 6-10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. 11–50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. 51-100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E. More than 100</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tutorial/study center are located at convenient location</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How many tutorial sessions are conducted in a term/semester?</td>
<td>A. Three</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Two</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. One</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The study/ tutorial center (Office) is opened</td>
<td>A. In all working days</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. During tutorial sessions</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. On Saturdays and Sundays</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. When the coordinator wants</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 12, almost all learners (99%) confirmed that tutorial service was conducted in all the institutions under study. Regarding the distance of the tutorial center from their home, while a very significant number (37%) of them indicated that the distance was 51-100 km far, other 23% of the respondents confirmed that the distance was more than 100kms. The rest, 22% of learner respondents replied that it
was 1-5km far and 5% of the respondents say that it was 6-10 km far. In relation to this issue, learners were requested to express their opinion whether the existing tutorial centers were located at a convenient place or not. Very large number 60% of the respondents reported that the study centers were not located at convenient place. Thus, it can be inferred that the more the distance from home to the study center, the more the possibility of learners not to participate in the face-to-face/tutorial programs.

Item 4 of the Table 12, reveals that 60% learners and 74% of tutor respondents agreed that two tutorial sessions were conducted per term/semester. 40% learners and 26% of tutor respondents replied that only one tutorial session was conducted in a term/semester. This implies that there is no uniformity of conducting tutorial sessions. Learners who got more tutorial sessions could be advantageous over those who got only one tutorial session.

According to item 4 of Table 12 majority (47%) of learners and 70% of tutor respondents replied that the tutorial centers are opened during tutorial sessions. Almost similar number of respondents 30% of learners and tutors reported that the tutorial centers were opened in all the working days. While 14% of the learners replied that they are opened on Saturdays and Sundays, the rest 8% of learners responded that the centers were opened when the coordinator wants. The interview conducted and the observation revealed that most of the study/tutorial centers were classrooms of conventional schools and some of the center coordinators/liaison persons were school principals.

The respondents of the study were also asked questions pertinent to degree of participation of learners in the tutorial sessions. The responses of the respondents are presented in the following two tables.
Table 13. Participation of learners and tutors for tutorial programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How often did you get information about tutorial schedules?</td>
<td>A. Yes, always</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Yes sometimes</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Not at all</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How often are learners attending the tutorial sessions?</td>
<td>A. All the sessions</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Only few sessions</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Never attended</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If your answer is “A” or “B”, why are you attending the tutorial programs?</td>
<td>A. To get clarifications from the tutors</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. To get an opportunity to interact with other learners</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. To motivate oneself</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. To increase knowledge</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>261</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If you have never attended, please select among the following reasons</td>
<td>A. Lack of time</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No prior information provided</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Economic problem</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. It is not much necessary for my study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E. Long distance to travel</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F. Tutorial sessions are poorly organized and managed</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G. I am confident of studying at home</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses*

Regarding the access of information on tutorial schedules, vast majority (60%) of learner respondents confirmed that they always received information concerning tutorial programs. But 39% of respondents informed that they sometimes get information and only 1% of respondents replied that they never got information regarding tutorial schedules. This could happen because of poor communication and coordination system in the coordination offices. According to documents reviewed some of the distance education providing institutions handed over tutorial and end course exam schedules to learners during registration. In addition to this most of the distance teaching institutions used public media for announcing tutorial and end course exam schedules to learners. These practices could help learners to better plan their
different commitments so that they can get the best out of distance education programs.

As observed in item 2 of Table 13, significant number (42%) of learners declared that they attended only in few of the tutorial sessions. On the other hand, 34% of learners confirmed that they always attend all the tutorial programs and 24% of learner respondents replied that they never attended the tutorial sessions.

Learner respondents were asked to give reasons for their participation on the tutorial-face-to-face programs. In this regard, item 3 of Table 13 depicts that 88% of the respondents made their reason to get clarification from the tutors. While 69% of the respondents said that their reason was to increase knowledge, 59% of them said that it was to boost their motivation. The remaining 28% of the respondents replied that the reason of their participation in the tutorial program was to get an opportunity to interact with other learners.

Those who confirmed their participation in the tutorial programs were requested to identify the major reasons that contributed for the irregularity of their participation. Accordingly, as presented in item 4 of Table 13, 30% of learners identified poor organization and management of the tutorial programs, 26% long distance to travel, 20% lack of time, and 18% economic problem as their reasons for their irregularity of attendance in the tutorial sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Tutors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How often do you prepare for tutorial sessions?</td>
<td>A. Always 28 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes 39 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Very rarely 3 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Never - -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 70 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutors were also asked to give their opinion regarding their preparation for the tutorial sessions. As seen in Table 14, more than half (56%) of respondents replied that they sometimes prepared for the tutorial sessions. While 30% of the respondents said that
they always prepared, 14% of them replied that they prepared very rarely for the tutorial sessions. From this one can infer that due to lack of prior preparation learners’ participation in the tutorial sessions could be minimal.

Table 15. Preparation of learners for the tutorial sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preparedness &amp; presentation of the lesson by tutors is</td>
<td>A. Good</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Average</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Poor</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learners study the modules before attending tutorial session</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If “No”, what are the problems you faced? *</td>
<td>A. Family commitments</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Job/Business commitments</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Lack of facility for study at home</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Disturbance from outside home</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>225</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tutors are available during the tutorial sessions</td>
<td>A. Mostly</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Very rarely</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Were the tutorial sessions useful for your study?</td>
<td>A. Most useful</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Some what useful</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Not at all useful</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How do you feel about your tutors?</td>
<td>A. They are very encouraging</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. They are not encouraging</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. They are discouraging</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Learners were also asked to give their opinion regarding the preparation of the subject matter during the tutorial sessions. In this regard, while 27% of respondents confirmed that preparedness and presentation of tutors was good, majority (55%) of them rated it as an average. But 18% of the respondents rated the preparation and presentation of tutors as poor. This could indicate that problems were observed in tutors’ performance.*
Learners were also requested to give their opinion whether they study the course materials (modules) before coming to the tutorial sessions. Item 3 of Table 15 shows that, 46% of learner respondents reported that they studied the modules before coming to the tutorial sessions. But more than half (54%) of the learners respondents replied that they did not study the modules before attending the tutorial sessions. The reasons were: 46% job and business commitment, 31% family commitment, 22% lack of facility at home and finally 9% because of disturbance outside home.

Item 5 of Table 15 shows the degree of availability of tutors during the tutorial sessions. In this regard, 31% of the respondents replied that tutors were mostly available during tutorial sessions. Whereas 52% of the respondents reported that tutors were sometimes available during the tutorial sessions. 17% of respondents replied that tutors appeared to the tutorial centers very rarely. Thus, the irregularity of tutors to the tutorial session could discourage learners from attending to the tutorial sessions.

Learner respondent were then requested to indicate how much useful the tutorial programs were for their study. Item 6 of Table 15 shows that, 60% of the respondent claimed that the tutorial programs were most useful to their learning. On the other hand, 35% of the learners took a middle position saying that the face-to-face sessions were some what useful. Only 5% of the learners attached negative value to the tutorial service. Thus, those who took middle position and those who are not satisfied with the tutorial service could develop negative feeling on distance education and this feeling could lead them to quite their study.

Those respondents who confirmed their attendance in the tutorial sessions were asked to give their reflection on their feeling about tutors. Item 7 of Table 15 shows that 51% of respondents replied that tutors were very encouraging and 31% of the respondents reported that the tutors were not encouraging. In this issue, 16% of the respondents indicate that the tutors tend to discourage learners. From this, we can infer that the over all approach of the tutors need to be improved.
Table 16. Provision of counseling service in distance education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Counseling is provided in your institution</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. I don’t know</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If “Yes”, what was the focus of the counseling program? *</td>
<td>A. Issues related to study skills</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Issues related to rules and regulations</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Issues related to different complaints</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Issues related to personal life</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If “Yes”, were the counseling sessions useful?</td>
<td>A. Most useful</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Some what useful</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Not at all useful</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The counseling were conducted by</td>
<td>A. Special professional assigned</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. The center coordinator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Tutors</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Coordinators and tutors</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses.*

Learner respondents were then requested to make their reflection whether counseling (non academic) services were provided to distance learners or not. In this respect, a great majority (71%) of learners declared that the institutions did not provide any service in the area of counseling. Thus, distance learners were not receiving the necessary assistance and guidance in order to carry out their study successfully.

Those respondents who confirmed the provision of counseling service were asked to identify the focus of the counseling services provided. Accordingly, issues related to rules and regulations were identified as focus area by 75% of the respondents. Issues related to study skill was identified by 58% and 38% of respondents indicated that the focus of the counseling sessions were on issues related to complaints. As indicated in item 3 of table 16, while more than half 15 (62 %) of the respondents agreed that the counseling sessions were useful, 9 (32%) replied that the sessions were not useful.
From this we can easily see that learners were not getting counseling service from the distance education providing institutions.

In responding to the question “who conducts the counseling program?” 2 (8%) responded by center coordinators and 5 (20%) respond by tutors. On the other hand, a great majority 17 (70%) replied that the counseling was conducted both by the coordinators and tutors. It was clear that no professional was assigned to carry out the task of counseling distance learners.

Table 17. Provision of library service in distance education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library service is provided at your tutorial center</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If ‘Yes”, is it accessible for you?</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If “Yes”, how frequent do you visit the library?</td>
<td>A. Always</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Sometimes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Rarely</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>68</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The existence of library has paramount importance for the education of learners in general and for distance learners in particular. Regarding this learners were asked if they are provided with a library service. As seen in Table 18, while one third (67%) replied that there was no library in the regional and study centers, about two third (33%) confirmed the existence of library in their respective centers. Regarding its accessibility to distance learners, from among those who confirmed its presence, 25% confirmed its accessibility and 75% replied that the library was not accessible.

A question was posed to know how frequent learners visited the library. In this regard, 10% always and 22% sometimes visited the library. But majority (65%) of the respondents replied that they rarely visited the libraries.
Table 18. Availability of relevant reference materials in the library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If you are visiting the library, do you find relevant reference materials?</td>
<td>A. Many</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Adequate</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Few</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. None</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If you are visiting the library, do you find it useful?</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If ‘No’, please specify the reasons *</td>
<td>A. Could not find related books</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Most of the time the library remains closed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Cannot borrow books to study at home</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. The library timings are not suitable</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E. There is no enough space in the library to sit and study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses*  

In relation to the availability of relevant reference materials in the library, while 36% of the respondents replied that they found many reference materials, the remaining 64% replied that they found few relevant reference materials. This shows that the libraries were not stoked with sufficient and relevant reference materials.

Respondents were then required to reflect their opinion regarding the overall usefulness of the library. Thus, while, 56 (82%) of respondents confirmed its usefulness, 12 (18%) declared that it was not useful. The reason they gave were: could not found relevant books by 100%, borrowing service was not allowed by 67%, the library timing was not suitable by 58%, most of the time the library remains closed by 50% and the unavailability of enough space in the library were also indicated as a reason by 6% of respondents. Thus, the provision of library service was very poor.

Learner respondents were asked questions related to end course examinations. Their responses are organized in the following table.
Table 19. End Course Exams and grading in distance education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Are you informed ahead of time for the examination?</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>213 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>60 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273 100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you sit for well-prepared exams for your course?</td>
<td>A. Yes, well prepared</td>
<td>54 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Most are actually good enough</td>
<td>106 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Most are not carefully prepared</td>
<td>67 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. I don’t know</td>
<td>46 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273 100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you receive exam results in time?</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>94 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>179 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273 100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To what extent are you satisfied with your exam results?</td>
<td>A. Highly satisfied</td>
<td>123 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Satisfied</td>
<td>90 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Less satisfied</td>
<td>37 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. Unsatisfied</td>
<td>23 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>273 100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 of Table 19 shows that while 78% of learner respondents confirmed that they received information ahead of time, 22% reported that they did not receive information regarding end course exams. Interview conducted with coordinators reviewed and documents revealed that the institutions were providing information regarding exam schedule during registration of learners. In addition to this the institutions also used public media to inform learners about exam schedules.

Item 2 of Table 19 reveals that 20% of respondents replied that the exams were well prepared and 39% responded that most of the exams were actually good enough. Whereas, 24% reported that most of the exams were not carefully prepared and the remaining 24% took a middle position.

Item 2 of Table 19, shows that 34% of the respondents replied that they received exam results in time. The reaming 66% reported that they did not receive exam results in time. As to their degree of satisfaction with the exam results, item 3 of Table 19 displayed that 45% of the respondents were highly satisfied and 33% were satisfied with the results. Accordingly, while 14% of the learner respondents reported that they
were less satisfied, 8% of them confirmed that they were not satisfied with the exams results.

Learner respondents were also required to reflect upon the overall organization and management of the distance education providing institutions where they were registered. Their response is organized in the following table.

Table 20. Learners observation on issues related to organization and management of Distance Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question items</th>
<th>Response items</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. Capable of coordination</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Distance Education program management is generally:</td>
<td>B. Unorganized in service provision</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. I don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learners believe that Center Coordinator have the capacity and knowledge to coordinate the program?</td>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. No</td>
<td></td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. I am not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Center coordinators are</td>
<td>A. Very encouraging</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Not encouraging</td>
<td></td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Discouraging</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Appeals you present are solved on time</td>
<td>A. fully solved</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Some times solved</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Never solved</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D. No appeal</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 shows that 49% of learners confirmed that the services provided by distance education providers were unorganized. While 33% of respondents reported that the distance education management was capable of coordination, the remaining, 18% confirmed that they did not know the condition. As to the availability of capacity and knowledge of center coordinators in managing and coordinating the distance education programs, 27% of the respondents confirmed positively. But more than half (54%) of them reported that they did not agreed with this. Still quite significant number (19%) of respondents took the middle position. Thus, we can infer from this that coordinators lacked skills of coordination of distance education programs at their respective centers.
Learners were also asked to give their reflection on coordinators relationships with learners. In this regard, while 33% of respondents reported that they got them very encouraging, 54% of them confirmed that they were not encouraging. The remaining, 13% reported that the coordinators were discouraging. This shows that distance learners were not receiving the necessary encouragement and support from both regional and study/tutorial center coordinators.

As indicated in item 4 of Table 8.0, it was found out that 23% of the respondents replied that appeals coming from learners were fully solved. While 46% of them responded that learners' appeals were sometimes solved, 20% of respondents reported that appeals were never solved. Surprisingly 11% of the respondents denied the existence of appeals. What we can understand from this is that the appeal system of the distance education providers was not well organized.

Policy and management issues in distance education

A policy is a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue devoted to forward a particular objective. Policy emanates from the socio-economic demands and events of the past and situations of the present. Looking back to the past and seeing the present helps the projection of the future. Policy describes goals and provides a guide to decision making. Policy gives the general framework within which decisions are to be established. An educational policy is nothing but a statement intended to facilitate purpose or goal achievement in the areas of education and entails the materialization of goals and objectives by institutions, teachers and all stakeholders (Reid and Barrington, 1997:260).

In this respect, interview was conducted with Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency at the MOE and Quality Assurance and Supervision Department at the Tigray National Regional State Commission of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) officials regarding policy, proclamations, rules and regulations related to distance education. In addition to this relevant documents were reviewed.
As indicated in the preamble of the "Higher Education Proclamation" No. 351/2003, it has become necessary to determine by law the directions of the private higher education institutions in order to promote their contribution in expanding education and conducting research. To this effect, the Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued proclamation for the establishment of Higher Education institutions and regulatory body i.e. "Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency" (HERQA). Among the powers and duties of the agency Article 82 from Number 2 -6 states that the agency:

1. ensure that higher education and training offered at any institution are up to standard, relevant and have quality;
2. ensure that higher education and training offered at any institution are in line with economic, social and other appropriate policies of the country;
3. issues directives which determine the powers and duties of accreditation permit evaluation committees; etc… (FDRE 2003:19).

To implement the above mentioned powers and duties, the MOE issued different directives and regulations that could help to carry out its obligations. The Regulation on the Naming, Standards, Pre-accreditation and Accreditation of first degree providing Higher Education Institutions is among the regulations issued by MOE providing detail directives (MOE 1996).

Document reviewed shows that the Federal Government established HERQA in 2003 which is responsible to award certificate of pre-accreditation and accreditation to higher education (first degree and above) providing institutions in the country by Proclamation" No.351/2003. According to Article 82 No.7 of the proclamation, the agency was given a mandate to evaluate higher education institutions every five years with a view of ensuring whether such institutions are up to standard and competent, and submit its findings to the Ministry. An interview conducted with the head of Pre-accreditation and accreditation and expert at HERQA revealed that due to shortage of human power the agency was not able to supervise the standard and competences of the higher education providing institutions. The agency was engaged only in issuing
certificates of Pre-accreditation and accreditation to those who were requesting to
open higher education institutions.

Regarding standards, pre-accreditation and accreditation of certificate for diploma
programs, it was the mandate of the Regional State Education Bureau (MOE 1996
E.C.). The study reviled that, in Tigrai Regional State, the responsibility of pre-
accreditation or accreditation for certificate and diploma programs was the mandate of
Tigrai National Regional State 'Commission of Technical and Vocational Education
and Training" (CTVET). The commission was empowered by the Council of the
National Regional State Proclamation Number 104/1998 E.C. published in Regional

Distance education requires the fulfillment of necessary facilities and equipments such
as computer centers, counseling rooms, training equipments store and distribution
rooms and mobile workshops (MOE 1996:60-63). But the interview and the
observation conducted at the regional and study/tutorial centers revealed that the
above mentioned facilities and equipments were not available in most of the regionai
and study/tutorial centers.

The availability of information and communication technology (ICT) at the regional and
study centers is indicated as one criterion for providing distance education programs.
But, facility of ICT (Internet service) was available only in Sheba College. During the
interview with regional coordinators it was revealed that shortage of manpower, lack of
ICT infrastructure, shortage of necessary office facility and equipments were among
the major problems identified.

The other problem identified during the interview with the private institution
coordinators was regarding the relationship they have with Tigrai Commission of
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) which is responsible for
issuing pre-accreditation and accreditation for diploma programs. The interviewee said
that the support they got from CTVET was not encouraging and supportive. Instead,
the role played by CTVET was highly focusing on controlling and fault finding rather
than supporting. Thus, the support given to the distance learning institutions was found out to be minimal.

An interview was conducted with officials of CTVET regarding the existing distance education programs running in the region and their relationship with the distance education providing institutions. Among the major problems identified by the officials of CTVET were the following:

- quality was not given due consideration by the distance education providers,
- admission of learners was below the admission requirements (especially degree programs) set by MOE;
- poor facility of the tutorial classrooms;
- poor organization of the tutorial/face-to-face programs;
- inadequate facility and equipments at the regional and study centers;
- absence of library services at the regional and study centers;

The CTVET officials were planning to put the seal of the commission on the backside of the diploma awarded to make sure that the diploma has a value. But this idea did not get the agreement of the private institutions. Still it is a pending issue that needs a solution by negotiation and discussion. But the negotiation should not be at the expense of quality of education and should not violate the rights of the institutions.

It was also observed that the CTVET was severely affected by shortage of manpower both in quality and quantity and because of this problem necessary supervision and assistance was not provide to the distance education providing intuitions in the region.

Lack of coordination among MOE and CTVET was observed. Even though the issuing of pre-accreditation and accreditation certificate for degree programs was the mandate of the MOE, supervisors from HERQA (MOE) did not regularly visit the distance education providing institutions. The officials of CTVET recommended that HERQA should delegate the responsibility and allocate necessary found to CTVET so that they can follow the day to day activities of the under graduate distance education programs in the region.
CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter comprises the summary of the findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations that focus on the gist of discussions with the view to identify the critical problems associated with the provision distance education in the study areas.

The main purpose of this study was to assess the Provision of Tertiary Level Distance Education Programs in Tigray Regional State. The study made an attempt to find answers for the basic questions raised in chapter one of this study.

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey approach. The study was carried out in three zones of Tigray regional state (Mekelle Zone, Southern Zone and Central Zone). The Zones were selected based on purposive sampling. The subjects of the study were distance learners, tutors, regional/study center coordinators, heads of Regional Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and officials from Higher Education Quality and Relevance Agency (HERQA) in the Ministry of Education.

The data were collected using questionnaires. Two sets of questionnaires were prepared and distributed to respondents that comprise 300 distance learners and 80 tutors. The questionnaire has both closed and open ended items. The questionnaires were pilot tested on potential respondents to make the data collecting instruments objective, relevant, suitable to the problem, and reliable. In addition to this, about six colleagues of the researcher checked the questionnaires for improvement.

Based on the feedback obtained, necessary corrections and amendments were made. For example, some questions were repeatedly asked; others were vague, and not targeted. Finally, the improved version of the questionnaire was printed, duplicated, and dispatched to the target population. The researcher himself administered the questionnaires.
The rate of return of the distributed questionnaires were 273 (81%) for learners and 70 (80%) for tutors. The combined rate of return was 80.5%. Structured and unstructured interview questions were also used to gather data from regional/study center coordinators, heads of regional Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and officials from Higher Education Quality and Relevance Agency. Available documents: Education Policy and Strategy, Proclamations (Negarit Gazeta), Regulations and other documents were reviewed and field observations were employed. Furthermore, related literature on distance education was also reviewed and organized from available resources. The collected data were then, tabulated and analyzed mainly using the descriptive and in few cases a chi-square test.

4.1. SUMMARY

While a number of issues have been analyzed and discussed, this sub-section considers the major findings of the study which were related to policies in relation to tertiary level distance education, planning and management, infrastructure facilities; student support services (TMAs, tutorial service, library service, and counseling service) in the distance education program Tigrai National Regional State.

1. Print in the form of course modules represented the one major medium for course delivery mechanism in all the distance education providing institutions. The distance education institutions were providing course materials/modules to learners and tutors on time. The course modules also contained sufficient exercises but learners found the modules difficult to study alone.

Video/audio visual support was not provided to distance learners. Among the five institutions under study only in one distance education providing institute language course was supplemented with audio cassette.

2. Except in one in institute working TMAs were taken as a requirement and it was found out that working a minimum of one assignment per course was required in all distance education providing institutions under study. Very surprisingly, in all the distance education providing institutions timely distribution of questions of TMAs to
learners was observed. But in relation to TMAs different problems were identified in the study:

a. delay in submission of assignments;

b. copying answers from one another;

c. delay in correction of assignments;

d. tutors were not providing adequate written constructive comments; and

e. learners were not satisfied with grades awarded to the assignments.

3. Regarding tutorial/face-to-face sessions, it was found out that one to two face-to-face/tutorial sessions per course were provided in all the institutions. But a few problems arising from management, tutors, and learners were identified. These include:

a. Management concern:
   i. Selecting inconvenient location of the tutorial centers;
   ii. poorly organization of tutorial sessions;
   iii. lack of training facilities;
   iv. insufficient remuneration paid to the tutors;

b. Tutor related:
   i. Lack of training in distance education teaching methodology;
   ii. Poor attendance coupled with inadequate preparation and presentation of what to lecture or interact;
   iii. lack of willingness to encourage learners;

c. Learners behavior:
   i. irregularity of attendance in the tutorial/face-to-face sessions
   ii. poor preparation on the learners side;

4. With regard to counseling service, the study revealed that in all the distance education institutions counseling service was not provided.

5. Significant number of respondents replied that there were no library services in study/tutorial centers that could serve as resource center for distance learners;

6. Regarding end course exams, information on exam schedule and other related issues were provided to learners on time. Print and public media were also employed to inform learners about the schedules. The problems identified in
relation to end course exams were delay in submission of exam result and
dissatisfaction of learners on the exam results.

7. The study also revealed that most of the regional and study center coordinators
and liaison persons were:
   a. not trained in management of distance education;
   b. not able to demonstrate the capacity and knowledge of coordination of
distance education programs;
   c. not encouraging distance learners;

8. The research finding also showed that the regional and the study/tutorial centers
were:
   a. using classrooms of conventional schools and colleges for tutorial/face-to-face
   sessions;
   b. not adequately staffed with necessary qualified personnel to carry out their
   responsibilities;
   c. not adequately furnished with necessary office facilities and equipments that
could facilitate the provision of student support services (some of the
study/tutorial centers were offices of the school principals);

9. Analysis of the documents and interview conducted with relevant officials disclosed
that:
   a. there was no specific policy regarding distance education;
   b. there was no specific responsible body to follow distance education programs;
   c. pre-accreditation and accreditation for first degree and above was the
   responsibility of HERQA at the MOE;
   d. for certificate and diploma programs it was the responsibility of the CTVET;
   e. lack of adequate man power both at the HERQA quality assurance body of
   MOE and CTVET that could carry out their responsibilities;
   f. the requirements for obtaining pre-accreditation and accreditation certificate
   were not addressed in detail;

10. The study also revealed that the relationship that exists between the distance
education institutions and the CTVET was not based on mutual support and
understanding but mainly on controlling and fault finding.
4.2. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study it is be possible to draw the following conclusions:

I. Course materials

Print materials were dominantly used in all the distance education providing institutions. The timely distribution of course materials was very encouraging and appreciated. The course materials/modules used in the distance education programs were found out to be difficult to follow by the learners. This could seriously discourage learners to study and could increase the drop out rate.

II. Teacher Marked Assignments (TMAs)

TMAs help learners prepare for final exams and provide them with feedback, comment on their work, and develop their self confidence. With regard to this working TMAs was a requirement almost in all the distance education institutions. This was very helpful practice and learners could get the best out of it. However, the different problems identified in the provision of TMAs made the TMAs service incomplete and unproductive.

III. Tutorial/face-to-face sessions

Distance learners may to some extent find it difficult to handle or use the self-learning materials/ modules by themselves. These would require knowledge of study skills which can be provided through expert support. In this regard the research identified that, tutorial/face-to-face services were provided in all the institutions under study. But the services provided were poorly organized and managed. Thus, it calls for redesigning of new program and reorientation of the actors played in this field.

IV. Counseling service

Counseling is about helping learners decide for themselves what is best for them as regards choice of course and career, overcoming of learning inconveniences and obstacles. The study revealed that learners were deprived of this service in all distance education providing institutions. Therefore, in this case learners could be discouraged and drop out their study because of the lack of professional guidance and counseling.
V. Library service

In addition to the course modules provided by the institutions, distance learners need to be provided with additional reference materials. However, the study showed that learners were not provided with library services. This shows that the distance teaching institutes did not give due attention to the provision of libraries. When learners were forced to depend only on the course materials/modules, the quality of distance education will largely be negatively affected.

VI. End course exams

Evaluation is an integral part of any teaching-learning system. It helps to identify the performance of learners. In all the distance education institutes learners were required to sit for end course exams. In order for learners to get a lesson from the exams and to make necessary arrangement in time they should receive exam results/feedback in time. But, the study revealed that exam results were not released in time and learners were not satisfied with the results they lately received. It may be concluded that such poor practice could discourage learners’ motivation and hinder improvement in their performance.

VII. Management and organization of Distance education institutes

All the distance education providing institutes were also providing conventional programs. By establishing distance education institutes or centers or departments at their respective main campus, they become a dual mode institutions catering to both the on-campus and the off-campus students. They have also established regional and study/tutorial centers in the region which were found functioning with inadequate staff both in quantity and quality.

The centers also suffered from lack of necessary materials and equipments. These shortcomings inhibit the centers from providing necessary student support services as expected from well organized distance education providing institutions. Thus, the distance education program in the region has serious quality shortcomings that need immediate solutions.
VIII. Policy issues in distance education

a. Distance education was considered as one way of delivering educational opportunity in the Education Sector Strategy of the country (TGE 1994: 14). But the study revealed that there was no specific responsible body in the MOE that follows the day-to-day activity of distance education programs.

b. HERQA at the MOE was established by proclamation No.351/2003 to handle issues related to pre-accreditation and accreditation of first degree and above. As yet it has made no progress towards visiting/supervising quality of distance education provided by the institutions. What it is doing is no more than issuing certificates of pre-accreditation and accreditation to degree level distance education providing institutions in the country.

c. Regarding issuing certificates of pre-accreditation and accreditation for certificate and diploma level education programs, the study also revealed that it was the mandate of the Regional Education Bureaus, but in case of Tigrai regional state the mandate was given to the CTVET. However, the problems observed in HEQRA were also observed in CTVET. In addition to this, the relationship of the council and the distance education providing institutions was not healthy. Both accusing each other for the problems observed in the program. Thus, it results into unorganized and poor quality of distance education in the region.
4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are forwarded to alleviate the problems which hampered the provision of effective and efficient tertiary level distance education provision in Tigrai regional state.

1. While it is apparent that a large number of methods could be used for delivering distance education, in practice print remains to be the bases of a large majority of distance programs. Well prepared course materials/modules cultivate and develop the self-esteem of learners. A good course materials/modules gives the successful learner a confidence boost.

In face-to-face teaching, students get all sorts of help regarding what they are supposed to be able to do. Learners ask questions, answer questions, listen to emphasis in tone of voice and so on. Distance learners miss out many of these sources of help, and therefore, need all the guidance and counseling that a good set of learning outcomes can provide. An important additional dimension distance learning outcomes is the user-friendly one. Thus, the researcher recommends that distance education providing institutions should:

a. prepare learning materials/modules in such a way that learners can easily and fully understand and utilize them. The course materials/modules should be user friendly;

b. design in attractive, rewarding and motivating way so that learners will develop interest of reading the modules;

c. prepare tutor's guide for proper implementation of distance education;

d. The encouraging practices such as: timely distribution of course materials/modules and TMA questions to learners on time should be kept up;

2. The information age challenges us to rethink the strategies that we employ teaching distance learners. Educational quality can also be enhanced by the
prudent use of new information communication technologies in supporting the teaching learning process. Therefore, distance education providers:

a. should attempt to select the technology that well best meet their goals and objectives, that is available, user friendly, and that will be educationally sound as well as cost effective;

b. should introduce other technologies like, audio, video, computer and internet for effective performance in distance education. supplementary reading materials should be prepared using audio cassettes and CD-ROMs;

3. Teacher Marked Assignments (TMAs) are important aspect of instructional process in distance education. TMAs have a special role in distance education. TMAs provide students with feedback about their work. Learners who did well need to know why they did well and how they can further improve their work. The essence of TMAs which is fundamental aspect of distance education programs requires learners to know that they have mastered their study before moving on to the next module or lesson. However, if they are having difficulty, they need to know what material to review or read in order to master the content. Timely feedback to learners' assignments is an essential factor for learners' achievement in tertiary level distance education. Thus, the researcher recommends that:

a. the institutes should encourage tutors to correct the assignments in time;
b. the institutes should send prompt feedback of the assignments to the distance learners;
c. assignments should be corrected by the tutors at the study/tutorial centers and it should not be sent to the main office;
d. tutors should spend significant time writing constructive and supportive comments to each distance learner's assignment;
e. learners should be encouraged to submit their assignment in time.

4. The loneliness of the distance learners cannot be effectively compensated for unless there are some opportunities for them to meet their tutors in person and
discuss their problem and exchange their views with them. Among the different forms of support given for distance learners, face-to-face tutorials have greater contribution in providing learners an opportunity to interact & communicate with their tutors and fellow students. Therefore, to provide effective and efficient tutorial services the researcher recommends that:

a. tutors should be available at the study/tutorial centers to assist distance learners;
b. tutors should come to the tutorial session with maximum preparation and plan;
c. tutors must converse with learners and help them understand what they are having difficulty or to challenge and extend an early provisional grasp of course materials;

5. Lack of trained staff can lead to poor quality distance education service and this, in turn, can undermine the initial credibility of the distance education program. Effective teaching at a distance requires specialized skills, abilities and training of the personnel involved in the distance education program. Therefore, in order to improve and to upgrade the skills of the tutors, the researcher proposes the following mechanism as alternative solution to the problems identified in the study:

a. distance education providers should identify their training needs and priorities;
b. tutors should be provided with adequate and continuous training;
c. tutors should be periodically evaluated;
d. tutors should be fairly remunerated and motivated;

6. The study has revealed the irregularity of learners in the tutorial sessions. In order to attract learners to the tutorial centers, it is also recommended that:

a. the tutorial centers should be located at convenient location whereby most of the distance learners could have easy access,
b. tutorial programs should be well organized and managed;
7. Counseling service has paramount importance in distance education because it is an important way of clarifying real needs, reconciling the conflicting demands of home and work, and coming to terms with isolation and with problems resulting from previous experiences. Counseling is also important in helping learners to develop their own individual strategy for studying under a distance education system. The researcher feels that it is advisable for the distance education institutions to provide counseling services to their learners. To this effect, it may be essential:

a. to provide counseling service to the distance learners;
b. the institutions to assign trained professionals to conduct guidance and counseling services;
c. where possible to established post, dedicated "help line" and E-mail with which distance learners may make enquires of their own interest;

8. Libraries are key factors in efforts to raise the quality of education. They play fundamental role in helping learners' performance. Therefore, the researcher recommends that:

a. distance education providers should establish libraries at the study/tutorial centers or they have to make some sort of arrangement with the existing conventional schools where the tutorial service is conducted;
b. It is also advisable that a mini library could be arranged at the offices of the regional/study center coordinators;
c. Distance education providers should establish resource rooms at the regional/tutorial centers where distance learners would be able to access and enhance their aware of learning.

9. The success of the distance education will depend on the competence of the staff it employees. Well-managed staff tends to be aware of the institutions mission and are generally motivated to pursue the goal. Thus, the researcher would like to recommend that:
a. in the recruitment and selection of regional and study center coordinators/liaison persons, proper attention should be given and minimum educational qualification (BA and above) that could help to accomplish the task must be set;
b. regional/center coordinators must be provided with necessary trainings such as, overview of distance education, management and coordination of distance education, planning and negotiation skills, characteristics of distance learners, etc;
c. the regional/center coordinators should be fairly paid and be motivated in order to have good performance;

10. As More and Kearsely in Shomaker (1998:49) states, distance education can not grow on the back of existing educational structure and policies. Policies must be created and for that policy making organization must be set up. The establishment of HERQA by the federal government is very timely and encouraging. Currently, distance education is expanding its coverage rapidly becoming an alternative form of education for those who can not join the conventional system of education. Distance education needs special attention and focus to get the most out of it. Thus, the researcher recommends that there should be separate clearly defined National Policy on the development and management of distance education programs in the country.

11. The research revealed that both bodies: HERQA and CTVET were not in a position to conduct supervision and assistance to distance education institutions. At the regional level, the relationship between the distance education providing institutions and the regional CTVET was not based on mutual understanding and assistance. Therefore, in order to improve the existing situation the researcher recommends that:

a. the professionals at HERQA and need to get relevant training regarding deciding on quality assurance of distance education and skills in human relations;
b. HERQA and CTVET must be staffed with sufficient personnel with necessary qualification to carry out its obligation of assuring quality and supporting the institutions to provide quality distance education programs in the region;

c. distance education providers should not only focus on quantity, instead, they have to strive to provide quality distance education to learners;

d. the CTVET must create favorable environment to work in coordination and collaboration with the distance education providers in the region;

e. the regulation on pre-accreditation and accreditation must not be such rigid, instead, it should consider the existing reality of the country in general and the regional condition in particular;

f. the distance education providers and the regulatory body must come together and create common understanding with out hampering the quality of education;

12. As mentioned in chapter one, this paper has not studied the problem in depth due to various limitations. The researcher, therefore, recommends that further and detail study must be made on the subject.
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INTERNET RESOURCE

- http://www.uidaho.edu/eo/dist7.html (DISTANCE EDUCATION AT A GLANCE
- www.distance-learning.co.uk/whatis/divol.htm
Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies  
Department of Educational Planning and Management

Survey questionnaire to be filled by Distance Learners

Dear distance learner,

I am a graduate student at the Addis Ababa University, College of Education, Department of Educational Planning and Management. I intend to produce a thesis as a requirement for my graduation. The study will try to investigate the opportunities and challenges of distance education in Tigray National Regional State. The trustworthiness of the study is based upon the accuracy of the information you provide. Please note that the information you provide will only be used for research purpose; and will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Direction: Put an “X” mark in the bracket [ ] of your choice or write your answer on the space provided.

Personal Data
1. Name of the College/University where you are studying: ____________________________
2. Program you are enrolled: A. Degree [ ] B. Diploma [ ]
3. Sex: A. Male [ ] B. Female [ ]
4. Age (in years)  
   A. 20-30 [ ]  
   B. 31-40 [ ]  
   C. 41-50 [ ]  
   D. 51 and Above [ ]
5. Marital Status  
   A. Married [ ]  
   B. Single [ ]  
   C. Divorced/ Widowed [ ]
6. Working Place: A. Urban [ ] B. Rural [ ]
7. Employed in:  
   A. Government [ ]  
   B. Private [ ]  
   C. Self employed [ ]  
   D. Any other (Specify) ____________________________
8. Work experience (in years)  
   A. 0–5 [ ]  
   B. 6–10 [ ]  
   C. 11–20 [ ]  
   D. 21 & above [ ]
9. Monthly income (if applicable):  
   A. Birr 235-530 [ ]  
   B. Birr 531-895 [ ]  
   C. Birr 896-1040 [ ]  
   D. Above Birr 1040 [ ]

Regarding Course Materials (Modules)
1. Are you receiving the course materials/Modules in time?  
   A. Yes [ ]  
   B. No [ ]
2. If “No”, what was the time gap between the expected date of receipt and the actual date of receipt of course materials?  
   A. Less than 2 weeks [ ]  
   B. 2 to 3 weeks [ ]  
   C. 4 to 8 weeks [ ]  
   D. More than 8 weeks [ ]
3. The course materials (Modules) have
   A. Very sufficient exercise [ ]   C. Not sufficient exercise [ ]
   B. Sufficient exercise [ ]

4. The study materials (Modules) are
   A. Easy to follow [ ]   C. Difficult to follow [ ]
   B. Fairly easy to follow [ ]   D. Very difficult to follow [ ]

5. What additional materials are you receiving from the institute? Put an “X” mark on your choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Additional educational materials</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Audio Cassette</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Video Cassette</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Floppy (Diskette)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Course calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Information Booklet</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reference materials</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tutor Marked Assignments and End Course Exams**

1. Are working assignments required in your study?
   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

2. If “Yes”, when did you receive the assignments (Questions)?
   A. Along with the course materials [ ]
   B. After receiving the course materials [ ]

3. Do you respect the due date for the submission of assignments?
   A. Always [ ]   B. Sometimes [ ]   C. Never [ ]

4. How many assignments do you submit in a course?
   A. Three [ ]   B. One [ ]
   B. Two [ ]   D. None [ ]

5. Are you receiving back the corrected assignments in time?
   A. Always [ ]   B. Sometimes [ ]   C. Never [ ]

6. Do tutors give you written comments/feedback on the assignments?
   A. Always [ ]   B. Sometimes [ ]   C. Never [ ]

7. If your answer is “A” or “B”, how useful are the comments of your tutor?
   A. Very useful [ ]   C. Not at all useful [ ]
   B. Quite useful [ ]

8. If “Not at all”, what are the reasons?
   A. No relation between the marks/grade awarded and comments [ ]
   B. The comments are vague and unclear [ ]
   C. The comments do not help me to improve my study [ ]
   D. The comments are discouraging [ ]
   E. Any other (specify) __________________

2
9. How much are you satisfied with the mark/grade assigned to your assignments?
   A. Fully [ ]     B. To some extent [ ]     C. To large extent [ ]     D. Not at all [ ]

10. Do you sit for well-prepared exams for your course?
    A. Yes well prepared [ ]
    B. Most are actually good enough [ ]
    C. Most are not carefully prepared [ ]
    D. I don't know [ ]

11. Do you receive exam results in time?
    A. Yes [ ]
    B. No [ ]

12. To what extent are you satisfied with your exam results?
    A. Highly satisfied [ ]
    B. Satisfied [ ]
    C. Less satisfied [ ]
    D. Unsatisfied [ ]

**Tutorial Services**

1. Is tutorial service provided in your study center?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]

2. If “Yes”, the distance from home to the tutorial/study center is (in kms)
   A. 1-5 [ ]
   B. 6-10 [ ]
   C. 11-50 [ ]
   D. 51-100 [ ]
   E. More than 100 [ ]

3. Is the tutorial/study center located at convenient location?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]

4. How often did you get information about tutorial schedules in time?
   A. Always [ ]
   B. Sometimes [ ]
   C. Not at all [ ]

5. How many tutorial sessions are conducted in a term/semester?
   A. Three [ ]
   B. Two [ ]
   C. One [ ]

6. How often are you attending the tutorial sessions?
   A. All the sessions [ ]
   B. Only few sessions [ ]
   C. Never attended [ ]

7. If your answer is “A” or “B”, why are you attending the tutorial programs?
   *(Multiple answers are allowed)*
   A. To get clarifications of concepts on topics which you could not understand from the course materials [ ]
   B. To get an opportunity to interact with other students [ ]
   C. To motivate yourself in the studies [ ]
   D. To increase your knowledge [ ]
   E. Any other (specify) ____________________________

8. If you have never attended please select among the following reasons. *(Multiple answers are allowed)*
   A. Lack of time [ ]
   B. No prior information on tutorial sessions [ ]
   C. Economic problem [ ]
   D. Tutorial not much necessary for my study [ ]
   E. Long distance to travel [ ]
   F. The tutorial sessions are poorly organized and managed [ ]
   G. I am confident of studying at home [ ]
   H. Any other ____________________________
9. Tutor's preparedness and presentation of the lesson during the tutorial session is
   A. Good [ ]   B. Average [ ]   C. Poor [ ]

10. Are the tutors available during the tutorial sessions?
    A. Mostly [ ]   B. Sometimes [ ]   C. Very rarely [ ]

11. Were the tutorial sessions useful for your study?
    A. Most useful [ ]   B. Some what useful [ ]   C. Not at all useful [ ]

**Tutorial Services**

1. Is tutorial service provided in your study center?
   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

2. If "Yes", the distance from home to the tutorial/study center is (in kms)
   A. 1-5 [ ]   B. 6-10 [ ]   C. 11-50 [ ]   D. 51-100 [ ]   E. More than 100 [ ]

3. Is the tutorial/study center located at convenient location?
   A. Yes [ ]   B. No [ ]

4. How often did you get information about tutorial schedules in time?
   A. Always [ ]   B. Sometimes [ ]   C. Not at all [ ]

5. How many tutorial sessions are conducted in a term/semester?
   A. Three [ ]   B. Two [ ]   C. One [ ]

6. How often are you attending the tutorial sessions?
   A. All the sessions [ ]   B. Only few sessions [ ]   C. Never attended [ ]

7. If your answer is "A" or "B", why are you attending the tutorial programs?
   (Multiple answers are allowed)
   A. To get clarifications of concepts on topics which you could not understand
      from the course materials [ ]
   B. To get an opportunity to interact with other students [ ]
   C. To motivate your self in the studies [ ]
   D. To increase your knowledge [ ]
   E. Any other (specify) ____________________________

8. If you have never attended please select among the following reasons. (Multiple answers are allowed)
   A. Lack of time [ ]
   B. No prior information on tutorial sessions [ ]
   C. Economic problem [ ]
   D. Tutorial not much necessary for my study [ ]
   E. Long distance to travel [ ]
   F. The tutorial sessions are poorly organized and managed [ ]
   G. I am confident of studying at home [ ]
   H. Any other ____________________________

9. Tutor's preparedness and presentation of the lesson during the tutorial session is
   A. Good [ ]   B. Average [ ]   C. Poor [ ]

10. Are the tutors available during the tutorial sessions?
    A. Mostly [ ]   B. Sometimes [ ]   C. Very rarely [ ]

11. Were the tutorial sessions useful for your study?
    A. Most useful [ ]   B. Some what useful [ ]   C. Not at all useful [ ]
12. How do you feel about your tutors?
   A. They are very encouraging [ ]
   B. They are not encouraging [ ]
   C. They are discouraging [ ]

13. Do you study the modules before attending a tutorial session?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]

14. If “No”, what are the problems you faced? (Multiple answers are allowed)
   A. Family commitments [ ]
   B. Disturbance from outside home [ ]
   C. Job/Business commitments [ ]
   D. Lack of facility for study at home [ ]
   E. Any other (specify) ___________________

Counseling Service
1. Is counseling service (None academic) provided in your institution?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]
   C. I don’t know [ ]

2. If “Yes”, what is the focus of the counseling program?
   A. Issues related to study skills [ ]
   B. Issues related to rules and regulations [ ]
   C. Issues related to different complaints [ ]
   D. Issues related to personal life [ ]

3. If “Yes”, were the counseling sessions useful?
   A. Most useful [ ]
   B. Some what useful [ ]
   C. Not at all useful [ ]

4. Who provides the counseling program?
   A. Special professional assigned [ ]
   B. The center coordinator [ ]
   C. Tutors [ ]
   D. Coordinators and tutors [ ]
   E. Other (Specify): ___________________

Library Service
1. Is there a library at your tutorial/study center?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]

2. If “Yes”, is it accessible for you?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]

3. If “Yes”, how frequent do you visit the library?
   A. Always [ ]
   B. Sometimes [ ]
   C. Rarely [ ]
   D. Never [ ]

4. If you are visiting the library, do you find relevant reference materials you can use?
   A. Many [ ]
   B. Adequate [ ]
   C. Few [ ]
   D. None [ ]

5. If you are visiting the library, do you find it useful?
   A. Yes [ ]
   B. No [ ]

6. If “No”, please specify the reasons (Multiple answers are allowed)
   A. Could not find related books [ ]
   B. Most of the time the library remains closed [ ]
   C. Cannot borrow books to study at home [ ]
   D. The library timings are not suitable [ ]
   E. There is no enough space in the library to sit and study [ ]
   F. Any other (specify) ___________________
Management

1. Distance Education program management is generally
   A. Capable of coordination [ ]
   B. Unorganized in service provision [ ]
   A. I don’t know [ ]
2. Are you informed ahead of time for the examination?
   A. Yes [ ] B. No [ ]
3. The study center (Office) is opened:
   A. In all working days [ ]
   B. During tutorial sessions [ ]
   C. On Saturdays and Sundays [ ]
   D. When the coordinator wants [ ]
4. Do you believe that the Center Coordinator have the capacity and knowledge to coordinate the distance education program?
   A. Yes [ ] B. No [ ] C. I am not sure [ ]
5. Center coordinators are:
   A. Very encouraging [ ]
   B. Not encouraging [ ]
   C. Discouraging [ ]
6. Appeals you present are resolved on time
   A. Always [ ] B. Sometimes [ ] C. Never [ ] D. No appeal [ ]
7. Would you please identify major factors affecting the tutorial service?
   A. ____________________________________________
   B. ____________________________________________
8. Would you please suggest ideas that can help to improve the tutorial service?
   A. ____________________________________________
   B. ____________________________________________
9. Would you please identify major problems related to assignments?
   A. ____________________________________________
   B. ____________________________________________
10. Would you please suggest ideas that can help to improve assignment related problems?
    A. ____________________________________________
    B. ____________________________________________
11. Please provide suggestions on how to improve Distance program services to students
    A. ____________________________________________
    B. ____________________________________________

Thank you again for completing this questionnaire!
Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Educational Planning and Management

Survey questionnaire to be filled by tutors.

Dear tutor,
I am a graduate student at the Addis Ababa University, College of Education, Department of Educational Planning and Management. I intend to produce a thesis as a requirement for my graduation. The study will try to investigate the opportunities and challenges of distance education in Tigray National Regional State. The trustworthiness of the study is based upon the accuracy of the information you provide. Please note that the information you provide will only be used for research purpose; and will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Direction: Put an “X” mark in the bracket [ ] of your choice or write your answer on the space provided.

Personal Data

1. Name of the Institution you work in: ____________________________
2. Name of your Region/Center: _________________________________
3. Sex:  A. Male [ ]  B. Female [ ]
4. Age (in years)
   A. 20-30 [ ]  C. 41-50 [ ]
   B. 31-40 [ ]  D. Above 51 [ ]
5. Educational Level:
   A. BA/BSc/LLB [ ]  C. PhD [ ]
   B. MA/MSc/LLM [ ]  D. Any other (specify)
6. In what capacity are you working as a tutor?
   A. On full time base [ ]  B. On part time/contract base [ ]
7. If your answer is “B” you are working in:
   A. Government educational institution [ ]
   B. Non government educational institution [ ]
   C. Government other sector [ ]
   D. Private sector or NGO [ ]
8. Work experience (in years)
   a. 0 – 5 [ ]  C. 11 – 20 [ ]
   b. 6 – 10 [ ]  D. 21 and above [ ]

Regarding course materials (Modules)

1. Did you receive the course materials/modules on which to work within time?
   A. Yes [ ]  B. No [ ]
2. Are you provided with tutors guide for the tutorial program?
   A. Yes [ ]  B. No [ ]
3. The course materials (Modules) have
   A. Very sufficient exercise [ ]  C. Not sufficient exercise [ ]
   B. Sufficient exercise [ ]
Regarding tutorial service
1. Have you got training related to distance education?
   A. Yes [ ]  B. No [ ]
2. If “Yes”, please put an “X” mark in the appropriate area of training and write the duration of the training you got.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Characteristics of distance learners</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Role of Tutor Marked Assignments</td>
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<td>Types of tutor comments</td>
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<td>Tutoring techniques</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Counseling distance learners</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other (List down)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Your experience in tutoring distance learners (in years)
   i. 0 – 2 [ ]  C. 5 – 6 [ ]
   ii. 3 – 4 [ ]  D. More than 6 years [ ]
5. How many tutorial sessions are conducted in a term/semester?
   A. Three [ ]  B. Two [ ]  C. one [ ]

Tutor Marked Assignments
1. In dealing with the assignments, what are the major problems encountered by learners?
   A. Delay in submission of assignments [ ]
   B. Incompleteness of assignments [ ]
   C. Copying from one another [ ]
   D. Getting it done by others [ ]
2. Do students complain regarding marking/grading of assignments?
   A. Yes [ ]  B. No [ ]

Management
1. How are you recruited to be a tutor?
   A. With criteria [ ]  B. Without criteria [ ]
2. How often is the study center (Office) open?
   A. In all working days [ ]  C. On Saturdays and Sundays [ ]
   B. During tutorial sessions [ ]  D. When the coordinator wants [ ]
3. How do you rate the remuneration you get from the institute?
   A. Very sufficient [ ]  C. Not sufficient [ ]
   B. Sufficient [ ]
4. Would you please identify major factors affecting the tutorial service?
   A.________________________________________________________
   B.________________________________________________________
5. Would you please suggest ideas that can help to improve the tutorial service?
   A. 
   B. 

6. Would you please identify major problems related to assignments?
   A. 
   B. 

7. Would you please suggest ideas that can help to improve assignment related problems?
   A. 
   B. 

8. What do you suggest to solve the major management problems of the center?
   A. 
   B. 

9. Please provide suggestions on how to improve Distance program service to students
   A. 
   B. 

Thank you again for completing this questionnaire!
Sample structured interview for Regional/study Center Coordinators

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE RESPONDENTS
1. Sex: __________ 
2. Age: __________ 
3. Educational level: ____________________
4. Field of study: ____________________
5. Name of the Distance Teaching Institution: __________
6. Work experience as coordinator of Distance education: ________ Years
7. Did you get any training related to distance education? ____________________
8. Responsibility in the regional/study center: ____________________

II. TEACHING LEARNING (MAIN ISSUE)
1. Will you please give me information regarding your staff:
   i. Preparedness to tutorial session
   ii. Availability on tutorial sessions
   iii. Correcting, Writing comments and submission of TMS on time
2. How and when is the course materials (Modules) distributed to distance learners?
3. How do you communicate with learners regarding tutorial sessions, exam schedules and registration time?
4. How do you evaluate students effort in respecting due date of the submission of assignments?
5. What do you say regarding the tutorial service?
   i. About the convenience of the location of the center
   ii. Tutors selection and recruitment
   iii. Training of tutors in distance education
   iv. Preparedness and availability of tutors for the tutorial session

III. MANAGEMENT
1. What kind of support do you get from the Ministry of Education /Regional Education Bureaus?
2. How do you evaluate the relationship you have with the Ministry of Education /Regional Education Bureaus?
3. Would you please identify major factors affecting:
   i. the tutorial service,
   ii. teacher marked assignments,
   iii. managerial functions
4. What Suggestions would you recommend as solution to the major problems you identified?

Thank you
## LIST OF VISTED CENTERS

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<tr>
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<th>Name of the Distance Education Providing Institution</th>
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<td></td>
<td>2 Maichew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Axum</td>
</tr>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Ethiopian Civil Service College</td>
<td>4 Mekelle</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>11 Alamata</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12 Axum</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>St. Mary's University College*</td>
<td>13 Mekelle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 Shire</td>
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*St. Mary's University College has two study centers: Mekelle and Shire*
## Appendix: E

### Enrollment of Distance Education Learners and Tutors

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<th>Name of the Institute</th>
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<th>Number of Tutors</th>
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*Source: From documents of the institutes (2005/06)*
## ENROLLMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION LEARNERS AND TUTORS

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<th>Number of Tutors</th>
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Source: From documents of the institutes (2005/06)
## Enrollment of Distance Education Learners and Tutors

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<th>Number of Tutors</th>
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<td>375</td>
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Source: From documents of the institutes (2005/06)

Total learners: 4757
Total tutors: 158
### 1998 E.C. Academic Calendar for Distance learners

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<th>S/N</th>
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<td>Application for Course Exemption</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>03 &amp; 04</td>
<td>02 &amp; 04(for Jijiga)</td>
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<td>Hidar 30 &amp; Tahissas 02 (for Jijiga)</td>
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<td>06 &amp; 07</td>
<td>05 &amp; 07(for Jijiga)</td>
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<td>27 &amp; 28</td>
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<td>Make-up/Supplementary Exam Period</td>
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<td>Remarking Examination Time</td>
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**First semester** = 114 days, including registration and exam time  
**Second semester** = 115 days, including registration and exam time
### Appendix C

**Alpha University College**

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</table>

**Telephone Numbers**

- 251-11-466032 (Office)
- 251-11-466031 (Office)
- 251-11-466030 (Office)

**Contact Information**

- Email: alpha@alphacol.edu