

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

TEACHER EDUCATION THROUGH DISTANCE PROGRAM: THE
PRACTICE OF TWO SELECTED PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS

BY
FISSEHA ESKEZIAW



JUNE, 2006
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GRADUATE STUDIES OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION SCHOOL OF GRADUTE STUDIES

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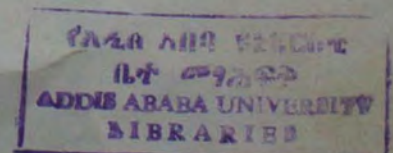
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BESO	Basic Education Strategic Objectives
DE	Distance Education
EMA	Educational Media Agency
ICCE	International Council of Correspondence Education
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Government Organization
PHEIs	Private Higher Education Institutions
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
TTC	Teacher Training College
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
USAID	United States of America International Development

ABSTRACT

The intent of this study was to find out the practice of PHIs in delivering distance education to qualify teachers to degree level. The study was conducted with reference to St. Mary's University College and Admas College. The researcher made Awassa the site of the study where both of the institutions have their centers.

A case study method was used whereby multiple instruments were employed in order to achieve the intended objectives. Therefore interview, observation and document analysis were data gathering instruments.

In this study; learners, tutors, center coordinators and some documents are used as sources of the data. Then the collected data have been analyzed and the major findings were listed. Some of them are: The program enabled adults to have access to education who other wise couldn't join higher institution for various reasons.

Lack of training, absence of various learning media, absence of close follow up to meet learners' interest were found to be some of the major hindering factors in the successful provision of the programs in each institutions.

The study also revealed that there was no effort made between the two centers to come together and share experiences so that quality education could be provided.

Finally, summary and conclusions are drawn and some recommendations are made.

CHAPTER ONE

1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

1.1 Background of the Study

Education is the most important factor that enhances human development as it empowers man to transmit his experiences, new findings and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development through generation. Education also enables individuals and the society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, ability, skills and attitudes.

Since the introduction of formal education then, man has invested a lot in education so that individual's and society's problem solving capacity, ability and culture can be strengthened. In this case, it helps man to improve, change, as well as develop and conserve his environment for the purpose of an all-rounded development by diffusing science and technology in the society. Hence the education and training policy of Ethiopia (1994:4) emphasizes the development of problem-solving capacity and culture in the content of education. The other objective of education in Ethiopia being to satisfy the country's need for skilled manpower by providing training in various skills and at different levels. One of the areas which has been give due attention and action priority is focus on teacher training, and overall professional development of teachers and other personnel (1994: 33) This is so with the assumption that improving the quality of training and professional competence of teachers is the key to improve education.

One of the strategies that has been followed so that the necessary education out come is achieved, according to the document (1994: 14) is providing a special education system and distance learning in collaboration and coordinated with the rest of the education systems.

Distance education basically was introduced ; Sharma (2005), Gachuhi and Matiru (1989), Holburge (1981) with the concern of reaching students who were isolated from regular institutional teaching and to try to compensate for some of the disadvantages of isolation; in this case the need for introducing distance education could be

- to have courses for students to learn in scattered communities covering sparsely populated, large geographical areas

- the training of teachers who are already working and can not be taken away for more than a few weeks,
- The provision of educational opportunities for adults who have been deprived of education.
- The acceleration of manpower development: such as the case of developing countries where educated manpower is demanded.
- To bring into the classroom expert knowledge, rare experiences and stimulating personalities.
- To update knowledge and skills
- To initiate national campaigns which deal with health and political issues
- To have a cost effective program for large number of students, etc.

Such characteristics make distance study facilities attractive to people who can not/do not want regularly to attend classes and to people who have limited time to spend on study, such as most adults who have jobs, families and various social commitments. Holmberg (1981) says these people can rarely allow themselves or financially afford to go in for full time study or even half time study.

Similarly Kuhanga (1981), Srisa-An (1981) Forman and Richardson (1977) in Wossenu and Befekadu (2002:19) state that distance education is provided as an alternative approach as: -

- Developing countries need trained manpower to carry out their social and economic activities and the opportunities for education in the traditional system are limited. Thus, in complementary approach to the traditional system of training manpower should be the focus of attention in order to alleviate the problem
- There is a high need for the vast majority of working people to have access to education on an extensive basis and at the same time to have a career opportunity available throughout life. Thus distance education can reach a wider student audience and meet the needs of students who are unable to attend on campus classes.
- There is a market increase in cost- effectiveness, particularly in capital expenditure. A distance learning system is potentially more cost effective than a conventional system

while teaching similar subject matter to a massive and ever increasing numbers of people who are widely dispersed and of low density.

Therefore the government of Ethiopia seems to be much concerned in giving high priority on education with an assumption that literate labor forces needed in any development process. As a result it has started to launch distance education and to encourage the provision saying.

Special education, distance and correspondence education shall be encouraged and made accessible to those who need it and at the level the resources of the country will permit. (MOE, 1994: 18)

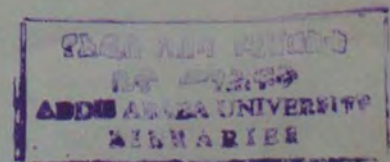
In the Education sector development program I (1999-2002) also the government promised to introduce teacher training through distance education as it is cost – effective when it stated;

Teacher training through distance education will be introduced as a cost-effective strategy, and to give teachers in remote schools, especially women who have difficulty leaving their families, opportunities for professional growth. (1999: 8-9)

By making the disadvantaged it's target, the government planned in its action plan I (MOE, 1999: 9) to expand the use of the distance education to more what it said 'formalized' courses for basic education, functional literacy, continuing education and teacher in-service training. In general in Ethiopia like other developing countries, distance education is believed to reach a wider students audience, meet the need of students who are unable to attend on campus classes. Therefore, not only, the government but also some private higher institutions have already started to provide education on distance programs to improve quality of teachers and also reach wider population through out the country.

As the program most of the time is done at a distance, it needs more effort and staff development from the stalk holder. Thus unlike the conventional one, the provision of education through distance program could meet its objectives when there are trained staff (implementers) who could play much roles in creating strong coordination among students, faculties, and facilitators. The presence of appropriate learning resources again play great roles in providing the necessary assistance to the learners.

However there seems to exist lack of effort from the stalk holders to implement this noble program. Due to this there are complaints from the learners that they couldn't get the necessary assistance from the concerned bodies. Thus, the area needs to be studied.



1.2 Statement of the Problem

As it's already stated, the major objective of any educational system is to cultivate the individual's capacity for problem solving and adaptability to the environment by developing the necessary knowledge, ability, skill and attitude. This is so with an assumption that the person will be able to participate in an all rounded way in the community and contribute to the overall development of the society she/he lives in.

One of the objectives of education in Ethiopia is to satisfy the country's need for skilled manpower by providing training in various skills and at different levels. Hence the area, according to the strategy set, (MOE, 1994: 31) has been given special attention and action priority is focus on teacher training and overall professional development of teachers and other personnel.

The strategy that is followed so that the necessary education outcome is achieved, in addition to conventional one is providing special education system and distance learning in collaboration and coordinated with the rest of the educational system. In doing so, according to the document on the strategy, distance education is also used as an alternative:

Distance education basically began with a concern to reach individuals who could not attend regular classes. Hence it has been used to reach students who were isolated from regular institutional teaching and to try to compensate for some of the disadvantages of isolation.

In ESDP II (MOE, 2002: 32) it's shown that distance education to primary and secondary education covers teachers training programs of the TTIs and TTCs. It also covers a wider audience including teachers and those that are unable to attend both formal schooling and training. Hence distance education is used as a tool for teacher training in primary and secondary education, especially to reach the under qualified school teachers.

Regarding the coverage widening it and improving the quality of distance education program is really very important.

So that distance education be effective, the program begin with careful planning and focused understanding of course requirements and student needs. Appropriate technology can only be selected once these elements are understood in detail.

Successful distance education programs mainly rely on the availability of trained personnel, consistent and integrated efforts of students, faculty, facilitators, support staff, and administrators.

But due to some circumstance, it is learnt that the program fails to satisfy the needs and interests of some students. As a result some students complain that they are not better served. These might come from not employing qualified personnel, inappropriate usages of instructional technologies and/or lack of coordination among participants, or lack of concern given to the program. Thus, the intent of the this study is to find out the practices of PHEIs in delivering education to qualify teachers though distance program, in this case, it tries to

- To investigate the effectiveness of the delivery system
- To identify problems encountered in delivering the program
- To point out efforts made to provide better service
- To show the reaction of the beneficiaries to the service

In order to conduct the study, the research has set the following basic research questions:

1. To what extent is distance education effectively carried out by St. Mary's University College and Admas College?
2. How well variety of learners are served by the system?
3. What attempts are made to improve the delivery system?
4. In what state is the utilization of instructional media and communication in both PHEIs?
5. What are the major problems that are associated with St. Mary's University College and Admas College in providing education at distance?
6. What are the reaction of the beneficiaries to the delivery of the program?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Distance education is now becoming a global issue: what has come to being by the need for more literate/ trained/ manpower, especially in the developing countries like ours. This study then is believed to have the following importance:

1. It creates an awareness to stalk holders and those who like to upgrade themselves in the area of education through distance education program.

2. It may help concerned bodies (St. Mary's University College and Admas College) in valuing and improving the quality of the program and technical support they provide to the attendants.
3. It may also initiate other researchers to conduct further and detailed study in the area.
4. It may give chance for the colleges to share experiences and learn something from each other.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to find out the practice of delivering the program. Hence availability of varied learning resources, availability of qualified manpower to deliver the program, adequacy of assistance provided to the learners are given due concern. The study also made learners of degree program in the field of teaching in focus.

This study also confines itself to see one study center from each selected higher institutions. Accordingly the study is conducted with reference to one distance education center in SNNP. Therefore Awassa is selected as a better site to find out the case of the two institutions..

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted with reference to study centers of two private higher institutes. It was also limited to deal with learners in the fields of teaching for the degree program only. Therefore the findings couldn't be generalized to other centers or other fields and levels of study.

Absence of adequate and exhaustive research works on the topic in the Ethiopian context restricted the researcher to rely on using the available few materials repeatedly as sources of the study.

Shortage of finance was also the other problem that the researcher encountered. Thus it was found difficult to include more centers and informants or fields so that the finding could be more comprehensive.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This paper will have five parts. The first part is the introduction. Under it it's tried to see the background of the study, statements of the problem, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, organization of the study and operational definitions of terms.

The second part is the review of related literature. It provides detailed information related to distance education. Some of the areas are the concepts of distance education, the need for introducing distance education, its historical development in Ethiopia, roles of each 'key players' in the implementation of the program.

The third part comes with the theoretical frame-work, of the research methodology, such like research design, data collection instruments, data management and analysis. These issues will be discussed in detail there.

The fourth part deals with data analysis and presentation. . Collected data through observation, interview and document analysis will be discussed in this part. The fifth and the last part presents summary, conclusion of the study and recommendations based on the findings.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

- *Non - formal education* - is any organized educational activity outside the established formal system whether operation separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives (internet)
- *Distance learning* - is learning at a distances from one's teacher usually with the help of prerecorded, packed learning materials where the learners are separated from their teachers in time and space, but are still being guided by them. Rowtree (2000: 29).
- *Delivery system:* is an approach which distance education departments follow to provide their programs
- *Center coordinator:* refers to persons the institutions assigned at each study centers so that they could coordinate and facilitate the delivery of the program
- *Study center:* refers to offices the institutions established to carryout their programs.
- *Tutors:-* they are persons who are employed to assist distance learners by giving face-to-face tutorial classes; and also evaluate learners' assignments.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Distance Education: The Concept

With in a context of rapid technological change in the developed countries and the need for more literate manpower in developing countries, education system is challenged with providing increased educational opportunities without increased budgets. Hence many educational institutions are responding to the challenge by introducing distance education programs.

At its most basic level, distance education takes place when a teacher and student (s) are at physical distance and technology (i.e. voice, video, print etc), which serves to bridge the instructional gap.

2.1.1 Definition

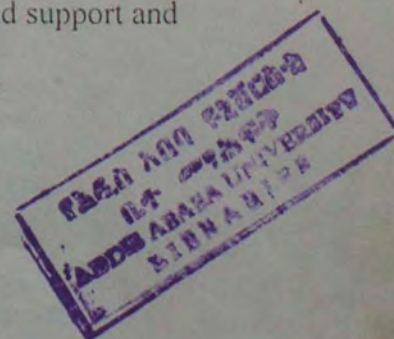
The term distance education basically refers to the form of education where students are not in direct physical contact with their teacher. Known with different names like telemetric teaching, distance study, correspondence education, home study, off campus study, extra mural system, the term refers to the same concept all over the world that involves the provision of education by mode other than the conventional face-to-face method whose goals are similar to and just as noble and practical, as those on-campus, full-time, face-to-face education. (Teshome 2003:4)

According to Gachuhi and Matiru (1989:11) the name distance education came to be popular after 1982 when a UNESCO affiliated organization called International Council for Correspondence Education (ICCE) changed its name to International Council for Distance Education (ICDE)

Perraton (1986) defines distance education to be an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space or time from the learner.

For Perraton, according to Teshome (2003), distance education

1. depends on two-way communication
2. needs a fixed instructional base to provide administrative and support and
3. Provides a systematized learning curriculum to the students.



Still Manjulika (1999) defines distance education to be the system of education in which education is imparted to students from a distance: For Manjulika, distance education contains the following two-what she calls 'basic elements'.

- a) The physical separation of teacher and learner
- b) The changed role of the teacher who may meet the students only for selected tasks.

Guchuhi and Matiru (1989:12) also define distance education to be an education which is offered to students who are at a distance, physically separated in space and time from their teachers. For these scholars the very important things then, are physical separation and time where students could learn themselves when they prefer. Thus, different scholars define the term distance education in varies ways; these varying definitions may come from the fact that

1. methods or style of delivering the lessons
2. place and ways of learning
3. the distance between the institutions and the learner (EMA, 2002).

Thus to alleviate such problems Keegan (1999:44) forwards the following six basic defining elements;

- The separation of teacher and learner which distinguishes it from face-to-face lecturing.
- The influence of an educational organization which distinguishes it from private study.
- The use of technical media, usually print, to unite teacher and learner and carry the educational content:
- The possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes and
- The participation in an industrialized form of education which if accepted, contains the genus of radical separation of distance education from other forms with in the educational spectrum. In this study, what Keegan (1999) forwards are found to be compressive and accepted to be used throughout the study.

2.2 Distance Education: It's Historical Development in Ethiopia

At the onset of the 19th century, when the then, Ethiopian government introduced formal schooling, it was challenged by insufficient number of teachers. So that it could overcome the

problem, the government planned to employ trained and untrained teachers for primary and secondary education. Though the plan worked, it didn't sustain for a long time, especially, when academic lessons provided by unqualified teachers were not encouraging. Hence some measures were taken, among which introduction of distance education was the one.

2.2.1 Distance Education during Imperial Period.

The government who was challenged by such demand like shortage of trained teachers, tried to introduce different ways. Hence teachers were required to attend vocational and academic lessons in the summers (during their vacations). still more teachers were demanded as more students were enrolled for schooling. As a result, government sponsored program called "Directed study for Teacher" distance education program was introduced in 1967 (Yalew, 2004; Ayalew, 2003, Getachew and others, 1991).

Government Initiatives

Directed study for Teachers and Addis Ababa University were the to institutions that were introduce to provide distance education by the then government.

The concern of directed study for teachers was to upgrade the quality and skills of unqualified teachers through distance learning while they were working. The program was then run jointly by Ethiopia and U.S (Ethiopian US cooperative Education program). That time education was provided in such a way by distributing self contained print materials (modules), exercises, key answers and study guides to the learners.

Unfortunately the program ended its service after two years, when the cooperation between Ethiopia and US terminated, in 1972 (Getachew and Others, 1991).

After the termination of the program launched by Directed study for teachers, AAU and MOE signed an agreement to start providing distance education to teachers. As a result correspondence education unit was established under extension division, AAU in 1970. Learning that distance education was a new mode of delivering education, MOE and AAU signed an agreement to work jointly with ELUY (distance institute in Netherlands). The objective of the agreement was to have trained manpower in the field of distance education. What a pity, the agreement again failed before it came to action after Ethiopia complained about the agreement.

But later some four Ethiopians were sent to Netherlands to get training on distance education. When they came back home after training, some attempts were made with regard to preparing text materials, especially for such subjects like Amharic, English, Maths and Geography. (Getachew and others 1991)

Private Institutions

Where there were no sufficient number of schools that can provide secondary education even in Addis Ababa, some foreign distance education institutions could deliver education on correspondence basis. One of these institutions was British Tutorial college. It started giving the service in Ethiopia in 1964.

2.2.2 Distance Education in the era of Ethiopian Revolution (1974-1991)

This was the period when relatively more institutions and other organization took part in training and qualifying learners to different levels in various fields.

Private Institutions

International correspondence school opened its office in Addis Ababa and used to educate 12th grade completes. According to Getachew and others (1991) the school played its part by educating 2,400 students (though which fields were not known) between the years of 1972 and 1987.

The other institutions was Trans World Tutorial College (TWTC). Documents show that the college started functioning in Ethiopia in 1981. Though it was difficult to find evidences which areas and levels education was given, the college registered and trained 510 students till 1987. (Getachew and others: 1991)

The third one was Century University (CU). The institution started its service in Ethiopian in 1983. It gave education to adults at the tertiary level. Since its start (in Ethiopia) many Ethiopians obtained degrees from the institution.

In general the above mentioned foreign institutions played a significant role in enabling a considerable number of Ethiopians have access to education and be qualified to different certificates, diplomas or degrees.

Non government Organizations (NGOS)

Like other institutions, some NGOs, also contributed their part in training adults so that they could lead a better life. Among such organizations was Agri-service Ethiopia (Tesfaye: 2000). The organization was sponsored by African Institute for Social and Economic Development, whose head office was in Abidjan, Ivory coast. The organization was opened in 1977 to provide training to farmers in Ethiopia related to their activities. When it started service, the organization had the following five branches; (Tesfaye, 2000)

1. Preparing course materials.
2. Training branch-from material dispatch to face to face tutoring
3. Information-creating communication between Agri service Ethiopia and the community through newspapers, for example.
4. Socio-economic research; conducting research and preparing learning materials for the years that follow.
5. home economics, preparing course for women

Agri service Ethiopia began its service in Wolayta for 213 candidates. By 1986 once the program was found to be fruitful, more centers in other zones were opened. Hence by 1986 there were 5019 adult farmers taking part in the program (Getachew and Others 1991).

Ministry of Education

Since 1977, MOE tried a lot to strengthen distance education program than before. Accordingly the program was run by Ethiopians. In line with the then new curriculum, 26 courses were made ready (prepared)and the teaching, learning process began in 1979. Hence drop outs from conventional schools and other adults who were residing in rural and remote areas were given priority. As a result the beneficiaries of distance education program were teachers (30%) military staff (27%) health officers (12%) office workers (12%) rural development workers (7%) and others (12%). The program was intended to qualify students to secondary education. Therefore 6,020 learners benefited from the program between the years 1979-1989. As media, print was used dominantly while radio (audio) is used as supplementary. (Getachew and others: 1991)

2.2.3 Distance Education since the end of May 1991

The period is characterized by the time where a significant progress with regard to distance education is practically observed. Currently not only government owned institutions but also private higher institutions are taking part in delivering distance education: and they are showing success in running the program to the broad masses of Ethiopia, reaching even the remotest areas which are far away from modern communication networks.

During this period, in general the program aims at rising student enrollment at primary, secondary and tertiary level. We also find Addis Ababa University launching master's degree program in two fields: 'Curriculum and Instruction' and 'Educational Planning and Management'; the university enrolled 118 and qualified 82 students in the years 1999-2001 (Teshome: 2003).

Primary School Level

Ethiopia has a long experience in providing education with a weekly supplemental radio program. Now according to Teshome (2003) the Education Media Agency (EMA) in collaboration with the USAID/BESO project initiated interactive radio instruction (IRI) programs in 1999.

The IRI lesson, Teshome says, produce widespread benefits in primary school languages instruction, measurably improving student learning and simultaneously providing teachers with new skills and confidence in teaching the subject.

Secondary School Level

Actually this level was begun in 1987. The program basically aimed at increasing access to secondary education for out-of school adults, youth and women.

The government sponsored program which is administered by the EMA takes all the responsibilities of producing instructional materials, register students, create course examination and certify the courses and the total program (Tilson and Getachew 1998). Though the program dominantly depend on print materials, there are also tutorial sessions, approximately twice per-semester (Teshome: 2003) and audio (radio) programs once a week for each grade level.

Besides EMA, some private institutions (for example Alpha, and pan-African) are emerging to provide such a program to primary and secondary level learners, they dominantly depend on print media, and tutorial session.

Tertiary Level

Since 1998, Addis Ababa University, Alemaya University, Diassa Teachers college, and Bahir Dar University are giving distance education programs for some pedagogical course; for summer in service trainees. (Yalew: 2004)

Another government higher institution that provides distance education is the Ethiopian civil service college. Currently the college provides its program in more than five major areas for the civil service sector

Some private higher institutions are actively involved in distance education programs in various fields of study MOE (2005). Among them are St. Mary's university college, Alpha University College, Unity University college and Admas college, (UK- Open University Zenebe: 2004) are the few. They enroll and educate (qualify) adults to various qualifications ranging from certificate to first degree.

2.3 Management of Distance Education

Rumble (1992:15) defines management to be the process of getting activities done efficiently and effectively, making decisions on what to do and how to do it and checking that it is done.

Modern management, Rumble says refers to four functions: planning, organizing, leading and controlling. The existence of effective and efficient management plays a significant role in any education system. Specially in distance education, ways of management may be quite different from that of conventional one.

2.3.1 Planning Distance Education Program

So that the intended goal can be achieved, effective distance education begins with careful planning and focused understanding of course requirements and student needs, hence planning includes defining goals, establishing strategy and developing plans to coordinate activities.

Teaching and learning in distance education and with few exceptions based on two constituent elements: Holmberg (1990:4) a pre-produced course and non-contiguous communication between students and tutors.

The pre-produced courses

The pre produced courses used in distance education are or are meant to be, of a self-instructional type. They are usually in print and often supplemented by recorded audio presentations (radio and/or TV, video recordings, view data/video text). Reproduced courses may be self contained or may function as guides to the study of set or suggested texts, recordings etc. They are normally divided in to units, at the end of which students are invited to answer (and ask) questions, compute, translate, solve problems, write essays etc. and to submit this work for correction and comment. Tasks for submission to the supporting organization are usually referred to as assignments.

Non Contiguous Communications

Non-contiguous communication by which of course, is means two way traffic whether in writing, on the telephone, on audio tape, by computer, or in any other way, varies in distance education systems. In some it is the basic element, in others it is partly or even largely replaced by self checking exercises and/or face-to-face sessions. Between these extremes there are various intermediary positions, acknowledging face-to-face interaction as a subsidiary procedure.

In planning distance education, basic research is essential to determine whether there are potential learners as opposed to statistics and to explore their nature, characteristics and circumstances. Such investigation can make a significant difference to success, if taken in to account in planning knowledge about the distribution of potential students provides a good example. In Guyana (Perraton, 2004) an in service training program for teachers used information from school mapping to design a delivery system that uses different arrangement for face-to-face tutorials in order to accommodate differences in terrain and population distribution.

2.3.2 Organization and Administration of Distance Education

Organizing involves determining the tasks to be done, deciding who does what, how the tasks are to be grouped, who reports to whom, and where decisions are made Rumble (1992:15). Successful distance education programmer, therefore requires effective organization and administration. The organizational plans should be set following the administrative structure of the institute so that it's possible to carry out the day-to-day activities. Further more, effective communication throughout the designed process is the major determinate to achieve successful

distance education. Moreover, the success or failure of distance education program largely depends on the personnel available, specially the academic staff.

Staff development

So that distance education can meet its goal, personnel who are specialists in the area are required. Moreover, system of management that could enable the work, workers, finance and other resources bring together and come with the result, an effective management is demanded. Hence one of the most important things to be considered is to have personnel (staff) that is well trained and be efficient. Still strengthening their moral and creating conducive working atmosphere helps to meet the intended goal. Panda (2004:2) stresses here that the department of the institution need to have a human resource policy in place, showing the type and number of human resources required at different levels, their recruitment, placement, induction and continuing professional development, their work load, appraise, benefits and incentives, tenure and promotion, transfer and termination and retirement, terms and conditions, and code of professional ethics.

Researches (EMA 2002) show that activities that are done with out the support of training may give rise to wastage of limited resources, and the outcome would also be inefficient. With regard to distance education course materials and media that are employed, they should be of learner centered and are prepared and get ready to meet the interest and easily accessible.

Accordingly course writers, editors, tutors, media program and distance education unit mangers should get continuous trainings, seminars, experience sharing among themselves and others, conduct studies in the area, etc (EMA 2002)

Training by itself may not be enough for the success of the program. It should also be noted that trained manpower should be managed wisely and effectively. Hence Tesfaye and Others in EMA (2002:10) suggest that policy makers of distance education program should believe and act accordingly that distance education should always consider the need for management that could satisfy the needs and interests of the learners.

In addition, management of distance education and policy makers are supposed to seek ways/means that could minimize shortage of staff, for example, employing new professionals in the place of those who may leave their jobs (World Bank report) in EMA: 2002.

Student Recording Keeping

In distance education, that needs efficient record keeping are course material dispatch, assignments from students, Marks (grades) of students, attendants of tutorial classes, etc. Efficient record keeping also helps to identify those who complete their study, strengths and weaknesses of the learners, to analyze examination results, to understand learners pace and so on.

Though record keeping has the above and other advantages, in some cases there is failure to do so; especially in using computers. Studies conducted in some African countries, for example Lesotho, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi show that it is difficult to find the necessary information readily as recording are done manually, world Bank report (in EMA 2002).

2.3.3 Implementing Distance Education program

Implementation refers to the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consist of in practice. Fullanin in (Marrew: 2000) then identifies some five dimensions of implementation, called

- change in materials
- structure/organizational structure
- role behavior or knowledge and understanding
- value internalization

For Vertecchi in Ejeta (2005) implementation in distance education is regarded as that many activities are required to ensure regular communication with learners since they get registered to the program. Hence material dispatch, correcting assignments, processing data, preparation, correcting and compensatory communication (to be sent) to the learners In implementing distance education program, the occupants of different parties are of then required to alter their usual ways of thinking about themselves and one another, and their characteristics of behaving towards one another and with in the institution.

The success of implementing distance education program can also be seen from the aspects of the roles-relationship; institutions, learners, tutors, coordinators, availabilities of resources, and the communication aspects and practices the parties can have among themselves.

With regard to this, Aspinall and others in Ejeta (2005) found the following important factors; that are difficult to run the program.

- unclear expectation about performance: The requirements of role are not made clear and the individual therefore, has no way of telling the sorts of criteria on which his/her performance is likely to be judged.
- conflicting demands by different members of role set for example, the head teacher expects a team leader to take a whole school view in his/her approach to evaluation, while team members expect him/her to defend the team's interests in the competition for resources conflicting elements within the role: for example, to act as both appraiser and advisor/supervisor or colleagues.
- role overloaded; too many roles for example, that head of the program, head of the center and tutor with a high teaching load. For the success of the program, therefore each and every section of the program and individuals are supposed to know their tasks and act/do accordingly.

2.3.4 Evaluating Distance Education Program

Evaluation is key to improve the quality of one's learners learning and it has a special role to play. Evaluation is roughly understood to be an attempt to understand what is going on, to judge its worth and perhaps make decisions about it,

Thorpe in Rowtree (2000: 204) defines evaluation to be

Evaluation is the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a program of education and training, as part of a recognized process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have

Thus in distance education, evaluation is seen in two directions; evaluating the delivery of the program and also evaluating learners for qualification, certification, etc. when we talk about the delivery, we may see instructional materials, course material dispatch, students and the

supporting service, network of support services and also interaction between students and the supporting service.

2.3.4.1 Course Material Dispatch

It should always be noted that students have to be distributed with the necessary course materials on time. In facilitating the dispatch for example, effective management and dedicated manpower is required.

World Bank in EMA (2002) found out that management that runs course material preparation and dispatch was not given due attention. As a result there is delay and also unfair distribution of materials to the learners.

In distributing learning materials, there might be different alternatives. Holburge (1981) then forwards that there are three alternatives with their advantages and disadvantages, that may be followed to distribute course materials.

The first one is to distribute all the necessary course materials at the outset. Such distribution may not be fair as; especially slow learners are discouraged and frustrated seeing piles of materials on their table. The other alternative is to send the materials on dates decided on in advance. Still this also has a problem as it is done with out paying attention to individual students needs.

The third alternative is to distribute the materials with a small number of units of each course she/he is enrolled for and then to send her/him a new unit with each assignment that is returned with corrections and comments. This alternative has an advantage in that it encourages even slow learner.

In general with regard to distribution of materials, distance education institutions may follow any approach that suits the nature of their learners and the availability of conducive infrastructure.

2.3.4.2 Administration of two-way Communication

Distance learners have many possible ways of interaction with their support services that have great importance in facilitating their studies.

One of the possible ways where learner has contact with their support service (or institution) is through assignments they send to the center for feedback.

Tutors are then expected to check the assignments and send it back with the necessary constructive feedback as fast as possible. The practice of providing feedback on students' assignments and send them back sooner has pedagogical advantage, as it encourages learners for further study. However, the report of world bank (in EMA 2002) shows that due to some circumstances most distance institutions took some three months for getting the assignments checked and brought back to the learners.

To have an effective way of providing feedback and avoiding delay, there need to have well trained tutors, effective communication infrastructure, better management and an efficient record keeping are needed.

The other possible way of communications is face-to-face interaction: Learners usually have the chance to meet their tutors in a limited time. This face to face interaction undoubtedly strengthens their relations with the institutions; more over it has a pedagogical advantage. This time, most often learners discuss their problems they face while they were reading alone, to do practical laboratory works, problems related to managing the system and finally seek demonstration.

Tesfaye and others in EMA (2002) argue that face to face tutorial program also helps to complete the given course in time and to provide support specially for slow learners.

To summarize, Holburge (1981: 83) believes that two way communications generally have the following purposes:

- to support student's motivation and interest by contact with an encouraging tutor and councilor;
- to support and facilitate student learning by having students apply the knowledge and skills acquired as well as by tutors' comments, explanations and suggestions;
- assessing students' progress in order to provide them with an instrument by means of which they can judge their educational situation and needs and by means of which marks can be awarded.

2.3.4.3 Network of Support Services

In distance teaching institution the organization of activities changes of team work and specialization, and various tasks are lined up in a chain. This necessitates interdependence between teaching, supporting and service divisions.

Although teacher's major function remains teaching, its definition and organization changes largely in distance education. The teacher loses 'control' (Panda 2004) over many things, and the equivalent of classroom teaching takes the shape of course planning, design and development (writing and editing), preparation of assignments and assessment mechanisms, scripting for audio and video program, coordination of design and development education system based research processes, tutoring and counseling of students (a task which part-time conventional teachers may carry out at local study centre), course maintenance and training of people involved in the process of development and delivery (such as course writers and counselors) apart from discipline based and distance education system based research.

2.4 Role of 'key players' in Distance Education Program

Wedemey in Keegan (1993) states that in any teaching learning situation, it is generally agreed that there are four essential elements; a learner, a teacher, communication system and something to be taught (learnt). So that these all come together and the necessary out come is obtained, the roles of the following what are called 'key players' is essential.

2.4.1 Role of Distance Education Program Units

The organizational pattern and operating practices of distance education, according to Verdium in Ejeta (2005) are based on the educational philosophy of that instruction as well as some economic and political restrictions. Rumble (1992) then forwards three potential modes used for organizing distance education: These are: institution centered, students centered and society centered.

The institution centered model is believed to handle large number of learners and is also highly controlled. Such a model has an advantage in that large numbers of students can be served. It is also believed to have an economic advantage to run the program with limited economic resources.

Contrary to this Rumbie criticizes such a model as that gives opportunity to the non-existence of contact between students and tutors, and/or students and students. For Aspinan and others in Ejeta, (2005) while much management activity is carried out through formal structure of organization, it also involves the complex network of informal relationships through which much of the real work of the institution actually gets done.



Similarly Verdant in Ejeta (2005) says distance education unit has to have a clearly defined faculty, counselors, and tutors. Here one may learn that implementation of distance education is based on team approach for sharing roles to assess learner's needs, designing appropriate learning packages, provide the necessary guidance or help, and also check their performance.

2.4.2 Role of Student Support Service

Learners usually work with 'packages' of materials. But the package is rarely enough. Most distance learners need support from people who can help them with their learning and respond them as individuals. In most cases learners without support are often liable to delay their completion of the program or to dropout altogether. Regarding this Rowtree (2000: 72) states that what ever ones connection with the learners whether as producer, deliverer or sponsor, he/she is likely to have an interest in how his/her learners might need supporting learners. With out support, Rowtree adds, they may simply have no one to stop when they run into problems.

Learners may need help of various kinds. They may need help before they begin learning and /or during and after learning programs.

Regarding personal help Rowtree (2000) states people may mean different things when they talk about support. Some would point out that learners will get support from the package, if it is properly structured. Some would say that a well equipped learning centre with access to computers or other kit, and may be also some peace and quiet is also supportive. Some would mention news letters, learning centre notice boards, or other means of keeping learners up to date with what is going on in the system. They are all undoubtedly supportive in a general sense. Learners won't get far if the materials are poor and they can't get access to vital equipment. And they may work more enthusiastically if we help them to feel part of a learning community, part of a training culture with in a company or, in the case of distance learners.

Most learners also need individual support. They need feedback that is related to their specific and unique concerns. To a limited extent, this can be provided mechanically. They may also need personal feedback, a response from someone who knows more about them. This could be any one with whom they can have a dialogue face to face, on the telephone or by correspondence. Most distance learning systems of any worth will enable learners to get personal help and support from

a variety of people, possible helpers being an advisor/councilor, tutor, line manager, librarians, learning centre receptionists, other learners, friends, colleagues and families etc. (Rowtree 2000)

Ways of Providing Support

There are various ways of providing support to the learners. These ways usually depend on the person's role with in the particular learning system: among such supports is tutoring.

Distance learning usually depends on the learners taking responsibility for teaching themselves with the help from a self instructional package. Tutoring is certainly the role for someone expert in the subject that learners are learning about. The person (tutor) needs to be knowledgeable about the learner. They need to know how to help learners, make their own sense of the subject and about the kinds of difficulty they may have and the kinds of approach they might find helpful from tutors.

Tutors may also need to help learners challenge the package, learning from the packages can easily take the form that Richard Boot & Vivien Hodgson in Rowtree (2000) call "dissemination". That is the learner may be encouraged to soak up what is presented on page or screen without questioning whether it truly accords with his/her experience of the world. Tutors may need to help learners critique the package in terms of their own values and experiences. Regarding this Alan Tait in Rowtree argue that such an approach can give learners more control over their learning and is an essential (rather than an optional element in distance education). Hence tutors are warned for example in Inland Revenue, against re-teaching all the contents of the package. Rowtree (2000: 79). They were encouraged to check whether learners have had any difficulties with the ideas in the package and to give remedial help. If necessary the main function of the scarce and expensive time face-to-face with learners to help them build on what they have already learned and achieve objectives that are not so easily attained on one's own.

Tutoring may take different forms: Face-to-face tutoring is usually done in groups. The tutor may prefer to act as a "facilitator". She/he will usually be helping groups to collaborate in a learning task and benefit from one another's insights and experience. Learners will sometimes urge for to lecture them about his/her own insights and experience. But some systems allow for occasional one-to-one sessions with a tutor; for example where the tutor is helping the learner develop work place competence.

Much important tutoring is done at a distance. (Rowtree 2000) It is usually done via telephone or correspondence. In addition, some tutors send personally recorded radio-tapes to their learners and some exchange messages via computer network.

In some distance learning systems, the tutor's most crucial and demanding task is to read and assess the regular assignments that learners send them and write constructive feedback that will help the learner overcome any weaknesses and build on his/her strengths. Such "correspondence teaching has been a major factor in the success of the open university.

Advising/counseling/

Distance learners often need help and advice on matters that are to do with the subject matter they are learning about. They may need help in getting started, organizing their time, coping with self doubt, and deciding on the next step after completing their learning programs; etc. Distance learners may be in particular need of help because they are usually in no position to pick up clues from other learners or from frequent face-to-face contact with their teachers. "Too easily they can become out of sight out of mind" (Fogge in Rowtree) unless proper support is designed into the system.

Learning center Staff

In learning centers, learners might meet people besides those (mentioned above,) who may give them support. For many distance learners, a center administrator or receptionist, or a technician or librarian, may be a key supporter. The centre receptionist, for example may be a fund of advice and information. The technician may be able not simply to help computer based learners unlatch their programs but also to help them be out of their fear of information technology: Libraries have always been resources for distance learning. Supporting this Dixon in Rowtree (2000) states in some institutions, librarians provide first level tutorial support in the form of counseling, encouragement, motivation and study skills leaving second level support in the form of advice on subject content and assessment to tutorial staff. Thus the contribution of such people and program is paramount in enabling the learner bring personal developments, for example.

2.4.3 Role of Learners (Participants)

Distance education is mainly based on personal work by individual students more or less independently of the direct guidance of tutors. Holmberg (1981: 26). The very important issue to know here is that learners join distance education program so that they can gain (learn) something from it. Hence Amudnasen in Keegan (1993) states the purpose of learners to join distance education program is that they learn something that fits the type of knowledge found in the field and prepare themselves for various forms of professional certification. And doing so the learner is the most important figure either for accepting or rejecting what is taught.

It can also be viewed as a learner to be the decisive subject for the success or failure of the program.

Some factors definitely affect learners either to continue or discontinue the program. Some of which are difficulty of the course they study, delay of feedback, what Lewis in Ejeta (2005) calls time lags which is built in to a postal system which may mean several weeks between discovering problem and getting an adjustment returned with its written help and encouragement. Amudndsen in Keegan (1993) emphasis that the learner and his/her need to structure and control the learning situation. This has received much emphasis in distance education. but here there has to be noted that there are individual differences among learners and support must always be there as learner's abilities are important and provision has to be made for both the slower and more rapid learners, and for those with specialized abilities (EMA: 1999).

2.4.4 Role of Media of Instruction

Instructional Materials

One of the important features of distance education is that it depends mostly on use of media. The teaching is pre-recorded and delivered through a medium for example, through print, through audio-visual devices or through a variety of computer based systems. In most cases most media can do most things reasonably well, though each does some things better than others do. And each media does some things better than other media do. So each media has its own strengths and Weakness. The presenter must know the target audience and select an appropriate technology for the presentation. Below are some of the technologies distance learning may utilize (Maujibul, 2004; Rowtree, 2000).

Print

Print is the foundation of distance education and the base from which all other delivery systems have evolved. Print media may take different forms; work books, study guides, text books, reference manuals, case studies, maps, wall charts and others. Print makes possible the mass production of books and the opportunity for people to learn on their own, from teachers that are too far away. It gives an opportunity for most people to learn their own. They can do so anywhere at home, in the work place, on the bus and they need no special equipment. Print is also cheap to buy (compared to other media) and learners can personalize it by writing their own on the pages.

Even from the providers point of view print is relatively easy to teach with, as it doesn't demand great media expertise and it's cheap to produce. The other important thing with print is that the teacher or the learner has a considerable control over what might appear in print. As a result, the teacher or the learner for example, may rapidly move through redundant sections, while focusing on areas demanding additional attention. Still print has an advantage of being easily edited and revised.

Practical Work

Learners can gain useful knowledge and skills by doing things in the "real world" as well as by working on the given materials. Practical work is essential for many subjects, especially when our objectives react to work related competence as well as knowledge. Practical work may involve equipment, for example collecting and analyzing soil samples. If the practical work involves equipment, and learners are studying on-site, then facilities can perhaps be scheduled at suitable times otherwise the required objectives might not be met.

Audio Teaching

When we talk about audio we refer to recorded sound, usually that of the human voice. And other sounds (for example those of engines, musical instruments, animals) they are all relevant to some learning. Sound can be a very powerful medium in distance learning. It may take the forms of radio, and also audio cassette. The audio cassette is much more useful in that learners don't have to be sitting by their radio at fixed times. They can listen whenever they like and as often as they need.

Rowtree (2000: 108) found out that the benefit of audio is that it makes the teaching more human and personal.

Video Teaching

Here we are talking about moving pictures accompanied with sound. Television screen for examples is believed to be the most usual means of presenting moving pictures in education and training. Video teaching may take forms of television programs, video segments and interactive video. As they bring pictures and audio together, their advantage is paramount. For instance, motion and visuals can be combined in a single format so that complex or abstract concepts can be illustrated through visual simulation. Still it has an importance in that time and space can be collapsed so that events can be captured and relayed as they happen. If wisely used, video is very effective for introducing, summarizing and reviewing concepts.

Computers

Computers can contribute to distance learning in a variety of ways: they can control access to other media, like interactive video or CD-ROM and other data bases (Rowtree 2000: 113).

- Computers are a storage medium that can hold vast quantities of information in text, pictures and sound.
- Computers can also make it possible for people to talk to one another. They can help learners keep in touch with one another and with their tutors. This is done through what is called computer mediated communication or computer conferencing.

In general, most media can give learners some sort of help towards the achievement of most learning objectives. But with certain objectives, some media may be more helpful than others. (Rowtree 2000) For instance print alone might be sufficient for someone learning to read and write a foreign language. But what if they wanted to converse in the language, then the addition of sound, for example, an audio or video tape would be necessary.

Similarly, certain other objectives may demand that learners study moving pictures, handle real objects etc. Thus the different media have unique characteristic that give them advantages and disadvantages for different kinds of learning;

In order to select the appropriate media, some facts should be taught of, for example what one knows about his/her learners may influence his/her media choice in a number of ways Mujibul (2004). To begin with, "which media can they get access to?" if students are learning at home (or even at work), they will know which media are available to them. It is also legitimate to ask oneself what she/he knows about her/his learners' media skills and preference. Most people can read and few have trouble watching TV. But what is important here is to know if they have the skills for using print and TV as learning tools.

Combining Media

Different media have different strengths. Rarely can one medium provide everything that a learner needs in a learning program of any duration. For instance, any pre-packaged medium needs to be backed up by human support and even computer controlled interactive videodisc may need the simple back up of a printed booklet. Otherwise learners may fail to have something to remind them of what they have studied.

The other thing to note is that a medium that suits some of the learners may not suit others. Some may prefer to learn by reading, some by listening, some by doing, and some by working together, and so on. If several media are combined then, there will be more chance that all will get at least some of their preferred medium. Regarding this Rowtree (2000: 103) shares his experience saying

I know an open university economics teacher who made a point of saying what he wanted to say in his printed workbook, then saying it again in sound on the radio, pictures or television. This is not to mean that all students need them all, but using all three helps ensure that every one gets her/his own best way.

Still learners find that changing from one medium to an other can be quite refreshing.

2.5 Teacher Education through Distance Education

In 1960s many countries of the 3rd world began to look for what Sharma calls 'unorthodox' solutions to the educational problems they had inherited (Sharma, 2005). In many African countries, for example it was clear that the expansion of schools, with in the limits imposed by finance and by the supply of teachers, could meet the demand for education, even with in a generation or more. Thus the experience of multimedia distance teaching, which was only just

being acquired in the rich countries, was seen as immediate relevant to the educational needs of the third world.

Distance teaching was seen not as a device to offer an alternative route to education for a small disadvantaged minority, but as a resource that should be used on a large scale because of the economies it seemed to offer in terms of teachers and money. The pressure on other educational resources made distance teaching look attractive. As a result, attempts have been made in the third world to use distance teaching for all level of education, from supporting literacy teaching to offering university degree courses. Sharma (2005: 10)

The educational background of primary school teachers is the major constraint on the quality of education they can offer. In many countries of the third world, the demand for primary education has outstripped the supply of trained school teachers (Sharma: 2005). As a result untrained or under trained and uneducated teachers have been pressed in to service. This by itself holds back the quality of what they do in the classroom. In this case distance learning has been seen as a way of providing in service education of primary school teachers on a large scale. What makes distance learning attractive is that teachers are not taken away from the classroom while they study. In their vacation courses are linked with 'correspondence' lessons, radio broadcasts, and some supervised classroom practice, and then it is possible to make qualitative improvements in the work of school teachers. Thus distance education in training teachers is aimed at the following; (Sharma: 2005)

- Not only raising primary school teachers own academic subject knowledge but also attempting to improve their classroom teaching. This has been the aim teacher-up grading projects in for example Middle East refugee camps (Sharma: 2005: 14).
- To provide a general education to teachers, making up for some of the schooling they lack. This is a simpler job because it does not involve the severe problems of teaching, at a distance, about classroom teaching. Therefore: distance education has been used to solve educational problems of both quantity and quality, and is seen as a valuable tool in an educational crisis: It has been used to extend education beyond the limits of the school and college system, and to improve the weakest bits of that system.

Accordingly, Robinson (1998) in EMA (2002) in industrialized and third world countries thousands of teachers benefited from distance learning. Hence $\frac{3}{4}$ of Francophone Africa, $\frac{1}{2}$ of Anglophone Africa $\frac{2}{3}$ in Latin America are given to teachers.

In the years of 1975-1981 many countries qualified considerable number of teachers

In Tanzania, conventional colleges qualified only 8007 teacher while distance education program educated (qualified) 35,028 teachers.

- In Brazil 49,000 teachers in rural areas were trained
- In Pakistan, 31,670 primary level teachers were trained with in three years.
- In UK it was possible to train more than 4000 at once on the basis of master of education degrees. The same thing is being practiced in Ethiopia, since a few years ago. MOE in collaboration with varies education institutions (Universities and Colleges) provided distance education to more than 12,972 first cycle and 1,197 Second cycle primary school teachers at the end of June 2004 MOE (2004:7).

Distance Education in Ethiopia now has the following major objectives;

- Train and qualify adults in various field
- Certify primary school and secondary school.
- Qualify unqualified teachers

With regard to teaching, it seems to give due concern in

- Providing an improved general education to teachers both for primary and secondary level. DE is also one of the means of providing in-service training to teachers.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study was mainly concerned with finding out the practices of PHEIs in delivering distance education in qualifying teachers to degree level. The study was done with reference to two selected private higher institutions: St. Mary's University College and Admas College. Hence it tried to see their practices and to what extent they are meeting the needs of beneficiaries, in educating teachers to alleviate shortage of secondary school teachers.

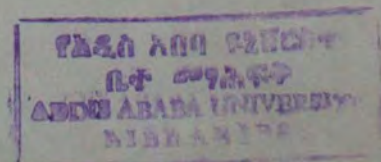
This study was conducted in two study centers of the institutions found at Awassa. Therefore it was preferred to employ case study method. This is so because the method in general helps to obtain first hand information from the subjects of the study. It also enables the researcher to have access to multiple method of collecting information.

Basically information gathered through qualitative method is direct, and first hand. Hence the design made use of multiple tools and data sources.

Sources of Data

The study was conducted with reference to St. Mary's University College and Admas College. These institutions are some of PHEIs that provide teacher education in degree program through distance education. The researcher preferred to make Awassa to be the site of the study for two main reasons: the first reason was that Awassa is a better site than others as there are more number of informants, than any other sites. The other reason was that both institutions have their branches in Awasa. Hence, the researcher could conduct the study with in the same setting and relatively similar socio-cultural context.

In orders to gather adequate information, the researcher selected those who have great roles in the program as the main sources of the data. Hence coordinators of each study center, some selected learners in the institutions who are reading for their degree in the field of teaching, and who have at least completed their one semester study. Thus students of semester II and above were selected to provide information. The other important sources of data, whose roles are paramount in the



program are tutors. Therefore tutors who have at least participated in two or above tutorial programs were selected as informants. This is so because their experience by itself has much importance to gather the necessary information required by the researcher.

3.2 Methodology

In this study, the researcher has mainly employed multiple methods to study the provision of distance education programs in two private higher education institutions. Since a case study is designed to undertake this qualitative study, the use of multiple instruments is seen as right approach. Denzin in Patton (1987).

Thus for the success of the study, the researcher dominantly employed three types of data gathering instruments: interview, observation and document analysis.

Structured and semi-structured interview guides were employed to gather the necessary information from all selected bodies, i.e. center coordinators, tutors and learners.

Information that were related to the scene of service or practical activities were gathered through observations. The observation was conducted based on guiding observation checklists.

Whereas information related to the programs provided by each institution, number of students and others were obtained from document.

3.2.1 Pilot testing

Before the researcher came to the actual data gathering activities, the instruments were pilot tested on two learners, one tutor and one study center coordinator here in Addis Ababa between 22-27 of February. The pilot test taught the researcher to make some improvement on the instruments.

Therefore some amendments were made on the already set interview guides and adding additional informant. Accordingly learners who have at least completed their first semester study were found to be appropriate source of data. Still with that of the coordinators, one more question was found important adding. Therefore the question was helpful to know if they get any support from the government or Educational Media Agency. Still some questions that were found to create ambiguity were made clear. The pilot study still dictated the researcher to include one

more tutor (informant) from St. Mary's University College. This was so because the role of the tutor at Awassa was limited to some very few activities. Thus the one who was responsibility with evaluating assignments was an other tutor in Addis Ababa

In general the pilot test taught the researcher to make some modifications on the interview guides, to add some more interview question and also to include one more informant from St. Mary's University college.

3.3 Instruments of Data Collection

The researcher has employed the following instruments of data collection in this study

3.3.1 Interview

Interview guides are understood to be list of questions or issues that are to be used in the course of interview, and they provide topics or subject areas about and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Patton (1987).

Interview guide Tim in Ejeta (2005) basically enable the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answer and thus enter in to dialogue with the interviewee. Therefore interview conducted with the three parties (coordinators, tutors and learners) were both so structured and semi structured that they enabled the researcher to obtain profound information with regard to the practice and /or delivery of the program.

The interview guide in general embodies three major focus areas, background information of the informants, information related to their roles, responsibilities and practices. There were questions on how they evaluate the overall system of the delivery.

3.3.2 Observation

Observation being one of an important source of qualitative data, it enables the researcher to obtain first hand information. According to Patton (1987) the main advantage of observation is its directness.

Data collected by observation may describe the observed phenomena as they occur in their natural settings Nachmias and Nachmias in Ejeta (2005). Hence through observation one can describe the activities that take place in the program, the activities of every informant in the program. Therefore observation in this study was employed so that a better understanding of the

contexts and the activities of every parties: (coordinators, tutors and learners) be found out. The observation was done based on checklists already prepared. (See appendix D)

These observation checklists were used to find out what was going on in the classrooms and also the situation outside the classrooms. Therefore two observation checklists were prepared and employed to describe the situations. Accordingly sessions and classes (tutorial classes) were observed on march 4, and April 18-19 when St. Mary's University College gave face -to- face tutorial class and final examinations respectively. As to Admas College, observation was made on (April 1-2) and(May 6-7) when tutorial classes and final exams were given respectively.

3.3.3 Document Analysis

Documents that were supposed to provide the necessary information about the institutions in general, their establishment, centers, population size, the constitutes of learners in teaching fields were consulted. In this case print materials the institutions usually release were found to be sources of data. Accordingly information obtained from documents such like magazines and brochures available in the two selected institutions were collected and supplemented to the main data.

3.4. Sampling

The main purpose of the study is, as it is already stated in chapter I, to find out the practice of two selected PHEIs in delivering teacher education on distance bases. Therefore the employed methodology is a case study.

In case study, being one of qualitative studies, normally the sample size is small Gall, Meredith D, (1996: 217). The purpose in selecting the case, or cases is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied; and it is a purposeful sampling. Patton in Gall, Meredith (1996)) says the goal of purposeful sampling is to select cases that are likely to be "information - rich" with respect to the purposes of the study. Thus the researcher in this study took limited number of informants on the bases of purposeful sampling.

The intent of purposeful sampling is to achieve an in-depth understanding of selected individuals, not to select a sample that will respect accurately a defined population.

In this case three students from each institutions who were between two - five semesters, and one tutor from Admas College and two tutors from St. Mary's University College were selected.

With regard to tutors the researcher took two from St. Mary's because the activities done by a tutor at Awassa was so limited, for example, giving face to - face tutorial classes that he couldn't provide information that are related to assignments.

Besides center coordinators of each institutions are the other major sources of data

3.5 Data (Management) and Analysis

As it is already stated above, the study is basically a qualitative case study. To achieve the intended objectives, multiple approaches were used to collect data.

The data obtained using interview and observation were analyzed and summarized using word expressions. The data obtained from documents were supplemented to the main interpretation.

The analysis of data begins with providing background information of the institutions and the study centers, based on information obtained from various sources. Still background information of the respondents was given.

With regard to confidentiality, one of the ethics of research entails the anonymity of the informants. Therefore, to keep their anonymity simple codes were used. The codes used include both letters and numbers. Below are the representations of the codes:

SM- refers to St. Mary's University College

A - refers Admas College

S - refers to student

t- refers to tutor

c- refers to study center coordinator

SMt -- refers to St. Mary's; student etc.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

This section of the study deals with the presentation and discussion of the data collected from the selected sources.

As it was stated in the earlier chapters, the major objective of this study was to find out the practices of two selected private higher institutions in educating teachers to a degree level on distance program. This study was conducted with St. Mary's University College and Admas College in focus. The Study is a case study; and the selected study centered are both situated at Awassa.

The presentation begins with providing background information of the institutions and then that of the respondents.

4.1 Background information about the selected study centers

Table 1: Years of establishment of the study centers

Institution (center)	Year of establishment
St. Mary's	(2002)
Admas	(2004)

Source: respective center coordinators

The table above shows years of establishment of the study centers. Accordingly St Mary's University College opened its study center at Awassa in 2002., while Admas College did so two years later, in 2004.

Table 2: Number of Students Currently enrolled

Institution (center)	Total Number of students currently enrolled			Total number of students currently enrolled to degree teaching fields		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
St. Mary's	947	183	1130	148	52	200
Admas	305	45	350	151	4	155

Source: Respective record offices of the centers

With regard to number of students currently enrolled, St. Mary's University College has a total of 1130 students at Awassa, among which 947 are males and 183 are females. On the other hand Admas College has a total of 350 students at Awassa, among which 305 are males and 45 are females.

As to students enrolled to teaching to the degree program, St. Mary's has 200 out of which 148 are males and the rest 52 are females. When we come to Admas College, it has a total number of 155 students in the fields of teaching for degree program. Among them 151 are males and the rest 4 are females. Significance of distance education is to enable females, who most of the time are educationally disadvantaged due to much family responsibilities, etc, (ESDPI: 1999-2002), the above table, however shows the number of females in the program is still much lower than that of male participants.

4.2 Background information of learners

Table: 3 Level of students' semester and their distance from the centers.

Institution	Learner	Semester	distance from the center
St Mary's	SMS ₁	3	___ (Awassa)
	SMS ₂	5	140 km
	SMS ₃	3	200 km
Admas	AS ₁	4	45 Km
	AS ₂	3	20 Km
	AS ₃	2	48 Km

Source: Interview conducted with the learners

Table 3 shows level of learners' (semester) and how far they are coming from. Accordingly the informants are from semesters II-V, when we come to where they come from, we can see some differences. Most of students studying at St. Mary University College come from relatively far areas than that of Admas College. With regard to coverage, St. Mary's University reach wider audience (distance) than Admas College does.

Table 4: Age, experience and jobs of the learners

Institution	Learner	age	experience	Job /current/
St. Mary's	SMS ₁	55	34	teaching
	SMS ₂	47	27	educ. office
	SMS ₃	42	12	teaching
Admas	AS ₁	43	20	educ. office
	AS ₂	45	21	teaching
	AS ₃	48	25	teaching

Source interview conducted with the learners

Table 4 shows age, experience and current jobs of the learners. Accordingly it is possible to conclude that the age group of the learners reading at a distance in the selected centers of the institutions stretches between 42 and 55. This shows that adults are benefiting from distance education program in order to upgrade their qualification to degree level. As to their experiences, they have served (not necessarily only in teaching, of course) for a considerable years that is between 12 and 34.

With regard to their profession, the table clearly shows that the majority of the learners (four- out - of six) are school teachers, while the rest (two –out-of six) are working in the related fields, i.e. in education offices.

The information obtained shows that not only teachers but also other people working in related offices like to upgrade themselves in the fields of teaching.

Table 5: Family background of the learners

Institution	Learner	material status	status of spouse	no of children
St. Mary's	SMS ₁	Married	House wife	2
	SMS ₂	Married	House wife	6
	SMS ₃	Married	House wife	5
Admas	AS ₁	Married	House wife	4
	AS ₂	Married	Employed	4
	AS ₃	Married	House wife	5

Source: interview conducted with the learners

From the above table one can see that all the learners are married. Except that of As2, the other five respondents' are house wives who don't have defined monthly income.

The other important information obtained from the table is that except SMS1 the other five have got relatively large families. Where they are supposed to support more families, which could be a hindering factor from joining higher institutions in other programs.

4.3 Information about the tutors

Table 6: Qualification, profession and term of employment

Institution	tutor	qualification	profession	term of employment
St. Mary's	SMS ₁	B. A degree	instructor	Part time
	SMS ₂	B.A degree	teacher	Part time
Admas	AS ₁	M.A degree	instructor	Part time

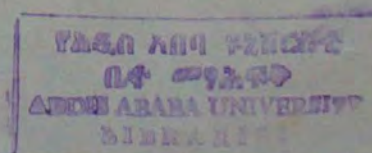
Source: interview conducted with the tutors

The table above show that tutors are qualified to B.A degree (St. Mary's) and M.A degree (Admas) in the fields they give service. They are employed by the institutions on the part time bases.

Table7: Role Responsibilities of tutors

Institution	Tutor	Responsibility (duties)
St. Mary's	SMt ₁	- gives face - to - face tutorial program only
	SMt ₂	- gives face - to - face tutorial program
	(A.A)	- evaluates learners' assignments
Adinas	At ₁	- gives face - to - face tutorial program - evaluates learners' assignments; whom he gave tuition.

Table 7 shows roles and responsibilities of tutors in both institutions. From the table one can learn that there is some differences with roles and responsibilities of tutors. With regard to St. Mary's, assignment, are evaluated at the head office (A.A). So assignments are collected from the learners by the coordinator and sent to the department, in Addis Ababa, where there are tutors who evaluate the assignments; among them is SMt2. Whereas with regard to Admas College the



tutor who gave the face – to- face tutorial class is also responsible to evaluate his learners' assignments.

In this case SMt1 is employed to meet students only for face to face tutorial classes. He makes no contact with the study center or his learners other time than face- to- face tutorial classes. SMt2 is in charge of evaluating learners' assignments, brought to the department (in Addis Ababa) from varies study centers.

With that of At1 it helps him and his learners to have another chance of contact so that he can evaluate his learners as well as his approach. During the interview he tells that

I check and give the necessary comment on the assignments of the learners whom I gave face - to - face tutorial classes; this actually tells me where students fail and/or succeed so that I could make improvement in my approach other times. More over such things strengthen the relation I have with my learners. (2, April 2006)

4.4. Staff member of the sampled institutions

Table 8: staff members of each study centers

Institute	Coordinator	Sex	Assistant	Sex	Total
St Mary's	1	F	1	F	2
Admass	1	F	2	F	3

Table 8 shows what number constitutes staff of each study centers. Accordingly two females constitute the staff of St. Mary's study center at Awassa while that of Admas are three (females).

In other words there are only two assisting staff for 1130 distance learners at St Mary's while there are 3 assisting staff for 350 distance learners at Admas.

4.5 Learners' needs and the situation of the delivery systems.

4.5.1 Why Learners read at Distance

Basically distance education program was introduced with the concern of reaching students who are isolated from regular institutional teaching. (Sharma, 2005; Mujibul, 2004; Gachuhi and Matiru,1989; Holburge. 1981). And the program helps to compensate for some of the disadvantages of isolation. Distance education specially with regard to teaching, helps to train teachers who are already working and can not be taken away for more than a few weeks. Keeping

these in mind the researcher wanted to know why they joined this program. Respondents then gave different reasons for their interest to join the program.

One of the respondents (SMs2) states that he has taught for about 27 years (see table 4). Most of the years as school teacher. As why he liked to continue his education on distance program he says:

It is recently that chances come for us to continue our education in the summery in-service program. Though I tried to benefit from the program, I was not qualified; as priority was given to current teachers.

As to evening program two major factors hinder me from joining the program. The first and the major problem is finance. As I told you earlier, I have large family. The other problem actually is the distance from the institutions I am; living it's 140 Km from Awassa, for example where I could find higher institutions. (18, March 2006).

From SMs2's words it is clear that the respondent has great interest to qualify himself to degree level. Unfortunately he couldn't benefit from other programs due to what he mentioned two factors. In this case learners like SMs2 have benefited from this distance education program.

On the contrary SMs₃ tells that though he was once qualified to continue his education on summery in-service program, due to his personal interest he withdraw and later come to continue on the distance education program. He says:

" . . . in my absence for summery education at Alemaya, I learnt that my family suffered a lot economically. Therefore I have to spend more time to maximize my income. And this distance education program enables me to manage my time to work part time jobs to support my family. (19 March, 2005)

SMs₃ remarks that he has large family (See tables 5) and it is difficult for him to support them with his monthly salary only. As a result he has to participate in some other part- time works to maximize his income. Therefore he benefits from distance education program.

Distance education program in general enabled adults to have access to education who otherwise couldn't join colleges or universities in such programs as advanced standing, summer- in-service program or extension program.

4.5.2 If learners got prior orientation or training

Basically distance learners are supposed to have or given orientation for example, before they start the program. This is believed that the orientation helps them to handle the program better and effectively. The information obtained from the learners and the coordinators, however shows that learners get enrolled to the given institutions with out having prior formal orientation. Learners themselves try to get the necessary requirements by their own efforts. Thus they gather information by consulting their seniors, center coordinators or print materials. One of the interviewee tells that . . .

I went to two study center offices to seek information, on their programs and fields of study. I collected brochures and other print materials. I got some information from each center coordinators. I also consulted few learners attending the program. Finally I decided to join the institution I am now learning at As3 (7, May, 2006).

This shows that even though there is no an already scheduled program (orientation), by the institutions, the learners themselves create their own mechanisms to have the necessary information.

4.5.3 Tutorial Sessions

Tuition to distance learners may be given in various ways; one of which is face - to -face tutorial program.

Face - to - face tutorial classes are so essential that learners make, for example direct contact with their tutors. The contact helps them to clear with their problems they face while they are dealing with their learning materials in general.

Still their contact with their tutors helps them to develop confidence that they are learning. To show how essential is help to distance learners, Forge in (Rowtree: 2000) says; too easily they can become out of sight, out of mind if proper help is not provided.

Learners from both institutes say that they really appreciate the presence of face - to -face contact with their tutors. They again report that they benefit a lot if they meet their tutors as frequently as possible.

From the interview conducted with the students, center coordinators and tutors, it is learnt that St. Mary's University College schedules tutorial programs once a semester, which lasts for three hours for a course, while Admas College does so two times a semester which lasts for two hours each time.

4.5.4 What learners expect from their tutors

It was tried to find out expectation of the students from their tutors during the face - to - face tutorial classes, in general. Their responses then can be summarized to be learners usually expect their tutors to give lectures or explain them the whole material . Still they want their tutors to guide them how they should study or handle the courses better.

4.5.5 If the allotted time is enough to obtain the necessary help

Though informants tell that they are happy with the presence of face - to - face tutorial classes, they get little assistance from their tutors. SMs1 tells.

I am happy there is face to face tutorial program. This time I expect to learn a lot from their lecture: What a pity the time allotted is too short. It goes before we cover the course (19, March 2006).

It was also found out that students from St. Mary's collect 3-5 modules for one course on average which they are supposed to go through (these all modules) with in the given three hours.

As3 adds though his college allots four hours a semester for a course that has only one module, the allotted time doesn't allow them to go through the material in detail.. However his coming to the center twice has advantage that he could meet his classmates whom he couldn't see otherwise. In his stay in the town for a few days, he says, he discusses his lessons with them.

4.5.6 Students' contact with their tutors

Distance learners always seek assistance from people, whom they believe could help. These may include colleagues, family, center coordinators and tutors. But the assistance they seek from their tutors is paramount.

SMs2 says he doesn't deny that he gets a little help from his colleagues and center coordinators. He still expects much help from his tutors when he says:

I wish I could see my tutors as often as possible; as the assistance I seek from them is much . . . It is unfortunate that it is not possible to find them other times than during the face to - face tutorial programs. (18, March 2006)

This in general shows that learners like to have frequent contact with their tutors. Rowtree (2000) agree that tutors are basically responsible and encouraged to check whether learners have any difficulties with the ideas in the package, for example and to give remedial help.

4.5.7 If learners often come to attend face - to-face tutorial programs.

To find out if learners often attend the given face to face tutorial classes, the researcher raised the same questions to all learners. Accordingly five of the respondents answered yes, while the other one said no, (SMs3).

SMs3 reports that he came for such programs the previous two semesters. However he learnt that out of four courses he took each semester, he was scheduled only two courses. As a result he learnt that it was no more advantageous to come to the center from a distance (about 200 Kms) for tutorial classes any more.

Other informants also tell that there are cases when some courses are not scheduled for the face to face tutorial programs: SMs1 replies.

This semester I was registered to four courses. However only two of them were scheduled for tutorial classes. (19, March, 2006)

As3 also tells that he was registered for four courses that semester; out of which three courses were scheduled for tutorial classes while the other one was not.

To find out if what learners said was true, the researcher interviewed both center coordinators. Accordingly it was learnt that there were cases where some courses were not scheduled. They respond that it is the policy of their institutions not to schedule tutorial programs if the number of learners taking the given course is less than five.

4.5.8 Means of communication or contact with coordinators

Besides face - to -face tutorial classes or examination times, learners are expected to make frequent contacts with their assistants. According to Rowtree (2000) much of tutoring or assistance is usually done via telephone or correspondence.

Information obtained from the learners and the coordinators, of course show that learners make contact with their coordinators for such cases like if learning materials are ready to collect, when and how they should submit or collect their assignments, etc. Therefore learners mostly use telephone and postal service. Still some learners (SMs1) for example, visit their centers in person when necessary.

As1.reports

It was a few months ago. I couldn't come to the center in person to collect the assignments. I phoned my center coordinator to send me the assignment via the nearby post office and she did so. (1, April, 2006)

Still As2 witnesses that

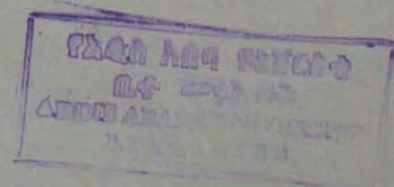
..... My center coordinator once phoned me that I was late and I should submit the assignment as soon as possible. (2 April, 2006)

In general in both institutions learners often phone or visit their centers as much as possible to get the necessary help or service. Unfortunately calling learners and /or sending them assignments for example via post office is not practiced by St. Mary's. This was so, as it was found by interview and observation on the date the center was visited, the coordinator was too busy serving her learners who phone and also come in person for different purpose. For example on April 1, the researcher learnt that she registers new applicants, gives brief information answers telephone calls, distributes learning materials and grade reports. During a three house stay at the center, it was found out that she couldn't find even few minutes to rest. Therefore the researcher believed that with St. Mary's it is difficult to serve 1130 and above students with one coordinator and one assistant.

The observation, of course tells that three people (One coordinator and two assistants) at Admas could easily serve a total of 350 learners.

4.5.9. Media employed to provide the lessons

It is obvious that learners have different learning styles: one of the most important issues so that the teaching learning process meet the needs of the learners, and run it effectively, employing various media of learning is essential (Rowtree: 2000).



From observations and interview conducted with learners, coordinators and tutors, the researcher found out that print media (Module) is dominantly used in both institutions. They of course reported that sometimes they use audio (tape) for such courses like 'listening skill'. In this regard, neither of the institutions show much effort or dedication in considering learners' learning styles.

4.5.10 Course material dispatch

Holburge (1981) states there are three possible strategies of dispatching course materials: one of which is to distribute all the necessary materials at once. This is advantageous specially for distance learners in Ethiopia, who have various constraints to visit their respective centers now and then.

Study centers of both private higher institutions therefore are found following this strategy. They try to dispatch all the necessary learning materials at once. In doing so, however, there are cases where learners complain that they do not find all the necessary materials readily. SMs2 for example reports:

I was supposed to collect 12 modules this semester. Unfortunately I collected only 9. The coordinator then told me that I have to come back some other time as the remaining materials are not in the store. (18, March 2006)

4.5.11 Assignments

Assignments in general have a lot of advantages for the success of the program. They keep and strengthen communication between the learners and their tutors, and their centers, of course. Still assignments encourage learners to read and do more on their courses. Through assignments, tutors could see where their learners are. Assignments also serve as a system that helps to control if the learners are in the system of the delivery program or not.

Through interview with learners, coordinators and also tutors it was learnt that in both institutions learners are required to do assignments on most courses.

One of the informants (SMs2) tells that in his case he took four courses that semester. Out of these one of the courses (verse and drama) didn't have assignment. He simply sat for the final examination.

With regard to collecting feedback on their assignments all respondents (learners) from Admas college say that they collect their assignments (after correction) with in a month. But in the case

of St. Mary's all learners respond that they have never collected back any feedback or the assignments they did

SMs1 tells

I submit the given assignments on the dates due. However I have never been brought back any of corrected assignments. I usually call the office if they could send me that. What I get from them is only a promise that they will do. Finally I sit for the exam with out seeing my success or failure. (19, March 2006)

SMs3 adds

I have never collected any of the assignments I did the previous two semesters. . . I was fed up with their frequent promise with regard to sending me back their feedback. This semester, I didn't submit any of the assignments. No body asked me why I didn't . . . What is the point doing assignments unless it helps me to know how much I understand the subject I am reading? (19, March 2006)

Scholars in the field recommend that the practice of providing feedback on students' assignments and send them back sooner has pedagogical advantage, as it encourages learners for further study. For example World Bank report in EMA (2002) shows that due to some circumstances most institutions took some three months for getting the assignments checked and brought back to the learners.

It was also learnt from the learners and center coordinators that assignments are optional in the case of St. Mary's while they are compulsory in the case of Admas. Thus it's up to the interest of the learner either to submit the assignment or not.

4.5.12 Examinations

One of the strategies through which learners' success or failure could be determined is through examinations. Information obtained from each informants show that in both institutions there are final examinations given at the end of every semester.

The difference between the two institutions lies when they should bring back grade reports or result to their learners. Grade reports, for example are evidences that tell success or failure of the learners in the program. Thus learners should be made collect their grade reports as soon as possible.

Learners at Admas College and the coordinator report that they could collect their grade reports sooner than six weeks. But at St. Mary's, learners report that it could take some five months. SMs1 said that he took the previous semester final examination in September. However he collected his grade report in March. But the coordinator (SMc) reported that grade reports would be ready with in three months.

According to SMs1 the problem was not only the delay; there were cases where incomplete grade reports were collected. He said last semester he sat for four courses: Unfortunately he collected the results of three courses.

Center coordinator (SMc)admitted that such cases might happen; but her office automatically corrects the failure as soon as it is reported. She said she did so whenever her learners reported that they faced such a problem.

4.5.13 Criteria set to be recruited as a tutor

The researcher wanted to know if there were predetermined criteria set to select tutors. Both tutors (SMt1 and At1) responded that their respective coordinators announced that they need tutors in the fields or subjects they are working now; They submitted their curriculum vitae and original documents that shows their experience and specialization. Besides recommendations obtained for example, staff could also help to be recruited.

4.5.14 Roles and responsibilities of tutors

These tutors basically were employed on part time bases (See table 6). And their roles and responsibilities were well defined and limited.

SMt1 has the role of giving face-to-face tutorial classes: in his words he says:

I am usually given the modules a few weeks before the tutorial class days come so that I can read and get prepared. After giving the face - to - face tutorial classes, I am needed no more. (5, March, 2006)

SMt2 tells that though he gives face-to-face tutorial classes where necessary, he is mainly employed to evaluate learners' assignments.

He Says:

The department collects all assignments from each study centers and here distributes them to us, according to our subject of specialization. (8, April 2006)

The major role and responsibility of SMt2 is just evaluating learners' assignments here in Addis Ababa. He has no direct contact with the learners.

At1 tells that his roles and responsibilities like other tutors working at Admas College of course, is both giving tuition and also evaluating learners' assignments.

. . . I am also given the responsibilities of evaluating assignments of learners whom I teach. (2, April 2006)

4.5.15 If they gave the last tutorial classes and; if enough time was allotted.

The same question was forwarded to smt1 and At1 if they gave the last tutorial classes and also if they completed the already set tasks with in the given time. It was learnt that they both did. Regarding the coverage, both tutors tell that they couldn't finish (cover) what they intended.

SMt1 says:

The course I gave was 'English in use" it has three modules with about 100 pages each, on average. The total time allotted was three hours only; out of which 1 1/2 hrs was for lecture while the remaining 1 1/2 hrs was for discussion on ready made exercise, the department prepares. What a pity, I was not able to cover what was planned with in the given time. (5, March 2006)

The problem was also experienced by At1. According to him he was told to give a two hours tutorial class, on one module. He prepared his own lesson and spent the whole time lecturing. Still he couldn't even finish lecturing, let alone reserving time for discussion or questions.

From their explanation and some documents of course it was learnt that St. Mary's gives a three hours tutorial class once a semester while Admas gives two hours during each program: that make a four hours session a semester.

The other important point or difference is that St. Mary's subdivides the time to two: an hour and a half for discussing the modules (lecture) and the other time for discussing questions that are already prepared by the institution or department. But in Admas it was learnt that it's up to the tutor to manage the lesson himself.

4. 5.16 Originality of learners' assignments

One of the possible ways through which learners communicate with their tutors is through their assignments. It is learnt from the tutors, learners and coordinators that learners are required to do one assignment for most courses they are offered. But while evaluating, tutors observe some problems.

SMt2 and SMc report that their institution always prepares new and original questions for assignments. This was also what the learners told. This practice gave no room for the learners to copy answers from what their seniors did. But as to submitting their own account, SMt2 reports:

I check assignments related to my field of specializations (English) I see so many students copying answers from one another. I usually comment that they copy from each other . . . what a pity though the department knows the practice, no measure is taken to control the theft. (18, April 2006).

At1 adds: *I feel assignment are meant to facilitate and encourage learning. . . In evaluating assignments I learnt that my college duplicates assignments already set the previous semesters. Hence juniors simply copy from seniors' papers what were correct and correct those which were wrong, based on comments I gave last semesters. (2 April, 2006)*

What At1 said was also shared by the learners and the coordinator from Admas.

To generalize, as to the originality of assignments, St. Mary's University college prepares and dispatches new (original) questions each semester while Admas college simply duplicates and dispatches an already prepared questions (and done by the previous semester learners) . Learners in both institutions found copying from each other than to do assignments by themselves.

It was also learnt that in both institutions there is no rule or effort made to control the situation.

4.5.17 If tutors get any assistance from other institutions

One of the strategies that the government of Ethiopia followed (MOE, 1994) was providing distance learning in collaboration and coordinated with the rest of the education systems. Distance education by its nature is more complex and the one that require specialist. To achieve the necessary educational out come, then training and educating for example tutors are essential. Unfortunately from the interview conducted with the tutors (and the coordinators) show that they didn't get any training from any responsible body. As to how to give the service, all tutors report

that their respective coordinators gave them brief orientation, that are typically related to their activities in the classrooms.

4.5.18 Roles and responsibility of coordinators

Distance learners in general need support whom they think does something to do with their learning. From the situation the researcher observed at Awassa in each center and interview conducted with each center coordinator; the roles and responsibilities of coordinators were much.

It is obvious that in most cases learners with out support are often liable to delay even their completion of the program or to dropout altogether. The support they get from coordinators being essential, through interview and observations the researcher tried to find out what the roles and responsibilities of center coordinators in assisting the learners.

Thus

- they register new and old learners
- distribute learning materials, assignments and grade reports
- announce (on notice board mostly) up to data information
- give necessary personal assistance to the learners
- serve as channel to pass information from and to their institutions.
- facilitate tutorial and examination program
- delegate their respective institutions at regional level and attend meetings or conferences on behalf of their institutions.

Some differences were found out on their responsibilities. For example: SMC of course, collects assignments from learners. She then send them to the department in Addis Ababa. Ac also collects assignments; beyond that she recruits tutors (who gave the courses) for correction and feedback. with regard to registration, they both register new applicants. The difference lies in providing identification cards: In the case of St Mary's, SMC reports that identification cards are prepared centrally (at the head office). So learners have to wait till their identification cards are prepared and sent. Where as in the case of Admas College, Ac reports that she could give identification cards as soon as the applicant is registered; Such practices, learners from Admas say make the service appreciable.

4.5.19 If there is share of experience or cooperation between the centers

To find out if there is a sort of experience sharing or cooperation between these institutions, the same question was raised to each coordinators. They answered that there is no such practice between them. They both stressed that it was competition where one wants to dominate the other in the program. Neither of them show any interest or effort to learn from the other

4.6 Observation

Observation was one of the tools employed by the researcher to gather the necessary information; and cross check if the given information through interview was true or not as well.

Hence the practices of each parties in the classrooms and outside, while tutorial classes or examinations were given were observed based on some guiding check lists.

4.6.1 St. Mary's

Session I (Morning)

It was on 5th March when tutorial classes were given. The observation was made in a class where 'English in use' was given. In the morning there were 15 learners out of which 12 were men while the other 3 were ladies. Almost all students were on time for the class.

The tutor started his activities by introducing himself, and the course. He then informed learners what they were supposed to do during each session (morning and the afternoon).

He started lecture which he already told them that what they were doing during the morning session.

From the observation it was learnt that three modules were there for the course while lecturing he told learners to turn to certain pages now and then . . . It was the tutor who spoke the whole time. No questions or comment were heard from the learners. Finally the bell went before he even wind up the lesson

Session II (afternoon)

This time the number of learners were less. There were only 9 students. The tutor required them to take out the guiding questions already set for discussion.. . . During that time, he read the

questions and encouraged learners to respond. Unfortunately only few learners tried to give answers . . . still the time was over before the tutor finished going through all the questions.

As to learning resources, chalk, duster, module and tutor notes (prepared himself) were used.

On 18th March also it was tried to observe the situation when examinations were given. Though the program was run smoothly it was observed in one class that out of the learners taking examinations (Educational psychology) two learners haven't got identification card. . . They told that they were semester II students, they were not given I. d cards nor their first semester grade reports, yet.

4.6.2 Admas College

Class observation was conducted on 1st, April 2006. In the class observed there were eight students. They were all men. The course given was ' curriculum inquiry' The tutor began his lecture by reminding what they did during the first tutorial program (given on 4th March).

He took out his note and also told learners to take out their modules.

The tutor then stressed now and then that he was not going through every detail, as the given time (two hours) didn't allow. He began his lecture, after writing what he said 'main points' on the blackboard. . . In the middle of his lecture, he raised questions where only few students attempted to answer . . . Finally it was learnt that the time was over before he covered the contents he wrote on the blackboard.

Chalk, duster, module and notes (prepared by the tutor himself) were the learning materials used that particular class.

The other day observation conducted was on 7th May, where examinations were given. That day it was observed that every thing was run smoothly.



CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

Summary

The major objective of the study was to find out the practice of two private higher institutions in delivering education through distance education to qualify teachers to degree level.

To reach at the intended objective specific research questions were set so that they could enable the researcher to point out the practice of the delivery.

Related Literature on such points like conceptual framework of distance education, its historical development in Ethiopia, management of distance education program, roles and responsibilities of key players in the delivery program and teacher education through distance education were seen.

In order to gather the necessary data, the research was designed in such a way that to employ a case study method. Case study being one of qualitative research method, helped to deal the delivery in detail by using multiple approaches of data gathering instruments.

To collect the required information, then the researcher employed multiple tools. Thus interview, document analysis and observation were the major tools.

As to the informants they were selected purposefully and also on the bases of availability. Accordingly learners who were believed to provide the necessary information about their learning and delivery were selected. Experienced tutors in providing assistance were also selected. Finally center coordinators of each institution were taken as sources of information.

The instruments were first pilot - tested on few selected learners, tutors and coordinator so that they could be reliable and valid. Thus some modifications were made on them later.

Data from tutors and learners at Awassa was collected during the times when tutorial classes and examinations were given to overcome the difficulty to find them. Data from coordinators was collected by appointment.

The information collected from the sources was organized and analyzed (described) using word expressions, while sometimes taking (using) the exact words of the informants.

After analyzing the necessary data in this study, the researcher has summarized the following as major findings.

The learners are between 42 and 55 years of age. It was also found out that they were all married where five of them have house wives while the other one has an employee (As2). As to their family size, except SMS1, who has only two children, the rest five learners have got 4-6 children each. These shows that they perhaps lead large families.

With regard to their experiences, it was found out that these learners served in teaching and other related fields for the years that range between 12 and 34 years. It was also learnt that most of the learners come to Awassa from a distance where they couldn't find other higher institutions near by.

Tutors are one of key persons in the delivery of distance education program. They were found to be qualified to B.A or MA degrees in the fields they gave tutorial classes. They were employed on part time bases. In getting involved in distance education program training or orientation was very important to run the program effectively or smoothly. However, neither the learners nor the tutors had got any formal training, for example with regard to their roles and responsibilities.

Hence tutors play their roles with their skills and knowledge they have to treat their learners in the conventional classes. Their roles and responsibilities could not go beyond providing face - to - face tutorial classes in lecture form and evaluating learners' assignments; the time allotted for the face-to - face tutorial classes was not enough to cover the contents of the materials.

As to learners' expectation from the support service, it was learnt that they expected a lot than what they get from their tutors or coordinators. Their expectation was summarized to be clearing them how they should handle their courses, manage their time, clear them with the contents of the materials, help them when they had difficulties while they were going through their materials.

Distance learning by nature is the one that is mostly done independently. In doing so learners may face problems. Thus they need close follow up and assistance from their coordinators or tutors, for example. In this study however, it was found out that the necessary help provided to them was not adequate. They get a three to four hours lecture a semester; which was too short

even to cover the course. And learners' contact to their tutors was mostly limited to the time when face to- face tutorial classes were given.

The other problem found out was that there were cases where even tutorial classes were not scheduled for certain courses: on the pretext of less number of learners were taking the course, nature of the courses, which coordinators report for some courses by nature, tutorial classes were not scheduled.

As to material dispatch, it was found out that in both institutions the strategy followed was to distribute all the necessary learning materials at once, at the beginning of the semesters. Moreover it was found out that there were three to five modules for one course in St. Mary's which had 118 and 180 pages each on average; while there was only one module for a course in Admas College which had 160 to 210 pages on average.

Employing appropriate or various media was one of the important issues in order to meet learners' interests who had different learning styles. Still nature of some courses dictate to use various media. In this study then it was learnt that both institutions dominantly use print media while for such courses like 'listening skills' they used tapes as a supplement.

With regard to assignments, it was found out that in most cases learners didn't show their own efforts: they rather copy answers from their colleagues and /or from their seniors.

As to the originality of assignment St Mary's prepared new questions each semester, while Admas was found simply duplicating questions which were set and distributed the previous semesters or year.

The other problem found out with regard to assignments was that in both institutions there were no defined rules and regulations set that could enable them to control or take measures against the theft (copying one another's answers).

Experience sharing and cooperation between institutions was believed to bring a better service to the learners, which in turn contribute their part in improving the quality of education. However, efforts were not made between these institutions to share experiences or work in cooperation.

Conclusions

Below are conclusions that are reached based on the findings that are already presented.

- As to the background information of the learners, it is learnt that they are all adults whose age lies between 42 and 55. They are all married and have families whom they support. Thus it is also found out that, had it not been for this distance education program, they had no chance of up grading their level of qualification.

According to the scholars in the field, Holburge (1981) for example, distance education could serve those who can rarely allow themselves or financially afford to go in for full time study or even half time.

- When we come to providing the necessary assistance to the learners, it is true that distance learners most of the time seek help and advice (Forge in Rowtree: 2000) on matters that are to do with the subject matter for example they are learning about. They may need help before, during or after the program. Thus such concern or dedication is not seen with either of the institutions.
- To have an effective way of providing the necessary assistance to the learners, there need to have well trained tutors. Panda (2004: 82) stresses that the department or the institution need to have a human resource policy in place, showing the type and number of human resources required at different levels.

To have such a staff then, training or a clear orientation is required. However it is found out that in both institutions there are no efforts made to train or provide a better orientation to strengthen the quality of tutors or the learners. This shows that there is no due concern given to provide quality service to the beneficiaries. Therefore distance learners in the given institutions couldn't get adequate assistance.

- With regard to material dispatch both institutions follow the strategy of distributing all materials at once. This is what learners appreciate, as they are not forced to visit their centers again and again to collect materials.

- To help learners learn better, it is advisable that different media be employed. The study found out that neither of the institutions show much effort to employ varied media, though there are little attempts to use tapes for such courses like 'listening skill'
- Assignments are one of possible ways through which learners contact their support service. Report of World Bank in EMA (2002) shows that the practice of providing feedback on learners' assignments and send them back sooner has pedagogical advantage, because it encourages learners for further study. However the study found out that with St Mary's university college bringing back learners assignments are not seen.

Though Admas College could bring back feed back quicker there is one important problem seen with it. The department fails to prepare new and original questions. Thus it always duplicates the questions that were given to learners who took the same courses the previous semester or year.

- Other problems the study found out with regard to assignments is that learners usually fail to submit what they did themselves. They copy down what their friends or seniors (Admas College learners) did. Though it is well known by concerned bodies, there are no already set mechanisms or efforts to control the situation.
- Experience sharing between the ^{stake}stake holders to bring the necessary and better service is essential, because it enable to bring together and apply the skills and experiences each institutions have. Unfortunately there are no efforts made so that these institutions work together.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion reached at, the researcher points out the following recommendations:

- Staff development and training has an essential contribution in running this distance education program as effectively as possible. It's contribution to bring quality education in countries like Ethiopia is paramount. Therefore these institutions need to give due concern to training tutors and learners before, during and also after the program.

- ☞ Assignments are one of the mechanisms that are employed both to keep contact with the learners and / or to check and evaluate their learning. Still assignment, help to find out that they are learning. However it is learnt that most learners do not show their effort, they rather copy from each other. No measures are taken by the departments/ institutions. Thus these institutions should seek mechanisms or draw rules that enable them to control such situation.
- ☞ The study also shows that there are cases where one of the institutions work better in some aspects while the other fails to do so. For example, in getting learners collect their grade reports, for St. Mary's it takes some five months while that of Admas takes only some six weeks. With regard to assignments, St Mary's is appreciated in that the department always prepares new and original questions while Admas College simply duplicates an already set items. Three support personnel (staff) at Admas could manage to serve 350 students while it is difficult for two at St, Mary's to serve 1130 student, etc. . . Thus Private Higher Institutions ought to develop better relationships among themselves as well as with other public Universities and Colleges to share best practices and experiences.
- ☞ The government of Ethiopia once promised in its strategy (1994) that it is giving due concern to distance education at the level the resources of the country permit. Therefore it has to continue to provide the necessary technical assistance to PHEIs so as to enable them evaluate their services and contribute to the development of quality education system in the country.

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ት/መ/ዘ/ደ (1994) የአንደኛ ደረጃ ሁለተኛ ሳይክል የርቀት ትምህርት ዲፕሎማ ፕሮግራም ሠልጣኝ መምህራን የመጀመሪያ ዙር የሂደት ግምገማ ጥናት: ትምህርት መገናኛ ዘዴዎች ድርጅት አዲስ አበባ

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Appendix A

Interview guides – with the learners

The objective of the study is to find out the practices of some private higher institutions in delivering distance education. Thus, as a distance learner, your genuine responses to the questions set are paramount for the success of the study.

Your background:

age _____ Job _____ marital status _____

family size _____

1. Why do you like to continue your education on distance education program while there are other alternatives, for example: advanced standing, or summer in service programs; etc.
2. Had you been given any prior training (orientation, advice) before you began to the distance education program? If yes, what were you told you need to note?
3. As distance student, were you made clear with your roles and responsibilities?

Tutoring

4. How often are face-to-face tutorial classes given per semester?
5. Do you think it's enough to have the necessary assistance you seek with the program?
Do you attend all the face to face tutorial programs scheduled for you? If no why?
6. When you come to the face-to-face tutorial classes, what do you expect your tutors do?
 - ◇ Did they do the way you expected them?
 - ◇ How much helpful are tutorial classes for you?
7. What contact do you have with your tutors other times than face-to-face tutorial sessions?
Can you explain?
 - ◇ Do you make frequent contacts with your tutors, peers or coordinators of the centre? And how often and for what purpose do you meet them?
 - ◇ What means (ways) do you usually prefer to contact them? (in person, telephone, letter or postal service)
8. What assistances do you expect from your tutors, and/or center-coordinators for the success of the program?

- ◇ Which of the expected assistances are not given (provided)?
9. Did you attend the recently given face-to-face tutorial classes?
- ◇ Are there courses that were scheduled, but not given?
 - ◇ What courses are they?
 - ◇ Did you ask why they were not given? And what was their response?
10. What learning media are available other than print media (modules) for example;
Radio/tape, Television/Video , Practical work, etc

Dispatch

11. Have you collected the necessary learning materials on time? And is there sufficient number of materials for you? (for example one-to-one ratio)

Assignment

12. Do you often do and submit your assignments on time?

- ◇ Have you ever faced any problem in doing the assignments? If so, what problems did you face?
- ◇ What did you do, if you had to submit the assignments,
- ◇ You asked somebody for help or you left it alone? Or what other mechanisms did you use?
- ◇ Do you believe all students you know (for example in your centre) do their assignments themselves? Or what do they do with it?

13. If you collect the corrected/checked/ assignments back,

- ◇ How long /on average/ does it takes?
- ◇ What feedbacks are you usually given (written on the paper), for example?
- ◇ Are the feedbacks you get from your tutors, and or other support services adequate?

14. What comments would you forward to improve the service

- ◇ At centre level
- ◇ At institution level

Materials

15. Do you find any problems with the packages (learning materials) when you deal with them?

If so,

◇ Do you have the chance to comment on the packages, or what strong or weak points do you find?

◇ Did you discuss these with your tutors?

Evaluation

16. How often do you take examinations per semester?

17. How strong/ careful are your invigilators while they're supervising examinations?

◇ Can you tell me the problems you observed with regard to invigilation?

18. How do you evaluate the overall service you are provided by the institute?

◇ What/ which areas are appreciable?

◇ What/ which areas you think need improvement?

Appendix B

Interview guides-with Tutors

- What are the criteria set by this institution to be recruited as a tutor?
- How often do you give face – to – face tutorial classes? And were you made clear with your roles and responsibilities?
- Think of the last time you gave face – to – face tutorial classes, and tell me if you finished the intended task on the given time?
- How much time was allotted for the course you gave? Do you think that enabled you to cover/go through/ every important help to be given?
- Did you face any other problem while you were giving the face – to – face tutorial classes? Would you explain?
- What is your contact with your students, other than face – to – face tutorial classes? And how often do you see them?
- Is there any that you would comment or suggest in how to improve the tuition process of such a program? (Ejeta: 2005)
- How would you evaluate the originality of trainees' assignments for submission? (Ejeta: 2005)
- How do you evaluate the overall delivery of the program? What strong points do you see and what areas need improvement?
- Do you get any technical assistance from other institution such as the Ethiopian Educational Media?

Appendix C

Interview guides – with coordinators

- As a coordinator, would you tell me your roles and responsibilities in implementing distance education program?
 - ☞ What does the role – relationships among various parties for example, your college, your office the learners and others look like?
 - ☞ To what extent do you think are the program effectively run? (excellent, v-good, good, inadequate)
 - ☞ To what extent (degree) are learning resources and support services are accessible to the trainees? (Ejeta :2005)
- What strategies do you prefer to dispatch learning materials?
 - ☞ How effective are these strategies?
 - ☞ What problems did you face?
- What ways (means) do you normally like to contact your learners, for example (telephone, letters, notice board, etc)?
- Would you please explain me the situation of the face – to – face tutorial program? (Ejeta:2005)
 - ☞ Was it smoothly run? Or there were problems?
 - ☞ What problems did you face (see)?
 - ☞ Were there courses that were not given that day? If so,
 - ☞ What measures did your office take then?
 - ☞ What comments do you forward to alleviate such problems, and better service is provided to your learners?
- Think of the situation when final exams were given. ◦
 - Was it smoothly run? Or
 - How strong /careful were the invigilators while they were supervising examinations?
 - Were all the courses scheduled given?
 - What other problems did you observe?

Assignment

- Do all students in your center submit their assignment in the time scheduled?

- were there learners who were late?

If so what measures did you take?

- Were their assignments checked (corrected) and brought back with out delay?

What about the learners, do they collect the checked assignments as soon as possible?

What other problems did you observe with regard to assignments?

How do you evaluate the over all system of delivery of the program?

What strong points can you mention?

Which areas need improvement?

- Do you make any attempt to share experiences or learn from other similar institutions?

Appendix D

Program Observation checklist

Location _____

Notice board ready _____

Time scheduled for the tuition/examination _____

Punctuality of learners _____

Tutors _____

Coordinators _____

Necessary help to the learners _____

Directing them to the classes they are assigned _____

Are there courses that are not given that day?

General comments

Strong points _____

Things to be improved _____

Appendix E

Classroom Observation checklist

Location _____

Subject observed _____

Classroom situation

- No of attendants _____ male _____ female _____
- Necessary facilities _____
- Overall situation of the classroom _____

Classroom performance

Tutoring method: Lecture _____ Presentation _____ Discussion _____
Eliciting _____ Role Play _____ Other (specify) _____

Learner's participation. Asking/answering _____

- Group / pair discussion _____
- Other (specify) _____

Time management:

Tutor's proper usages of time _____

Availability of supplementary materials (tape, radio, etc for) _____

And appropriate usage of the material

Tutors readiness to the class _____

Activities performed before class _____

Activities performed during class _____

Activities performed after class _____

General comments:

Strong points _____

Points to be improved _____