

**ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGERIAL
FACTORS AFFECTING THE SECONDARY
LEVEL DISTANCE EDUCATION IN
ETHIOPIA**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of materials used for this study have been dully acknowledged.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -----	I
<hr/>	
TABLE OF CONTENT-----	II
LIST OF TABLES-----	V
<hr/>	
ACRONYMS -----	vii
ABSTRACT-----	Viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION -----	1
1.1 Background of the Study -----	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem-----	4
1.3 The purpose of the study-----	5
1.4 Significant of the study-----	5
1.5 Delimitation of the Study-----	6
1.6 Limitation of the Study-----	7
1.7 The Research Design-----	7
1.7.1. Research Methodology -----	7
1.7.2. Data Sources -----	7
1.7.3. Data Collection Instruments-----	8
1.7.4. Sampling Population and Sampling Techniques -----	9
1.7.5. Variables -----	9
• Dependent Variable-----	9
• Independent Variables -----	9
1.7.6. Statistical tools used -----	10
1.7.7. Organization of the Study-----	10
1.7.8. Definition of the Key Terms -----	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW -----	12
2.1 The Concept of Distance Education -----	12

2.1.1. Innovative Aspects of Distance Education-----	15
2.1.2. Target group -----	19
2.2 Distance Education - Stages of Growth-----	21
2.2.1 Need for a New System of Education -----	21
2.2.2 Correspondence Education: The Early Stage of Distance Education -----	22
2.2.3 Distance Education - The Present Form -----	23
2.2.4 Distance Education - The world Scene -----	24
2.3 Distance Education in Ethiopia-----	25
2.3.1 Historical Development-----	25
2.3.2 Organizational Structure and Objectives of the Distance Education Panel -----	30
2.4 The concept of Organization and Management.-----	32
2.5 The Organization and Administration of Distance Education Programs -----	36
2.5.1. Staff Development-----	37
2.5.2. Student Records -----	38
2.5.3. Administering Course Development-----	38
2.5.4. Administering Distribution of Course Materials. ----	40
2.5.5. Administration of the Interaction between Students and the Supporting Organization. -----	42
2.5.6. Administration of the Media Utilization -----	48
CHAPTER THREE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY -----	51
CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS-----	115
4.1 SUMMARY-----	115
4.2 CONCLUSION -----	120
4.3 RECOMMENDATION-----	122
BIBLIOGRAPHY-----	127
APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Distribution of students by sex-----	51
Table 2. Distribution of students by Age /sex-----	52
Table 3. Marital status of distance students -----	53
Table 4 . Number of children of the students -----	54
Table 5. Employment status of students /sex-----	54
Table 6. Occupational Distribution of Distance learners -----	55
Table 7. Educational Background of Distance learners -----	56
Table 8. General Information on the Respondents of the staff members----	60
Table 9. Man power Distribution of the DEP -----	62
Table 10. Adequacy of Man Power Allocation to each Department -----	63
Table 11. Provision of Initial Training for the staff members-----	64
Table 12. Duration of the Initial Training -----	64
Table 13. In- service Training -----	65
Table 14. Attempts made by EMA to train its staff members at local and abroad-----	66
Table 15. Allocation of man power in the record department -----	68
Table 16. Time taken to complete the registration formalities -----	69
Table 17. Clarity of information delivery system on program and distance materials-----	70
Table 18. Time taken to collect the first set of course materials after registration-----	71
Table 19. Means of communication with Distance Education panel -----	73
Table 20. Availability of postal service in the locality -----	74
Table 21. Availability of Telephone service-----	74
Table 22. Distance to the nearest post office -----	75
Table 23. Turn- round time of assignment for submission-----	76

Table 24. The impact of distance on the turn- round time of assignment. --	77
Table 25. Reliability of postal service -----	77
Table 26. Time taken to receive examination results -----	79
Table 27. The speed by which the various services are provided -----	80
Table 28. Student perception of the following comments (whether they are included in their assignment by their tutors or not) -----	82
Table 29. Assignment with and without valuable comments -----	83
Table 30. Service years of the tutors -----	85
Table 31. Provision of Initial training to the tutors-----	85
Table 32. Duration of training provided to the tutors -----	85
Table 33. Provision of in-service training -----	86
Table 34. The time tutors are available to contact with DEP and students -	86
Table 35. Student perception of the help they need from tutorials -----	87
Table 36. Student evaluation of the role of the tutor -----	89
Table 37. Participation in the tutorial program -----	91
Table 38. Participants of tutorial program /2002-----	92
Table 39. Reasons for not participating in the tutorial program-----	93
Table 40. Face - to - face program participants V _s Distance of tutorial centers from the learners residence-----	94
Table 41. Distance of the tutorial centres and the reasons for not participating in the tutorial program-----	96
Table 42. Selection of Tutorial centres -----	98
Table 43. Utilization of distance Educational Radio program -----	100
Table 44. Reasons why some distance learners attended sometimes while	

ACRONYMS

EMA	Educational Media Agency
DEP	Distance Education Panel
DE	Distance Education
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MOE	Ministry Of Education
REB	Regional Education Bureau
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Region

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate organizational and managerial factors affecting the secondary level of distance education in Ethiopia. To conduct this study, a descriptive survey was employed. Questionnaire survey, interview, document analysis and organizational observation were used to collect the necessary data. The subjects of this study were chosen using systematic and availability sampling procedures. The research study involved three categories of sample population: Distance students, distance education staff members and tutors. Data analysis was made by using statistical tools such as percentage, chi-square and t-test to identify whether there were differences or agreement in the views of the respondents regarding the various variables.

The study findings indicated that there is disparity between the needs of the distance education students and the provision of educational services. Some of these include: delays in informing examination results, delays in distribution of course materials, low turn-around time of assignments, and shortage of trained staff members. Besides, inadequate facilities such as computer network have been big problems for secondary level distance education. According to this study, the major reasons for the delays of services were limited institutional capacity, over-centralization of distance education activities and inefficient postal service. Moreover, tutors and Distance Education Panel staff members are not equipped with the necessary skills that would enable them to carryout their duties effectively.

As the study reveals the largest group of distance students (64%) were not beneficiaries of tutorial programs mainly due to long distance of the tutorial

centres from the students' locality and the absence of tutorial programs in some regions (Somali, Afar, DireDawa, Benshangul-Gumuz and Gambela). Moreover, the educational radio programs were underutilized and most of them were not helpful because they were not based on the new syllabus. Though efforts have been made in the provision of the three instructional media; namely, print, face-to-face and radio, they could not be used effectively to support the distance learners.

The results obtained also indicated that distance students on the average spend 10 years to complete the secondary level (9-12 grades) though the expected time of completion is 2 years. Distance students identified inefficiency of postal service, delay in sending examinations, course materials and assignments as the major reasons for the low rate of progress.

The results obtained indicated that all the problems cited in the findings are closely related to capacity, organizational and managerial problems. Finally, based on the findings and conclusions, recommendations were made to address the problems under study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

It is evident that organizations in a society be a social services or industrial plants need trained manpower to accomplish their goals. That is why education is believed to be the training ground for other sectors. In view of this fact, several scholars explain that no country has scored sound economic growth without sound development in its education "PHRDP (in Tarekegn Haile Selassie, 1999:1). The history of economic development reveals that the developed countries have given the priority to education to get rid of the bottleneck of poverty. They invested large amount of money on the sector to ensure quality and quantity. However, still the quality of education is significantly affected by low educational inputs, unfavorable policy, inadequate facilities, inefficient organization and administration etc. Particularly, in developing countries the amount of educational investment does not go pace with the need to greater educational opportunities.

Needs are a function of the societal level of developments. As economies of the countries diversify, governments need and demand for trained staffs are growing all the time. On the other hand the needs of a modern industrial society are very different from those of an idyllic pastoral community or a relatively stable feudal society. With the ever-expanding division of labour of the industrial society, its educational needs also increase in their range and variety (Koul and Ramanujam,

1989:8). Hence, curriculum and syllabus can no longer remain unchanged for an indefinite period of time. They have to be improved or changed from time to time so as to serve the desired needs. During the past fourteen years the world population has doubled to over six billion (2000) people, most of who want to be literate and want greater educational opportunities for themselves and their children. The population explosion particularly in developing countries has aggravated the problem. In countries where 30-40% of the population is under the age of fifteen, the economic and manpower resources are already severely strained (EMA, 1999:1:3). Moreover, the increase in complexity of all aspects of living, the increase in educational requirements for almost all jobs, the acceleration rate of change in nearly all occupations, and particularly in job-knowledge technology, the increase in the probability that substantial numbers of workers must face periods of personal obsolescence during their life time-obsolescence which cannot be removed without personal retraining or re-education, the increased mobility of almost all citizens, the special educational needs of disadvantaged and minority groups who often do not respond well to conventional education but who cannot become useful and fulfilled members of society without an adequate education, etc have signaled new social and educational needs (Routledge and Kegan, 1973:74). The construction of more and more educational institutions, expanding infrastructures, development of instructional materials and training of teachers to meet the new demands are more than these countries bear. Thus, education has been one of the biggest problems in developing countries. This calls for the need to develop an effective system of education.

Educational planners all over the world during the last decades have experienced a growing interest to find out a new system of education that satisfy the ever-growing educational needs. It is believed that old, well-tried methods have been found to be inadequate in meeting the demands of the expanding field of education. Moreover, many important issues in the need of new system of education stem from the life pattern of the working adults. Constraints of time, geographical location, finances, professional and social obligation etc., do not allow them to attend formal education.

In view of the afore- mentioned problems, most scholars agreed on distance education as the most economical system particularly in a country where there is meager material resources and large number of unqualified teachers. Kuhanga and others (in Wossenu Yiman and Befekadu Zeleke ,in Institute of Educational Research (1999:19) have indicated the following rational for using Distance education:

- *Developing countries need (trained) manpower to carry out their social and economic activities, and the opportunities for education in the traditional system of training manpower should be the focus of attention in order to alleviate the problem.*
- *There is a light need for the vast majority of working of people to have access to education on an extensive and egalitarian basis and at the same time to have a career opportunity available through out 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 marked 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 number of people who are widely dispersed and of low density.*

The tasks to which distance education is being applied are many and varied, which seems to indicate that one of the advantages of this methods is its flexibility and its capacity to adapt to different local conditions (Routledge and Kegan, 1973:3-8). That is why distance education has experienced dramatic growth internationally since the early 1980s (Simon and Macmillan, 1996:403). More recently, there is tremendous growth and diversity in distance education in the number and types of individuals learning outside traditional rooms, in the variety of providers, in the range and effectiveness of media technology serving as instructional tools for learning.

Today Ethiopia is one of the developing countries which claimed a lot to tap the afore- mentioned potentials of distance education. In this country, distance education in the form of correspondence education appeared as early as 1967 in private institution. British Tutorial College (BTC), International Correspondence Schools (ICS) and Trans World Tutorial College (TTC) are some. Relatively distance education is a new beginning to the Ethiopian public education system. The need to this system of education came on the scenes as early as 1960's. After a serious effort, the distance education panel organized in a semi-autonomous specialized institution, Educational Media Agency (EMA), which has the

responsibility of providing distance education at the secondary level. Currently, 6341 distance learners are working on various senior secondary courses in grades ranging from 9 to 12. The instructional print materials are produced centrally. Similarly, Educational Radio programs, as one of the instructional components, are also produced at EMA's central studio, and broadcast all over the country. Face-to-Face tutorial programs are conducted twice in a year in selected tutorial centres. The distance education panel has also undertaken the responsibility of instructional material development, material duplication and distribution, processing grade reports, managing technical services, enrolling new students, recording information, counseling, conducting fact-to-face programs, giving and correcting exams and assignments, training tutors, coordinators, course writers and editors.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Experience and research so far show that distance education like conventional studies have strengths and weakness. Studies of correspondence students have found that they are much more likely to drop out before completing their courses (Michael Potashnik and Joanne Copper in MOE, 1999:2). Evidently the problem is even worse in Ethiopia. For instance, survey study conducted by KUAWAB (1999:94) in Oromia region has depicted that out of 66 respondents of distance learners, 21.2% declared that they have already dropped out of distance education program. Moreover, 95.5% disclosed that they have lagged behind their studies. Figures at national level also indicated the low rate of completion. Within 15 years of its operation, out of the total about 6600 participants enrolled at all grade levels

(9-12), only about 850 had successfully completed grade 12. From this one can say that the completion rate of the distance learners seems to be low.

Some of the studies conducted in our country failed to investigate the organizational and managerial causes of low completion rate. For instance, the study made by Abraham Amsalu (1994) attempted to describe some study problems of distance students of the distance education panel in Ethiopia. In his study, he left aside to examine specifically the organizational and managerial factors affecting the rate of completion of the learners. Other study conducted by KUAWAB in 1999 in Oromia region did not exert the view to generalize the over all situation of the country. Thus, research works related to the organizational and managerial factors affecting the secondary level distance education appear to be almost non-existent.

1.3 The Purpose of the study

The major purpose of this study is, therefore, to investigate, through an extensive review of related literature and empirical evidence, the organizational and managerial factors that seriously affecting the implementation of secondary level distance education in Ethiopia.

With this general framework, the study will attempt to answer the following basic questions.

1. How far have the existing organizational structure and human resource capacity limited the scope of the panel's activities?
2. What are the major factors affecting the management of course production and distribution?
3. What are the problems related to administration of the two way interaction between the students and the organization and between the tutors and the learners?
4. To what extent do the instructional media (print, radio and face-to-face) are best integrated in the system.

1.4 Significance of the study

1. Experience and research so far show that distance education can be an effective, and cost effective means of providing education on large scale. It can be instrumental only if its organization and management system is so efficient and effective. In view of this fact, the investigation of the existing problems related to organization and management of instructional media development and distribution; media utilization, communication, face-to-face programs, training etc. are essential not only for the beneficiaries but also for the effective functioning of tutors, counselors, course writers, editors, designers, radio program producers and others. By doing so this study is believed to open the ground for subsequent programs to be designed and implemented more efficiently and effectively.
2. The findings may generate awareness among the decision makers and encourages the promotion of efficient managerial approaches in designing the future tasks of distance education.
3. Today, a number of private and government distance institutions are opened in the country. As to the history of distance education in the country, these institutions have inadequate experience in designing, planning and organizing distance programs. In this respect the study may serve the planners and policy

makers as an additional information source and document base in the process of designing, planning, organizing, implementing and supervising the distance education programs.

4. It is felt that the findings of this study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the operational system of distance education.
5. The findings of this study may also serve as a stepping-stone to other researchers for further investigations in the area.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

There are many factors that can affect the distance students at the secondary level. However, they vary according to the objective realities of the country. As employed in this study, only the organizational and managerial aspects were taken into account as the major independent variables of the study. This was due to the fact that the organizational and managerial systems within which distance education operate has significant influence on the system's management as a whole and on program effectiveness in particular. Secondly, some of the studies conducted in our country failed to investigate the organizational and managerial causes of low completion rate. Moreover, the distance students are distributed in wide geographical areas. Face-to-face contact with all these groups of people would be impossible. However, the writer designed to access some of the learners who will come to the institution for academic and administrative purposes from various regions. Moreover, some others have been accessed during face-to-face programs that have been conducted in selected 11 tutorial centers.

1.6 Limitation of the study

detained students, distribution of active /inactive students by grade levels were not available. Due to these problems, there was the need of sending questionnaires to dropout students through post office. The most serious limitation to the study was the difficulty to get available data. Data on dropouts, promotion,, which contributed to the low return of responses. Moreover, except for the year 2002, data on the participation of distance students on the tutorial program since the establishment of the organization were not available, which hindered to conduct the study in depth. Out of 300 questionnaires sent to distance students through mail, only 180 have been returned. On the other hand, the researcher has to wait for the questionnaires to be sent back after being filled by the respondents. However, the responses of the students were not quick. Due to this problem, the researcher was not able to collect the data

within the planned time-frame making the analysis a much difficult task even for submitting the first draft copy of the study to the advisor on time. This in turn affected the study from being deep and exhaustive.

1.7 The Research design

1.7.1 Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a descriptive method of research was employed on the assumption that it could help to reveal the existing organizational and managerial problems of secondary school distance education in Ethiopia.

1.7.2 Data Sources

While conducting this study, the writer used different methods to collect primary and secondary data so that the study will be properly substantiated. Among these, questionnaires survey, interview, document analysis and personal observation have been employed in the study.

1.7.3 Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire

Three kinds of questionnaires have been prepared based on organizational and managerial problems of distance education to collect primary data. The questionnaires consist of 33, 20 and 26 items for the learners, tutors and staff members respectively both closed and open ended. The questionnaires have been deliberately prepared in Amharic to facilitate the data collection; a direct translation of the questionnaires in English has been attached at the end of the paper as appendix.

The first part of the questionnaire deals with the personal background of staff members, tutors and students. Where as the second part is directed to the organization, and management aspects of instructional material production and distribution, face-to-face tutorial programs, communication, media utilization, counseling, training etc.

Cost considerations, the time factor, the geographical size of the country and the scattered nature of distance students made the use of a questionnaire more convenient. Before developing the questionnaires, however, the relevant and related literature have been thoroughly examined, selected and revised. Finally, the questionnaires have been pre-tested on 30 randomly selected distance learners, 5 tutors, 5 staff members and necessary modification has been made to improve the quality of the instrument to improve for the final study.

Interview

To get further information, interview has been conducted with the distance learners, head of distance education panel, tutors, counselors, student support coordinator and record clerks, and Regional distance education units. For this purpose, unstructured interview method was used to collect the necessary data from the respective interviewees

Observation

To supplement those official statistical data and documents, personal observation was conducted to identify problems related to examination process, admission, recording and counseling activities. Moreover, informal discussions concerning on operational problems had been made with distance learners, tutors and student support coordinator, editors, distance radio program producers etc.

1.7.4 Sampling population and Sampling Techniques

The distance education panel has a total of 6341 distance students actively studying in the respective grade levels (9-12). These are the studying population, out of which 450 respondents has been taken as a target group using systematic and availability sampling techniques. Moreover, 28 staff members from distance education panel have been included in the studying population. 300 distance students have been selected from their files with systematic sampling procedures, and then the questionnaires have been distributed through mail with a pre-paid envelope in return. At the same time, the rest of 148 questionnaires were administered to those students who came to DEP for academic and administrative purposes from various regions. The remaining 122 questionnaires have been distributed to 11 tutorial centres during face-to-face tutorial program. Like wise, 26 questionnaires have been distributed for part-time tutors living in Addis Ababa.

1.7.5 Variables

Dependent variable

. Dependent variable of the study includes: The secondary level distance education

Independent variables

- speed of turn-around time of assignment for submission
- reliability of postal service
- administration of course distribution
- staff and tutors training
- organizational structure
- Participation in the face-to-face program
- average distance of the respondents from the tutorial centres
- quality of tutoring
- media utilization

1.7.6 Statistical tools used

The data have been examined and explained on the basis of the information gathered. Percentage points have been calculated so that comparison between different variables is possible. Tables showing personal background of the learners, turn-around time of assignment for submission, round trip distance to the nearest post office, reliability of postal service, participation in the face-to-face program, average distance of the respondents from the tutorial centres are some that have been utilized and analyzed to come up with the final findings. Similarly, map showing the distribution of tutorial centres in the country has been included. Moreover, chi-square, and t-test has been used so as to identify significant difference regarding various variables in the judgments of the respondents

1.7.7 Organization of the Study

The paper has been organized into four chapters. The first one deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance, delimitation, limitation, research design and organization of the study. The whole of the second chapter deals with review of the related literature. The third chapter is meant for presentation and data analysis. Conclusion and Recommendations are presented in the last chapter.

1.7.8 Definition of the Key Terms

Completion rate: is defined in terms of the ratio between the amount of time

prescribed for a course and the time the course is completed. (Theodore E. Stone, 1992)

Correspondence Education: It is formal study and instruction conducted by mail, using texts,

course outlines and other materials, with lesson reports, corrections and examinations (Edstrom and others, 1970: 119)

Distance Education Panel: a panel within Educational Media Agency that provides Secondary level of distance education in Ethiopia

Distance Education: is a learning system where the teaching behaviors are separate

from the learning behaviors. The learner works alone or in a group- guided by study material arranged by the instructor who together with the tutors is in a location apart from the students, who however have the opportunity to communicate with the tutor/tutors with aid of one or more media such as correspondence, telephone, television and radio. Distance education may be combined with various forms of face-to-face meetings (Sewart and others, 1983:9)

Management: In this study the meaning of management include... planning, (including

decision making, policies, procedures, programmes, and methods), organizing (including staffing, coordination and communication), actuating, including leadership and motivation) and controlling (including supervision) (Mulumebet Mitiku, 1981: 22)

Organization: are relatively permanent social entities characterized by goal oriented

behavior, specialization and structure (Ayalew Shibeshi, 1991:2)

Rate of progress: The number of years a distance learner take to complete the respective grade levels within the expected completion time

(KUAWAB, 1999:94)

Tutor: is a member of the instructional staff who, through informal conferences, instructs

and examines students, sometimes while maintaining residence in a dormitory with the mass of students or an undergraduate or graduate student selected and recommended by professors to assist students by means of private conferences (Good, 1973: 626)

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Distance Education

In recent times, we quite often come across the term Distance Education in the Educational Journals and Newspaper. However, it lends itself to a variety of interpretations that empowers it as a concept. There are some misconceptions in

attempting to define distance education. According to Rumble (In IGNOU and International Extension College, 1993 :25), the term 'distance' has different connotations. He stated that:

It (distance) is certainly not restricted to the notion of mere geographical distance from the source of teaching: a high proportion of students enrolled in distance education courses live in densely populated urban areas close to the physical location of the institution from which their course materials are mailed.

Adding to this idea, Evans (1994) indicates that, the concept 'distance' refers to not just as static distances which can be measured in kilometers or miles, rather, they are complex and fluid 'distances' in the teacher-learner relationship. These are not just matters of geography or even time; the social, economic, spiritual, political experiential and personal dimensions add many inter woven layers to the distancing of the teacher from the student. It seems realistic and physical sense is not a major necessary defining feature of this form of educational provision. Even some of us may jump to the conclusion that any kind of acquisition of knowledge, skills etc., by a learner independently is distance education (Koul and Ramanujam; 1989:7).

From the above statements we can conclude that, as such the concept does not include all kinds of self-learning or private studies. But distance education is meant for people who want to pursue their studies with out attending regular classes but who need the help of some teaching institution.

Manjulika S V Venugopal Reddy in Indira Gandhi National Open University, (1989:3), quoted the different nomenclatures given to distance education by different authorities in different countries. Moor (1975) names it "telematic teaching", Delling (1976) calls it "distance study", Sims (1977) as "correspondence education"; Holmberg (1977) as "distance education", and so on.

According to Holmberg (1995:2), the concept of 'distance education' implies consistent non-contiguous communication between the supporting organization and its students. This communication is of two kinds. One-way traffic in the form of pre-produced course materials sent from the supporting organization and involving students in interaction with texts; this can be described as simulated communication-the two way

traffic, i.e. real communication between students and the supporting organization. Distance education, therefore, has two constituent components, the teaching exposition referred to as one-way traffic and the real communication by means of which students access to the personal counseling and tutoring. With this in mind of its two constituent elements, Holmberg defined distance education as covering the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the continuous immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and teaching of a supporting organization. Keegan (1980:5) on the other hand has synthesized all the various views held with regard to the definition of the term distance education and identified six key elements of distance education:

- The quasi- permanent separation of teacher and learner throughout the length of the learning process, this distinguishes it from conventional face-to-face education.
- The influence of an educational organization both in planning and preparation of learning materials and in the provision of student support services; this distinguishes it from private study and teach-yourself programs;
- The use of technical media; print, audio, video or computer, to unite teacher and learner and carry the content of the course;
- The provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate a dialogue; this distinguishes it from other uses of technology in education;
- The quasi-permanent absence of a learning group throughout the length of the learning process so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meeting for both didactic and socialization purposes.

Thus, the basic characteristic of this form of education is the separation of teacher and learner which distinguishes it from conventional, oral, group based education, the volitional control of learning by the student rather from the distant instructor, and non

contiguous communication between student and teacher, mediated by print or some form of technology. This separation differentiates distance education from all form of conventional, face-to-face, direct teaching and learning (Holmberg, 1974). However, distance education can and usually should include some face-to-face study. A noteworthy feature of distance education is that it needs massive organizational effort that is similar to industrial organizations (EMA 1999:1-20). Thus, we see that distance education institutions have two distinct characteristics- academic and industrial. The "academic" represents the development and preparation of course material, whereas " industrial" refers to production and distribution of educational material. Other scholars try to verify the concept of distance education by comparing it with the conventional system. According to Holumberg (1995:18), distance education is different from conventional schooling and has so many characteristics of its own that as an academic area of study it may be regarded as a discipline in its own right. Adding to this point , Sewart and others (1988:13-14) state the following distinctive features between the two:

- In traditional education a teacher teaches. In distance education an institution teaches. This is a radical difference.
- In distance education the goal of linking of learning materials to learning is at the centre of the organizational structure. In conventional education the inter subjectivity that Peters saw as central to the teaching learning process is automatically set up. In distance education this 'inter subjectivity' is lacking and there can be no guarantee that anything will happen once learning materials have been developed and dispatched to the students.
- From the student's point of view there are important differences between the two systems of education. The distance system gives a radical new meaning to the concept of the independence of the adult learner. In this system he is responsible for initiating the learning process and, to a large for maintaining it throughout. Questions of motivation and skill acquisition, of a specifically different kind to those required in traditional education, need to be tackled to combat the phenomena of non-starters and drop-outs that have been a feature of this type of education throughout the last one hundred years.

- Management skills that are more akin to those found in industrialized enterprises are needed in distance education. The distance system has daily preoccupations with lead times, deadlines, print runs, job schedules, typefaces, warehousing, delivery and dispatch and planning decisions on educational priorities that must take place two, three or more years before teaching is to take place.
- Distance education is a form of education that can easily become depersonalized both for staff and students. There is little doubt that the absence of students can create a strained atmosphere for lecturers. The constant process of writing creatively for distance students, whether alone or in a course team framework, poses problems, which are not fully resolved even in those institutions where the lecturer has some responsibilities for on-campus students as well.

From this we can justify that systems of distance education, of course, differ from the formal education.

2.1.1. Innovative Aspects of Distance Education

Distance education is a relatively new development in the realm of pedagogy and as such it is innovation in itself. It is a system that jumped the four walls, is capable of reaching the economically, geographically, socially etc., disadvantaged groups of the society everywhere and every time to their satisfaction. The relevance of distance education lies for both developing and developed countries. However, it has much to do for developing countries where shortages of highly skilled teachers and instructors, schools or institutions, teaching materials and finance are acute. However, it does not mean that distance teaching is necessarily a cheap way of solving educational problems (Indira Gandhi National Open University and International Extension College, 1993). This is due to the fact that distance educations happen to be the only means in some occasions. For example, one cannot think of training a mass of unqualified teachers taking out of the schools for financial and social reasons. Under this circumstance, the distance education system can be cheaper and appropriate.

Distance education as a system is often regarded as the most innovative, which gives learners independence of high degree. This view has been expressed by Charles Awedemeyer (in Holmberg, 1995:8) as follows:

- Instruction should be available any place where there are students - or even only one student whether or not there are teachers at the same place at the same time.
- Instruction should place greater responsibility for learning on the student.
- The instructional plan or system should free faculty members from custodial duties so that more of the teacher and learner's time can be given to truly educational tasks.
- The instructional system should offer learners wider choices (more opportunities) in subjects, formats and methodologies.
- The instructional system should use, as appropriate, all the teaching media and methods that have been proven to be effective.
- The instructional system should mix and combine media and methods so that each subject or unit within a subject is taught in the most effective way.
- The media and technology employed should be articulated in design and use; that is, different media or technologies should reinforce each other and the structure of the subject matter and teaching plan.
- The instructional system should preserve and enhance opportunities for adaptation of differences among individual learners, as well as among teachers.
- The instructional system should evaluate student achievement not by raising barriers concerning the place where the student studies, the rate at which he studies, the methods by which he studies, or even the sequence in which he studies, but instead by evaluating as directly as possible the achievement of learning goals.
- The system should permit students to start, stop, and learn at their own pace, consistent with learner short-and long-range goals, situations and characteristics.

Holmberg (1995:163) agrees on the afore listed characters. However, adding to Awedemeyer, he listed the following innovatory characters of distance education as well.

- The particular organization which makes it possible to provide for both independent individual learning and mass education through personal tutoring and more or less industrialized' working methods.
- The possibilities it offers for economies of scale
- The influence distance education exerts on adult education, further training, and labour market conditions, by opening new study opportunities as well as through its methods and organization.

These quotations can be regarded as a summarizing declaration of intent with which many distance educators can identify. In distance education system using these characteristics to the full, it is quiet possible for each learner to begin, stop, and complete the course as work, family and health conditions allow, to study at his /her own pace, and to disregard all the organizational and administrative restrictions usually inevitable in face-to-face education. Hence one can confidently conclude that distance education with its three basic components Viz. printed material, contact program and electronic media is a truly educational innovation of this century (Distance Education Panel , 1982:1-5).

We have considered the arguments infavour of distance education. Most of its problems and constraints, however, are experienced by the students.

Problems and Constraints in distance education

Dodds Tony (1983: 10-11) identified the following difficulties:

1. The first is the problem of isolation students studying alone at home, far from their tutors, have no immediate source of help, no-one to answer questions about things they don't understand, no-one to seek encouragement from. In many cases they don't even have the support of fellow students experiencing similar difficulties.

2. It encourages and depends on rote learning. The student who learns the lesson notes by heart and regurgitates then in the examination stands the best chance of success. Correspondence education, by itself, is certainly a very good vehicle for teaching parrot-fashion repetition. But it does not need to be.
3. Most distance students have been outside formal education for some time, and may well have been unsuccessful students if they were ever in it. So their study skills are poorly developed, their approach to study is hesitant, and they lack self-confidence. Without a regular guide or tutor they are likely to make mistakes, become discouraged and to become dropouts or failures.
4. There is therefore a danger that distance education may be seen as, and allowed to become, inferior to Orthodox education, to what is traditionally provided in schools and colleges. If in practice a distance teaching system leaves its students isolated, and if its courses concentrate on the transfer of facts and encourage rote learning of those facts, then it is second best.
5. The problem of isolation, the boredom that comes from rote learning and a common belief that distance teaching is inferior to traditional forms of education, often lead to a high dropout rate. This is a particular danger if the production and distribution system does not keep up with its students, so that their college failing to get their study materials out to them on time increases their self-doubt and loneliness.

From the above quotation, we can understand that distance education as a system has its own problems and constrains. Therefore, for a given distance education project to succeed, those people involved in the system must find out ways of minimizing its difficulties. In view of this, it is of prime importance to make every possible effort to reduce the loneliness of the long-distance students. Moreover, by encouraging active learning and with a regular guide the distance students can be motivated. However, that job depends on employing good academic staff and effective and efficient organization and management.

2.1.2. Target Group

It is vital that we should consider the character of the learning distance education has to support. According to Lockwood (1995: 311), typically, open and distance education

students are adults, which means that they have full and busy lives with many responsibilities often they will be undertaking their studies after all other essential tasks have been completed usually at night time. There are those who are very able and confident, others may lack the confidence or be studying for the first time since leaving school.

This means adults are individuals possessing unique needs, values, attitudes, goals, beliefs, motivations, and self-concepts. Certainly this complicates the process of education, with such diversity in goals, needs, and motivations. Where does the distance educators begin?. It is evidently important to know what types of learners are to be taught before distance education programs can be designed. Their general education and prior knowledge of the subject to be learnt must necessarily exert decisive influences on the teaching.

In view of this fact Major and Beach (in Holmberg, 1995:37) state that:

The course must be designed for the target population (students) that actually exists. It is foolish and wasteful to design a course without defining the target population. The major characteristics of the target population constitute the starting- point of the course, the performance called for in the course objectives constitutes the finishing point, and the process of turning the incoming student into the skilled graduate of the course is derived by subtracting what the student already is able to do from what you want him to be able to do.

This is to stress that any distance education designers have to accept the point students' prior knowledge and proficiency must be the basis of any education endeavor. In other words, administrators, instructors and curriculum designers must take the needs of the adult student population into account when proposing theoretical andragogically based instruction designed for distance education programs. There is no indication that distance learners are homogeneous group. The only common factor is that, with few exceptions, these students are adults and consequently are gainfully employed and/or look after their families. According to Holmberg(1991:21), the 25-35 age group seems to be the largest in most organizations. Distance study evidently contributes to up ward social mobility. Gradually older students too, not only those around 40 and 50 but also

old-age pensioners, seem to show a preference for distance education. Likewise, study conducted by Aslanian and Brickell (1988), in Simon and Macmillan (1996: 403), reveals that, in general, the students are married (61%), female (58%), part-time students (80%), employed full time (71%), and paying for their own schooling (60%).

Many students choose the distance education mode because it suits their lifestyle and learning style. They prefer the self-pacing and open approach to study (warner and Wilkinson in *Research in Distance Education*, 1992:4). Also stated that, for these students attendance on campus may be a necessary evil, which they have to endure because they wish to study a particular discipline. Other students choose distance learning solely because they are too remote from the institution of their choice or they are already in full-time employment and need to fit their learning expenses into their free time. Moreover, factors like working conditions (eg. house wives who look after their children and domestic affairs and mobile workers including armed forces) largely confined persons (prisoners), conflicts in timetable and old people who feel embraced and uneasy when attending classes with children hinder people from attending regular day-classes (EMA, 2000). Therefore, distance education is expected to cater those who could not go for higher education at an earlier stage for one reason or the other; those who have had education for some years and have got their careers but would like to continue their education for improving or their knowledge and advancement in carrier; drop outs who want to have a second chance- people discontinue their studies for various reasons; those who want to make their education a life long affair (IGNOU, 1993:1-20)

In summary, it is important to recognize here that distance learners vary drastically from region to region, from country to country and among the groups as well on the socio-economic and geographical differences. Therefore, there is no simple formula of designing the distance programs that fit all the target groups. However, the gap can be bridged with effective planning, design and implementation of educational programs. Thus, achieving educational programs require, among other things, a management approach that explicitly recognizes the need to manage diversities.

2.2. Distance Education-Stages of Growth

2.2.1. Need for a new system of Education

The fast growth of industrialization and growth of science and technology have contributed for the explosion of information and knowledge over the current century, changes in technology have made it more difficult for informal systems to suffice in providing the necessary education and training people needed (Hakemulder, 1979). The demand for formal education has increased drastically all over the world. Parents see the school as a way to the mastery of new skills and at the same time as a way to earn additional money and attain better living standards.

Technical changes in medicine, in agriculture and in engineering have opened new ways of life to the entire society. However, may be open only if they have accessed to some start of relevant education and training. This undoubtedly increases the demand for education in scope and variety to cop up with the new demands of life. This calls for the improvement on changes of curriculum so as to fit the newer educational needs. Moreover, the demand for school places, however, is very much bigger than the capacity of many economies to supply them Even the industrialized countries are encountering problems in financing this costly and not very efficient school system (Hakemulder, 1979). Accordingly, Ramanujam (in EMA, 1999: 1- 2), had the following to say regarding the problems associated with formal education.

... there are problems of access, quality and relevance unless we reorganize and reorient our educational system, we would not be able to overcome them. We have, therefore, to think of alternatives and different strategies. One such strategy, which is catching up all over the world, is that of distance education. Thanks to the availability of modern communication technologies, it is possible for us to provide access to education to a large number of people, improve the quality of education and provide relevant courses.

Hence, education is not to serve all members of the society in all places in time. There are some sections of the society such as adults who may not afford the time and money to continue their education. It is for these reasons that educational planners and agree that they can no longer stick on to the old pattern of classroom teaching or on campus

studies as the only way of imparting education. This has led to the search for alternative methods of education which can reach more people, and so more cheaply.

The whole mark of the above statements is expanding of education for all, not just to the fortunate minority in school but also to the whole community. To this effect, Distance education ensures this possibility.

2.2.2. Correspondence Education: The early Stage of Distance Education

If we try to trace back to genesis of distance education, we find that this form of education happen to be began since human beings have been able to read and write. People even in the primitive stage exchange useful sometimes educational information to each other by means of letter i.e. they have corresponded with each other. Dodds (in IGNUOU and International extension College, 1993:7) states that:

In the Christian tradition, one of the earlier and most significant efforts at religious education was the letters of St. Paul. The Islamic tradition records that the prophet himself passed on much of his teaching to followers who lived at a distance from him by letter (in some countries the phrase used for correspondence education is 'education by letter'.

The term correspondence "refers to the mode of delivery of learning materials to learners" (Koul and Rammanujam, 1989:8). Correspondence education is taken to denote teaching in writing, by means of so-called self-Instructional texts, combined with communication in writing, i.e. correspondence between student and tutors (Holmberg, 1995:3). Historically, the primary means of communication between learners and teachers separated by space and time has been through the printed word, and this is still the preferred medium of life rally and distance education institutions/ universities of the world.

Thus, the first type of distance education to be introduced was correspondence education. This was an innovation, not so much in technology as in the organization of teaching and learning. Otto peters has pointed out that this is the first industrialized

form of education, characterized by mass production and division of labour (Peters, 1993:41). However, the correspondence mode of education suffers from many drawbacks. IGNOU (1989:8) has pointed out that:

....It offers the same conventional courses which are offered by the traditional colleges and universities. Many correspondence institutions usually send some kind of lecture notes to their students. The learning materials in print are mostly in the form of textbooks, which hardly help the students learn on their own. Admission policies and evaluation methods adopted by correspondence institutions are similar to those of the traditional institutions. The potential of the mass media is hardly used for educational purposes.

As a result, the correspondence mode of education could not meet all the varied individual needs of the modern learner. Quality of education, therefore, suffers. This however, is not to deny the fact that of late, many such institutions have been making conscious efforts to improve their materials in various ways.

2.2.3. Distance Education-The present form

The phrase distance education is quite a recent origin. Even did not exist at the beginning of 1971 (Dods in IGNOU, 1993:1). The concept has evolved from varied names such as 'home study', 'Postal tuition', 'correspondence course', 'independent study', 'external study' etc. The educationist thought that the potentials of the various educational media and means should be exploited maximally. Educational media and the audio-visual aids thus became part of the instructional process. Student support services are considered to be one of the major components of 'Distance Education'. Hence, more recently most scholars agreed that the three elements: Correspondence, broadcasting and occasional face-to-face tuition, are the most common elements in what we have just defined as distance education. However, the three have their own different connotation. Dodds (1993:6) has further to say the following in regards to the conceptual meaning of the three elements.

We talked about correspondence education, to describe a method of teaching through printed materials sent by post to students who studied them and sent back exercise, to their tutors who in turn marked and returned them by post. We also

talked about 'educational broadcasting the use of radio or television to teach both school and adult students. Face-to-face tuition, by its nature not distance teaching. However.--- include some elements of face-to-face tuition most regularly incorporated into distance education teaching systems.

Now, multi-media self-instructional materials, student support services etc. cannot be described by the term 'correspondence'. That is the reason why the term 'correspondence' has been replaced by 'Distance'. In recognition of these changes, the International council for correspondence Education changed its name in 1982 to International council for Distance Education.

2.2.4 Distance Education:- The World Scene

Today, many countries increasingly use this system for educating people and has become popular in the overall sphere of education. As of July 1995, there are 779 institutions in 95 countries practicing distance education programs. The break up for each region is provided below.

Distance Education - The world over

Regions	Countries	Institutions
Africa	34	122
Asia	18	97
Australia	4	66
Europe	18	207
Middle East	2	3
North America	2	217
Caribbean	4	7
Latin America	13	60
Total	95	779

The above figure is a clear indication, to the steady growth and wide spread acceptance of distance education through out the world. Some of the reasons for the spread of distance education are population explosion, appalling illiteracy rate, ever increasing number of aspirants for higher education, technological growth that herald new knowledge, the need for up-to-dating the work force, etc. IGNOU (1995:27)

2.3 Distance Education In Ethiopia

2.3.1 Historical development

During the last few decades, there has been a growing awareness in Africa of the need to introduce a new delivery system, distance education, in order to satisfy the educational requirements in spite of poor communications, scattered settlement and lack of adequate qualified personnel. Consequently, many countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, Malawi and Botswana have set government sponsored institutions geared to specific national priorities. Most of these countries have succeeded in developing correspondence courses at least at primary and secondary levels.

Today, it is a proven fact that conventional educational institutions cannot fulfill the educational demand of both children and adults simply because school facilities are inadequate. Ethiopia, a developing country, is not an exception. This pressing educational problem had led the country to the search for alternative solutions such as Distance Education. Its need /Distance Education/ is world wide both in developed and developing countries, though it has a greater significant role to play in Ethiopia where there are not enough institutions for school age children; where improving the skill and training of working adults are needed badly; where giving the educational opportunities for those adults who discontinued their education for various reasons is a must and where tackling the problems of literacy is prevalent in rural or remote regions and is demanding Distance Education Division (1970 E.C.:5)

Adding to this, Distance Education Division (1982:5-6) has stated the following justification for the starting of Distance Education in Ethiopia.

- It is affirmed by the departments survey of November 1977, that there is a felt need for correspondence education. For instance, out of 855 factory workers with secondary level education, 735 persons filled in the questionnaires showing interest in correspondence education, which is the educational alternative for the adult population.

- It enables to disseminate educational opportunities to all corners of the country, so that it lessens the time old grievance of centralizing educational opportunities.
- It tremendously reduces the number of requests for transfer to Addis Ababa which many unqualified elementary school teachers and workers in remote areas demand under the pretext of improving their level of education.

In view of the above facts, one can infer that the expansion of distance education program is highly timely and desirable for the promotion and development of adult education throughout the country.

The initiatives to launch the distance education program have emanated from both private and public institutions.

1. Private Initiative

I. External Commercial Correspondence Institutions

The first pioneers of distance education, in the form of correspondence education, appear to have been externally based on commercial correspondence education institutions. According to KUAWAB (1999:17) an institution known as the British Tutorial College (BTC), which was based in Kenya, had opened an office in Addis Ababa as early as 1967 and offered correspondence education courses in Ethiopia. However, admission to higher educational institutions was based on students' achievements in entrance examinations conducted by the examining body of the University of London. "Between 1967 and 1978, 7,000 students were reported to have graduated from the system" Department of Adult Education (In KUAWAB, 1999:17). After the establishment of the BTC, International Correspondence Schools (ICS) and Trans-World Tutorial College (TTC) established offices in Addis Ababa in 1972 and 1980 respectively. Courses offered by ICS and BTC were: Marketing and sales management, Management, Office Management, Book Keeping and Accounting, Secretarial Science, Industrial Technology and Auto-Mechanics, Tropical Agriculture and Journalism. However, the students of these institutions were unhappy. They felt to have wasted their time and money in exchange for educational credential. This is due to the fact that the education these institutions offered lacks academic accreditation (KUAWAB, 1999:18)

II. Agri-service Ethiopia

In 1969, NGO initiated distance education pilot program of a non-formal education nature moved in by Agri-Service Ethiopia in the current Wolayita Zone of SNNPR.

Agri-service Ethiopia (ASE) emerged as a corporate body of the INADES Formation (African Institute for Social and Economic Development), which then organized and operated correspondence education to farmers and women in nine West African Francophone countries. Basically "the principal aim of ASE was to promote improvement in agricultural methods, community development, as well as the improvement of home conditions" Kabwasa, (in KUAWAB, 1999:18). Through the provision of adult education ASE aimed to enhance the socio-economic development

of rural communities particularly at rural peasants and rural women. Home Economics and Agriculture are the major correspondence courses offered by ASE, where by each of these courses had an average of 20 study units and were studied over duration of two years. Assignment for submission and face-to-face group tutorials, radio support and field visits are also parts of the components of the distance education. The target groups of the correspondence courses were peasants and rural women. The ASE's correspondence education program consists of both illiterate and literate group (KUAWAB, 1999:18). The literate group leaders organized the illiterate farmers around them so that they can study the correspondence courses together. The fact that ASE, as a corporate member of the INADES formation, was able to cater for illiterate farmers and women through a correspondence course was quite an innovation.

III. National Vocational Correspondence Enterprise (NVCE)

Alpha International, and Ethiopian Private business firm established the National Vocational Correspondence Enterprise (NVCE) in 1980/81.

The following are the major objectives of NVCE as stated by Kabwasa (1999:19):

- *Upgrade and improve the skill of untrained but experienced low level technicians by providing them with basic scientific and technical knowledge that relates to and enhance their practical experiences.*
- *Provide manpower-training service to the public and private enterprises that wish to update or upgrade the skills of their employees while they are still working.*

At the beginning, the students are required to take Book Keeping, Electricity, Auto Mechanics, General Mechanics, Agriculture, Home Science and Wood Technology.

A year later two more courses namely, purchasing and store management; and personnel and production management were added. NVCE operates from its central office in Addis Ababa and has no regional offices.. "NVCE's Certificate is accredited by the ministry of Education and is equivalent to comprehensive high school vocational stream certificate" (Kabwasa, 1999:19). Correspondence courses are the backbone of this institution. Eventhough, it had initially planned to provide learning kits and face-to-face tutorials for subjects such as Auto mechanics, General Mechanics and

Electricity, this was not put into practice. This highly dependency on a single media is not advisable for immature students, and for students with limited educational background. As all the courses included assignments for submission, NVCE also provided marking service for which it employed qualified and experienced tutors on part time basis from the Technical/Vocational schools in Addis Ababa. Postal communication was the principal means for exchanging learning materials and assignments between NVCE and its students.

2. Public Initiative

At the beginning of modern education in Ethiopia, the problem of teachers was one of the big problems. However, attempts were made to satisfy the educational demands of the people by employing trained and untrained teachers in both primary and secondary schools. In the meantime, in service distance education program was designed particularly to improve the academic performance of teachers. Thus, a sort of distance education program, which is known as directed study for teachers implemented in 1960 E.C. (Getachew Kelemu and others, 1983:6). Directed Study for Teachers is in service program which was run by Ethiopian US Cooperative Education program to enhance the academic performance of those unqualified teachers. However, the program had failed before it evolved to distance education system, this was due to the fact that the two countries had stopped suddenly cooperation in education in 1964 E.C. (Ibid, 1983). Here after the in service teacher training returned back to its traditional conventional system.

The role of Addis Ababa University

In response to the repeated demands made by people working in various ministries, factories and military organizations, the Addis Ababa University and Ministry of Education Jointly planned to develop senior secondary correspondence courses. This was as far back as 1967 (Distance education Division, 1982:4). On the basis of the agreement then reached, the correspondence study unit was established under the supervision of the Extension Division of Addis Ababa University. In fact, the correspondence study program had been led by the Extension Division of the university

till November 1976, when it was wholly and officially transferred to the ministry of education. Even though significant contribution had been made; the program was not implemented while under the administration of the Addis Ababa University. Lack of competent course writers, editors who came from foreign countries were available only for a short period of time, the authors and editors who signed an agreement to prepare courses did not live up to their commitment, the course writers were not happy with the money they were paid and change of senior secondary school curricula have been emphasized for the mission to be unsuccessful (Distance Education Division, 1982:3-4). Mean while, just after the break of the on going revolution, the whole responsibility was shouldered by the Ministry of Education and began to expedite the tasks which has come to fruition now. Here, it would be appropriate to state that, the Ministry of Education having seen the use of distance education on large scale in Nigeria and Britain, realized the vast possibilities of this new type of educational opportunity and introduced it into the work plan. In the mean time, the ministry of Education, to strengthen the Distance Education Division (panel) sent three Ethiopians to Kenya, Tanzania and England to study about correspondence education development. Then after, with the experience so far gained, the DEP has launched the secondary level of distance Education program in Ethiopia in 1978.

2.3.2 Organizational Structure and Objectives of

The Distance Education Panel

The ministry of Education has technical support services under its auspices. One of these technical arms is a semi-autonomous specialized institution, Educational Media Agency (EMA). The distance education panel is one of the panels in EMA. Currently, the panel is offering secondary level distance education in Ethiopia for 6341 students. The panel has two major functional departments (Units). These are: course development and student support service units. The course development unit prepares guidelines for editors and/or authors; coordinates the work of subject matter experts, critically examines whether or not course manuscripts are of the expected educational standard and checks that courses are based on the current curricula of the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, the Tutorial unit train and assign tutors in the respective grade levels; gives individual instruction to students and solve their academic and

administrative problems and pin-points deficiencies of courses based on feed back from students and tutors.

Objectives of Distance Education

The objectives of the distance education have been changing overtime due to changes in the educational policy of the country. According to EMA (in KUAWAB, 1999:5) the following are the most recently declared objectives of distance education in Ethiopia.

- Contribution towards the democratization of educational opportunities by providing secondary and technical/ vocational continuing education, at a distance, for people who are unable to make use of the conventional education provisions.
- Assist the national effort to improve the quality of education by training under qualified and/or untrained teachers of all categories.
- Develop and implement a national plan for developing a capacity for distance education as an integral part of all educational training systems.
- Contribute towards the realization of the national goal to evolve a system for continuous professional development of teachers of all levels by providing multi-media in-service teacher training packages, at a distance, both for group and individual learning.
- Assist the national manpower development endeavor by developing and offering need-base packages, to people working in industry, commerce and social service such as economic sectors.
- Provide technical and professional support to institutions of higher learning, which seek to organize distance education for off campus students.
- Provide technical and professional support to regions in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating distance education programs, both in the formal and non-formal education area.

- Conduct research and evaluative studies in the field of distance education with the view to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, in the context of the Ethiopia's objectives conditions and needs.
- Promote and popularize distance education techniques and methods in all levels of education and manpower training.

The whole mark of the above objectives consist of giving educational opportunities for those adults as well as school drop-outs who discontinued their education for economic and social reasons; improving the skills and training of the people; providing the opportunity for those who want to broaden and enrich their knowledge and outlook. In the final analysis, the aim of the DEP is to increase the size of the literate population of our country.

Major programs

According to EMA, the following are the most recently declared programs of distance education panel.

I. The Senior Secondary Distance Education Program

Secondary education was the first sector to seek the support of distance education. Principally, the aim of this program is to provide an alternative continuing education to the working adults, who could not, for various reasons, make use of the conventional system.

II. In service-Teacher Training

There are over 21,400 unqualified second cycle teachers teaching in the respective grade levels (5-8). To upgrade these unqualified teachers the panel has designed a distance education program that entails the participation of the regional education bureaus and teacher training colleges actively. In this program, Educational Media Agency has shouldered the responsibility of providing technical, financial and material support to strengthen the capacity of regions and teacher training colleges.

Target Group

The distance education panel launched its secondary level education to general people at large. The study conducted by DEP in 2001 revealed that the distance learners are not homogenous group. These are mainly factory workers, agricultural extension workers, teachers, health workers, member of the armed forces and police, and mobile workers etc.

2.4 The Concept of Organization and Management

Organization

Experience has shown that in recent years to use the terms "management" and "organization" has been used to define two distinct and incompatible phenomena (Urwick, 1970: 361-371).

One definition describes 'organization' as the process of breaking down the object of managerial behaviour (such as a business firm, hospital or university) in to a logical structure of positions and then grouping the required activities under them. The second definition uses "organization" to describe a collection of individuals seeking a common goal.

The above statements need to be simplified. To avoid unnecessary confusion, we will make the following distinction.

When speaking of "organization as a process" (structuring positions), the verb organizing will be used to describe one part of the manager's job. The noun organization will be used to describe a "collection of individuals working toward a common goal. "According to Urwick (1946: 370-371), a distinction such as this is essential to an understanding of past contribution to management thought and to the accuracy of the future development of management as a discipline.

On the other hand ,Ayalew (1991:2) defined organization as relatively permanent social entities characterized by goal oriented behavior ,specialization and structure.Organizational structure is of great importance not only in specifying the

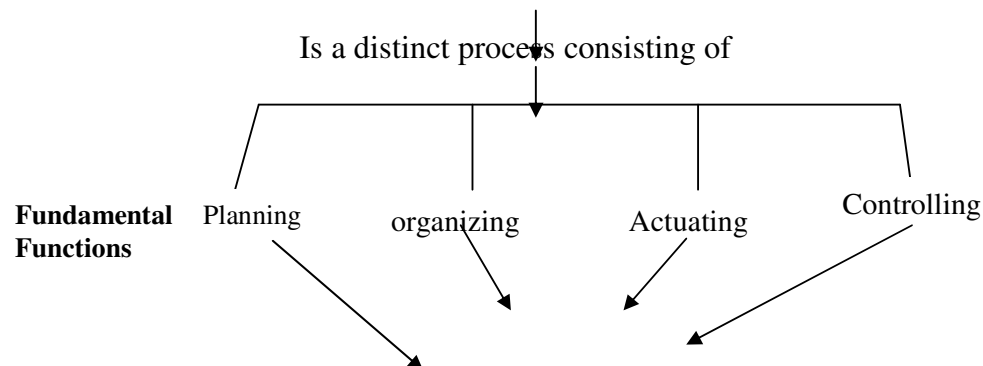
relationships of work activities but also in defining authority relationships. If organization are to meet student needs, it has to fit the objective reality of the given environment. For instance, as organization grows, however, and the number of staff and the volume of work increase, it becomes impossible for everyone to be involved in all activities. Jobs get done more quickly and more effectively if the work is clearly divided between groups of staff members whose functions and skills are closely related to each other. Hence, the growth of departments. The pattern of departments should, as nearly as possible, follow the pattern of functions the institutions has to carry. That is why Ayalew (1991:1) argued the need to have effective management and organization if educational organizations are to meet student needs, parent and employee expectations.

Management

Another source of difficulty arises with respect to the term administration. Some writers carefully distinguish between management and administration, arguing that the former is working with people and is built upon the cornerstones of people, resources, and processes. In this scheme, administration is working with things such as organization (structure) and human and operational systems (communication) (Brice, 1971:65). Although there may be reasons for such a distinction under certain conditions, we shall take the liberty of using the terms interchangeably in this particular study.

Management has traditionally been associated almost exclusively with the economic, or profit-oriented firm (Mulumebet Mitiku, 1981: 7). However, management extends to all areas of organized activity such as the governmental, health care and educational fields. On the same page Mulumebet further stated that management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, utilizing in each both science and art and followed in order to accomplish predetermined objectives. Figure 1 illustrates further elaboration of this definition in diagrammatic form. Reading downward, the concept of management can be identified as a distinct process consisting of major functions of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling.

Management



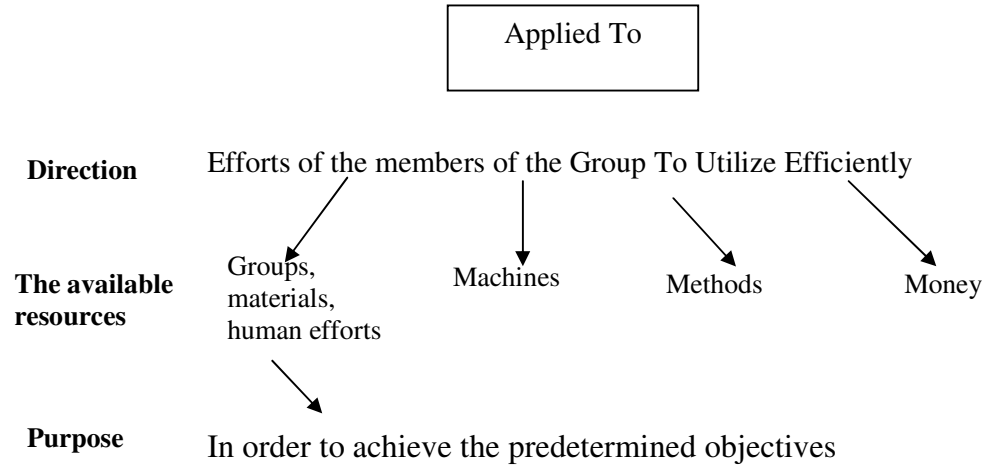


Fig.1. Definition of Management in diagrammatic form (Mulumebete Mitiku, 1981:7)

The afore mentioned fundamental functions of management (planning, organizing, actuating and controlling) applied to the efforts of the members of the group in order to efficiently utilize available resources. That is, if a given sector is to continue operating, certain common functions of management must generally be performed regardless of whether the enterprise is state or privately owned. The socio-economic conditions, activities, the people, the physical facilities, and the environment may change from region to region or country to country, from sector to sector, and from department to department, but the principal function is identical in all circumstances. In other words, in a given sector or enterprise, at least some objectives and action plans must be formulated, activities must be controlled, and feasible organizational structure must be established; at least some authority must be delegated and responsibility exacted; and personnel must be recruited, trained, motivated, led and supervised.

Problems In Applying Principles of Management

There is no denying that management is an increasingly important factor in making all the links in the organization of society function more effectively. It helps achieve better equipment, plants, offices, products, services, and human relations (Mulumebet Mitiku, 1981:22). The whole mark is be it educational enterprises or other sectors, its survival is in direct link to their ability to provide useful goods and services. However, from the society's point of view, the basic problem of educational organization and management is to become steadily more efficient over time. In order to achieve this goal of efficiency, the management functions have to be oriented in line with the objective reality of the given environment. Moreover, principles are basic; yet they are not absolute (Ibid : 28). They are not laws and they do not imply that the same identical result will occur in each set of circumstances that appear to be similar. In Application to management, principles are flexible in that they should take into account particular, special, and changing conditions. Adding to this, Thomson (1990:5) and UNESCO (1992: 35) stated that management varies according to situation, nature and objectives it is aiming to attain. This implies that management

slightly adopted roles in different social groups and institutions, and serve specific ends and purposes in education, business and other sectors. Similarly, theories of educational management are adopted in industrial and business sectors. The management of distance education, thus, requires further adaptation from the very nature of characteristics of its program, target groups, objectives, etc, as stated earlier. Probably the most important reason for the success of a project is appropriate design and adequate preparation that are particularly adapted to local political, administrative, economic, cultural conditions, and other related factors emerge as essential ingredients of successful implementation (Tarakegn, 1999:52). This implies that each project faces a unique set of situations, many of which can be controlled while some others can not. In this case, effective project design that fit to a given circumstances is a vital factor. Moreover, it is almost a requirement that good educational programs are associated with good managers. The influence of the quality of management on project performance is usually visible. Regarding this, Kennedy in (Mulumebet Mitiku, 1981: 19) stated the following statement.

"we recognize the Pioneering quality of the astronauts who are blazing trails in space, but behind their exploits and every other exciting new technological development lies the complex work of organizing and managing advanced new systems."

From the above quotation one can infer that no enterprise can long be successful that does not utilize effective management. Thus, it is under these parameters, that major factors affecting the management of secondary level distance education of Ethiopia will be identified.

2.5 The Organization and Administration of Distance Education

Programs

Effective management is central to all good education practice; however, it is vital for distance education because the activities involved in developing and teaching distance education programs differ in key respects from conventional education (Rumble, J. in World Bank, 1992:27). The range of activities involved in distance teaching is wider, and the skills required to develop, produce, and deliver courses are more diverse than

those typically found in conventional education. The services that must under all circumstances be organized are the development and technical production of distance study courses; the distribution of course materials, the non-contiguous two-way communication between students and tutors/ counselors, record keeping. In some cases services will also be required for course certificates; examinations and supplementary face-to-face contacts between students and tutors/counselors.

2.5.1 Staff Development

Distance education requires teams of people performing different tasks and working at different levels to accomplish common institutional goals. As a result, it is difficult to imagine a distance teaching equivalent to the one-teacher school.

Training of staff, writers, tutors and administrators is an aspect of distance teaching institutions, which must surely attract considerable attention. Such training ought to reinforce what is accepted as one of the fundamental principles of distance teaching, namely, that any course should relate firmly to the needs and background of the students, Routledge and Kegan (1973:6). Moreover, staff training is most successful if it is reinforced by refresher courses, workshops, periodic seminars, and experience share with other distance institutions-local and abroad and regular tutors of the areas covered by the institution.

In contrast to staff development, which is based on the assumption that the better technical skills staff has members, the better they will perform on the job. However, to be successful in a changing and competitive environment, technically skilled individuals are not enough. Individuals must be helped to improve not only their technical skills but also their ability to work productively with each other for the good of the organization (World Bank, 1992). In the words of Argyris (1971), "At the heart of organizational development is the concern for utilizing, energizing, actualizing, activating, and renewing of organizations through technical and human resources. Apparently policy makers have yet to be convinced that distance education requires the administrator who is best able to influence, guide, and direct- in short, to communicate

with the individual participants in an organization is-the one who had developed a sensitivity to the participants needs and goals. Moreover, managers in distance teaching institution and policy makers responsible for staffing should consider reviewing the current patterns of resources expenditure to fill key posts; introducing measures to avoid turn-over of experienced staff; reviewing procedures to ensure the early recruitment or replacement of staff to fill vacant posts, providing staff development programs, including on-the-job training, to provide a pool of in- house candidates from which staff losses could be replenished (World Bank, 1992:28).

2.5.2 Student Records

All distance education systems must maintain student records (Friedman, 1981). The major records include details of students registered, fees received, course texts and other materials distributed to students, assignments returned by students, marks awarded by tutors, student attendance at face-to-face sessions, examination results, etc. Well- maintained and easily accessible records are a vital source of information for managing programs efficiently and analyzing institutional effectiveness, including progress by student Cohorts, drop out rates, and examination results (World Bank, 1992:29). Moreover, such records can also help to assess students' progress, particularly those experiencing difficulties in their learning process. Records of this kind are now kept in a computer system. However, most records in the developing countries where there is not well-developed computer network are kept manually. Studies conducted in six African countries (Lesotho, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi) revealed that for the most part, records are difficult to access and do not seem to be used in any systematic way to analyze student progress or assess institutional effectiveness.

2.5.3 Administering Course Development

Course Writing

As printed materials are the primary medium of instruction for distance teaching, course writing, editing, typesetting, printing, and binding course texts and other printed materials are central to course development activities. Some distance teaching institutions employ full-time or part-time staff to write the print medium, while others

employ specialists, either full-time or part-time. Most of the institutions employ editors experienced in the form and presentation of distance teaching materials either to work with the writer or to edit the text subsequently. Editors are usually employed full time (World Bank, 1992:32).

Another approach to course writing that one institution used was to bring together a group of subject specialists for a short period to write a distance material under the direction/supervision of an experienced editor. However, this approach works best when the text format is specified in advance, the team leader is experienced in text production, and the distance teaching text is essentially a guide ancillary to an existing text book (Leech and Murphy, 1977:19-24). Whatever approach a given distance institution follows for course writing; distance course materials must be prepared and edited from the students perspective. Individuals with the skills required to write courses and edit distance-teaching materials require special training. Managers failure to manage the course writing activities inevitably leads to delays in writing and producing course materials; inadequate course materials in terms of subject content or, more commonly, instructional effectiveness; poor integration of the different components of course (World Bank 1992:27.) As to the advantages of team works Walter (1976:99) stated that:

To produce the drafts on the various course materials that would enable an adult, working in isolation, to reach a predetermined stand and of performance in a given area of study, called for the combined skills of a number of groups of people. First we had to have not just one university teacher, with his thoughts and ideas about the objectives, contents and methods of presentation of the course, but several, because our courses were to be multi-disciplinary as well as multi media in nature.

This in turn, meant that each teacher would have different and inevitably conflicting thoughts and ideas which would somehow have to be reconciled with each other to lead to an agreed final version. Second, since the university teachers that we could recruit would mostly be unfamiliar with the special problems both of education of adults and of teaching at a distance, we would need the advice of other experts, in particular

educational technologists, television and radio producers, in order to determine the method of presentation of the courses.

This course-team approach has its own advantages. The various tasks are divided between groups of highly specialized team members (subject specialists, designers, media, editors etc). However, according to Weingartz, (1980:167-169) the model may impede personal approaches and may tend to words knowledge being presented more as a finished product than as a complex of problems under development

In a paper about course development procedures, Smith classifies the approaches to course development into five broad categories. These are; the course team model; the author / editor model; the author /faculty model; the educational adviser model and the intuition model (Smith, 1980:61)

The 'author/faculty model' which is just a variety of the author/ editor model, is characterized by outside experts being 'contracted to write the courses but the material is vetted by the full-time faculty of the university'. Educational adviser model seems to be a kind of author/ editor approach. The intuition model', on the other hand, is based on no other principle than letting the work be guided by academic intuition rather than systematic procedures (Smith ,1980 :65)

2.5.4. Administering distribution of course materials

For the distribution of course materials a very special organization is necessary. However, as print is a technically simple medium, the need for effective management systems to develop and deliver printed texts is often underestimated (World Bank, 1992:33). Delays in sending texts to student and failure to deliver texts to all students on the course were a recurrent problem in a number of institutions.

The dissemination of materials and the submission of assignment by students to tutors is for the most part by post. However, postal services are somewhat uneven. In some countries, mail to remote or rural areas can take a considerable time to arrive. For instance, in the case of Venezuela the mail system is quite deficient, in contrast to the English or North American systems (Sewart and others 1988).

According to Holmberg, (1995:138), course units and other learning materials for distribution to students are handled in practice in three basically different ways. A few distance-teaching organizations send packages containing complete course at the beginning of the study. This is usually felt to be a questionable procedure, as many students are likely to be intimidated by the large packages to be worked through. It is also had economy, as even modest drop-out rates lead to smaller editions of later units being required if course materials are distributed in batches along with students' progress (Ibid :138). A much more common practices to send study material on pre-determined dates. However, to send study material on dates decided on in advance without paying attention to individual students' needs, seems to be counter productive, as then such a great number of course units can be amassed on a slow-working student's desk that he feels frustrated and discouraged from starting. The rigidity that such pre-planned distribution is based on is probably owing either to lack of imagination, i.e lacking the capacity to realize what students' work situation may be like on account of professional, social and family commitments, or a firm desire to make students conform to the pacing imposed on them. A third way is to adapt the distribution of course materials to what is desirable from the points of view of motivation, support and the non-contiguous two-way communication. According to this model, course units are distributed in relation to the individual study pace of each student. This can be effected by providing the student at the outset with a small number of units of each course enrolled in and then to send out a new unit with each assignment that is returned with corrections and valuable comments.

It is obvious that in each area each institution will have to generate its own system in accord with the communication characteristics of the country. For instance, the organizers of the distance institutions can use the infrastructure of their local centers. On the other hand there are other systems which are more effective than the mail, for example, the news paper distributors of soft drinks (Sewart, and others 1988:321-337). As regards to student problems of some African countries (Routledge and Kegan, 1973:7-8) stated that:

lack of available textbooks is a frequently encountered problem in Africa, one which could be counter balanced by increased library facilities including the provision of mobile libraries, a heavier reliance on study groups to circulate material, and the development of educational taps, slides and films. Inefficient mailing systems, an equally widespread impediment could possibly be overcome, as in Northern Nigeria, by the use of dispatch vans or, as in the Ivory Coast, by the dispatch of a number of lessons at one time.

2.5.5 Administration of the interaction between students and the supporting organization

The separation of the teacher from the student is the most common characteristic of distance education. However, this separation is rarely absolute. There is a common agreement between both learner and institutional perspectives that there is a need for a place for learner/learner and learner/ teacher interaction for access to various services. This two way communication in particular helps to: support students' motivation and interest by contact with an encouraging tutor and counselor; facilitate student learning by having students apply the knowledge and skills acquired as well as by tutors' comments, explanations and suggestions; judge their educational situation and needs and by means of which marks can be awarded.

In this regard, the distance education institution through its student support service department have an important role to play in providing for and facilitating the two way common color interaction with staff and students, rather than taking on the mere supplementary role sometimes ascribed by institutions. The element of distance education, which is commonly referred to as student support, is made up of: tutoring, whether face-to-face by correspondence, telephone or electronically; counseling; the organization of study centers, interactive teaching through radio, and other activities (Lockwood, 1995:232). These activities have as key conceptual components - the notion of supporting the individual learning of the student whether alone or in groups.

Tutoring at a distance is by far the most important form of tutoring activity in distance education. It is a basic component of the distance education system where by all kinds of contact with tutors physically present are contingent on special conditions.

The distance learners are required to submit their assignment and projects at set intervals for marking and grading. The activities of marking and grading the assignments are carried out by part- time tutors. If marking a script is to be helpful constructive process, is not at all the same as marking an examination paper or marking notes on an essay that will be discussed in a conventional tutorial (Sewart and other 1988:329). The tutor had to support the motivation of the learners by engaging them in thinking, reading, and other activities. Friendly contact are essential when the tutor provides examples, suggestions and comments on individual students' , work/or talks with their distance learner. However, this task is challenging, and time consuming. As Eltan (1988) says :

If tutoring is done by correspondence, then experience indicates that it requires far more time, skill and application on the part of the tutor than many normally be found in essay marking' on campus.

However, if this is provided, then it can be more effective than either campus essay marking or the traditional group tutoring. On the other hand, speeding up communication is very important. For students to receive the maximum benefit, assignments need to be returned quickly, with helpful comments on students' performance (World Bank, 1992:64). A great weakness of distance education has in most cases been the slowness of the communication process caused by the correspondence method dominating this kind of education. For a student assignment to be sent by the student, received by the supporting organization, corrected, commented on and returned to the student so that he/she receives it within a week is considered remarkably quick and represents a turn-around time that many distance-education institutions (and Post offices) seem unable to achieve. As a result of the delayed feed back given tutor comments, the distance learners are usually dissatisfied (Holmberg, 1981:83-90). The problem of the worst according to some delay of longer duration is

studies conducted in selected African distance education institutions. For instance, in Malawi, the MCDE has not been very efficient in arranging for students scripts to be marked and returned speedily. According to a number of study center supervisors, students have to wait up to three months for marked scripts to be returned (World Bank ,1992:64). Suffice it to stress here that, speed is a high-priority concern for the administration of tutor-student interaction. Therefore, it is important to arrange record keeping in such away that it causes no delaying the communication process. The relevance of this situation is evident from the fact that most distance education institutions apparently use the services of external tutors to whom students' assignments are submitted. On the other hand , Renee Erdos describes the administrative procedure in the 1960s when the work was still usually done manually.

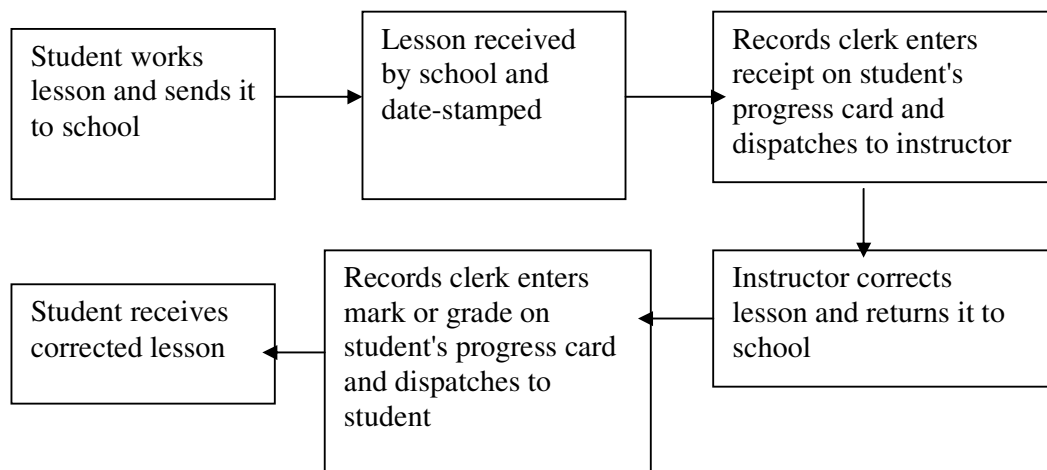


Fig.2 Movement of a correspondence lesson (Erdos 1967:26)

While with the almost universal use of the computer this description is out of date (Holmberg, 1995:140). Students' assignments or other communications may arrive by post, by tele fax or by electronic mail. Tutors may comment on the assignments in writing, using the post, electronic mail when forwarding them with marks to the administration of the institution and returning them to learners. The whole administrative work is usually computerized today (Holmberg , 1995:141). Holmberg adds that the computer is a very useful and economical instrument for both the distribution of course material and the handling of students' assignments, inclusive of record keeping.

The use of Face-to Face elements: Research Works indicating that many psychomotor objectives and objectives in the affective domain, i.e. attitudes and emotions, are more effectively attained by personal contacts (Holmberg, 1981:62) lead many distance education institutions and their students to make use of face-to-face sessions, when this is possible, for the purposes of practicing psychomotor skills in laboratories and under similar conditions; also verbal skills through personal communication; facilitating the understanding of the communication process and human behavior; encouraging attitudes and habits of relevance for the study, mutual inspiration and stimulation of fellow students and training in co-operation.

A question that is under debate is to the usefulness of face-to-face tutorial. One school of thinking finds face-to-face sessions essential, another finds them unnecessary and even, in some cases, harmful. However, in cases where course completion within a pre-determined period of time is a target, students using supplementary face-to-face sessions have often been found to be particularly successful (Holmberg, 1981:62).

Holmberg adds that:

many students cannot or do not want to use their time for face-to-face sessions even for a good tutorial when they manage by means of non-contiguous communication. They prefer phoning (or writing to) their tutor to traveling-perhaps for an hour by car or train to a tutorial center. Some students are deterred by expense while others are kept at home by family responsibilities or physical handicaps. However, to some other face-to-face sessions is naturally something found desirable. It is also practically implemented in many cases.

However, there are cases where by face-to-face element is so crucial. Particularly, students learning at home face particular difficulties. If they are using distance-teaching materials, then subject content should be adequately presented in these materials. But that is not really enough: for immature students, and for students with limited background education, it is not easy to learn in isolation. Such students need to get support and encouragement, something which is quite difficult to do through broadcasts and extremely difficult to do through print. An isolated student lacks both the goad of a teacher and the encouragement, and pace-setting, which his peers could

offer him. there is, therefore, a danger that a home student will get depressed and discouraged simply because of his/her isolation. In relation to this, (Perraton, 1983:30) Stressed that isolated students may face more narrowly educational problems too.

Counselling: Counselling has been described as a 'systematic exploration of self and/or environment by a client with the aid of a counsellor to clarify self-understanding and/or environmental alternatives so that behaviour modifications or decisions are made on the basis of greater cognitive and affective understanding' (Thornton and Mitchell , as quoted by Holmberg, 1995:128). It is usually provided to the distance learners by correspondence, on the telephone and, where possible, face-to-face. A very simple' frequently used form of what may be referred to as counselling that has proved to be of great importance is sending encouraging letters to students who have not submitted papers for a period or have otherwise deviated from their plan of study (Holmberg, 1981)

According to Sewart (1984:9-11), counselling functions are divided in to four different groups of tasks: referral (to the proper agency), vocational (career planning), information provision, and coping with students' personal study problems. For the last-mentioned task, counselors must be close enough to the student to have a thorough knowledge of the student's domestic work and study circumstances. Students need support that helps them to address problems that are not only practical and organizational but also educational and intellectual (Kirkwood, 1989:39). As a rule, students are adults who have a job, social responsibilities, and often a family. Various circumstances influence their study. Combinations of study difficulties and personal problems sometimes become so considerable, that necessitates the importance of counselling service. To tackle this problem students need information about the paths of study that interest them, where they lead, and what they are like. Moreover, they wish to have access to personal advice both pre-registration and during their studies. The fact that distance learners are in most cases on their own in their proceedings, with the anxiety and problems that they encounter, makes it crucial for distance institutions to find ways to provide counselling service. However, very few distance -study

organizations, unlike many conventional universities, are equipped to deal with difficulties of this kind (Holmberg, 1995:128).

Generally, in regards to the students support service, the following research findings have been forwarded by (Lockwood, 1995:222) as follows:

- learner- institution contact, such as regular contact with support staff, appears to have a positive effect on learner performance and persistence rates;
- factors which correlate positively with course completion rates include the use of course assignments, early submission of the first one, short turn-round times for giving learners feedback, pacing of progress, supplementary audio-tapes or telephone tutorials, favorable working conditions in the learner's context, the quality of learning materials and reminders from tutors to complete work;
- multiple interacting factors (personal, environmental and course variables) are at work in determining learner success; some institutional interventions can assist if appropriately targeted;
- learners value contact with support staff and other learners, though do not always use the services provided; learners most often report a preference for face-to-face tutoring compared to other media, though where face-to-face meetings are not possible, other forms of contact are rated as acceptable or valuable;

However, stating these broad conclusions in this way may give some of them more substance than they warrant. According to Lockwood (1995:223), some are based on studies which have produced marginal or equivocal findings. Replication studies are few and frequently produce conflicting findings or fail to confirm the earlier ones. This is due to the fact that there is a considerable differences between institutions and their practices and the difficulties these created for achieving generalisation. Moreover, different research approaches can elicit different answers.

The different aspect of two-way communication between the students and the supporting organization influence the administrative procedures. In regards to the need to have an effective organization, Holmberg (1981:101) had the following to say:

....Pre-registration counselling and routine correspondence with potential students requesting factual information requires effective organization, and so do counselling and other correspondence with students enrolled. The correcting of and commenting on students' papers must be organized. So that the right tutor receives the right student's papers and any necessary background information without delay procedures for application and enrolments, registration and statistics are necessary. Warehouse and dispatch arrangement have to be made for the course materials, and quick turn-over for all communication with the students must be provided.

Holmberg further indicated that the organization and administrative aspect of distance education naturally vary with the cultural and sociological contexts in which distance study is made available. However, it is the task of the administrative organization to bring about (Ibid ,:102): correct, competent and courteous treatment of all letters, correct delivery of instructional material, information circulars, etc and proper reception of students calling in person or on the telephone; short turn-around time for assignments submitted in writing on audio-tape and other media and for letters applying for information and advice, containing questions, requests, complaints or suggestions, etc; practical provision for the education use of the telephone, the computer and other aids included in the working methods; accurate, easily available registration data; checking on students' progress and procedures for reminders to those who fall behind or seem to be in danger of dropping out; facilities (when needed) for supplementary reaching telephone tuition, oral refresher courses, laboratory institution, etc.) general efficiency in all the above activities at reasonable cost.

2.5.6 Administration of the Media Utilization

Based on the experience of correspondence education, various educationists conceived the idea of improving the system by bringing in the latest technology and the electronic mass media. The educationist thought that the potentials of the various educational media and means should be exploited maximally. That is why most scholars support the ideas that the growth of distance education, to a great extent, depends in the growth

of media technology. For instance Garrison in Simon and Macmillan (1996 :423) begins the discussion of technology with this statement:

Distance education is inexorably linked to the technology of delivery. It can be seen as a set of instructional methods based largely on mediated communication capable of extending the influence of the educator beyond the formal institutional setting for the purposes of benefiting the learner through appropriate guidance and support. Without technology, a future for distance education does not exist.

In the past, time and distance have been major obstacles to the participation of distance learners. In this regard distance education was designed to overcome these barriers. In particular, the development of new telecommunication system bringing about a turning point in the teaching learning system. However, given the heterogeneity of the adult student group, the great variety of new information and telecommunication technologies and the lack of conclusive reasons concerning adult learning patterns, the suitability of the different new technologies as media and/or tools in the adult learning process is difficult to assess in any defined or systematic way (open universities, Heerlen, the Netherland, 1986:34). In spite of this fact a few can be said about the advantages and disadvantages of these technologies for the distance learners. For instance, the non interactive technologies, e.g. broad cast television and radio, audio cassettes, etc. have the advantage of being available in most households, and therefore, familiar and non-treating to use. Their disadvantages may, however, out weight these advantages. The home, and the living room in particular, often is not an ideal place for regular and concentrated learning, especially when the learner lives in a family situation (Ibid ,:35). Moreover, listening or viewing times in the case of radio and TV may conflict with work schedules or other social constraints. On the other hand, In spite of their ability to reach mass audiences, their many years of experience in educational broadcasting, and their often formidable political influence, TV and radio appear to be playing so small role in the development of distance learning (Sewart and others, 1988, 227-241). Discussions with practioners and students in the six African countries (Ethiopia, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawl:, Zimbabwe and Kenya) suggest that radio is not achieving its educational potential (World Bank, 1992:35). The studies conducted revealed that even in those countries in which institutions devote a good

deal of time to preparing and testing programs, students do not use them. The reasons advanced include programs broadcast at the wrong time, programs not relevant to the syllabus, no receiver available and, very commonly no power source available. Department-separate from the distance learning system, satisfactory cooperation between broadcast organization and educational institutions seem difficult to achieve in most countries.

The survey identified some of the following major problems affecting the media utilization (Sewart and others, 1988:229-230).

- firstly, in most countries, the broadcasting service is provided by an organization a national broadcasting organization, commercial station, or a government.
- Getting adequate transmission facilities was most also a big problem. Institutions were dissatisfied with the quality of the times available, particularly for broadcasts aimed at adults.
- Perhaps more surprising was the difficulty in several countries of accessing the target audience through broadcasting. While it is perhaps to be expected that in Tanzania, radio can reach only about 45% of the population.
- Cost, however, did not seem to be a major reason why broadcasting was not heavily used. Many institutions in any case do not have to pay the "real" cost of broad casting and when they do, it is sometimes paid for by their governments.

Technologies come in many packages. However, selecting the most efficient medium for delivery of instruction is the most challenging issue for distance education developer worldwide. But according to Garrison in Simon and Macmillan (1996,423), each technology must be scrutinized for its effect on the achievement of the learner for its costs, and for the environmental conditions necessary for its implementation. Moreover, managers must establish why radio and other media programs are not reaching the students and identify ways to overcome these problems. They should also consider how to use melti media programs creatively to reach out to potential students

and the community at large, there by raising the community's awareness of the institution's activities.

CHAPTER THREE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

As it has been stated in the preceding chapters, the general objective of this study was to investigate the organizational and managerial factors affecting the secondary level distance education of Ethiopia. Pertinent data were, therefore, collected through questionnaires, interviews and review of documents. This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the already gathered data.

3.1 General characteristics of the distance learners

The respondents were asked about their residence, sex, age, marital status, number of children, education, and occupational and financial background. The study, therefore, begins by treating these characteristics.

3.1.1. Sex of the respondents

Table 1
Distribution of the Students by Sex

S.N	Sex	Number	Percentage
1	Male	368	81.78
2	Female	82	18.22
	Total	450	100

Distribution of distance learners by gender shows that the male (81.78%) are more in number than the female (18.22%).

The results of this study, seemingly confirm the findings of the studies conducted by Ansere (1978) and Kinyanjui (1975). Ansere (1978:3-28) found out that 92 per cent of the 309 correspondence students he studied were male while the female accounted for 8 per cent. Similarly, Kinyanjui (1975:253-272) reported that 97 per cent of the correspondence students in Kenya were male while the remaining 3 percent were female. The study conducted in Norway by Rekkedal (1978:29-38) revealed that male accounted 98 per cent as compared to 2 per cent female.

The above findings show that not many female students participate in the distance education program of the panel. In this regard, the organization has to make efforts to encourage more female students to study in the distance education program.

3.1.2. Age of distance learners

Table 2
Distribution of Students by Age/Sex

Age Group	Responses			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total	
Below 20	11	4	15	3.33
20 - 30	138	57	195	43.33
31-41	193	21	214	47.56
Above 41	26	-	26	5.78
Total	368	82	450	100.00

The majority of the distance learners, that is about 47.56 per cent, fell between the age group of 31 - 41. The findings of this study indicate that the secondary level distance learners of the distance educational panel in Ethiopia are relatively young adults. Moreover, the distance learners are concentrated neither in the youngest age group (below 20 age), nor in the oldest age group (above 41). They are equally distributed between 20 - 41 years of age.

The findings of this study correspond with the age structure of the distance learners of other countries. For instance, studies conducted by Rekkedal (1972), James and Wedemeyer (1959), McIntosh and others (1980), Keegan (1980) in (Abraham, 1994:56), revealed that both in developed or developing countries, distance learners tend to be young adults.

3.1.3 Marital Status

Table 3

Marital Status of Distance Students

S.N	Marital Status	Responses	Per cent
1	Married	295	65.56
2	Single	155	34.44
3	Divorce	-	-
	Total	450	100

As far as the marital status is concerned, the number of married learners (65.56 per cent) is greater than those who are single (34.44 per cent). In relation to the findings of this study, the study conducted by Aslanian and Brickell (1988), in Simon and Macmillan (1996:403), indicated that, in general, the distance learners were married (61%). This however indicates that over half of the distance learners have family commitments. Moreover, this is partly an indication of the fact that most of the learners have been out of school for long years before they joined the distance education.

3.1.4 Family size

Family size helps to know under which circumstances the distance students study. Since distance learners live with their family, their children living with them may have

great impact on their studies. Table 4 presents the number of children the distance learners had. As shown in the table, 41.78 per cent of the learners have 4 - 6 children on the average.

Table 4
Number of Children of the Students

S.N	Item	Sex					
		Male		Female		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	No Children	69	18.75	29	35.37	98	21.78
2	1 - 3	82	22.28	13	15.85	95	21.11
3	4 - 6	161	43.75	27	32.93	188	41.78
4	7 and above	56	15.22	13	14.85	69	15.33
	Total	368	100	82	100	450	100.00

The above figures (Table 4), therefore, indicate that most of the learners have family responsibility. It also shows the difficulty condition by which distance learners are attending their studies.

3.1.5 Occupational Back-ground of the Learners

Table 5
Employment Status of Students/Sex

Employment Status	Responses				Total	Per cent
	Male		Female			
	No	%	No	%		
Employed	316	83.59	62	16.40	378	84.00
Unemployed	52	72.22	20	27.78	72	16.00
Total	368	81.78	82	18.22	450	100.00

As can be seen from the table above, the employment status of the students indicated that 84 per cent of the respondents were gainfully employed while 16 per cent of the students declared themselves unemployed. Moreover, a greater proportion of the male students (83.59 per cent) were employed than the proportion of female students (16.40 per cent).

The above findings go in line with the observations of Aslanian and Brickell (1988) in Simon and Macmillan (1996:403). These scholars in their research confirm that 71 per cent of the distance learners are employed full time. In the studies conducted by Bock (1980:124-153), it was investigated that the less advantaged individuals, especially the unemployed tend to possess the characteristic associated with low participation rate.

Thus, the employed distance students participate to a greater extent than the unemployed in the senior secondary level of distance education courses offered by Distance Education Panel..

The employed distance learners were distributed among the following occupations.

Table 6
Occupational Distribution of Distance Learners

S.N	Occupational Category	No.	per cent
1.	Teachers	65	16.89
2.	Health workers	29	7.53
3.	Armed Forces (police and military)	51	13.25
4.	Managerial, administrative and finance	138	35.84
5.	Ministry of Justice	18	4.68
6.	Ministry of Agriculture	25	6.50
7.	Factory workers	18	4.68
8.	Self employed	34	8.81
	Total	385	100.00

As shown in table 6, a relatively large number of the employed distance learners were concentrated in the occupational categories of managerial/administrative and finance

(35.84 per cent), teachers (16.89 per cent), Armed Forces (13.25 per cent) and self employed (8.91 per cent) in that order.

On the other hand, Flinck, R. and A.W. Flinck (1989) in Abraham, 1994:66 reported that 45 percent of the total enrolments at the distance education were primary school teachers, while Yeshimebet (1982 E.C) in Abraham (1994:66), noted that military personnel and teachers accounted 31.6 per cent and 27.4 per cent of the distance education participants respectively. In both cases, teachers stand either the largest or the second largest group of distance learners. The findings of this study also indicated that teachers constitute the second largest group of the distance students.

3.1.6. Educational background of the respondents

Table 7
Educational Background of Distance Learners

S.N	Regions	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Total	
		T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
1	Tigray	23	18.55	3	6.25	13	19.40	6	2.84	45	10.00
2	Afar	3	2.242	--	--	2	2.99	5	2.37	10	2.22
3	Amhara	21	16.94	13	27.08	19	28.36	37	17.54	90	20.00
4	Oromia	21	16.94	14	29.17	10	14.92	80	37.91	125	27.78
5	Somalia	2	1.61	--	--	2	2.99	2	0.95	6	1.33
6	SNNPR	15	12.09	13	27.08	11	16.42	49	23.22	88	19.56
7	Benishangul -Gumuz	--	--	--	---	2	2.99	5	2.37	7	1.56
8	Dire Dawa	2	1.61	--	--	1	1.49	2	0.95	5	1.11
9	Gambela	3	2.42	2	4.17	2	2.99	5	2.37	12	2.67
10	Harari	--	--	--	--	1	1.49	3	1.42	4	0.89
11	Addis Ababa	34	27.42	3	6.25	4	5.97	17	8.06	58	12.89
	Total	124	100.00	48	100.00	67	100.01	211	100.00	450	100.01

As can be observed in Table 7 the majority of the distance learners were in Grades 12 (46.89 per cent), 9 (27.56 per cent), 11 (14.89 per cent) and 10 (10.67 Per cent) in that order. From the above figures we observe that large number of distance learners were detected in Grade 12 and 9. Significant number of grade 11 students were promoted to grade 12 within a short period of time due to changes in education policy, while some of the groups of Grade 10 students who attended the old curriculum have been forced to join Grade 9. As a result, relatively large number of distance learners from Grade 9 and 12 were included in the study.

As to regional distribution of distance learners, it was found that Oromia, Amhara and SNNPR accounted 27.78 per cent, 20 per cent and 19.50 per cent of the respondents respectively. While, Harari (0.89 per cent), Dire Dawa (1.11 per cent) Somali (1.33 per cent) have relatively less number of distance students.

3.2. The organization and administration secondary level distance education in Ethiopia

3.2.1 Organizational structure of distance education panel of Ethiopia and its implication to the implementation of its program.

Types of organization

Educational organization is increasingly recognized as a vital instrument in enabling the education process to thrive. To meet this demand, the Distance Education Panel has its own set of organizational structure. The Ministry of Education has technical support services under its auspices. One of these technical arms is a semi-autonomous specialized institution -Educational Media Agency (EMA). The Distance Education Panel is one of the Panels in the Educational Media Agency. The Distance Education Panel has three units, namely, the course development unit, tutorial support unit and teacher-training unit (Annex5). Regarding the manpower, currently the DEP has 28 staff members (Table 9) organized under the aforementioned three units. Besides, the panel employs about 26 secondary school teachers in Addis Ababa as part-time course tutors.

The Organizational structure of the DEP resembles a single-mode organization. According to Holmberg (1995:142) the single-mode organizations employ their own academic and administrative staff to take responsibility for developing and distribution of instructional materials. They organize and provide advisory and didactic mediated two-way communication with their students as well as some supplementary fact-to-face tuition. Counselling, examining, issuing certificates, running research projects, etc are other concerns for these organization. What makes DEP special is the structural units of it does not have branch sub-units at regional level .The operation of distance education (Course development course distribution, face-to-face programs, counseling and media programs) is rather centralized i.e, all services are delivered from the head quarters (DEP). The REB, Zonal and Woreda Education Offices are participating in the program only when the distance students take their examination in those offices. According to the interview conducted with the head of Distance Education Panel, the REB, Zonal and Woreda Education Offices have not been so far involved in the planning, organizing, actuating and controlling of the secondary level distance education program in Ethiopia. Similarly, discussion conducted with distance students of the panel revealed that overcentralization of some of the services has become a big problem.

The findings of this study also reveal that the organizational structure which has a direct influence on the efficiency of the management of services has resulted in delay in the collection of the course materials (Table 18), low turn-around time of assignment (Table 23), longer time to receive examination results (Table 26) and lack of easy access to tutors' and counsellors' assistance. In connection to this, World Bank (1992:28) stated that the administrative structures with in which distance education systems operate has a significant influence on the system's management in general and on the effectiveness of the program in particular. Similarly, Tarakegn (1999:58) indicated that 'from the structural and organizational point of view, the most important factors that aggravated the problems of collaboration are that many perceived government structures are often rigid, hierarchical, and autocratic, that is, they have a natural tendency to centralization, bureaucracy; at the same time, power and control rest at the topmost level where programmes are designed and resources allocated. As a result, the central body remains the ultimate arbiter and determinant of the changes that take place within the system.

From the above argument, we can conclude that if educational organizations are to meet the desired goals they have to fit the objective reality of a given circumstances. In relation to this, Holmberg (1995:141) stated that the type of the organizations offering distance education facilities varies with cultural and social contexts, with national and other traditions as well as with the target groups and educational levels of study. From this context, we can say that the organizational structure of the DEP aggravated the management problem, which emanated from over centralization.

The informal discussion conducted with the distance students revealed that some of the tutorial services such as distribution of course materials, face-to-face programs, counselling services have to be decentralized so that efficiency in the management of services could be enhanced.

A rationale for introducing more decentralized structures of governance is based on the claim that decentralization may yield considerable efficiencies in the management of educational systems (World Bank, 1988:10-11). The claims involve two sets of expectations: (a) that greater decentralization will mobilize and generate resources that are not available under more centralized conditions and (b) that decentralized systems can utilize available resources more efficiently.

To sum up, the organizational structure of DEP that led to overcentralization, has resulted in management inefficiency in the provision of student support services, as clearly indicated in the discussion here under.

3.2.2 Administration of secondary level Distance Education In Ethiopia

Staff development

Table 8
General Information on the Respondents of The Staff Members

Item	No.	Per cent
Sex		
• Male	14	50.00
• Female	13	46.43
• No Response	1	3.57
Total	28	100.00
Age		
• Below 20	-	-
• 20-30	9	32.14
• 31-40	11	39.29
• above 40 years	8	28.57
Total	28	100.00
Education		
• Below 12 th Grade	1	3.57
• 12 th Grade	8	28.57

• 12 th grade + 1	3	10.71
• Diploma Graduate	7	25.00
• B.A./B.Sc degree	8	28.57
• MA./M.Sc and above	1	3.57
Total	28	99.99
Service years		
• 1-5	4	14.29
• 6-10	3	10.71
• 11-15	6	21.43
• 16-20	6	21.43
• 21 years and above	9	32.14
Total	28	100.00

The major characteristics of the staff members are summarized in Table 8 above. Gender composition is more balanced with women accounting 46.43 per cent of the staff members. In terms of age, 39.29 per cent of the respondents are in the 31-40 age group followed by 20-30 age category (32.14 per cent).

The share of professionals (those with B.A./B.Sc. degrees and above) is much higher in the staff (32.14 per cent), 12th grade level (28.57 per cent) and 25 per cent are semi professionals (those with diplomas), while respondents with 12th grade + 1 accounted for 10.71 percent. 75 per cent have a service of 11 years and above.

Thus, Table 8 reveals that the majority of the respondents had long years of service and, thus, were expected to generate relevant information to the problem under investigation.

Distance education requires teams of people performing different tasks to accomplish common institutional goals. In this regard, the Distance Education Panel currently has 28 staff members working in various activities of the panel. The distributions of these personnel are indicated in the following table.

Table 9
Manpower Distribution of the DEP

S.N	Activities	No. of personnel assigned	Vacant posts
1	Editors	5	4
2	DEP, head	1	
3	DEP, secretary	1	
4	DEP, clerk	1	
5.	Course type setters	4	
6	Counsellor	1	
7.	Support service head	1	
8	Teachers education expert	1	
9	Layout and design	-	1
10	Record clerks	4	
11	Registration	2	
12	Distance education, researcher	1	
13	Course production and distribution	5	
14	Statistician	1	
	Total	28	5

Table 9 reveals that, currently the DEP has 28 workers, while there are 5 vacant posts within the panel's departments. According to the information gained through an interview with the head of distance education panel, the vacant posts are to be filled by

part-time workers. In relation to this, the staff members have been asked whether there is shortage of manpower in various departments of the distance education panel or not. The summary of the responses has been presented in the following table.

Table 10
Adequacy of Man Power Allocation to Each Department

S.N	Item	Responses	Per cent
1	Adequately allocated	--	--
2	Is not adequately allocated	14	50.00
3	There is a big shortage of man-power	9	32.14
4	Difficult to respond	5	17.86
	Total	28	100.00

Table 10 shows that 50 per cent of the respondents reported that manpower was not adequately allocated in each department. While 32.14 per cent of the respondents declared that there was a big shortage of manpower, 17.86 per cent said it is 'difficult to respond'.

Generally, the information in Tables 9 and 10 disclose that the distance education panel failed to allocate adequate number of personnel in some of its departments. Given the complexity of the distance education sector, the inadequacy of staff members has a significant influence on the system's management in general and on program efficiency in particular. According to some experts of the panel, delays in filling the vacant posts have been big problem in the DEP.

This may imply that policy makes of the DEP failed to consider the following: reviewing the current patterns of resource expenditure to fill key posts; introducing measures to avoid losing experienced staff; reviewing procedures to ensure the early recruitment or replacement of staff to fill vacant posts and providing staff development programs (including on the job training). However, the problem of inadequate personnel is the pit-fall of many African distance education Institution. Studies conducted in African countries - Malawi and Zambia -confirmed that (World Bank, 1992:28)

Managing even small distance education systems imposes unremitting demands on practitioners. Individuals with the required expertise to meet these demands are seldom readily available, which may help account for the number of unfilled posts in some of the institutions visited.

On the other hand, availability of staff members is not an end by itself. Well-trained staff is very crucial for the effective implementation of a given plan. In this regard, the staff members were asked to find out whether the staff had some sort of training before they were engaged in actual performance or not.

Table 11
Provision of Initial Training for the Staff Members

S.N	Item	Responses	Per cent
1	Have you received training before you were engaged in your present activities?		
	a. Yes	8	28.57
	b. No	20	71.43
	Total	28	100.00

As can be seen from Table 11, 71.43 per cent of the staff members confirmed that they had not received any kind of initial training. Only 28.57 per cent of them said that they had received a special initial training. Thus, the majority of the staff members had started working in the DEP without having some sort of training.

Table 12
Duration of the initial Training

S.N	Duration of The training	Response	Per cent
1	Short-term seminars and workshop	4	50.00
2	3 -6 months	2	25.00
3	7 months- one year	--	
4	Above a year	2	25.00
5	Others	-	--
	Total	8	100.00

In relation to this, 50 per cent of the staff member indicated receiving the special training through short-term seminars and workshops, while 25 per cent and 25 per cent through training program offered for 3-6 months and above a year respectively.

Thus, Table 12 reveals that most of the trainings were offered through workshops and seminars. It is impossible to adequately train the editors, record clerks, counsellors, teacher training experts, course production experts, typesetters, heads of tutorial services etc only through workshops and seminars. Thus, in order to adequately train its staff members, the DEP should manage continuous training opportunities not only to train these groups in the essential skills, but also to introduce them to new and recent findings in methods of distance education.

Table 13
In-Service Training

S.N	Item	Response	Per cent
1	Have you received on job training?		
	a. Yes	2	7.14
	b. No	26	92.86
	Total	28	100.00

Regarding the provision of in-service training after assignment in the various activities of the panel (editing, typesetting, counseling, recording, course production and teacher training), 7.14 per cent of the staff has participated in refresher courses and 92.86 per cent have not.

Generally, the information in Table 12 and Table 13 disclose that the Distance Education Panel failed to equip its staff members adequately with the necessary knowledge and skills on distance education system either through initial training or in service training. Similarly, the staff members were asked questions in order to find out whether Educational Media Agency had attempted to train its staff members locally and abroad or not, 50 per cent responded that attempts were 'low', while 46.43 per cent said it is 'difficult to respond'.

This implies that the distance education panel has over looked the role of training in the implementation of distance education programs.

Table 14
Attempts Made by EMA to Train its Staff Members at Locally and Abroad

S.N	Rating	Responses	Per cent
1	Low	14	50.00
2	Average	--	--
3	High	--	--
4	Difficult to respond	13	46.43
5	Others	1	3.57
	Total	28	100.00

Thus, from the findings of this study, it could be presumed that most of the staff are not equipped with adequate training to effectively carryout their duties.

The above findings go in line with the observations of Albinson (1988), Magnussen (1993) and Tilahun (1994), in Mengistu (1996:78). These scholars in their research on Ethiopian adult education confirm that, only a very limited number of the numerous adult education personnel in Ethiopia have so far received any substantial training. Others have attended training event like short seminars and workshop usually conducted on-adhoc basis and without related follow-up activities. Still others- large groups indeed have not received any such training at all. However, in the field of distance education, it is believed that to achieve the desired goals of distance education, editors, counselors, tutors, support service coordinators etc need to posses important qualities that enable them to play their role successfully. Hence, dealing with distance learner demands well trained staff members with some kind of special training.

3.2.3. Student records, registration and information delivery system on program

Student records

Easily accessible records on various activities of the distance education panel and students performance are vital source of information for managing programs effectively and efficiently. Fast information flow can be facilitated if only records of this kind are kept in a computer system. The discussion made with the record department of the DEP revealed that, registration and recording are conducted manually. This makes it difficult to find out quickly the file of a distance learner out of piles of files when such services are requested by distance students by telephone. It is also difficult to assess assess students' progress, particularly of those who encounter difficulties in their studies. In view of these facts, record clerks, let alone assessing students progress, they do not know student cohort, dropout rates and active learners by grade level. Moreover, the limited number of record clerks complicates the problem of the recording system as well. Thus, as we can see from Table 15, there is too much

work to be done by the individuals. Even there are times when each individual (clerk) is made to do the work of a colleague who is absent due to sickness or other reasons or is on his/her annual leave. This is an indication that there is no match between the panel's objectives and the capacity of the staff members. This lack of sufficient manpower in the department may create obstacles to the proper management of recording and registration activities. This inconvenience may also create dissatisfaction on the part of the individual performing the activities. Moreover, in a work place where there is no well-developed computer network, performing those activities manually with a single person assigned for a grade level may not bring about the expected results. It should be noted that in order to accomplish the task, it is absolutely necessary that good educational programs be well equipped with manpower and facilities.

Table 15
Allocation of Manpower in the Record Department

S.N	<i>Grade Level</i>	Number of clerks assigned	<i>Major activities</i>
1	9	1	Registration, recording students' assignments and exam results, transcript preparation, receiving distance learners telephone call and communicating on the basis of their requests, informing students progress when the request is made, counseling. etc
2	10	1	"
3	11	1	"
4	12	1	"
	Total	4	

The above facts are also revealed in the studies conducted in six African countries (Lesoto, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi). According to these studies, for the most part, records are difficult to access and do not seem to be used in any systematic way to analyze student progress (World Bank, 1992:29-30). Therefore, the operation of a large distance teaching institution with tens of thousands of students and the monitoring of student progress requires sophisticated data processing (Verduin

and others, 1991). Hence dealing with distance learners demands well-established computer network.

Registration and information delivery system

The following table indicates how long the distance learners take to complete the registration formalities

Table 16
Time Taken to Complete the Registration Formalities

S.N	Time taken	Responses	Per cent
1	1 month and below	199	44.22
2	2-3 months	91	20.22
3	4-5 months	24	5.33
4	6 months and above	84	18.67
5	No response	52	11.56
	Total	450	100.00

As can be seen from Table 16, 44.22 per cent of the respondents declared that they completed the registration process within a month, 20.22 per cent said they completed the registration after a period of 2-3 months, 5.33 per cent after 4-5 months, while 18.67 per cent of the respondents declared that it took them 6 months and above. 11.56 per cent did not respond to this particular question.

From the above findings, we conclude that it takes quite a long time for a student to complete the registration process. According to Distance Education Panel, this was a serious problem especially for those distance learners who have registered in the secondary level distance education by sending the necessary documents through the post office. This was due to the fact that a lot of time was wasted in exchanging information and documents through the post offices. Moreover, for some of the students (Table 17), lack of a clear understanding of how to join distance education and get the necessary service was also another drawback. In this regard, the distance

learners were also asked how clear the information they gained about distance education and its services was.

Table 17
Clarity of Information Delivery System on Program and Distance Materials

S. N	Item	No	Yes	If it is yes its Degree of clarity					
				Excellent	Very good	Good	Low	Weak	Difficult to respond
1	The information I gained to attend distance education was clear	40 [8.89%]	410 [91.11%]	97	148	102	46	17	
2	There was no difficulty in completing the application form	18 [4%]	432 [96%]	152	139	73	24	38	6
3	The general Information I gained about the course materials was clear	46 [10.22%]	404 [87.78%]	152	114	51	32	32	23
4	I was clearly informed about the utilization of radio student guide.	234 [52%]	216 [48%]	39	49	34	34	34	26
5	I was clearly informed about how to get the necessary distance material	43	407	117	108	47	27	108	

		[9.56%]	[90.44%]						
6	The existing system in the Distance Education Panel was so conducive and gives information as how to get the necessary services	142	308	39	49	79	40	46	46
		[31.56%]	[68.44%]						

As can be observed in Table 17, although the information gained as how to attend distance education was clear to 91.11 per cent of the respondents, there were still significant number of distance learners (8.89 per cent) who faced difficulties in understanding about the system. Responses of distance learners to item 4 in Table 17 clearly indicate that 52 per cent of the respondents reported that they had no clear idea how to use the radio programs, which was one of the course components. Accordingly, responses of Item 5 of the same table revealed that 90.44 per cent of the learners responded positively about the clarity of getting the necessary distance materials, while 9.56 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they were not well informed.

The above findings (Table 16 and 17) show that, the Distance Education Panel has the basic documents, rules and regulations used as guideline for completing registration formalities and utilization of services. The implementation and effect of these guidelines and documents has been observed.

3.2.4 Administration of course distribution

The distance education panel has the responsibility to produce and disseminate instructional material to the distance learners. And, course units and other learning materials are sent from the centre for distribution. However, the panel does not have any network at the regions that would facilitate the distribution of course materials, so that the distribution of course materials through postal service has of course proved inefficient.

The following table summarizes time taken to collect the course materials from the centre.

Table 18

Time Taken to Collect the First Set of Course Materials after Registration

S.N	Time taken to collect the first set of course materials	Responses	per cent
1	1 month or below	137	30.44
2	2-3 months	73	16.22
3	4-5 months	86	19.11
4	More than 6 months	124	27.56
5	Lost	30	6.67
	Total	450	100.00

Table 18 shows that 30.44 per cent of the distance learners receive the first set of course materials within a month's time while for 27.56 per cent of the respondents, collecting the first set of course materials takes even more than 6 months. 4-5 months and 2-3 months category accounted for 19.11 per cent and 16.22 per cent of the respondents respectively.

The problem of delay in distribution of course materials has also been raised while the writer of this paper conducted group discussion with 10 distance learners who came to the institution on February 30, 2002. Problems related to course material distribution which were identified by these distance students include: distribution of course materials without assignment, lost course materials, distribution of course materials arbitrarily, provision of outdated courses and distribution of incomplete course units.

As one course production and distribution expert said, "Although we have adequate number of printing machines, most of the time we sit idle. Quite many distance learners complained about the incomplete course materials every day. 'To your surprise', said the expert, "courses like Grade 12 mathematics (unit 1), biology for Grade 12 (unit 10), physics for Grade 10 (Unit 1), biology for Grade 10 (Unit 1), chemistry for Grade 10 (unit 1), English for Grade 11 (Unit 6 and 7) were not available in our stocks for more than 6 months. Surprisingly, the printing machine runs out of ink and duplicating paper for almost a year. Due to these problems, Grade 10 education had been disrupted for two years (2000 - 2001). Distance students became frustrated due to this. As a result, large number of Grade 10 distance learners were forced to take their transcript from the panel and join extension programs in the regular schools."

From the above findings we can conclude that there is a problem related to management of course production and distribution. In relation this World Bank (1992:33) indicated that 'the need for effective management systems to develop and deliver printed texts is often underestimated. Hence, delays in sending texts to distance learners is a recurrent problem in a number of institutions'.

Besides delays in the distribution of course material, (Ibid:36) identified that the increasing cost of paper and the scarcity of foreign currency needed to import it as well as the high cost of transporting texts over long distances have been the major problems affecting the provision of course materials to distance learners. An alternative approach that could be used for some programs is to reduce the number of texts produced by supplying copies to study centres for use by several students (Ibid:37). However, in Ethiopian situation, students are widely dispersed and come together only occasionally, if at all. In such cases the only option is to provide each student with the required course materials.

3.2.5 Administration of the interaction between the students and the supporting organization

An important consideration in the organization and administration of distance education programs is communication. Communication is critical because in distance education the instructor and the student are physically separated during the majority of the instruction. In relation to this, the respondents were asked about the means of communication they use to interact with the distance education panel and the tutors. The distance education participants responses to questions related to communication are presented as follows.

Table 19
Means of Communication with Distance Education Panel

S.N	Item	Respondents	
		No	Per cent
1	How do you communicate with the distance education panel?		
	a .through post office	248	55.11
	b.by telephone	-	-
	c. physical presence	17	3.78
	d. through a messenger	9	2.00
	e.all means [through post offices , by telephone, physical presence and personal messenger)	176	39.11
	Total	450	100.00

Table 19 indicates that postal service is the major means of the two-way communication for the majority (55.11 per cent) of the learners, followed by the use of

post offices, telephone, physical presence and personal messenger, which accounted for 39.11 per cent. Similarly, the distance learners were asked about the availability of postal service in their locality and the distance they travel to get to the post office. The students responded as shown in the table below.

Table 20
Availability of Postal Service in the Locality

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No.	Per cent
1	Is there a post office in your locality ?		
	a. yes	388	86.22
	b. no	58	12.89
	c. no response	4	0.89
	Total	450	100.00

Table 21
Availability of Telephone Service

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No.	Per cent
1	Is there a telephone service in your locality?		
	a. yes	400	88.89
	b. no	50	11.11
	Total	450	100.00

As can be seen from Table 20 and Table 21, 86.22 per cent and 88.89 per cent of the learners have access to postal and telephone services respectively, while 12.89 per cent and 11.11 per cent noted that they do not have any access to the aforementioned services. This is an indication that postal and telephone facilities are not available everywhere in the country. Though they are few percentage wise, the responses once more, revealed that there was communication gap between the learners and the institution in the teaching- learning process.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to state how far the nearest post from their home is.

Table 22
Distance to the Nearest Post Office

S.N	Single trip	Responses	Per cent
1	Less than 5 km	156	34.67
2	5-20 km	58	12.89
3	More than 20km	166	36.89
4	Difficult to respond	70	15.55
	Total	450	100.00

As shown in Table 22, 36.89 per cent of the respondents live more than 20kms away from the nearby post office, while 34.67 per cent of the respondents live within 5kms distance.

We can conclude from this that, the majority of the distance students live in rural areas where the main means of the two-way communication between learners and the Distance Education Panel i.e; the postal services, is less accessible. It also takes considerable time to get the mails from remote rural areas.

Thus, the inadequacy of communication network facilities and the long distance the distance course materials have to travel, might have contributed to the low turn-around time of assignments for submission.

Inquiry was also made with regards to the speed and frequency of communication.

Table 23
Turn-around time of Assignments for Submission

S.N	Turn -around time	Responses	Per cent
1	1-3 weeks	35	7.78
2	1-2 months	93	20.67
3	2-3 months	80	17.78

4	More than 3 months	234	52.00
5	Lost	8	1.78
	Total	450	100.01

As can be seen from the responses in Table 23, out of 450 respondents, 52 per cent revealed that it takes more than three months for the students to send and get back the assignments, while the ranges 1-2 months(s) and 2-3 months accounted for 20.67 and 17.78 per cent respectively.

From the above findings we conclude that, low frequency of turn-around time of assignments for submission has been the major obstacle encountered while studying through distance education. This shows that the distance students are dissatisfied in the frequency and speed of the feedback system provided by the Distance Education panel.

The impact of distance on the turn around time of assignment has been evaluated by comparing those students living in Addis Ababa with those living outside Addis Ababa in the following way.

Table 24
The Impact of Distance on the Turn-around time of Assignment

S. N	Item	Respondents		Responses						
				1-3 weeks	1-2 months	2-3 months	More than 3 months	Is not returned	Total	χ^2
1	The degree of influence of distance	Distance students living in Addis Abeba	N	11	8	11	24	4	58	
			%	18.97	13.79					

from the center on the turn-round time of assignment	Distance students living outside Addis Abeba [The rest region]	N	24	85	69	210	4	392	23.59*
		%	6.12	21.68	17.60	53.57	1.02	99.99	

* Significant at alpha level 0.05 df 4

The Chi-Square value indicates that the difference between the responses of distance students living in Addis Ababa and that of regions is statistically significant at an alpha level 0.05. The calculated Chi-square ($\chi^2 = 23.59$) is higher than the Table value of Chi-square ($\chi^2 = 9.49$). Hence, the distance from the location of the institution has negatively affected the speed of communication. On the other hand, as it is revealed on Table 23, some of the distance learners (1.78 per cent) noted that the assignment they sent to the institution were lost. In this regard, the respondents were asked to rate the reliability of the postal service. The responses of the respondents are summarized in the following table

Table 25

Reliability of Postal Services

S.N	Level of reliability	Responses	Per cent
1	Quiet reliable	193	42.89
2	Less reliable	181	40.22
3	Not reliable	21	4.67
4	Difficult to respond	55	12.22
	Total	450	100.00

Table 25 shows that 42.89 percent considered the postal service to be quite reliable while 40.22 per cent regarded it as less reliable and 4.67 per cent said it was not reliable. 12.22 per cent reported 'it is difficult to respond'. In relation to this, Machenize (1975:44) stated that for the postal service to be satisfactory it must satisfy universality, reliability, uniformity, speed and cost. That is to say the material prepared must reach everybody who is enrolled in correspondence instruction. The delivery time must be nearly uniform and be swift enough to ensure that the student get back his / her tutor's comments in time. The cost or fee must be reasonable and should not cripple the correspondence students. Failure at one of these points may limit the effectiveness of the institution.

The results of this study confirm the findings of the studies conducted by RekKedal (1978), Holmberg (1981), Beardsley (1975) and Baath (1974), in Abraham (1994:86). In the study conducted by Rekkedal (1978) in Norway, on the effects of the turn - round time of the written assignments, it was investigated that irrespective of which group the students belonged to, they seemed to be satisfied with the turn-round time of one week or less. More than one week seemed to result in a large proportion of the students becoming dissatisfied. Holmberg (1981:89) on the other hand noted that, students seem to accept and profit from comments and corrections given within seven to ten days after an assignment has been completed, but are usually dissatisfied if the delay is of longer duration. Other studies conducted by Baath (1974) and Beardsley (1975) are not different from the above reality. According to Baath (1974), high frequency of turn-round time is motivating, in that they demonstrate to the students that he/she makes progress, and leads a student to greater success than low frequency of turn-round time. Beardsley (1975:204) also noted that the shorter the laps of time between the exchange of the communication, the better. If distance students have to wait up to two or three weeks before responses to questions and reaction to work submitted, the effectiveness of the system can be jeopardized.

Several scholars have studied the impact of frequent student-tutor interaction and of the length of turn-round times. However, there is no empirical evidence to show that the frequency of student-tutor interaction exerts any influence on the learning (Holmberg 1995:124). This has been surprising as contact with a tutor is assumed to be helpful. This is due to the fact that it is the quality or the student - tutor interaction rather than its frequency that is decisive for its effectiveness and /or that high interaction frequency can be expected to be helpful on condition that the interaction is of high quality (Baath 1989: 85). Revising the research done on this a decade after his original empirical study Baath expressed himself as: ‘If the work of the tutors in the postal two-way communication is of great value to the students, then it would seem highly probable that the density of postal contacts between students and tutor(s) is important’. Most educators probably agree that goals close at hand (i.e. goals that can be attained in a reasonably short time) are motivating, in that they demonstrate to the student that he or she is making progress (Holmberg, 1995:125). This implies that if motivation is taken to promote success, this would seem to indicate that suitably high submission frequency should be expected to lead to greater success than low submission frequency.

The findings of this study show that low turn –round time of assignment is a typical feature of the secondary level Distance Education in Ethiopia. This would seem to result in a large proportion of the students becoming dissatisfied. Therefore, low submission frequency should not be expected to lead to greater achievements. The respondents were also asked to state the time taken to receive examination results from distance education panel. The summary of the responses has been presented in the following table.

Table 26
Time Taken to Receive Examination Results

S.N	Duration	Responses	Per cent
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1	From 1-3 weeks	45	10.00
2	1-2 months	45	10.00
3	2-3 months	90	20.00
4	Above 3 months	180	40.00
5	We do not get our results	9	20.00
	Total	450	100.00

Surprisingly enough, Table 26 indicates that "above 3 months" ranked first (by 40 per cent), followed by 20 per cent for 2-3 months category for the time taken to get examination results. Still there are significant numbers of distance learners that is (20 per cent) who have never received their results. Group discussion conducted with those who came to the tutorial centres during face-to-face program and the observation made so far revealed that there were face-to face participants who had never been informed about their current grade levels. For this group of students, participation in the tutorial program has been a big problem.

The following table summarizes the speed with which the various service of the DEP reach distance students

Table 27
The Speed with which The Various Services are provided

S. N	Type of Services	Responses							
		No	Yes	If your response is 'yes' how do your rate it?				Difficult to respond	
				Some times	Partially	Usually	Always		
1	I receive the distance education course material sent through post office in time	No	180	270	55	105	15	60	35
		%	40.00	60.00	20.37	38.89	5.56	22.22	12.96
2	I received radio student guide from distance education in time	No	259	191	42	48	8	31	62
		%	52.26	42.44	21.99	25.13	4.19	16.23	32.46
3	I received the radio transmission time table from distance education panel in time	No	307	143	25	36	16	11	55
		%	68.22	30.78	17.48	25.17	11.19	7.69	38.46
4	I received the tutorial program time table from	No	311	139	61	48	19	11	

	distance education in time	%	69.11	30.89	43.88	34.53	13.67	7.91	
5	I received the exam from distance education in time	No	362	88	30	40	4	6	8
		%	80.44	19.56	34.09	45.45	4.55	6.82	9.09

In item 1 (Table 27) the inquiry was made to explore whether the course materials are distributed to the learners on time or not. Based on this, 60 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they received the distance education course materials sent through post office on time while 40 per cent belong to those who responded 'No'. Under each item, the questionnaire used four-point rating scale to explore reactions to the speed of material distribution. 38.89 per cent said they received the course material on time partially, while those who responded always accounted only 22.22 per cent of the respondents. It was also clear from this study that the distance learners value the speed by which they receive radio guide and transmission timetable, tutorial program timetable and exams negatively. 57.56 per cent and 68.22 per cent of the respondents reported that they had never received radio guide and transmission timetable on time respectively, though 42.44 per cent and 31.78 per cent were satisfied with the speed with which the services were provided. Accordingly, 69.11 per cent and 80.44 per cent of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the speed of distribution of tutorial program timetable from distance education.

The above findings show that the distance learners in Ethiopia are dissatisfied in the frequency and speed of print and audio-medium provision.

Managing the interaction between the distance learners and tutors

When we talk of the two-way communication between the distance learners and the institution, not only the speed but also the nature of the comments has to be evaluated. In this regard, the respondents were asked about their perception of the comments of the tutors

Table 28

Student Perception of the Following Comments (whether they are Included in their Assignment by their Tutors or not)

S.N	Tutors comments	Strongly agree		Fairly agree		Agree		Difficult to respond		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	My tutors show me the wrong answers when correcting my assignments	160	35.56	80	17.78	106	23.56	26	5.77	52	11.56	26	5.77
2	My tutors provide me with clear explanation for the wrong answers	213	47.33	23	5.11	71	15.78	23	5.11	47	10.44	73	16.22
3	My tutors provide me with valuable and constructive comments	201	44.67	90	20.00	23	5.11	23	5.11	68	15.11	45	10.00
4	My tutors comments on my progress	171	38.00	45	9.56	43	9.56	21	4.67	64	14.22	108	24.00

As can be seen from Table 28 (Item 1), the respondents were asked to rate the quality of their tutors' comments. 76.89 per cent of the respondents agreed their tutors' indicate wrong responses, while 17.33 per cent were dissatisfied with the tutors as comments were not given to them.. Moreover, the learners were also asked to rate the degree of provision of tutors' analysis and clear explanation for the wrong answers. 68.22 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they were provided with analysis and clear explanation on their assignments, while 26.67 per cent have not been provided any sort of analysis and clear explanation on their assignments. This has undoubtedly negative consequences on the motivation of the learners. Accordingly, the learners were also asked whether their tutors provide them with valuable and constructive comments, pointed out their academic progress or not. 69.78 per cent and 57.56 per cent of the respondents noted that they were provided with valuable and constructive comments, and the tutors pointed out comments on their progress respectively. On the contrary, out of the total 450 respondents 25.11 per cent and 38.22 per cent of the learners who responded negatively to the comments were still significant. The writer tried to review the existing documents; especially learners' assignments, which were returned to the

panel after having been corrected. According to the observation, there were significant numbers of assignments with only 'wrong' and 'right' comments.

The writer has selected two subjects from each grade level for this study using the lottery method. The finding of the document review is provided in the following table

Table 29
Assignments With and Without Valuable Comments

S.N	Grade level	Subject	No. of assignments checked	Correction without valuable comments		Correction with valuable comments	
				No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
1	9	English	185	130	70.27	55	29.73
		Biology	105	61	58.10	44	41.90
2	10	Mathematics	150	96	64.00	54	36.00
		Physics	110	56	58.10	54	49.90
3	11	Biology	96	-	-	96	100.00
		Chemistry	180	118	65.56	62	34.44
4	12	Geography	200	168	84.00	32	16.00
		English	200	87	43.50	113	56.50

As can be seen from Table 29, out of 185 assignments for submission, the number of assignments without valuable comments accounted to 70.27 per cent and 58.10 per cent for 9th grade English and biology courses respectively. The same picture is detected for 10th grade assignments. Correction without comments accounted to 64 per cent and 58.10 per cent for mathematics and physics assignments respectively. Differences in the role of tutors are reflected in Grade 11 and 12 courses. Grade 11 biology tutor who corrected the whole 96 assignments with valuable comments has better performance than grade 11 chemistry tutor who has provided valuable comments only on 62 assignments (34.50 per cent) out of 180, while the remaining 118 assignments (65.56 per cent) were given correction without valuable comments. Similarly, individual differences in the tutors' comments were also detected in the 12 grade courses. Out of 200 geography assignments, 168 assignments (84 per cent) were provided correction without valuable comments for the wrong responses, while the English tutor has a better performance - 113 assignments (56.50 per cent) were given correction with valuable comments.

From the above findings we conclude that, except for a few subjects, most of the students assignments lacked valuable comments for the wrong and right responses. This was an indication that DEP tutors were not doing enough to guide and motivate the distance students. In relation to this, Edstrom and others (1970:203) stated that the teacher (tutor) should show the student what major mistakes have been made in the assignments answer and how they can be avoided. While correcting the assignment, all mistakes showing that the student has failed to comprehend or has forgotten

principles or facts of any importance must not be left by the tutor. The tutor has to convince the student that he/she has fully understood the nature of the error. Experience has shown that the only overt indicator of tutors having gone through the learner-response is a grade or mark put on top of the response sheets. Such a grade or mark may stimulate some communication or reaction on the part of the learner, but it cannot go far pedagogically, as, in such a case, the tutor has functioned more like an 'examiner' than as a correspondence/distance tutor (Indira Gandhi National Open University, 1995: 38). In other words, tutorial input should consist of constructive criticism, encouragement, etc., for it is comments and not mere grades/ marks that improve learner performance.

In line with this fact, the writer tried to investigate to what extent the tutors were equipped with the necessary skills of tutoring and were experienced as well. For this purpose, 26 part time tutors were involved in the study, and completed a questionnaire on some aspects of their background and role.

Table 30
Tutors Service Years

S.N	Item	Responses	Per cent
1	Below 5 years	-	-
2	5-10 years	-	-
3	11-15 years	-	-
4	16-21 years	1	3.85
5	22-27 years	10	38.46
6	Over 28 years	15	57.69
	Total	26	100.00

As we can see from Table 30, the tutors surveyed were on the whole experienced in teaching profession with an average of 28 years, and, thus, were expected to generate relevant information to the problems under investigation.

Table 31
Provision of Initial Training to Tutors

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No.	Per cent

1	Have you received a special training before you were assigned as a tutor?		
	a. yes	18	69.23
	b. no	8	30.77
	Total	26	100.00

Table 32

Duration of Training Provided to the Tutors

S. N	Item	Responses	
		No.	Per cent
1	Short term seminars and work shops	16	88.89
2	3-6 months	-	-
3	7 months-1 year	-	-
4	More than 1 year	2	11.11
	Total	18	100.00

Table 33

Provision of In- service Training

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No.	Per cent
1	Have you attended any refresher courses after you were assigned as a tutor?		
	a. yes	15	57.69
	b. no	11	42.31
	Total	26	100.00

Table 31 shows that, out of 26 respondents, 69.23 per cent said they had taken some training in distance learning through short seminars and workshops, while 30.77 per cent said, have not received any such training. Accordingly, 57.69 per cent of the respondents have had on the job training, while the remaining (42.31 per cent) who have not taken any form of on the job training are still significant. From the above figures, it is revealed that the number of tutors who lack the necessary skills in tutoring is significant. This has undoubtedly a negative impact on the quality of the comments. Moreover, shortage of time for commenting the students' assignments may also have

its own impacts on the quality of the comments. In this regard, the tutors were asked the time they have to meet the DEP and distance learners. The summary of the responses was presented in the following table.

Table 34

The Time the Tutors are Available to Contact with DEP and Students

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No	Per cent
1	When are you available for tutorial duties?		
	a. any time	4	15.38
	b. at all times at work	4	15.36
	c. by appointment	10	38.46
	d. on the telephone	8	30.77
	<i>Total</i>	26	99.99

Table 34 shows that, availability of tutors by appointment and on the telephone comprise 38.46 and 30.37 per cent respectively. The number of tutors who are available any time and at all times at work are not significant. From this we conclude that except few (4 tutors), most of the tutors are secondary school teachers serving in both shifts. Therefore, they have very limited time to contact with the distance education students as well as the panel. However, experience indicates that tutoring requires for more time, skill and application on the part of the tutor than may normally be found in essay marking, on campus. Thus, under such circumstances, one can assume that the tutors of the DEP are not in a position to check students' assignment critically and give back to the institution on time. This has undoubtedly negative impact on turn-around time of assignments

Distance learners were also asked whether they needed help from their tutors on the courses they had studied. The responses are shown in Table 35.

Table 35

Student Perception of the Help they Need from Tutors

S. N	Type of help needed from tutor	% Needing			
		A lot of help		Some help	
		No	%	No	%

1.	Analysis of the errors and deficiencies on my assignment	360	80.00	90	20.00
2.	Explanation of what the right answers to my assignment are	329	73.11	121	26.89
3.	Help with identifying my strengths and weaknesses in my assignment	360	80.00	90	20.00
4.	The clearing up of problems and obscurities in the course materials	387	86.00	63	14.00
5.	Feedback on how I was progressing in my studies	360	80.00	90	20.00
6.	Encouragement from tutor	419	93.11	31	6.89
7.	Help with preparation for the exam	360	80.00	90	20.00
8.	Help with keeping pace with the time given for my studies and identifying priorities	330	73.33	120	26.67

On all, except two of the 8 types of help listed (which accounted for 73.11 per cent and 73.33 per cent), more than 80 percent of the students under each category reported needing a lot of help on ‘analysis of the errors and deficiencies’, ‘identification of strong and weak points’, ‘clearing up of problems, obscurities in the course materials’, ‘feedback on how they were progressing’, ‘encouragement from tutor’, and ‘help with preparation for the exam’.

Generally, the information on Table 35 reveals that, the students need more help and more support. However, the question is, to what extent tutors of the DEP tutors can meet the dire need of the distance students. As indicated in Tables (31-34), the tutors are neither well trained nor have ample time to assist their students by critically correcting their assignments. As experience indicates, there must be a close match between a project's objectives and the capacity of local institutions to implement, operate, and maintain it. In this regard, tutors of the DEP could not meet the demands of the distance learners effectively.

The distance students were also asked to respond to a very wide range of statements about their experience of post – foundation tutors generally.

Table 36

Students' Evaluation of the Role of the Tutors

S. N	Attitude statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Difficult to respond		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Apart from having my assignments graded and commented on, I don't need other help from a tutor.	68	15.11	41	9.11	95	21.11	150	33.33	96	21.33
2.	Without a course tutor there would be no one to whom I could turn for help with study problems	140	31.11	62	13.78	62	13.78	186	41.33	--	--
3.	Some aspects of most of the courses can only be taught effectively on a face – to – face basis	30	6.67	120	26.67	150	33.33	120	26.67	30	6.67
4.	If the amount of tutor support were reduced it would adversely affect my ability to cope with my studies	120	26.67	120	26.67	75	16.67	135	30.00	--	--
5.	If it were not for the help of a tutor I would probably have dropped out from my studies	90	20.00	60	13.33	135	30.00	150	33.33	15	3.33

As can be seen from Table 36, (Item 1), 54.67 per cent felt that they need other contact apart from having their assignment graded and commented on, while 24.22 per cent of the respondents did not want or need other contact with a tutor, 44.89 per cent (Item 2) definitely felt that without a course tutor there would be no – one to whom they could turn for help with the problem, while 41-33 per cent of the respondents disagree to this particular item. Accordingly, 33.33 per cent of the learners (Item 3) did not accept the idea that 'some aspects of most of the courses' can only be taught effectively on a face – to – face basis, while the same number of respondents (i.e. 33.33 per cent)

indicated that face – to – face is an effective means of treating some aspects of most courses. The remaining 33.33 per cent said 'it is difficult to respond'.

On the other hand, 53.33 per cent (Item 4) realized that if the amount of tutor support were reduced it would adversely affect their ability to cope with their studies, while 30 per cent reported that they have never agreed.

In Item 5 (of the same table), 33.33 per cent of the respondents felt that if it were not for the help of a tutor they would probably have dropped out from their studies, while 36.67 of the respondents confirmed that they would not drop out. The remaining 30 per cent said 'it is difficult to respond'.

As shown in Table 35 and 36 with regard to the role of the tutor it can be conclude that the students value tuition as a whole very highly.

Face – to Face- Tutorials

Face – to Face tutorial program is one of the instructional components of the distance education panel. The distance learners are expected to participate in the face – to – face programs conducted twice a year at selected tutorial centres. However, in most forms of open – learning, face – to – face tuition is a voluntary aspect; it is provided with the assumption that learners want to use it. But do they infact use it? And for how long and how often?. There are also important managerial considerations for monitoring attendance. This is because buildings, rooms and salaries are costly resources to offer to a group of learners. Does take – up justify provision? Could we increase take – up if we re-organized provision, to better match learner convenience?. These are important questions. In this regard, the questionnaire also included questions regarding face – to – face tutorials.

The distance learners were also asked whether or not they have participated in the occasional face – to – face sessions. The responses of the learners are presented in the following table.

Table 37

Participation in the Tutorial Program

S. N	Item	Responses	Per cent
1	Have you ever participated in the tutorial program?		
	a. Yes	162	36.00
	b. No	288	64.00
	Total	442	100.00

As we can see from Table 37, 36 per cent of the respondents said that they had participated in the tutorial program after they registered in the distance education program, while 64 per cent reported 'no'. From this figure we can say that the largest group of distance students were not beneficiaries of the tutorial program. Of course, the following data on tutorial participants for the year 2002 is in agreement with the aforementioned facts.

Table 38

Participants of Tutorial Program /2002

S. N	Regions	Tutorial centers	Number of distance students participating in the tutorial program				Total
			Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	
1	Oromia	Nekemt	2	1	1	2	6
		Mizan	-	-	-	7	7
		Dodola	4	1	1	-	6
		Asela	1	-	-	-	1
		Abomisa	1	1	-	2	4
		Total	8	3	2	11	24
2	SNNPR	Sodo	2	-	3	12	17
		Butajira	5	-	-	-	5
		Total	7	-	3	12	22
3	Amhara	Dejen	5	-	2	3	10
		Woldeia	2	-	-	2	4
		Total	7	-	2	5	14
4	Tigray	Adigrate	23	-	2	2	27
		Total	23	-	2	2	27
5	Addis Abeba	Addis Abeba	15	5	5	10	35
		Total	15	5	5	10	35
6	Gambela	-	-	-	-	-	
7	Afar	-	-	-	-	-	
8	Diredawa	-	-	-	-	-	
9	Somalie	-	-	-	-	-	
10	Benshangu l-gumuze	-	-	-	-	-	

As the recorded data for the participants of tutorial program conducted before the year 2002 were not available, this study included participants of the year 2002 only.

As we can see from Table 38, inspite of students being geographically scattered, Oromia, SNNPR, Amhara, Tigray and Addis Ababa have only 5, 2, 2, 1 and 1 tutorial centres respectively. Besides, the number of tutorial participants in each region is insignificant. Oromia, SNNPR, Amhara, Tigray and Addis Ababa accounted for 24, 22, 14, 27 and 35 tutorial program participants respectively. Surprisingly, tutorial programs have not been conducted in Diredawa, Somali, Afar, Benshangul and Gambela regions for the year 2002(Annex 6). Of course, according to the interview with the counselor of the DEP since the launching of the distance education program, students living in those regions were not beneficiaries of the tutorial program for two reasons. In the first place, the number of distance students were very low. Secondly, due to the short vacation, part -time tutors from Addis Ababa could not move to those distant tutorial centres. From the above responses, we can conclude that the distance education panel could not serve all distance students equally. If the existing situation continues_ particularly the implementation of face-to-face programs at a specific regions as it was indicated on Table 38_ then, the quality of educational services will vary in different regions. Hence, the DEP has to devise a mechanism that would enable it to serve all regions equally. One such mechanism could be to use tutors from the secondary school of the regions which would replace the mobile tutors from Addis Ababa.

Table 39
Reasons for not Participating in the Tutorial Program

S. N	Reasons	Responses	Per cent
1.	Distance of the tutorial centres from my locality	111	38.54
2.	I couldn't cover transportation cost	35	12.15
3.	Time conflict (my life situation is not convenient) with my working condition	70	24.31
4.	Lack of time table for the tutorial program	68	23.61
5.	The tutorial program is not useful to me	4	1.39

<i>Total</i>	288	100.00
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The 288 respondents who claimed to have participated in the face -to-face tutorials were also asked the reasons for not participating in the tutorial program.

Table 39 above indicates that, the most common reasons respondents gave for not going to all the tutorial classes are all related to personal as well as managerial factors. 'Distance of the tutorial centres, time conflict with my working condition, lack of time table for the tutorial program and high cost of transportation due to long distance of the tutorial centres' were identified by 38.54 per cent, 24.31 per cent, 23.61 per cent and 12.15 per cent of the respondents respectively.

From the above information, it is clear that of the four reasons, i.e distance of the tutorial centres from the learners' locality, lack of time table and high cost of transportation due to the long distance of the centres are closely related to managerial problems. Furthermore, 1.39 per cent of the distance learners did not attend tutorial programs because of past experience of unhelpful tutorials. In connection to distance of the tutorial centres from the learners' residence, the respondents were asked to what extent distance negatively affects participation. The responses of the distance learners are summarized in the following table.

Table 40
Face – to – face Program Participants Vs Distance of Tutorial Centres from the Learners Residence

S. N	Item	<i>Respondents</i>		<i>Responses</i>			x ²
				Yes	No	Total	
1	The degree of influence of distance of tutorial centres on tutorial program participation	Learners located below 5kms from tutorial centres	N	43	53	96	*14.76
			%	44.79	55.21	100.00	
		Learners located between 5 to 20 kms from tutorial centres	N	30	27	57	
			%	52.63	47.37	100	
		Learners located above 20 kms from the tutorial	No	89	208	297	

		centres	%	29.97	70.03	100	
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* Significant at an alpha level 0.05 df = 2

The negative impact of distance on the tutorial participation is clearly detected in the distance learners located more than 20 kms away from the tutorial centres. 70.03 per cent couldn't attend the tutorial programs, but for those who are located within 5km from the tutorial centres, distance is not the main determinant factor. The chi – square value also indicates that the responses of distance learners located below 5 kms, between 5 to 20 kms, and above 20 kms from the tutorial centres in this respect is statistically significant at an alpha level 0.05. The calculated chi – square ($\chi^2 = 14.76$) value is higher than the table value of chi – square ($\chi^2 = 5.99$)

Table 40 above shows that the majority of the distance learners (66 per cent) are located more than 20 kilometers away from the tutorial centres. According to the discussion made with the distance learners, the location of tutorial centres is not fixed. There were cases of distance learners traveling up to 300 kilometers.

In the following table, an association of distance of the tutorial centres and the reasons for not participating is made to find out the major reasons affecting the participation of tutorial program for each category of distance.

Table 41

Distance of the tutorial centres and the reasons for not participating in the tutorial program

<i>Distance</i>		Distance of the tutorial centres from my locality	I could not cover transportation cost	Time clash with my working condition	Lack of timetable for tutorial progr
Below 5 kms	N	7	4	19	
	%	13.20	7.55	35.85	35
5 – 20 kms	N	--	---	9	
	%	--	--	33.33	66
Above 20 kms	N	104	31	42	
	%	50	14.90	20.19	1
Total	N	111	35	70	
	%	38.54	12.15	24.31	23

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As we can see from Table 41, distance has negatively affected the rate of tutorial participation for those respondents who were located more than 20km away from the tutorial centres – out of the 297 respondents only 29.97 per cent participated the program, while the remaining 70.03 per cent did not (Table 40). As shown in Table 41, for those who were located within 5 km distance, time conflict with working time and lack of timetable (35.85 per cent) for the tutorial program were the two equally most important factors responsible for relatively lower rate of participation, while distance (13.20 per cent) stands a second reason. Better participation performance (52.63 per cent) was detected in those within 5 – 20 kms distance limits, though the number of non – participants were also significant (47.37 per cent). The major reason for not participating in the tutorial program for this distance category (5 – 20kms) was lack of timetable (66.67 per cent), followed by time clash (33.33 per cent).

The chi – square value also indicated the responses of distance learners located in different localities, in this respect statistically significant at an alpha level 0.05. The calculated chi – square ($\chi^2 = 68.96$) value is higher than the Table value of chi – square (15.51), that is, the differences in the reasons for not participating in the tutorial program for different categories of distance is statistically significant.

It is clear from this study that distance of the tutorial centres has been the most frequent reason affecting the participation of distance learners in the tutorial program. This is an indication that there were problems associated with the location of tutorial centres.

The above findings do not go in line with the observations of Kelly and Swift (1983:61-64) in some respects. These scholars in their study confirm that, the most common reasons respondents gave for not going to all the tutorial centers for their course were all related to personal factors: Family, personal and work commitments. However, the second most frequent was distance/time spent to get there. In this study, distance of the tutorial centres stood out as the most common cause for not going to all the tutorial events while personal and work commitments stood as the second most frequent reason unlike the Kelly's and

Swlift's (1983) study. In this regard, the respondents were asked to point out the body responsible for deciding the location of the tutorial centres. The summary of their responses is presented in the following table.

Table 42
Selection of Tutorial Centres

S.N	Who selects the location of Tutorial centres?	Responses	Per cent
1	The students are responsible to select the tutorial centres which are convenient for them	135	30.00
2	The distance education panel decides the location of the tutorial centres	315	70.00
	Total	450	100.00

As shown in Table 42, 70 per cent of the respondents said that the distance education panel decided the location of the tutorial centres, while the remaining 30 percent indicated that the students were responsible for selecting the location, which is convenient.

Effective face-to-face tutorial programs are usually considered as valuable tools for successful implementation of distance education programs. For reasons mentioned above, the face-to-face element was not effectively integrated with radio and print components. In relation to this, Perraton (1983:37) stressed that, where students cannot attend tutorial programs at a centre once a week, or once or twice a month, then they will face far more serious problems than those who participate in the tutorials. And, when we examine the intervals at which the tutorial programs are conducted in the secondary level distance education program in Ethiopia, we find that the intervals are long. i.e twice a year. Perraton further stated that even though many distance-teaching organizations arrange occasional residential courses for their students, these are of limited value if they are at long intervals, or are far away. Students' problems should be solved immediately since it is difficult for them to wait until their problems are solved in the next face-to -face contact.

To sum up, with regard to planning and implementation of fact-to-face support, DEP, distance education students, REB, Zonal and Woreda Education Offices should have to establish proper working relations. It is only through participatory planning and priority arrangements that the distance learners'

values, beliefs, perceived needs, and goals could be met and the level of participation in the tutorial programs could be enhanced.

3.2.7 Administration of media utilization

Both practice and theory confirm that using a variety of media helps the teaching-learning process especially by motivating students. Distance education uses a wide variety of media to convey the educational content of courses, as a means of communication between students and tutors, and to administer programs (World Bank, 1992:31). To tap the potential of radio medium, the distance education panel produces supportive educational radio programs for Amharic, English and biology courses. However, there is evidence that the programs were not effectively utilized. In connection to utilization of educational radio programs, the respondents were asked whether they make use of the programs or not.

Table 43
Utilization of Distance Educational Radio Programs

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No.	%
1	How often do you listen to the distance education radio program?		
	a. always	52	11.56
	b. Sometimes	86	19.11
	c. No I don't listen to it.	312	69.33
	Total	450	100.00

As the table 43 above reveals, only 11.56 per cent of the respondents fully utilized the radio programs, while 19.11 percent listened to the programs sometimes, and 69.33 per cent did not listen at all.

Thus, from the above facts, it can be noted that radio program was underutilized in a very significant percentage. the. Why was the utilization of educational radio program so low?. The respondents' responses to this question are summarized as follows.

Table 44
Reasons why Some Distance Learners Listen to the Radio Programs sometimes and Why Others did not Listen at all

S.N	Items	Responses	Per cent
1	Absence of radio sets	14	3.52
2	Time clash with my working condition	327	82.16
3	Lack of timetable for the radio programs	57	14.32
	Total	398	100.00

According to Table 44, 82.16 per cent of the respondents declared that time clash has been the major reason for those distance learners that attended the radio program 'sometimes' and for some others that 'did not listen to the programs at all.' 'Lack of timetable' and absence of radio stets' accounted for 14.32 per cent and 3.52 per cent of the respondents respectively.

The findings of this study support the finding of the studies reported by open universities, Heerlen, the Netherlands (1986:35). In the studies, it was reported that, the home, and the living room in particular, often is not an ideal place for regular and concentrated learning, especially when the learner lives in a family situation. Moreover, listening or viewing time, in the case of radio and TV may conflict with work schedules or other social constraints. That is why different authors argue for the need to design appropriate learning environment. For instance, Brown and others (1997:3) pointed out that inclusion of media in the process of education requires carefully thought purposes as well as judiciously selected kinds of resources appropriate to the subject, the student's background and needs, and the existing environmental situation in which those media will be implemented. That is, in order to bring maximum learning among students, the kind of educational media used to transmit the learning objectives must not be

incorporated into the system at random, rather the availability of the right media resources, which fit the core learning factors, should be sought out earlier. Moreover, appropriate listening time, quality of the program, timely provision of the radio program time table and radio guides have to be taken into account while designing the radio programs. Regarding factors affecting the utilization of educational radio programs, Solomon Melese (1999:22) also asserted that in developing countries, such as Ethiopia, the attitude of people, which is resulted from the age-long tradition of using lecture method within teacher dominated classroom instruction, has a great negative impact on the use of interactive media resources for educational purpose. In other words, the author seems to stress on the negative impacts of traditional teaching learning methods on the media utilization.

Besides the above facts, the distance learners were asked about the quality of the radio programs.

Table 45
Quality of Transmission of the Radio programs

S.N	Item	Responses	
		No.	%
	a. Excellent	19	13.77
	b. Very good	79	57.24
	c. Good	40	28.99
	Total	138	100.00

As Table 45 above shows, the respondents who noted 'excellent' to the quality of transmission were 13.77 per cent, while 'very good' and 'good' were reported by 57.24 per cent and 28.99 per cent of the respondents respectively. Similarly, the fitness of the radio program to the contents of the course materials has been evaluated. According to the responses, 66.67 per cent of the respondents rated fitness of the radio program to the contents of the course materials as 'very good' while 33.33 per cent of them reported 'good'.

Generally, the above information appears to disclose that the distance students appreciate the quality of the radio transmission as well as the relevance of the contents of the radio programs. Therefore, according to the respondents, the impacts of quality and relevance of the radio program on the utilization of the radio programs was minimal.

On the other hand, the existing radio program documents have been reviewed so as to cross-check whether the radio programs transmitted were really relevant to the new curriculum. The summary of the reviewed documents is presented in the following table.

Table 46

Correspondence of Radio Programs Transmitted with the new curriculum

S.N.	Radio programs prepared based on old curriculum though the new curriculum has already been implemented	Percentage of the Total radio programs	Radio Program prepared based on the new curriculum	Percentage of the Total radio programs	Remarks
	<u>English Radio Programs</u>		<u>English Radio Programs</u>		
1.	Grade 10 English radio programs		1. Grade 9 English radio programs		
2.	Grade 11 English radio programs	77.78			
	<u>Amharic Radio Programs</u>		<u>Amharic Radio Programs</u>		
3.	Grade 10 Amharic radio programs		2. Grade 9 Amharic radio programs	22.22	The new curriculum for Grade 12 courses has not been implemented yet.
4.	Grade 11 Amharic radio programs				
	<u>Biology Radio Programs</u>		<u>Biology Radio Programs</u>		
5.	Grade 9 Biology radio programs				
6.	Grade 10 Biology radio programs		–		

7.	Grade 11 Biology radio programs				
Total	7 courses	77.78	2 courses	22.22	

As one can see from Table 46 above, out of the 9 educational radio programs, 7 of them (77.78 per cent) were produced based on old curriculum although the curriculum was changed two years ago. Only Grade 9 English and Amharic radio programs fit the textbooks of the new curriculum. This implies that the radio lessons prepared by Educational Media Agency were not designed to support the correspondence component

In connection to this the researcher tried to explore the extent the educational radio programs of the distance education panel were improved once they were produced. In this regard, the following table reveals the extent to which the radio programs were improved, as reported by the respondents of the panel.

Table 47
The Extent the Radio Programs were Improved

S.N.	Item	Responses	Per cent
1	They are improved every year	43	31.16
2	They are improved every two years	17	12.32
3	They are improved every three years	9	6.52
4	Have never been improved	69	50.00
5	Others	--	
	Total	138	100.00

As the above figures indicate, 50 per cent of the respondents noted that the recently transmitted educational radio programs have never been improved for many years. This fact was also revealed in the documents of distance education panel. Data on the production and improvement of educational radio programs are presented in the following table.

Table 48**Date of Production and Improvement of Educational Radio Programs**

S.N	The name of The radio program	Year of Production (E.C.)	Year of improvement (E.C)	Number of years serving without improvement
	<u>English Radio Programs</u>			
1.	Grade 9 English	1978	1986, 1992	1986 -1978 = 9 1992 -1986 = 7
2.	Grade 10 English	1978	1987	9
3.	Grade 11 English	1981	1983	2
4.	Grade 12 English	1983	--	11
	<u>Amharic Radio Programs</u>			
5.	Grade 9 Amharic	1985	1992	7
6.	Grade 10 Amharic	1985	--	9
7.	Grade 11 Amharic	1981	1986	5
8.	Grade 12 Amharic	1978	1987	9
	<u>Biology Radio Programs</u>			
9.	Grade 9 Biology	1974	1983	9
10.	Grade 10 Biology	1987	--	7
11.	Grade 11 Biology	1977	1986	9
12.	Grade 12 Biology	1981	--	13

As Table 48 shows, except Grade 11 English, all the rest the radio programs were transmitted for more than 7 years without being improved or replaced by new ones. Besides, except Grade 9 English and Grade 9 Amharic, all Grade 10 and 11 radio programs need to be produced in line with the new curriculum.

From the above figures, we can conclude that most of the programs transmitted currently (77.78 per cent) are too irrelevant to support to the existing print medium. As a whole, it is the feeling of this writer that the role of media technology in the distance education system has been neglected.

In the preceding discussion we have explored the provision of the three components of media (print, radio and face- face) in the distance education program. Evaluating to what extent each of these media has been utilized in the course the students who have completed their courses is essential so as to design strategies that would enable utilization of resources more effectively. With this in mind, the questionnaire used a five point rating scale to explore reactions to the provision of different media. A comparison of the three media is summarized in the following table.

Table 49
Quantitative Comparison in the Provision of Course Materials, Radio Programs and Face-to-face Tutorial Programs

S.	Item	Much too much		Too much		About right		Too little		Much too little		No answer	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Course materials	56	12.44	--	--	140	31.11	226	50.22	--	--	28	6.22
2.	Educational radio programs	--	--	--	--	289	64.22	66	14.67	--	--	95	21.11
3.	Tutorial programs	--	--	--	--	60	13.33	270	60	30	6.67	90	20

Of the three main components listed in Table 49, tuition elicits most of the 'not enough provided' responses, 66.67 per cent of the respondents noted 'little provision of tuition'. Like wise, 50.22 per cent of the learners also indicated 'too little' provision of course materials as compared to 'the right amount' responses (31.11). Accordingly, 64.22 per cent of the respondents reported that educational radio program was provided to the distance learners about the right amount, while 14.67 per cent of the respondents did not agree with this idea.

The above finding shows that the distance learners were not supplied with the necessary instructional materials, the print, face-to-face and the media components were not effectively integrated so as to satisfy the individual needs of the distance learners. Besides the potentials of each instructional media has not

been fully exploited. Students have complained about this saying that they felt hopeless due to inadequate provision of services. However, the degree of the problem varies from organization to organization. For instance, in institutions developing their own learning materials, shortage of materials and delays in their distribution worsens the problems (Thomas, 1996:102).

In relation to this, (Ibid: 102) stated that distance education methods are likely to be more effective if reasonable study facilities can be provided, and problems in the supply and distribution of materials are overcome.

Generally, when we examine the level of provision of services one can conclude that the DEP is not providing services effectively.

To cross-check the above finding, the distance learners were also requested to complete the following table. The table provides an idea about the quantity of the provision of face-to-face, reference materials and teaching materials

Table 50

Provision of face-to-face ,Reference materials and Teaching materials

S. N	Items	Rating											
		Strongly agree		Fairly agree		Agree		Not decided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Face-to-face tutorial programs were conducted adequately to enable distance learners utilize the course materials effectively	87	19.33	70	15.56	29	6.44	48	10.67	102	22.67	114	
2	Library services were organized to enable the learners complete their courses effectively	48	10.67	35	7.78	22	4.89	42	9.33	162	36	141	
3	Sufficient reference materials were organized to	50	11.11	34	7.56	25	5.56	25	5.56	139	30.88	177	

	facilitate the teaching-learning process.												
4	Sufficient teaching materials were organized to facilitate the teaching learning process.	99	22.00	80	17.78	15	3.33	23	5.11	83	18.44	150	
5	Tutors were very skillful in helping and guiding each learner	140	31.11	107	23.77	25	5.56	21	4.67	54	12.00	103	

According to the responses to Items 1, 3 and 4 of Table 47, inadequate amount of tutorial programs, reference and teaching materials was reported by 48

per cent, 70.21 per cent and 51.77 per cent of the respondents respectively. These and the many other failures that result from poor management inevitably lead to higher dropout rates, poor examination performance, and wastage of scarce resources.

3.2.8 Rate of progress

Distance Education Panel does not interfere with the pace with which students follow their lessons- students are free to proceed at their own pace. However, according to the regulation of the distance education panel, fast learners have the chance to complete each grade level in six months. At this speed, a learner can complete grade 9-12 within two years time. This study tried to investigate the time taken to complete each grade level. The following table summarizes the responses obtained.

Table 51
Time Taken to Complete the Secondary Level Education

Grade		Below 1 year	2-3 years	4-5 years	6 years and above	Total
9	N	6	43	11	--	60
	%	10	71.67	18.33	--	100
10	N	4	23	7	8	42
	%	9.52	54.76	16.67	19.05	100
11	N	5	80	16	6	107
	%	4.67	74.77	14.95	5.61	100
12	N	17	68	30	21	136
	%	12.50	50.00	22.06	15.44	100
Total	N	32	214	64	35	345
	%	9.28	62.03	18.55	10.14	100

As can be seen from the data in Table 51 similar trends are detected in all Grade levels. Most of Grade 9 students (71.67 per cent) spend 2-3 years in the same Grade level in the course of their study, while 4-5 years has been reported by 18.33 per cent. Grade 10 students have more or less similar pattern as that of Grade 9. 2-3 years category is the most frequent one (54.76 per cent) to be indicated by the respondents, while unlike Grade 9 students, the number of respondents (19.05 per cent) who spend 6 and above years in the same grade level stands second. 16.67 per cent of the distance learners responded 4 -5 years. Responses for Grade 11 and 12 have the same pattern.

Like Grade 9 and 10 students, 74.77 per cent of Grade 11 respondents and 50 per cent of Grade 12 respondents reported that they spend 2-3 years to complete the respective grade levels, while 4-5 years category stands second and accounted for 14.95 per cent and 22.06 per cent of the respondents in Grades 11 and 12 respectively.

The following table compares the actual time taken with the expected time of completion as stated in the policy of the DEP.

Table 52
Average Time Taken to Complete Each Grade Level

Grade	Average time taken (\bar{x}) years)	Expected time of completion (\bar{y} years)	t_{test}
9	2.83	0.5	0.224*
10	3.96	0.5	
11	2.93	0.5	
12	3.41	0.5	

* is not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ $df = 6$

As we can see from the above table, the expected time of completion for each grade level is 6 months (0.5 years), while 2.83, 3.96, 2.93 and 3.41 years for grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 respectively. On average, there is 2-3 years difference between the expected and the actual time of completion. However, the t-test value indicates that, the difference between the actual and expected time in this respect is not statistically significant at an alpha level 0.05. The table value of t test (2.447) is higher than the calculated t value ($t_{obs} = 0.224$). Though, not significant statistically, 2-3 years difference between the actual and the expected is not short time.

The discussion made with record and dispatch department members reveal that there are significant number of distance learners who have still failed to complete Grade 12, though they were registered way back in 1979, and reported that the rate of progress of the students is too slow. Similarly, discussion made with group of distance students who came to the institution indicated that the majority of students have lagged behind their study schedule.

In connection to this, the experiences of other countries reveal that low completion rate is a big problem in the systems of distance education. For instance, correspondence instruction has taken place in the USA for over a hundred years; yet correspondence have been unable to raise the persistently low completion rates of correspondence students (World Bank, 1992)

This study also investigated the major causes for slow rate of progress. In this regard, distance education participants were asked to list down the major causes for lagging behind. A summary of the responses is presented in the table below.

Table 53
Causes for Being too Slow in Distance Studies

S. N	What are the reasons for being too slow in your study?	Responses					
		Simple		Moderate		High	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Delayed course materials and worksheets	38	8.44	104	23.11	308	68.45
2	Delayed examinations	30	6.67	110	24.44	310	68.89
3	Delayed radio guides	39	6.44	150	33.33	271	60.33
4	Lack of cooperation on the part of Distance Education Panel	135	30	135	30	180	40
5	Lack of support from the tutors	58	12.88	112	24.89	280	62.22
6	Incomplete course materials	150	33.33	106	23.56	194	43.11
7	Inefficiency of postal services	58	12.89	70	15.55	322	71.56
8	Difficulty of the subject matter	81	18	154	34.22	215	47.78
9	Personal problem or work-load	63	14	150	33.33	237	52.67

As shown in Table above, three rating scale i.e (simple, moderate and high) are used to indicate the degree of each problem. In all of the Items (1-9), almost all the

respondents felt that the degree of each problem is high. However, the problems are not equally important in affecting the rate of progress. Inefficiency of postal service, delayed: examination, course materials and worksheets were identified as series problems by 71.56 percent, 68.89 per cent, 68.45 per cent of the respondents, respectively.

On the other hand, the distance education staff members were asked to state down the major factors affecting the secondary level of distance education, and identified the following three serious problems in their degree of importance.

Table 54

Problems of Distance Education as rated 1-3 by the Staff Members

S.N	Item	Rating
1.	Problem of planning and management	1 st
2.	Inefficient student support service	2 nd
3.	Lack of Training	3 rd

As one can see from the above table, problems of planning and management stand first as the most serious problem of secondary level of distance education. Of course, responses of staff members (Table 54) were also in agreement with the rating responses of distance learners (Table 53) to the reasons for being too slow in their study i.e. delayed course materials, assignments, examination and radio guide; lack of cooperation on the part of the distance education panel, lack of support from the tutors, incomplete course materials and inefficiency of postal service which were rated by distance learners as the most serious problems; all related to planning and management problems of the distance education panel. Accordingly, inefficient student support services and lack of training (Table54), which were rated as second and third problems respectively, are directly a reflection of the first problem ie. problem of planning and management.

In relation to this, Lockwood (1995:222) stated that factors which correlate positively with course completion rates include the use of course assignments, early submission of the first one, short turn-round times for giving learners feedback, pacing of progress, supplementary audio tapes or telephone tutorials, favorable working conditions in the learner's context, the quality of materials and reminders from tutors to complete work. Similarly, World Bank (1992:27) stated that:

the outcomes of poor management which can negatively affect the course completion rates include: delays in writing and producing course materials, inadequate course materials in terms of subject content or, more commonly, instructional effectiveness; poor

integration of the different components of courses, that is, written texts, face-to-face sessions, radio transmissions; failure to deliver course materials to all students or failure to deliver on schedule; excessive delays in marking and returning assignments to students.

Therefore, from the foregoing discussions, we can conclude that, planning and management problems coupled with social constraints have been the major factors affecting the rate of progress of the secondary level distance students in the country.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to gain some insight into the organizational and managerial problems affecting the secondary level distance education in Ethiopia. It assessed the characteristics of the respondents, the impact of organizational structure

of the DEP on the activities of the panel, staff development recording system of the panel, administration of course distribution, speed of communication, interaction between the students and the panel, and the students and the tutors, media utilization and students rate of progress. This chapter summarizes the major findings and draws conclusions and recommendations based on them.

4.1 SUMMARY

1. In this study, the descriptive survey method of research was employed. To collect the necessary data, questionnaire survey, interview, document analysis and observation were used as an instrument for the study. The subjects for this study were identified using systematic and availability sampling procedures.
2. As shown in this study, the secondary level distance students were mainly adults. It was found out that, the students were married (65.56%), male (81.78%), gainfully employed (84%), have 4-6 children on the average (41.78%) and 47.78% were between the ages of 31 and 41.
3. As to the regional distribution of distance learners, it was found out that Oromia, Amhara and SNNPR accounted for 27.78 percent, 20 percent and 19.56 percent of the respondents respectively, which was the largest share of the country.
4. The operation of distance education panel is too centralized. All services are delivered from the head quarters at the Educational Media Agency. The involvement and role of REB, Zonal and Woreda Offices in the planning, managing and evaluation of distance education was marginal.
5. As to the characteristics of the staff members, 39.29% of the staff were in the 31-40 age group, the share of professionals (32.14 %) and (over 75 %) have long years of service and hence experience.
6. The Distance Education Panel has 28 staff members and 5 vacant posts. In this regard, 50 per cent of the respondents reported that manpower was not adequately allocated to each department, while 32.14 per cent noted that there was a big shortage of manpower. Moreover, 71.43 per cent of the staff members affirmed that they had not received any kind of initial training. 7.14 percent of the staff have participated in refresher courses and 92.86 percent have not. The study

showed that the attempts made by EMA to train its staff members were low, reported by 50 per cent of the staff members.

7. As shown in this study, recording and registration are conducted manually. This makes it difficult to find quickly the file of a distance learner out of a pile of files.
8. It was investigated in this study that 44.22 per cent of the respondents declared that they completed the registration formalities within a month, while 20.22 percent said after a period of 2-3 months, 5.33 per cent after 4 - 5 months while 18.67 per cent noted over 6 months.
9. According to the findings of the study, information gained to attend distance education was clear to 91.11 per cent of the respondents, while 52 per cent reported that they had no clear idea about how the radio student guide were used. 90.44 per cent noted the clarity of getting the necessary distance materials from the panel.
10. Problems identified by distance students which are related to course material distribution include: distribution of course materials without assignment, lost course materials, distribution of course materials arbitrarily, provision of outdated courses and distribution of incomplete course units
11. As indicated in this study, 30.44 per cent of the distance learners receive the first set of course material within a month time after registration, while for 27.56 per cent it takes even over 6 months.
12. In this study it was revealed that postal service is used as a major means to facilitate the two-way communication for 55.11 per cent of the learners followed by the utilization of all means (39.11 per cent) i.e. post office, telephone, physical contact and through messenger. Moreover, 86.22 and 88.89 per cent of the learners are found to have access to postal and telephone services respectively. However, 36.89 per cent of the respondents were located more than 20km away from the nearby post office, while 34.67per cent live within 5 km radius.
13. According to this study, delays in informing examination results and low turn-around time of assignments have been major problems. 52 per cent reported that the turn-around time of assignment for submission was more than 3 months,

while the ranges 1-2 and 2-3 months accounted for 20.67 and 17.78 per cent respectively. The impact of distance on the turn-around time of assignment has been evaluated. In this regard, the chi-square value indicated that the difference between the responses of distance students living in Addis Ababa and the rest of the regions is statistically significant at an alpha level 0.05. 42.89 per cent of the respondents considered the postal service to be quite reliable, while 40.22 per cent noted less reliable. 4.67 percent said not at all. Concerning time taken to receive examination results from distance education, 3 months ranked first (by 40 per cent) followed by 20 per cent for 2 -3 months category while 20 of the respondents percent have never received their results at all..

14. As to the speed by which the services are delivered to the learners, 60 per cent confirmed that they received the distance education course materials in time. Contrary to this, 57.56 per cent and 68.22 per cent noted that they had never received radio guide and transmission timetable in time respectively. Similarly, 69.11 per cent and 80.44 per cent expressed their dissatisfaction with the speed of distribution of tutorial timetable and exams respectively.
15. As to the students' perception of the tutors' comments, 76.89 per cent of the respondents agreed that their tutors' indicated the wrong responses, while 17.33 per cent were dissatisfied. 68.22 per cent confirmed that they were provided with analysis and clear explanation on their assignments. On the other hand, 69.78 per cent and 57.56 per cent indicated that they have been provided valuable and constructive comments; including comments on their progress respectively. However, review of the distance students corrected assignments, contradict with the aforementioned facts. Except for few subjects (Grade 11 Biology, Grade 12 English), most of the students assignments lack valuable comments for the wrong and right responses though the tutors surveyed (26 tutors) were on the whole experienced in the teaching profession and 69.23 per cent had taken initial training.
16. Except two cases (73.11 and 73.33 per cent), more than 80 per cent of the students need a lot of help from their tutors concerning analysis of the errors and

deficiencies on their assignments, explanation of what a good answer is, identifying the strong and weak points, clearing up of problems and obscurities in the course materials, feedback on how they were progressing, encouragement, preparation for the exam, and keeping pace with the study time and identifying priorities.

17. According to this study, 64 per cent of the respondents have never participated in the tutorial program. For instance, the data on the tutorial participation of the year 2002 reveals that in spite of geographically scattered distance students, Oromia, SNNPR, Amhara, Tigray and Addis Ababa have only 5, 2, 2, 1 and 1 tutorial centres respectively. Besides, the numbers of participants were insignificant. 24, 22, 14, 27 and 35 tutorial participants were registered for the respective regions while tutorial programs were not conducted at all in Diredawa, Somali, Afar, Benshangul and Gambela regions. The most common reasons respondents gave for not going to all the tutorial events were all related to distance of the tutorial centres (38.54 per cent), time clash (24.31 per cent) and lack of timetable for the tutorial program (23.61 per cent).
18. As to the selection of the tutorial centres, the study shows that 70 per cent of the respondents said that it was the distance education panel that decides the location of the tutorial centres, while 30 per cent noted that the students were responsible.
19. Although, the distance education panel produced supportive radio programs for Amharic, English and biology courses, 69.33 per cent did not attend the programs at all, while 19.11 percent listened to the programs sometimes, while 11 percent used the programs fully. The most common reasons respondents gave for attending the programs sometimes and for not attending at all, was related to clash of time (82.16 per cent), lack of a timetable (14.32 per cent) and absence of radio sets (3.52 per cent). On the other hand, it was found out that, almost all (77.78 per cent) of the radio programs are outdated i.e.were produced based on the old curriculum and 69 per cent of the respondents noted that the programs have never been improved for over than 9 years.

20. The provision of course materials, educational radio programs and tutorial program has been compared in this study. Of the three main components, educational radio programs is the one eliciting most of the 'enough provided' responses, while for the remaining course material and the tutorial programs, 50.22 per cent and 60 per cent of the respondents replied 'too little' provision respectively.
21. Distance students are free to proceed at their own pace- although fast learners are expected to complete each grade level in 6 months, most of the students in Grade 9 (71.67 percent), Grade 10 (54.76 per cent), Grade 11 (74.77 per cent) and Grade 12 (50 per cent) spend 2-3 years. The major reasons identified for lagging behind include inefficiency of postal service (71.56 per cent), delayed examination (68.89 per cent), and delayed course materials and assignments (68.45 per cent). Similarly, the distance education staff members identified problem of planning and management, inefficient student support service and lack of training as the most serious problems affecting secondary level distance education.

4.2 CONCLUSION

1. Delays in informing examination results to distance students and distribution of course materials, and low turn-around time of assignments have been major problems of secondary level distance education in Ethiopia. The major causes for the delays in the provision of services are:
 - the institutional capacity (in terms of facilities and man power allocation) of the panel is so limited that it couldn't respond quickly to requests of the distance learners.
 - the activities of Distance Education Panel is too centralized to be efficient_all services are delivered to geographically scattered students from the centres. Although the regional education structures (REB, Zonal and Woreda Education Departments) are physically close to the participants, they could not play significant role in solving the educational and administrative problems of the learners.

- the postal service, which is the main means of communication between students and DEP, and between tutors and distance students is not efficient and reliable.
2. Responses of staff members of the DEP clearly indicated that most of the staff members are not equipped with the necessary training to effectively carry out their duties.
 3. The tutors surveyed were on the whole experienced and the majority (69.23 per cent) have training in the distance education system. Although the distance learners have been satisfied with the tutors' comments, the reality was different. More than 75 per cent of the corrected assignments lack any sort of written comments either for wrong or right responses. Thus, we can conclude that most of the tutors of the panel are not efficient enough to carry out their responsibilities. Secondly, the DEP does not have any mechanism devised to evaluate its tutors most of who lack the necessary skills in tutoring. And the impact of unskilled tutors on the quality of comments should not be underestimated. More than 15 per cent of the tutors are secondary school teachers in Addis Ababa serving in both shifts. Therefore, they have very limited time to meet with the distance education panel as well as students.
 4. As the study reveals, the largest group of distance students (64 per cent) were not beneficiaries of tutorial programs and, the impact of lack of contact with the distance students on the students' academic performance and administrative issues can not be underestimated. As it was indicated earlier, distance has been a big problem affecting participation. This was due to the fact that it was the Distance Education Panel that decides the location of the tutorial centres in most cases. Distance students couldn't travel long distances due to family and work commitments as well as high transportation costs.
 5. As to the utilization of media programs, 77.78 per cent of the radio programs broadcasted currently are irrelevant and cannot serve as a supportive medium of the distance education courses. This is wastage of resources by itself. As a whole, the positive role of media technology in the distance education system has been neglected

6. Distance students on the average spent a minimum of 10 years to complete the secondary level education (9-12 grades) though the expected time of completion is 2 years. This is really discouraging.

4.3 RECOMMENDATION

In view of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been forwarded. As we examine the existing distance education panel, we can understand from the findings of this study that there is a big gap between the needs of the distance education students and the provision of educational services. Shortage of trained staff members and tutors coupled with inadequate facilities such as computer networks, shortage of course materials and other related teaching materials, inefficient tutorial services and irrelevant media programs, all have affected the secondary level distance education in the country. This, calls for a strong management both at the centre and the grass root level. If distance education is to be efficiently and effectively used, first and for most the following issues relating to policy, organization and management need to be addressed:

Policy issues

1. The absence of clearly defined policy related to evaluation of distance students, Tutors, quality of Distance Education, the relationship between the DEP and the regional offices, drop out and readmission, curriculum changes etc have complicated the management of secondary level distance education in the country. In view of this the DEP needs to articulate a policy that clearly defines and directs the aforementioned policy issues.

Organizational and Management issues

2. The most common complaint from distance students was delays in informing of examination results, distribution of course materials and low turn-around time of assignments. Some of the basic causes identified for these problems include: inefficiency of the postal service, traditional recording system and small number of clerks in the record departments. So, devising ways of minimizing these problems

is crucial to the effective operation of the Distance Education Panel. Among the many alternative methods that can be included are: utilization of public transports and commercial delivery systems (such as those used for news papers). Moreover, the Distance Education Panel should be adequately equipped with the necessary facilities (computer) and skilled manpower. Another alternative method for overcoming these problems may be to decentralize some of the activities of the panel if its organizational efficiency is to be improved. The writer, therefore, recommends that the distance education panel should organize functional distance education units at regional, zonal and woreda levels. The responsibilities of the units may include, devising plans and strategies for implementing distance education programs, coordinating the tutorial program and conducting monitoring and evaluation on distance education program. In this regard, the DEP can use the tutorial centres already established for teacher training. The centres could be given the responsibility of conducting tutorial programs, receiving and storing course materials and distributing them to enrolled students, providing feed back on assignments and examinations. They could also be used as resource centres for media production. By doing so, it could be possible to respond quickly to students' requests and speed up the two-way communication between students and the DEP, and between the tutors and distance education students. Mutual commitment and support is also needed between the DEP and the relevant local offices and tutorial centres. To do this, there is a need for coordination among the DEP, local education offices (REB Zone and Woreda Education Departments) and tutorial centres. Some mechanisms must be found. Among these are:

- providing clear-cut policies and plans is essential. The local educational offices and tutorial centres should be provided not only with precise definition of their roles in the implementation of distance programs, but also they need clarification on the distance education objectives; how the local institutions would contribute to achieve them and be able to do this within the context of the local situations.

- identifying job description for REB, Zonal and Woreda Education Departments and tutorial centres.
- a clear definition of the responsibilities of each of the participatory organs so that they can play a collaborative role.
- establish a systematic channel of communication between the DEP and the local participants to disseminate information like operational procedures and other related issues.
- appropriate systems of monitoring/evaluation mechanisms for ensuring accountability. Among the many techniques of monitoring and evaluation used for educational programs, the following techniques must be considered:
 - beneficiaries should participate in monitoring and evaluation of the distance education program executed in their respective places;
 - evaluation in addition to physical progress and disbursement, concentrate on the quality output and services offered by the Distance Education Panel and the local participants (REB, Zonal and Woreda Education Departments and tutorial centres);
 - distance education program evaluation requires clearly stated objectives and indicators for each type of distance education projects as well as well defined evaluation methodology in terms of anticipated program impact so that they can be measured;
 - design computerized management information systems to facilitate the process of monitoring and evaluation.

Based on the above factors, continuous follow-up mechanisms should be strictly realized; and evaluate the potentials of the DEP, participants of the local education institutions and tutorial centres in the implementation of the distance education programs.

3. People should not be perceived as passive recipient who accept whatever benefits and services are given to them but rather as active participants who make demands on the delivery systems or on whatever benefits. However, the study shows that

there still is a tendency of neglecting the beneficiaries (distance students) and the local education offices who are directly involved in evaluating the distance students, in the planning, identifying priorities and strategies in implementing distance programs etc.

4. The major findings of this study have revealed that 77.78 per cent of the radio programs are irrelevant. Moreover, due to time clash the programs have not been utilized effectively. Therefore, strategies must be designed so as to use audiocassettes as an alternative means to the broadcast radio programs. The DEP should also seek a means to develop new education radio programs that fit to the new curriculum.
5. The DEP has to revise its policy with regard to examinations. Instead of providing examinations in any time of the year, it is advisable if two or three exam dates are fixed for the calendar year. This would enhance not only the efficiency of the management but also the motivation of students.
6. Distance learning methods are likely to be more effective at the secondary level:
 - if staff members and tutors are provided with training that would enable them to effectively support distance education students.
 - if students are offered, particularly at the beginning of their studies, an adequate level of study skills, advice and information on the delivery system of distance education.
 - if the recording and registration activities are conducted with computerized system.

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