

BANGLADESH

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THE NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries of Asia and the Pacific region. The country's economy is predominantly agrarian. Agriculture accounts for half of GDP and about two-thirds of employment. People are strongly attached to the land. The literacy percentage (for 5 year olds and above), according to the 1981 census, was 23.8%.

The per capita income in Bangladesh is US \$170.00. Education expenditure is 1.7% of GDP. According to a report of the World Bank (Report No.3745-BD), the average cost per student in the country is about 6% of per capita GNP for primary education; 37% for secondary and higher education; 325% for university education; and almost 400% for education in specialized colleges and institutes. In absolute terms, annual average cost per student comes to US \$10.00 for primary education; \$61.00 for secondary and higher education; \$202.00 for vocational education and teacher training; \$536.00 for university education and \$625.00 for education in specialized colleges and institutes.

Bangladesh is a country of 144,000 km with a population of 110.3 million (estimated in mid- 1989). The population density is 766 per km and the growth rate is 2.16% per year. There are 106 males for every 100 females. Crude birth and death rates are 33 and 11.4 respectively. Infant mortality rate is 98 per 1,000. Life expectancy at birth is 56 years.

The national language is Bangla (also called Bengali) and it is spoken by all except a small ethnic minority. Except in a few international schools, the national language is the medium of instruction at all levels of education. The present education system is based mainly on the Western model. A number of old indigenous institutions are, however, still in existence. Primary education is free. The Primary Education (Compulsory) Act was passed in February, 1990. According to the latest cabinet decision, the law is to become effective from January, 1992. There are many non-government (private) institutions of different types and standards. Non-government secondary schools receive up to 70% of their teacher's salary from the government.

Other government institutions are the Glass and Ceramic Institute, College of Leather Technology, College of Textile Technology, Institute of Graphic Arts, Institute of Post-graduate Medicine and Research, Dental College, Nursing College, Music College, Technical Teachers' Training College, and Vocational Teachers' Training College.

Other private institutions include Homeopathic Colleges (37), Ayurvedic Colleges (schools of Hindu medicine) (5), Unani Colleges (schools of Muslim medicine) (9), and Sanskrit (130) and Pali Tols (110) (traditional schools for the study of Sanskrit/Pali language, grammar and rhetoric, etc.)

There are nine universities with Faculties, Departments and Institutes. Each university has its separate Statutes, Ordinances and set of rules. The latest university will start functioning from July, 1991. Of the eight universities, one is the University of Engineering and Technology and another one is the Agriculture University. The universities are autonomous institutions receiving over 90% of their budget allocation through the

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University Grants Commission, from the government.

Parallel to the general stream of education, there is a religious stream, known as Madrasah Education. The total number of institutions under this stream - from pre-primary to post-graduate level - is over 80,000. Approximately 50% of these institutions are mosque-based informal schools and their principal curriculum is to teach how to read the holy Quoran (the holy book of the Muslims).

According to the Third Five Year Plan (TFYP), 1985-90, telecommunication facilities in the country are inadequate. There were 7,590 post-offices in the country in mid-1985; of these post-offices 1,518 were in the urban areas and 6,072 in the rural areas comprising 68,000 villages. The number of post-offices has not noticeably increased since then. Their counter services and delivery systems are unsatisfactory. Telephone density was 0.18 per 100 population in 1984/85; it was planned to raise the density to 0.23 per 100 population by 1989/90. This target has more or less been achieved. Telephone services are gradually being extended to an increasing number of new townships and clients. Telegraph and telex services are also insufficient and not satisfactory. There are ninety-four dailies in the country, including thirty-eight in metropolitan Dhaka, with wide variations in their circulation. There are nine radio stations/sub-stations and ten television stations/relay stations in the country. The entire country is covered by radio and television.

There is no stated communication policy for education or distance education. Planning documents have proposed, however, to introduce correspondence courses with extensive use of radio and television to spread primary and mass education. Leaders of the government often reiterate this policy in their public statements. Newspapers carry news, views and occasional lead stories critical of government policies and measures on education. Radio and television have regular education programmes.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

An Audio-Visual Education Centre (AVEC) was established by the government within the premises of the Dhaka Teachers' Training College in 1962 with the objectives of teaching through films, and supplying educational equipment and aids to the schools. A separate programme, known as the School Broadcast Programme (SBP), was introduced in 1980 with Japanese funding assistance. Under this SBP, audio control console sets were distributed to 1,070 secondary schools for monitoring curriculum based educational broadcasts over national radio. However, prior to introduction of the new SBP, a similar school broadcast programme was already in existence.

The AVEC and the SBP were housed in the same building and the staff comprised the same set of personnel. Since the objective of both programmes was to improve education, the AVEC and the SBP were combined into one institution in 1983 and named the National Institute of Educational Media and Technology (NIEMT). Later in 1986, consequent upon introduction of distance education in 1985, the organization and management of NIEMT and that of distance education were merged into one institution under the new name of Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE). BIDE was responsible for the Bachelor of Education (BEd), the only distance education programme in the country, in addition to the existing non-distance education BEd programme.

Over 90% of the secondary schools are non-government institutions and about 70%

of their teachers are untrained. The academic standard of the majority of these teachers is rather poor but they have been, and will remain, in the teaching profession. With a view to boosting teachers' morale and giving incentive to their improved professional performance, the pay scales of teachers in approximately 10,000 non-government secondary schools have been raised. However, for obvious reasons it has neither been possible to increase the intake capacity of the existing ten TTCs nor to establish new TTCs for training of the back-log of these untrained teachers. In this context NIEMT, which later became BIDE, introduced a BEd programme through distance education, with a view to improving the professional competence of untrained working secondary school teachers without dislodging them from schools.

The prevailing system of education, with its conventional methods of delivery, proved insufficient to cater to the growing needs of the increasing population. Hence, despite severe resource constraints and other handicaps, the search for alternative systems and non-conventional methods of delivery became necessary. The possibility of either a correspondence course, or a multi-media approach, such as in a distance education open university had been under consideration by planners and administrators for quite some time. Social demands could not be satisfied due to financial constraints and it was not possible to build up necessary institutional facilities quickly. Pressure was mounting for deployment of more trained teachers at the primary and secondary levels, as well as to extend teacher training facilities. It seems that under such an uneasy situation it was decided to do something at any cost. The policy proposals and statements contained in the planning documents were possibly the immediate sources of inspiration for undertaking the BEd distance education programme.

Distance teaching activity was established in the year 1985 when the first batch of students were registered under the programme. The level of the programme was the post-graduate degree of Bachelor of Education, BEd.

Reading and listening materials for distance education - subject-wide modular textbooks and audio cassettes - were developed and distributed among students at the time of registration for each semester. The existing ten TTCs and the NIEAER were selected as regional centres for handling admission formalities, guiding practice teaching, giving tutorial services, organizing summer and winter schools and conducting examinations. A weekly radio programme of thirty minutes and a fortnightly television programme of twenty-six minutes were broadcast for discussion of selected topics and students' queries. A Centre of Counselling and Guidance was set up at BIDE for correspondence with the students. This Centre published a bulletin.

The BEd. distance education programme was introduced as an experimental programme to be contained within the regular budget of BIDE. In 1985-86 fiscal year the Director-General of Secondary and Higher Education, with the approval of the Ministry of Education (MOE), gave an amount of taka 10 lakh (approximately US \$30,000) to BIDE for meeting initial costs of the distance education programme. In the following year a sum of taka 40 lakh (approximately US \$120,000) was given to BIDE from the same source, for the same purpose. Besides, BIDE received a total of taka 24 lakh (approximately US \$72,000) as grant from the four Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board for facilitating the management of distance education. These grants were also approved by the MOE. Each student of BIDE pays a fee of approximately US \$50.00. It had been proposed to raise it to \$100.00 but this was not

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implemented. It needs to be mentioned that BIDE's staff salary and maintenance cost were borne by the government from its revenue budget. BIDE inherited the functions of the AVEC and the NIEMT. The distance education programme was added to it without additional financial support at a later stage. This meant that even if BIDE did not administer distance education it would get its staff salary and maintenance cost from the government for the other functions that it had been performing, as usual.

Registration of BEd students for distance education began in 1985 and continued until 1987. The duration of the BEd distance education course was two years, divided into four semesters. All students did not graduate regularly at the end of every two years because the maximum time limit for completing the course was first set at seven years and later reduced to five years. Some students, who broke studies at some point of the two-year programme, are still waiting to complete the course requirements and take the examination at their convenience. They are eligible to do so within the stipulated time limit, which is by June, 1992. The causes of irregular study were family problems, financial difficulty, declining interest in pursuing the programme, and transport problems.

BIDE has a limited staff, limited physical facilities and budgetary constraint. In the absence of a firm government decision for the continuation of the distance education programme to provide the necessary inputs - human, material, and financial - registration for the BEd distance education programme had to be suspended effective in 1988. There is no dearth of interest in the programme. Queries in person, over the telephone and by post regarding the possibility of restarting the programme pour in to BIDE's office almost daily. Attempts are afoot to reopen the programme. Currently a feasibility study for a prospective Open University is nearing completion. It will not be surprising if the government decides to start an Open University by restarting registration for the BEd distance education programme.

THE LEGAL STATUS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

In the Second Five Year Plan (SFYP), 1980-85, it was proposed that, "Correspondence and evening courses will be introduced for training of primary and secondary teachers; Radio and TV will also be used." (P.XVI-25). The TFYP, 1985-90, proposals included, "Audio-visual aids, viz, charts, posters, globes, maps, etc., will be supplied to primary and secondary schools under the BIDE project. TV sets, video tapes, cassettes, tape recorders, films, slides, film projectors, slide projectors will be supplied to TTCs, NIEAER and NAPE under the BIDE project," and "Correspondence courses in secondary teachers training will be experimented under a pilot project." (p.345).

In the TFYP Education Sector Document of the MOE, the distance education programmes in Australia, the off-campus distance education of Malaysia, the Open University of Thailand and University of the Air of China were cited as innovations for widening access to higher education, serving the educational needs of disadvantaged groups, and offering lower cost per student (p.44). Innovations along these lines were envisaged for higher education of the country. In this context it was proposed that:

Multi-media approach through the use of educational technology will be introduced. Distance education, extensive use of radio, television, video cassettes, newsletters, etc., will be introduced (p.51).

Provision should be made for the publication of up-to-date textbooks, newsletters and resource materials to help lifelong professional growth of teachers and teacher educators (p.52).

Correspondence and evening courses will be introduced at the teacher training institutions for in-service professional development of primary and secondary school teachers (p.52).

Further to these proposals, it was stated that, "The Distance Education Programme for offering in-service BEd degree as initiated by the Rajshahi University will be strengthened" (p.52).

In the TFYP Education Sector Document of the MOE, it was also proposed in the context of Educational Technology, among others, "to provide the 10 Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs) with small format video cameras, video cassette records and monitor and train their staff to carry on proper experimentation with micro teaching to conduct BEd courses for secondary teachers through in-service distance education methods, to prepare the ground work for the formal start of an Open Education System which may lead to the establishment of an Open University" (p.57).

The University of Rajshahi passed an Ordinance on 28.10.84 offering the Bachelor of Education (BEd) course through the Distance Education System in coordination with the NIEMT (later BIDE), Dhaka, Faculty of Education, University of Rajshahi and Teachers' Training Colleges. The university agreed to award the BEd degree to such candidates as would fulfill the requirements of the programme, as specified by BIDE. The BEd distance education programme was introduced with the approval of the president of the country in June 1985. No law was passed or government executive order issued to give distance education a legal footing.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION

Aims and Objective of Distance Education

Before describing the aims and objectives of distance education it is relevant to look at the aims and programmes of BIDE, the institution that administers the distance education programme. The stated aims of BIDE are:

- a. To improve the quality of primary and secondary teachers through the use of modern electronic media and educational materials to be carried by post;
- b. To improve the quality of classroom teaching with the support of Radiovision broadcast and other recorded materials for those schools that received the audio control sets;
- c. To assist in teacher training programmes conducted by the TTCs, NIEAER and NAPE; and
- d. To repair and maintain the equipment supplied to secondary schools under the SBP.

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The programmes of BIDE are:

- a. To prepare and show video programmes for improvement of primary and secondary education and teacher training;
- b. To prepare audio programmes to assist teachers of secondary schools and teacher trainers;
- c. To broadcast curriculum based radio programmes for enrichment of classroom teaching in the secondary schools under the SBP and improvement of primary and mass education;
- d. To prepare, print and distribute educational aids, such as, maps and charts, for improvement of teaching in primary and secondary schools and booklets for guidance of radio programmes;
- e. To repair and maintain the audio control console sets distributed to secondary schools and other equipment for recording audio and video programmes;
- f. To train personnel for preparation and classroom use of educational aids and maintenance and petty repairs of audio control console sets; and,
- g. To conduct BEd programmes through distance education.

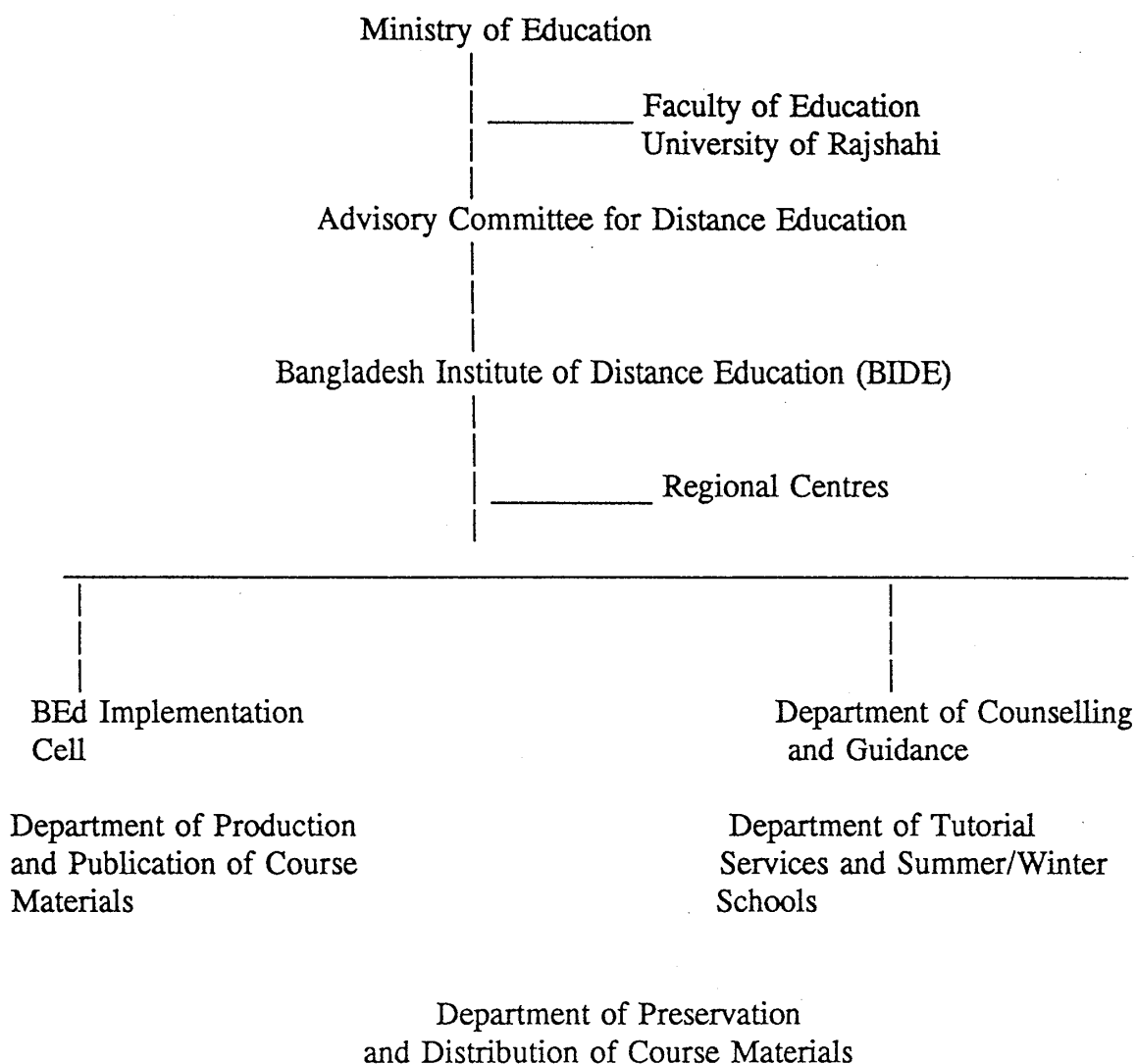
The aims and objectives of distance education, as gathered from BIDE's literature, activities and an evaluation report of BIDE's performance are:

- a. To enable untrained secondary teachers to receive professional training at low cost by staying where they are, through (i) correspondence materials, (ii) audio cassettes, (iii) radio and television programmes, (iv) tutorial services, (v) demonstration teaching, and (vi) organization of winter and summer schools;
- b. To improve professional competence of untrained working secondary teachers;
- c. To improve the quality of teaching-learning in secondary schools by increasing their stock of trained teachers;
- d. To tone up the general level of secondary education; and,
- e. To reduce pressure from TTCs.

Control, Organizational and Management Structure of Distance Education

The distance education programme in the country is a national programme and the structure of governing bodies for distance education is given below:

TABLE 1: The Structure of Distance Education Governing Bodies



Currently BIDE has a staff strength of fifty-seven, including the Director, the Deputy Director and three Assistant Directors with technical as well as non-technical support staff. The Director of BIDE is, and always has been, an academic administrative officer. The post of the Director and that of the Deputy Director were not filled by direct recruitment, which is generally true for the recruitment of other staff members. The post of the Director is filled by a person drawn from the Senior Education Service, either from a general college or a TTC. The Deputy Director is also drawn from the Education Service. Some staff members came from national radio when the distance education programme was introduced. BIDE is a non-teaching institution. It is more like a service department of the MOE which administers the BEd. distance education programme.

Each of the five wings of BIDE, namely the BEd Implementation Cell; the Department of Production and Publication of Course Materials; the Department of Preservation and Distribution of Course Materials; the Department of Tutorial Services and Summer and Winter Schools; and the Department of Counselling and Guidance, is headed by a senior member of staff assisted by

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others. The Director is the chief executive and has the overall responsibility of the institute and its programmes. The Director, the Deputy Directors, the Assistant Directors and heads of the five wings plan their activities and implement those with the approval of the Advisory Committee in cooperation with the Regional Centres.

The academic standards of the BEd programme through distance education were set at the time of the introduction of the programme in consultation with experienced professionals, external experts and academics, including TTC principals, NIEAER specialists and IER teacher educators. BIDE neither determines nor sets the academic standards by itself.

There is no apparent academic and administrative relationship between BIDE which offers the BEd distance education programme and the ten TTCs and the IER which offer non-distance education teacher training programmes. However, the curriculum of BIDE is on a par with that of TTCs. The requirements for the BEd degree in distance education and non-distance education are approximately the same. The distance education programme was designed in conformity with the non-distance education programme. Both programmes have almost the same set of courses. The compulsory subjects for the BEd distance education programme are Principles of Education, History of Education, Educational Psychology, Evaluation, Counselling and Guidance, and Education and National Development.

Each student chooses any two of Mathematics, Science, Bengali, English, Geography, and Social Science (Economics, Civics and History).

A student may also choose the only optional subject - Educational Administration. Candidates for the BEd degree through distance education take examinations in compulsory subjects (five) of 100 marks each, elective subjects (two) of 100 marks each, optional subject (if chosen) of 100 marks, and practical works of 300 marks.

Practical works include preparation of lesson plans and teaching aids, teaching practice, internal assessment and an oral examination.

The successful candidates from both programmes are, in principle, considered equivalent. The differences between distance education and non-distance education programmes lie in the systems of administration and management, the methods of delivery and in the examination procedures. One such difference is that in the conventional system of examination, the emphasis is on long essay questions whereas in the non-conventional system the ratio of objective and essay questions was first set at 80:20 and later revised to 50:50.

Financing Distance Education

Distance education is not separately or independently financed. The sources and forms of financial support for distance education have been described above.

An accurate comparison between the budgets of the institution offering distance education and those offering non-distance education in secondary teacher training is not possible because of dissimilarities in the characteristics of the institutions, their functions and the lack of itemized expenditures. However, a crude comparison may be attempted.

TABLE 2: Budgetary Allocations for BIDE and TTCs

	Government Revenue Expenditure			
	1985-6	1986-7	1987-8	TOTAL
Distance Education Institution (BIDE)	207,147*	143,323	161,059	511,529
Non-Distance Education Institutions (Ten TTC's)	430,000	450,000	-	880,000

* Development Expenditure: From the following year it came under Revenue Expenditure.

Source: a. Bangladesh Educational Statistics, 1990.

b. BIDE Records.

Government budget allocation for BIDE over three years, 1985-87, totalled a sum of US \$511,529. If it is arbitrarily assumed that one-half of BIDE's staff time and facilities were devoted to distance education, it has to be presumed that one half of the total amount, or \$225,764 has been spent for distance education. BIDE received an amount equivalent to \$222,000 as grants from other sources and approximately \$514,150 as fees from students. The total amount comes to \$991,914. The number of students registered over these years was 10,283. By simple arithmetic the average annual cost per BIDE student comes to \$96. On the other hand, ten TTCs received an amount equal to \$13,70,000 over the same period and their total number of students over those years was 10,748. In this case the average annual cost per TTC student comes to \$127 per student. Clearly, the cost for distance education was lower than that for non-distance education.

BIDE is a non-teaching institution and it has other functions besides administering BEd distance education, whereas, TTCs are purely teaching institutions. BIDE students pay a fee but TTC students do not have to pay any fee. Moreover, each TTC student receives a government stipend irrespective of whether or not he/she draws salary from school. Generally, non-government secondary school teachers come for training in the TTCs, either on leave, with or without pay, or on deputation with pay. Some fresh graduates, not in-service, do however study in TTCs and receive only a stipend. Government school teachers receive their pay from schools and are not entitled to a stipend. Traditionally, teacher education has been substantially subsidized. If the financial benefits of free tuition and a stipend and/or salary are taken into account, the average annual cost per TTC student would be much higher than what it appears to be. If only the fee of approximately \$50 as paid by each BIDE student, is added to the cost of approximately \$127 per TTC student, the average cost per TTC student rises to \$177. The World Bank Report (p.1) calculated this to be \$202. Further, if BIDE's programme had continued beyond 1987, the average cost per student would have been less than \$96. It needs to be said again that this comparison is by no means an exact or accurate comparison.

Geographical Coverage of the Provision of Distance Education

The entire country is covered by the BEd distance education programme. BIDE has eleven Regional Centres: TTC Chittagong; TTC Comilla; TTC Dhaka; TTC Feni; TTC Jessore; TTC

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Khulna; TTC Mymensingh for men; TTC Mymensingh for women; TTC Rajshahi; TTC Rangpur; and NIEAER, Dhaka. NIEAER does not offer a degree awarding teacher training programme. It is an institution for conducting short in-service training in administration and management. NIEAER has a qualified professional staff.

The country is divided into four administrative divisions and sixty-four districts. The regional centres are spread over all four divisions. Students registered under the programme came from all districts.

Instructional System

The major methods of delivery utilized for the BEd distance education programme are for each student to get the prescribed textbooks and three audio cassettes every semester. Thus, in four semesters, all students receive all textbooks and twelve audio cassettes. The textbooks are written in Bangla, except the one on English language teaching, which is written in English. The cassettes are recorded in Bangla, again except the one on English language teaching. In the regional centres there is one scheduled day long face-to-face contact meeting of students with the tutors every two weeks. In these meetings students' queries and problems are discussed and attempts made to resolve them. Different tutors, in separate sessions, meet the students and discuss problem topics of their respective subjects.

There is a weekly thirty-minute radio programme and a fortnightly twenty-six minute television programme. Demonstration lessons are presented through these programmes. Queries of a general nature concerning a large number of students are also discussed in these programmes. A bulletin, published quarterly, is sent to every student regularly by post. That is, over the scheduled time of two years a student receives eight volumes of *The Bulletin*. The last issue of the *Bulletin* was published in December, 1989. This means that the *Bulletin* was published up to two years after registration of students in 1987. Individual questions and problems raised by students in their letters written to BIDE are also answered by post.

No research activity on the distance education programme was ever undertaken.

Enrollment in Distance Education

The last batch of students were registered in 1987 and registration has remained suspended since then. Enrollment in BEd distance education and BEd non-distance education (in ten TTCs combined), according to yearly registration, is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Enrollment in BEd Distance Education and Non-distance Education

YEAR	DISTANCE EDUCATION	NON-DISTANCE EDUCATION
1985	3,211	3,500
1986	3,287	3,624
1987	3,783	3,624
Total	10,281	

Source: a. BIDE Records

b. Bangladesh Educational Statistics, 1990

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The academic year is from July to June. BIDE students are admitted for two years and TTC students are admitted for one year. The above enrollment figures show only the regular students who are registered each year and not the ones who did not complete the course within the specified two year duration.

The number of graduates per year in the distance education programme is presented in table 4.

TABLE 4: Number of Graduates per Year in Distance Education

YEAR	GRADUATES								TOTAL
	1987		1988		1989		1990		
	Jun	Dec	Jun	Dec	Jun	Dec	Jun	Dec	
1985	1,681	509*	146*	66*	49*	26*	-	-	2,477
1986	-	-	1,262	647	204	-	52*	-	2,165
1987	-	-	-	-	1,424	598*	254*	-	2,276
Total	1,681	509	1,408	713	1,677	624	276	-	6,918

* Irregular students

Source: BIDE Records

The number of students registered over three years has been shown earlier. When these figures are contrasted with the figures above, it appears that altogether there are some 3,363 non-completers. Only after expiration of the time limit in June 1992 will it be possible to take an account of the attrition rate. The accumulated number of graduates in the BEd distance education programme, as of 1990, is 6,918.

International Affiliation and Cooperation

BIDE, the distance teaching institution, is not a member of any national, regional or international organization. No foreign aid/grant/support for distance education was ever sought or received in the past. There is none in the pipeline either.

Growth and Expansion

The distance education programme operated for only three years. There are some irregular students yet to complete the course and seek the degree. Registration in the programme has remained suspended with effect from 1988. The question of growth and expansion, therefore, does not arise. The only possibility, and this is merely speculation, is that if and when it is decided to start on Open University, the distance education programme is likely to be revived.

Problems and Issues

BIDE inherited the functions of the AVEC, NIEMT and SBP, such as school visits, production

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and distribution of audio and video programmes as well as maps and charts, the organization of broadcast programmes, as well as repair and maintenance of equipment supplied to schools. Over and above these functions, BIDE took upon itself the responsibility of administering the distance education programme. Naturally, BIDE's staff time and utilization of facilities were divided between two sets of activities. If it had not been so, distance education would have had a greater chance of becoming more efficient and effective.

BIDE was established neither as an exclusive distance teaching or teacher training institution. It did not have a core staff of academics proficient in teacher training and related research techniques. This limitation compelled BIDE to depend greatly upon the staff of the regional centres. The centres also made compromises with the limitations of BIDE. Had it not been so, the distance education programme could prove itself more efficient and effective.

Organization and management of teaching practice was weak and the time for supervised teaching practice was short. Students did not regularly attend the regional centres whilst some students and tutors did not take the task as seriously as was expected. Micro-teaching, if practiced at all, was no more than a make-believe game. Obviously, this very important aspect of the teacher training programme was partially neglected. If these lapses had been prevented, the distance education programme could have proved itself quite efficient and effective.

The distance education programme was well-designed and cost-effective. BIDE made rather a hasty start of distance education and got the programme going without perhaps examining all the pros and cons. Maybe a little excess of enthusiasm was behind the efforts. Even then, strengthening of the programme content, revision of the textbooks and adoption of a strategy for instilling pedagogical skills in the trainees could have made the programme much more efficient and effective if it had continued.

Family obligations of the students, limitations of the public transport services and also inadequacy of the telecommunication facilities were some of the factors that limited students' contact with their tutors in the regional centres. Unsupervised teaching practice in the classrooms of the students' respective schools did not offer the opportunity to evaluate students' gradual progress and development. There was some laxity in the process. If all these factors had been controlled, efficiency and effectiveness of the distance education programme would have been at a much higher level.

The general conclusions are that the distance education programme was a breakthrough in the traditional system and conventional methods of delivery of an educational package that was, and still is, in demand. The programme suffered from certain unanticipated limitations. Some people felt that the products of the programme were not equal in quality to those of the conventional programme. Given time, money, material and moral support, the distance education programme could have overcome many of its shortcomings and would have been able to compete with the conventional programme in effectiveness and quality.

The major factors hindering implementation of the distance education programme may be summarized as lack of a firm government decision to implement the programme; absence of a law/government executive order that could give the distance education programme a stable footing; change of government and the top echelon of planners/administrators/executives; lack of adequate financial/material support to the programme; and resistance, mostly psychological, from the orthodox old-timers who show reluctance to any change.

The general conclusions in this regard are that the distance education programme began as a prelude to an Open University, to which the government has not yet made a commitment. The inherent weakness with which the programme started was that there was no law or

government executive order behind the programme. Even during its life time of three years the key planners and the top executives did not support the programme and move for a law or an executive government order. One criticism is that the advocates of distance education were a little impatient to introduce the programme and thus overlooked this vital requirement to the detriment of the programme. Another criticism is that the programme was launched without sufficient preparation. Both criticisms point to the same weakness. No doubt there are competing demands on the attention and resources of the government and the decision making process is complicated.

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