

Growth and Development of Distance Education in Bangladesh: A Study

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How to cite this article:

Partha Biplob Roy, Muhammad Mizanuddin/Growth and Development of Distance Education in Bangladesh: A Study/
Indian J Lib Inf Sci 2022;16(3):201-213.

Abstract

This study aims to explore the growth and development of distance education in Bangladesh. It tries to express the reasons behind the establishment of distance education system in Bangladesh. The intent of this study is to find out the initiatives and activities of different institutions that are involved in developing distance education in Bangladesh. The study found that the idea of distance education system in Bangladesh started in 1956 through the establishment of Audio Visual Cell (AVC). At present, Bangladesh Open University is the only public university that offers education for all through distance mode in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education, Distance education.

INTRODUCTION

It is recognized that education is the basic key component to make any person enriched and enlightened. Education brings social change and national development. It is considered an investment for human resource development which would ultimately contribute to economic, industrial and scientific development of a nation.¹ There is no way to success without proper education. In this context,

distance education system plays vital role that works to enrich people through organizing teaching learning environment. It is difficult to define the concept distance education clearly. Sometimes various synonyms such as correspondence education, home study, independent study, external study, off campus study, open education create confusion in defining and indicating the area and scope of distance education. From the very beginning, correspondence education, the earliest version of distance education, was defined as a simple process of education where teaching-learning activities are done via correspondence only. But the modern version of correspondence education, i.e. distance education is developed in theoretically and philosophically and enriched quickly by using communication and information technologies. Different author defines distance education from different viewpoints. Some are theory based, some are philosophy based, some are technology oriented and some are combination of any two or more of them. According to Michael

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Received on: 18.06.2022

Accepted on: 28.07.2022

Moore, "Distance teaching may be defined as the family of instructional methods in which the teaching behavior are executed apart from the learning behaviors, including those that in a contiguous situation would be performed in the learner's presence, so that communication between the teacher and the learner must be facilitated by print, electronic, mechanical or other devices".² Distance education is a communication technology dependent teaching-learning education system where learners are motivated by himself/herself, learn by self supervision, pursue studies by self direction and take any plan by self-control manner. Teacher plays passive role only to provide instructions and suggestions from distances and an institution designs, organizes, controls and maintains teaching-learning environment. Distance education basically aims at facilitating those who are otherwise deprived from formal schooling due to many reasons and to assist the economically and socially disadvantaged groups in the society.³

Distance education is a method of modern education system fully differs from conventional face to face education that makes teaching and learning easy and attractive by conquering distances in terms of geography and time. It is such an education system that provides opportunity to all without considering age, sex, race, nationality etc. This type of non-conventional education provides study opportunity as second chance to adults, school leavers, rural and remote population, unsuccessful applicants and other disadvantage groups such as prisoners, handicapped.⁴ It serves as an alternative form of formal system of education that helps to expand education in remote areas. Distance education is a non-traditional education system. It grows and develops for those who are not able to be a traditional learner due to various reasons. One of the important features of this type of education is that it uses different modes i.e. print, audio and video to learn learners. All the teaching and learning activities of this system are operated from distances where teacher or instructor, educational institution or organization and learners are located at different places.

OBJECTIVES

The core objective of this study is to explore the history of distance education in Bangladesh. However the specific objectives of this study to explore the reasons of starting distance education in Bangladesh, to know the initiatives and activities of different institutions behind the development of distance education in Bangladesh. To describe the

present scenario of distance education system in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature. It is a product of reviewing primary and secondary literature including project proforma, pamphlet, thesis, quarterly progress report, annual report, books, journal, research article etc. Most of the relevant literature has been collected visiting the central library at BOU main campus, Gazipur and internet browsing.

Reasons of Starting Distance Education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh became an independent country in the world through the liberation war in 1971. Before independence it was a province namely East Pakistan. From the formation of Pakistan, the socio economic status of East Pakistan was very distressful. Formal educational activities for the general people in East Pakistan were hindered again and again or run slowly due to the lack of insufficient educational institutions and inadequate qualified teachers. Lack of proper reading materials, proper communication system and poor economic status were also the reasons that hindered the people of that province in acquiring education. Considering all of these matters, various initiatives and plans were taken at different times in different aspects for improving the education system of the then East Pakistan. As a part of such initiatives many institutions established and tried to develop the idea of distance education system in few phases in that province. Finally this new system started in full swing in Bangladesh truly by establishing Bangladesh Open University in 1992.⁵

Initiatives and activities of different institutions behind the development of distance education.

The institutions and programs that involved in developing distance education in Bangladesh are;

- Audio Visual Cell (AVC)
- Audio-Visual Education Centre (AVEC)
- School Broadcasting Program (SBP)
- National Institute of educational media and Technology (NIEMT)
- Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE)
- Bangladesh Open University (BOU)

Audio Visual Cell (AVC)

In 1956, the government of Japan donated some wet battery operated radio sets to the government of East Pakistan.⁶ The Japanese government sent these radio sets not only as gifts but also as a symbol of friendship for the people of the then East Pakistan. After allotment, the education directorate of East Pakistan got about 200 radio receivers and 400 car batteries from the total gifts.⁷ This gift influenced the high officials of education directorate and developed the idea that radio can be a helping tool in teaching and learning. Based on this idea, the education directorate initiated to establish a separate division namely audiovisual cell for utilizing the radio receivers and car batteries properly. Other functions of audio visual cell were as follows.

- to distribute the Japanese gift i.e. radio sets among the educational institutes of the province.
- to look after the distribution.
- to maintain of the radio sets
- to control and manage the overall operations.

Audio Visual Cell (AVC) was formed in East Pakistan in 1956 for providing educational support for the learners of that province.⁷ AVC was the first institution that began its activities through distance mode for making education easy, understandable and more attractive to the general people of that province. Actually activities and objectives of AVC are related with the concepts of modern distance education. That is why it is said that distance education system started in East Pakistan from 1956 while Audio Visual Cell was formed as a division under the education directorate of East Pakistan.⁷ It is true that when audio visual cell was established and started functioning, it could not do all the activities of distance education system even the planners do not know that the objectives and activities of audio visual cell are related with the theme of distance education system. But audio visual cell is a division under education directorate that works as a base institution, as a platform through which distance education system starts firstly.

Audio - Visual Education Center (AVEC)

At the end of 1961, 8mm. film and silk screen printed educational charts were begun to produce in East Pakistan. This innovation inspired AVC highly and developed a new theme that film and charts took part in education. At that time AVC expanded its

functions. AVC gave more concentration on the development of education for both teachers and students through the use of film and charts in lieu of distribution and maintenance of radio sets. AVC took priority on making more films and charts. To do these activities AVC took plans for establishing a new institute. As a result Audio-Visual Education Center (AVEC) grew under the education directorate by renaming the former Audio Visual Cell (AVC) in 1962.⁶ The objectives of AVEC were as follows.

- to support the school based formal education
- to make, print and distribute the educational charts.
- to produce and develop the 16mm. educational film and 35 mm. film strip library on science and different subjects in school level.
- to organize services for borrowing films, filmstrips and charts.
- to organize training program for the school teachers for using low cost audio-visual education aids and materials.

From 1962 to 1969 AVEC worked properly for achieving its objectives. At this time AVEC produced various films, filmstrips, and charts and distributed them to the educational institutions. The local United States Information Service (USIS) helped AVEC and educational institutions by providing opportunity to borrow its film projectors and filmstrip projectors which were the important components for organizing film shows. At that time some transistor radio receivers were distributed among the schools, and arrangements were made with Radio-Pakistan, Dhaka for educational broadcasting.⁷ After 1971, USIS stopped its lending facilities. Because of the lack of projectors, AVEC reduced its activities and stopped the production of films and filmstrips. Moreover, AVEC took more emphasis on making and distributing wall charts, arranging educational broadcasting and organizing short training programs for the teachers.

School Broadcasting Program (SBP)

After independence the govt. of Bangladesh received 1100 sophisticated audio control console sets and ten mobile audio-visual vans as gifts from the Govt. of Japan in 1978.⁷ At that time, the govt. took initiatives for the proper utilization of these received gifts and took two decisions. First one was to distribute the console sets in secondary

schools for developing the secondary level school education system in Bangladesh. And the second was to broadcast educational programs through radio. To achieve these goals, National Evaluation Committee (NEC) approved school broadcasting program as a project under the education directorate in November, 1980.⁷ The objectives of SBP were as follows.

- to produce educational programs and broadcast through radio.
- to benefit the learners by making lessons easy and understandable.
- to support the learners by arranging different radio program
- to take part in the development of the status of school level education system.

After the approval of school broadcasting program (SBP), the console sets were distributed in more than 1000 secondary schools and various educational programs were made for broadcasting as radio programs. Under the SBP, the first formal program was inaugurated on 1 January 1981.⁷

National Institute of Educational Media and Technology (NIEMT)

From the beginning of 1980 our Government, planners and policy makers initiated to make policy for spreading education to all and improving the quality and quantity of trained teachers and reading materials. For this reason, a British team from the Open University and British Council were invited to visit Bangladesh in November 1980.⁷ After completing the visit Mr. S.B. Edington, leader of the British team, recommended that the use of mass media is necessary to improve the quality of education in Bangladesh. Based on this report and the recommendations given by the high level Bangladesh team, who visited UK Open University, BBC, London university and UNESCO headquarters in Paris, our policy makers understood that formal distance education system should be introduced in Bangladesh.⁶ They decided to establish a separate media-based institute for materializing their objectives and thoughts initially without considering existing AVEC and SBP. As a result, under the ministry of education, National Institute of Educational Media and Technology were set up in April, 1983 by merging the former school broadcasting project and Audio-Visual Education center.⁸

The Objectives of NIEMT

- to improve the quality of formal and non-formal education.
- to facilitate the students and teachers in teaching.
- to organize training program for developing the quality of teachers.
- to make various audio, video programs, motion pictures, films, slides, cassettes, wall charts posters etc. for helping teaching and learning.
- to organize meetings, seminars and workshop.
- to broadcast educational programs with the help of Radio Bangladesh & Bangladesh television.

Activities of NIEMT

From the establishment, NIEMT played an important role in education. The institute used modern technology for providing educational instructions. It taught the teachers and students through the use of radio and television, motion pictures, films, slides, cassettes, wall charts, posters etc. which were important media for introducing improved teaching methods and extending education facilities among the people. Activities of NEIMT were as follows:

Production of Video Programs

From 1983 to 1985 the institute made over a hundred video programs which were shown at different educational institutions. A list of some popular video programs is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Video Programs

Name of the video programs	Date
Islam & Science	January 1984
Hand operated pump	February 1984
Let's do something	March 1984
Paharpur Buddhist monastery	March 1984
Poet michael Madhusudon Dutta	April 1984
Mahasthan Gar	May 1984
Santal	July 1984

Source: NIEMT, Annual report 1984

Production of Audio Programs

NIEMT produced a large number of educational audio programs for school teachers. On the basis of the meeting held on 7 and 29 Feb., 1984 at NIEMT, many audio cassettes were produced on Bengali

pronunciation and Bengali recitation.

Videos and Film Shows

NIEMT arranged audio and video programs at

different educational institutions. This initiative helped the learners and teachers more effectively to teach. A list of videos and film shows is given in table 2.

Table 2: Videos and Film Shows

Date	Place	Types of program
21-27 January, 1984	12 educational institutions in Chittagong, Bandarban, Noakhali & Comilla district.	Video program
February 1984	Several educational institutions at Dhaka, Narayanganj & Tangail.	Video program
18 February, 1984	Manikgonj	Video program
7-12 April, 1984	6 secondary schools in Rajshahi	Educational video film
19 April, 1984	A school in Narayanganj	Video film
April to June	Different institutions in Dhaka City	Video shows
19-28 July, 1984	8 Institutions in Rajshahi Division	Educational video program
July, 1984	8 Schools of Dhaka district	Educational video film
August, 1984	10 schools of Dhaka and Mymensingh	Educational video film
17 November to 5 December, 1984	25 Institutions in Rangpur	Video film
20-21 November, 1984	Dhaka Medical College	Video film
November, 1984	Educational Institutions of Dhaka	Video shows
22-24 October, 1984	NIEMT auditorium	Film festival

Source: NIEMT, Annual report 1984

Programs Broadcasted Through Television

NIEMT made some video programs and broadcasted

those through television. Popular video programs produced by NIEMT are mentioned in table 3.

Table 3: T.V Programs

Name of the programs	Telecast date	Time
Letter	21 Dec, 1983	at 9.40 P.M
Brain Operation	26 May, 1984	at 11.30 P.M
Silk	23 Sep, 1984	at 9.30 P.M
Rubber	02 Oct, 1984	at 7.40 P.M

Source: NIEMT, Annual report 1984

Programs Broadcasted Through Radio Bangladesh

The programs broadcasted by radio Bangladesh are listed in table 4.

Table 4: Radio Programs

Name of the programs	Subjects	Date
Discussion Programs	Observance of the International Literacy Day	6 September
Special Radio Play	International Literacy Day	8 September
Shikharthider Asar (40 minute)	For secondary school students	Five and six days of a week respectively
ESO Pori (30 minute)	Primary and mass education	Five and six days of a week respectively

Source: BANBEIS, Educational statistics of Bangladesh 1985

Organization of Training Programs

To achieve the goals NIEMT always performed different functions. Training programs was one of them. NIEMT decided to organize training programs for the teachers. NIEMT trained 2000

teachers for learning the use of audio visual materials and provided 1062 audio console sets to different secondary schools. A short list of such training programs is given in table 5.

Table 5: Training Programs

Subject	Participant	Date
Short training course on educational broadcast programs	16 teachers from 16 secondary schools in and around Dhaka city	1-5 January, 1984
On the repair and modification of audio control console sets	Technical officers of NIEMT	17 January-6 February, 1984
Short training in the use of audio-visual materials	Over a thousand secondary school science teachers	January to December, 1984
First advanced course on educational broadcast program	18 teachers from different schools on Dhaka city	3-11 November, 1984

Source: NIEMT, Annual report 1984

Publications

NIEMT published a lot of publications to help the learners and teachers for knowing the programs broadcasted through the radio Bangladesh and

Bangladesh television. NIEMT sent the program guide to those schools that had console sets. A list of some publications of NIEMT is given in table 6.

Table 6: List of Publications

Booklet/ Guidebook/ Publications	User	Date
Booklet or guidebook for the programs broadcasted by radio Bangladesh namely Shikharthider Asar from July-December, 1984.	Secondary school students and teachers	May, 1984
Booklet or guide book for support and understand the programs broadcasted by radio Bangladesh namely Shikharthider Asar from January-June, 1984	Secondary school students and teachers	Dec, 1983
Shikkhak Nirdeshika	School teachers	1984
Proposal for the establishment of Bangladesh Open university (BOU)	Planners, Govt. officers and teachers	April, 1984
Booklet entitled special educational video programs	Schools teachers	May, 1984
Teaching through flannel board	School teachers	1984
Booklet on audio video programs	Schools, institutions and interested persons	July-August, 1984
Monthly report on the activities of NIEMT	School students and teachers	Publishing in every month from 1983-June, 1984

Source: NIEMT, Annual report 1984

Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE)

At the end of 1984, NIEMT took plan to start formal distance education in Bangladesh. For this reason NIEMT organized a workshop and two discussion meetings on preparation of course materials for B.Ed. course in August 18 to 23 and in September 12 to 18, 1984 respectively.⁸ Based on the recommendations that came out from the workshop and meeting, NIEMT prepared a draft plan and submitted this to the ministry of education for permission to introduce B.Ed. course through distance mode. At that time the ministry of education appointed a local committee for examining this proposed plan and studying the feasibility of establishing Bangladesh Open University. The committee submitted report indicating the potentials for starting a bachelor of

education (B.Ed) course through distance education as the first experimental phase of an open university.⁹ On the basis of these recommendations, the ministry of educational encouraged NIEMT to start the B.Ed. course as an experimental basis through distance education method and ensured necessary financial support. Subsequently our planners took initiative to establish a distinct institute for offering distance education. All the TTCs, the National Institute of Educational Administration Extension and Research (NIEAER), the Institute of Education and Research (IER) of the Dhaka University and Rajshahi University appreciated to establish such an institute and agreed to work collaboratively when necessary. As a result, the Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education (BIDE) project was approved by Project Evaluation Committee (PEC)

on 11.7.1984. The project was then waited for the approval of ECNEC. In the beginning of 1985 NIEMT was renamed BIDE and started functioning under the academic protection of the University of Rajshahi.⁷ From the establishment, BIDE initiated to run the B.Ed. course smoothly with carrying the ongoing activities of NIEMT.

Rational in Offering B.Ed. Course

In 1985, there were 9589 secondary schools in Bangladesh where 20,306 trained and 75,000 untrained teachers taught the learners.¹⁰ So, one of the vital tasks of the then government was to train these untrained teachers. At that time teacher-training activities were run by 10 TTCs. But it was not possible to train this large number of teachers quickly by the 10 TTCs because the number of annual intake of teachers by the TTCs was about 3000 only. To overcome this problem the establishment of new TTCs, increasing of teaching staff and facilities etc. were not done because it required a large amount of money. For this reason decisions were taken to establish a separate institution that would work distinctly but would run all activities in cooperation with 10 TTCs and offered B.Ed. program as double shift teachers training program through distance mode. This initiative was appreciated highly because of two reasons i.e. it did not affect the normal school learning process and no need to establish new residential training institutions.

Objectives of BIDE

The basic objectives of BIDE were as follows.

- to conduct B.Ed. course through distance mode for training the secondary school teachers.
- to develop infrastructure, course materials, tutorial services, student evaluation process etc. for executing the B.Ed. program through distance education.
- to work as first experimental phase for developing an open university in future.

Enrollment

In Bangladesh, BIDE was the first institution that offered B.Ed program through distance mode. Any secondary school teacher who had a bachelor degree or a minimum of two years teaching experience was eligible to get admission in B.Ed program offered by the BIDE. After the nation wide publicity the enrollment procedure of BIDE was done in the month of July each year. Fifty percent

of the seats is filled up in a first- come -first served basis and the rest in filled up on the basis of the length of services.⁷ Two factors namely the limited hostel facilities and accommodation of 10 TTCs were considered to decide the number of students' intake of each session. The number of students of the three batches enrolled in B.Ed. program is listed in table 7.⁷

Table 7: Enrollment

Year/Session	Number of students enrolled
July 1985-87	3211
July 1986-88	3288
July 1987-89	3782

Source: Islam 1987

Course Curriculum

The B.Ed. program offered by the BIDE is a 2 year duration program. The whole program is of four semesters. The duration of each semester is six months. The curriculum and the syllabus for B.Ed. program were the same as in conventional system with the following subject.⁷

Compulsory

- Principles of education
- History of education
- Education & psychology
- Evaluation, counseling and guidance
- Education and national development.

Elective (any two of the following)

- Mathematics
- Science
- Bengali
- English
- Geography
- Social sciences (economics, civics and history)

Optional subject

- Educational administration

Activities of BIDE

For achieving objectives the following activities were done by BIDE

- to produce good number of audio cassette programs on Bengali pronunciation to support the distance learners in making

their lessons easy.

- to arrange video cassette programs of varying lengths and duration on interesting subjects like history, culture, education, religion etc.
- to make and distribute various visual teaching materials such as educational wall charts, maps for the learners of B.Ed program.
- to produce three radio programs and broadcasted by Radio Bangladesh, Dhaka.¹¹ The list of these programs are shown in table 8.

Table 8: BIDE's Radio Programs

Name	Duration	Schedule
Shikharthider Ashar	40 minutes	Five days a week
Porashona	15 minutes	Three days a week
Ganoshikkha	15 minutes	Three days a week

Source: Karim 1990

- to provide information and guidance services to its distance learners through direct correspondence, radio and TV broadcast and newsletters.
- With the help of 10 teachers' training colleges and the NIEARE at Dhaka BIDE organize tutorial services for helping the learners.
- to organize document delivery system through postal services.

Bangladesh Open University (BOU)

Bangladesh Open University was established in October 21, 1992 by an act of parliament.⁵ From the beginning of its establishment it is running for achieving its visions and aims. The idea of distance education system began with the establishment of AVC in 1956 and truly executed by the inauguration of BOU. BOU opened wide opportunity of education for all and served to those who were deprived from formal education.

Initiatives behind the Establishment of BOU

The necessity of starting distance education through an institution in Bangladesh was felt from 1985 while BIDE was established for offering B.Ed. course only for training the secondary school teachers. Basically the B.Ed. course under BIDE is the first phase of establishing BOU.⁹ The first formal initiative for organizing feasibility study to set up the Bangladesh Open University was taken

by the financial assistance of the British Overseas Development Authority (ODA) in 1987.⁶ Under ODA assistance a team from Bangladesh visited the open universities of India, Pakistan, Thailand and United Kingdom and gathered practical experience regarding the setting up an open university in 1988.¹² In March 1989, based on these experiences the Bangladeshi team in collaboration with ODA experts drew up a detailed master plan of BOU.¹²

Another initiative about the establishment of BOU was taken by the Government of Bangladesh in 1989. At that time Asian Development Bank fact finding mission visited Bangladesh at the request of the Govt. of Bangladesh. Under the ADB assistance another feasibility study was conducted to formulate a comprehensive project proposal for BOU, through a Technical Assistance Project (TAP) in 1989.¹² A consulting firm namely Educational Consultant Council, India limited was engaged by the ADB from 9 May 1991 to 12 August 1991 to undertake the project preparatory study.¹² After some time the responsible consultant submitted a report.

On 13 September 1991, fact finding mission of ADB visited Bangladesh to assess the proposed project on the basis of consultant's final report.¹² At that time several discussions were held among ADB representatives, high officials of Bangladesh Govt. and other related agencies. On 12 October 1991, they submitted an aid memoir to the Govt. of Bangladesh mentioning the project objectives, scopes, cost, estimates, tentative financing arrangements etc.¹² On the basis of the aid memoir, a PCP was prepared and submitted at the planning commission on December 19, 1991 for approval.¹² In 1992 the government of Bangladesh had formed a National Steering Committee (NSC) under the chairman of the secretary of the ministry of education for giving policy guidelines on Open University project.¹²

The PCP was approved by the ECNEC in a meeting held on January 01, 1992.¹² Based on the PCP, the PP was prepared which is later approved by the DPEC on May 21, 1992.¹² After prolonged discussion, an official agreement was signed between the Govt. of Bangladesh and ADB on 4 August 1992 and Bangladesh Open University project was approved by the ADB¹³ sanctioning 34.33 million US dollars as loan to set up the BOU. According to the agreement, ADB would bear 80% and the Gov. of Bangladesh would bear 20% of the total expenditure.¹⁴ Finally the BOU was established officially by an act of parliament on 21 October 1992.⁵

Objectives of Bangladesh Open University

The main objective of the Bangladesh Open University is to provide flexible and need based education to those who are unable or not willing to join conventional teaching institutions. Bangladesh Open University offers greater access to education and training to the masses, particularly to the rural disadvantaged groups like women, agricultural workers, unemployed youths, uneducated adults, health and family planning workers etc. by introducing courses/ programs of studies more compatible with social and development needs of the country.¹⁴

Present Scenario of Distance Education in Bangladesh

At present, Bangladesh Open University (BOU) is the only public university that organizes distance education in this country. Since its inception, BOU has taken various noticeable initiatives to highlight and popularize distance education and has created

a distinct educational environment all over the country. Its activities, learning strategies and student support services are highly appreciated at all levels. As an educational institution, BOU tries to organize this type of education to teach distance learners systematically.

Programs of Bangladesh Open University

Bangladesh Open University offers two types of programs i.e. formal and non-formal through 6 different schools for the distance learners. In 1993, BOU surveyed to decide the programs which are needed to the learners. After conducting countrywide need assessment survey, the concerned committee recommended the necessity of 75 formal and non-formal programs for the distance learners in Bangladesh.¹⁵ At present BOU offers many formal and non formal programs^{16,17} which are shown in table 9.

The numbers of students in every program are also mentioned in table 10, 11,12,13,14, and 15.

Table 9: Name of programs of Bangladesh Open University

Schools	Academic programs Formal	Academic programs Non-formal
Open School	Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS) Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bangla Medium Master of Business Administration (MBA), Bangla Medium Master in Criminology and Criminal Justice (MCCJ)	-
School of Education	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) Master of Education (M.Ed) Bachelor of Education (B.Ed)	Environmental Education (with SST) Maternity and Child Care (with SST)
School of Business	Certificate in Management (CIM) Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Master of Business Administration (MBA) Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA) Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CEMPA) Master of Philosophy (M.Phil)	-
School of Social Science, Humanities and Language	Master of Arts (MA) & Master of Social Science (MSS) (Preliminary) Master of Arts (MA) & Master of Social Science (MSS) (Final) LLB (Honours) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) & Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) Bachelor of Arts (BA)/Bachelor of Social Science (BSS) Bachelor of English Language Teaching (BELT) Certificate in Arabic Language Proficiency (CALP) Certificate in English Language Proficiency (CELP)	-

School of Agriculture & Rural Development (SARD)	<p>Formal Programs</p> <p>Bachelor of Agricultural Education (B.Ag. Ed)</p> <p>Diploma in Youth in Development Work (DYDW)</p> <p>Certificate in Livestock & Poultry (CLP)</p> <p>Certificate in Pisciculture& Fish Processing (CPFP)</p> <p>Master of Science (MS) in Agricultural Sciences</p> <p>a) MS in Agronomy</p> <p>b) MS in Entomology</p> <p>c) MS in Soil Science</p> <p>d) MS in Irrigation and Water Management (IWM)</p> <p>e) MS in Aquaculture</p> <p>f) MS in Poultry Science</p> <p>Master in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihood (MSARL)</p> <p>Upcoming Formal Programs</p> <p>Certificate in Poultry Management (CPM)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (B.Sc.Ag) (Hons)</p> <p>Bachelor in Youth Development Work (BYDW)</p> <p>Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)</p>
School of Science And Technology	<p>Ongoing Academic Programs</p> <p>Diploma in Computer Science and Application (DCSA)</p> <p>B. Sc in Nursing (BSN) (at present enrollment has been held up)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Engineering (B.Sc in CSE)</p> <p>Master of Disability Management and Rehabilitation (MDMR)</p> <p>Master of Public Health</p> <p>Post Graduate Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (PGDMU)</p> <p>Upcoming Academic Programs</p> <p>Diploma in Community Health Care (DCHC)</p> <p>Diploma in Pharmacy (D. Pharm)</p> <p>M.Sc in Software Engineering (MSSE)</p> <p>B.Sc (Hons) in Food Science and Nutrition</p> <p>M.Sc in Pharmacology</p> <p>Online Diploma in Health Professionals Education (ODHPed)</p>

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

Table 10: Program wise Students in Open School

School	Name of Program	Number of Students (Admitted & Registered)			
		Carried out students of last 05 years	2019	2020	Cumulative
Open School	SSC	57498	62312	53074	172884
	HSC	52657	111835	38604	203096
	BBS	2120	4362	-	6482
	BBA (Bangla)	-	-	582	582
	MBA (Bangla)	-	605	1172	1777

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

Table 11: Program wise Students School of Agriculture & Rural Development

School	Name of Program	Number of Students (Admitted & Registered)			
		Carried out students of last 05 years	2019	2020	Cumulative
SARD	BAGEd	2248	6310	1534	10092
	DYDW	55	89	23	167
	CLP		534	249	783
	CPFP		181	69	250
	MS in Agronomy		8	3	11
	MS in Entomology		5	1	6
	MS in IWM		5	2	7
	MS in Aquaculture		14	2	16
	MSARL		102	120	222

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

Table 12: Program wise Students in School of Business

School	Name of Program	Number of Students (Admitted & Registered)			
		Carried out students of last 05 years	2019	2020	Cumulative
School of Business	PGDM/CIM	91	112	4	207
	MBA	363	613	65	1041
	MBA (Evening) Spring	74	249	175	498
	MBA (Evening) Summer	39	229	-	268
	MBA (Evening) Fall	40	215	-	255
	CEMBA/ CEMPA	294	363	77	734
	BBA	1331	3046	858	5235
	MPhil		6	0	6

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

Table 13: Program wise students in School of Education

School	Name of Program	Number of Students (Admitted & Registered)			
		Carried out students of last 05 years	2019	2020	Cumulative
School of Education	M.Ed	1372	5543	-	6915
	B.Ed	3903	8624	6128	18655
	MPhil		14	-	14
	PhD		4	-	4

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

Table 14: Program wise students in School of Social, Science, Humanities and Language

School	Name of Program	Number of Students (Admitted & Registered)			
		Carried out students of last 05 years	2019	2020	Cumulative
SSHL	BA/BSS	65367	308060	150725	524152
	Bangla (Honors)	–	287	49	336
	History (Honors)	–	199	40	239
	Islamic Studies (Honors)	71	320	47	438
	Philosophy (Honors)	87	239	45	371
	Political Science (Honors)	103	300	50	453
	Sociology (Honors)	93	240	49	382
	Law (Honors)	181	760	95	1036
	Bangla (MA)	–	152	37	189
	Political Science (MA)	65	309	108	482
	Sociology (MA)	26	279	117	422
	History (MA)	33	149	39	221
	Philosophy (MA)	32	145	11	188
	Islamic Studies (MA)	32	288	46	366
	LAW (MA)	–	2	–	2
	CELP	–	–	–	–
	CALP	–	102	–	102
China Language	–	25	–	25	

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

Table 15: Program wise students in School of Science And Technology

School	Name of Program	Number of Students (Admitted & Registered)			
		Carried out students of last 05 years	2019	2020	Cumulative
SST	DCSA	2113	1033	697	3843
	BSc in CSE	164	499	156	819
	MDMR	–	156	–	156
	PGDMU	–	36	16	52
	MPH	–	653	425	1078
	BFSN	–	–	279	279

Source: www.bou.ac.bd

CONCLUSION

The idea of distance education system in Bangladesh is not new. It started from 1956 through the establishment of AVC. It can be said that distance education system in Bangladesh executes in three phases.¹⁸ In the first phase the two institutes namely AVC and AVEC were grown and tried to help teachers and learners in teaching and learning with the help of radio sets. In this initial stage different activities were done to support the formal education system by using different audio visual materials. In the second phases distance education system was developed by SBP, NIEMT and BIDE from 1980 to 1992. At that time these institutions provided

or made arrangement to run programs through distance mode. In the third phase the idea of distance education system was implemented fully and started functioning with the help of a distinct institution namely Bangladesh open university from 1992. Bangladesh Open University is the first public university in Bangladesh that offers education through distance mode successfully and tries to make equal opportunity for all in acquiring education till today. At present, Bangladesh Open University offers various programs by using distance mode and takes initiatives to develop countrywide education system in Bangladesh by organizing various student support services.

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