

**The Islamia University of Bahawalpur**  
**Department of Educational Training**  
**Distance Education**

**INTRODUCTION TO DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**1.1 What is Education?**

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.

Education has been defined as “a process of development in which consists the passage of human being from infancy, to Maturity, the process by which he adopts himself gradually in various ways to his physical and spiritual environment.” In this definition the ability of social adaptation means the development of social qualities like co-operation, co-ordination among social groups and communities.

Education brings a natural and lasting change in an individual’s reasoning and ability to achieve the targeted goal.

It facilitates us to investigate our own considerations and thoughts and makes it ready to express it in various shapes.

Education is the main thing that encourages us to distinguish between right and wrong because in the absence of education, we can’t do what we need or we can’t achieve our goal.

**1.2 Types of Education:**

**1. Formal Education**

Formal education corresponds to a systematic, organized education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content and methodology. There is a program that teachers and students alike must observe, involving intermediate and final assessments in order to advance students to the next learning stage. It confers degrees and diplomas pursuant to a quite strict set of regulations. The methodology is basically expositive, scarcely relating to the desired behavioral objectives as a matter of fact, it is but seldom that such targets are operationally established. Assessments are made on a general basis, for administrative purposes and are infrequently used to improve the education process. Their character is, for the most part, punitive, obeying a mono-directional

methodology that fails to stimulate students and to provide for their active participation in the process, though in most cases, failures are ascribed to them.

## **2. Informal Education**

Informal education is quite diverse from formal education and, particularly, from non-formal education, although in certain cases it is capable of maintaining a close relationship with both. It does not correspond to an organized and systematic view of education; informal education does not necessarily include the objectives and subjects usually encompassed by the traditional curricula. It is aimed at students as much as at the public at large and imposes no obligations whatever their nature. There generally being no control over the performed activities, informal education does not of necessity regard the providing of degrees or diplomas; it merely supplements both formal and non-formal education.

## **3. Non-Formal Education**

As seen, formal education has a well-defined set of features. Whenever one or more of these is absent, we may safely state that the educational process has acquired non-formal features. Therefore, if a given education system is not presential most of the time non-contiguous communication - we may say that it has non-formal education features. Likewise, non-formal education characteristics are found when the adopted strategy does not require student attendance, decreasing the contacts between teacher and student and most activities take place outside the institution - as for instance, home reading and paperwork. Educative processes endowed with flexible curricula and methodology, capable of adapting to the needs and interests of students, for which time is not a pre-established factor but is contingent upon the student's work pace, certainly do not correspond to those comprised by formal education, but fit into the so-called non-formal education. Proportionally to the number of formal education factors that are absent from a process, we find several grades of non-formal systems.

### **1.3 Distance education:**

Distance education or distance learning is the education of students who may not always be physically present at a school. Traditionally, this usually involved correspondence courses wherein the student corresponded with the school via post. Today, it involves online education.

“Distance education is formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, email, or online technologies and software.

#### **1.4 Objectives of Distance Education:**

- To provide the opportunities to those who have missed the conventional mode of education
- To provide self-paced open learning opportunities
- To serve as a channel for life-long learning.