Introduction:

Education is a basic need of any civilized society. Needless to say, any nation makes progress, when the civilians are well educated and positively contribute in their respective areas of specialization.

The importance of education cannot be undermined at all. India could make a commendable progress mainly due to its organized and progressive education system. While the facilities and opportunities are available in large towns and cities, it is equally important that the masses in the rural areas as well should get the benefits of education system. According to Mukhopadhyay (2004) higher participation in the advanced education ensures larger number of people acquiring high level skills and knowledge.

Education plays a vital role in our life. It has a great impact on our personal growth and social life. It imparts us all the power and necessities in making a noticeable change in any of the field. Various achievements are based on the level of education. So today, education is of prime importance, but the cost of higher education is also increasing day by day, which forces an average student to work and earn to finance his / her education. However, working and studying is not an easy task. The working students face many difficulties during this period of education. Further, the inequalities of income compel large number of people, within and outside the cities, to simultaneously, undertake the jobs, to defray the expenses of higher education (Sheeja, 2011).

However, due to inadequate infrastructural facilities in many parts of the country, quite often students have to migrate to the cities like Mumbai, to pursue higher education. Many college students due to this situation face complex dilemmas about whether to attend college, where to attend, how to pay, how much to work, how to pay credit card and mobile bills, how to balance between family and job, and how to adjust these competing priorities while in college (Ndinga & Clayton, 1998).

This kind of situation creates many difficulties for the students, who are, “Learning while earning” (Alfonso, 1984). Undergraduates who work in off-campus jobs feel that their employment increases these limitations.
Some studies in the past have focused on working students, but that is not enough. Researchers have looked on how work affects campus management, persistence and graduation, cognitive and social development, development of leadership and social skills, faculty interaction and interaction with other students (Mahle, 2007).

It is important for higher education researchers, policy analysts, education practitioners, faculty and administrators to better understand their needs and challenges in trying to balance work, financing and college. Due to these conditions, the need for distance learning aroused to encourage further studies.

In simpler terms, distance education is a process by which students learn the desired course through a location which is away from the tutor. This technology of delivering distance education developed overtime. The way distance education is conceptualized has also changed due to the recent advancement in technology. Distance education has grown considerably over the past few years, and this has in turn expanded the potential of both teaching and learning.

The past literature identifies four stages in the concept of distance education which are linked to various technologies as modes of delivering course instruction (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). These are delivered through independent study/correspondence (first generation), radio/audio study (second generation), television, broadcast, videotape, by interacting on telephone, or both delivery or interaction by telephone, cable or ISDN lines, satellite (third generation) and computer based multimedia and computer networks (fourth generation) (Chandar & Sharma, 2003).

These stages not only reflect the changes in technologies but also correspond to difference in the way instructors and learners approach distance education. These choices are undertaken by many learners in different stages of learning. Depending on the venue, the learner can make menu choices (McMillan, 2006). Similarly, these technology advances provide some exclusive opportunities to enhance the entire process in a way that distinguishes this approach from all previous instructional technologies.

Although the advances of technology have enhanced interaction, the positive effects of technology are still debatable (Morrison & Anglin, 2011). However, since these
technologies are ever changing, better clarification and appropriateness of techniques is required. The importance of doing this is not only to aid the research in distance education, but as technological advances take place, the use of these technologies to facilitate distance education will increase and penetrate schools (Roushanzamir, 2007). However, Cobb, (1997) argues that different media have an impact on learning but do not produce different learning outcomes.

Today, there is variety of different technological tools which helps aid better communication process. Despite the various technologies, there are certain other benefits such convenience, time and geographical constraints, elimination of space, deeper critical reflection, increased peer interaction and the skill to effectively utilize the internet resources (Olmanson, 2011). Further, it is important to have high level of interactivity with the learners. Instructors need to be cognizant of incorporating a significant amount of interactivity into their courses. There are many ways by which communications could take place. They are interaction through content, interaction with instructors, and interaction between peers. Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, (1994) identified a fourth type of interaction which they have termed as learner-interface interaction. This was defined as “the interaction that takes place between a student and the technology used to mediate a particular distance education process” (p. 31). Thus, interactivity can be incorporated at different levels within a course.

Visser & Keller, (1990) have correctly identified the lack of empirical research focusing on the relationship between interactivity, student success, and motivation. The study that has been conducted has established a strong relationship among these three factors. Similarly, communication is an interactive component that needs to be given serious consideration in distance learning. It is also essential to get adequate feedback from the instructors to reinforce the student’s concerns to see if they have acquired adequate knowledge from these modes of distance learning teaching. It could also prove beneficial if tutors provided support to their students by providing “fast and relevant assistance by sending timely and individualized messages and provide appropriate feedback to students (Lee & Busch, 2005).

Shotsberger, (2000) explores the concept of context and takes this issue to the next step by exploring the social context of communication. He also found that the human and social encounters are missing from asynchronous communication. This mode of
communication is missing a variety of cues that are found in face-to-face communication.

Finding the right educational tools to achieve a specific learning outcome and using those tools appropriately can result in superior success. This statement is more appropriate for distance education surroundings in which tutors and learners are physically separated or are away for a long time from each other (Asherian, 2007).

It is therefore predictable that one form of instruction or communication over another best meets the learning goals of the class. However, the key then is to uncover systematically the instances in which one form of communication is more effective than the other. Nevertheless, this study focuses on improving these communication methods to reduce difficulties for working students.

Thus, it was necessary, to conduct an in depth study, of the state of affair of such students and endeavour to develop a model which can facilitate the communication process with the students as well as the teaching community to help resolve difficulties, with collective efforts.