



CHAPTER – III

IGNOU: A Brief Profile



CHAPTER THREE

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY (IGNOU): A BRIEF PROFILE

Introduction:

The advances in information and communication technology provide great opportunities to enhance teaching and learning in higher education by both on-campus and distance education.

More than conventional education, distance education is in a better position to address the issue of social exclusion by increasing access to higher education for socially marginalized sections. In fact distance education is more popular among women and socially backward classes. Even disabled students who are denied access to traditional institutions, and all those who require updating and life-long education can now be benefited by the modern facilities of communication.

In India, the Distance Education mode has become a powerful for increased opportunities for higher education as well as for learning skills. This mode of instruction has an enormous potential for supplementing adult literacy and regular education programmes in India where the conventional system of education is outdated and inadequate in order to accommodate the growing needs of the society. (Chaudhary, 2006)

Origin of Distance Education:

Distance education system is a device to provide education to distant students as well as reduce communication gap between the distant student and the teacher. (Goel Aruna and S. V. Goel, 2000)

According to Wikipedia “Distance education, or distance learning as a field of education that focuses on the pedagogy/ andragogy, technology

and instructional systems design that aim to deliver education to students who are not physically “on site”.

The University of London was the first University to offer distance learning degrees, establishing its External Programme in 1858. There are now many institutions around the world, often with the name Open University. (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

In India Distance Education was adopted as an alternative mode of education to the conventional mode of education and promises to play an important role in ensuring access to higher education to people who are unable to take admission in formal programmes in the Universities.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University was the first such programme establishing in 1982 in India. They offer postgraduates and certificate programmes in varied fields. At present in India there are 12 Open Universities and more than 100 Centres for distance open learning in conventional Universities, which offers diverse and career-oriented programmes, enrolling millions of students from all over the world. In addition distance-learning programmes are offered by some Private Institutions and Television Companies. (Chaudhary, 2006)

In order to understand IGNOU’s role, it is necessary to study its brief profile. The material for this profile is mainly drawn from the secondary source, i.e. www.ignou.ac.in.

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY:

Indira Gandhi National Open University was established in 1985 by an Act of Parliament and has emerged as an international institution in the field of Open Distance Learning. It has been conferred with the awards of ‘Centre of Excellence’ and ‘Excellence for Distance Education Materials’ by the Commonwealth of Learning.

Objectives of IGNOU:

- Democratizing higher education by taking it to the doorsteps of the learners.
- Providing access to high quality education to all those who seek it irrespective of age, region or formal qualifications.
- Offering need-based academic programmes by giving professional and vocational orientations to the courses.
- Promoting and developing distance education in India.
- Setting and maintaining standards in distance education in the country as an apex body for the purpose.

Functions of IGNOU

IGNOU has two main functions:

- a) It offers various academic programmes that lead to Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees. It develops and produces for delivery through open learning and distance education mode. IGNOU is actively involved in research, training and extension activities.
- b) In the capacity as an apex body, it co-ordinates and monitors distance education system throughout the country. IGNOU has also constituted the Distance Education Council and has provided expertise and assistance to other Open and Distance Learning Institutions in the country.

Special Features of IGNOU

Some of the special features of IGNOU are as follows:

- National jurisdiction
- Flexible admission rules

- Individualized study
- Flexibility in terms of place, pace, age and duration of the study.
- Use of the latest information technology for effective Student Support Services
- Modular programmes
- Cost effective education
- Resource sharing, collaboration and networking state Open Universities and other ODL institutions

(IGNOU Annual Report 2002-03)

Admission:

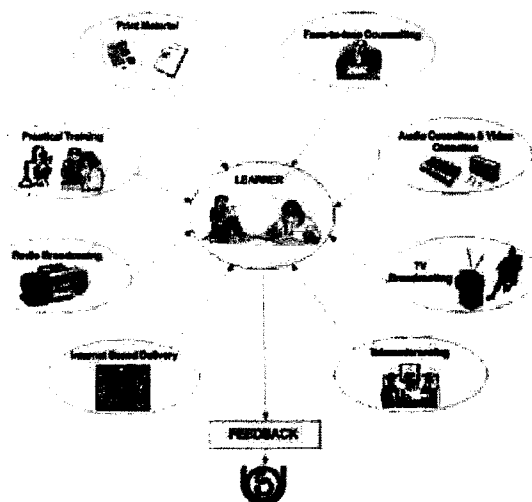
The University follows two academic cycles- January and July. Admissions to the academic programmes are under three modes i.e., through entrance examination, merit and direct admission, depending on the nature of the programme. Admission notifications are issued in leading national and regional dailies during April-May for July session and August-September for January session. Most of the Bachelors and Master Degree programmes are offered in July cycle, while the other Diplomas and those not covered in July cycle are offered in January cycle. However, Certificate programmes of six months duration are offered in both the cycles.

Instructional system:

IGNOU's method of instruction differs radically from that of other conventional universities. Indira Gandhi National Open University has adopted a multimedia approach to instruction. The different components being: self-instructional materials, counseling sessions, both face-to-face and via teleconferencing mode. For courses in Science, Computers,

Nursing as well as Engineering and Technology, arrangements have been made to enable students undertake practical classes at select study centres.

A Diagrammatic representation of a multimedia approach for instruction process of IGNOU is given below:



The learner-centric instructional system of IGNOU

(Source: www.ignou.ac.in)

Recognition:

IGNOU is a Central University and the Degrees/ Diplomas/ Certificates awarded are recognized by all the members Universities of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and are at par with similar Degrees/ Diplomas/ Certificates of all Indian Universities/ Deemed Universities/ Institutions vide UGC Circular No. F.1-8/ 92 (CPP) of February 1992 and AIU Circular No. EV/11(449)/94/176915-1777115 of January, 1994. MBA and MCA are duly recognized by AICTE.

The School of Studies:

With a view to developing interdisciplinary studies, the University operates through Schools of Studies. Each School is headed by a Director

who arranges to plan, supervise, develop and organize its academic programmes and courses in coordination with the school staff and the different academic, administrative and service wings of the University. The emphasis is on providing a wide choice of courses at different levels. The schools of studies currently in operation are as follows:

Various Schools of IGNOU

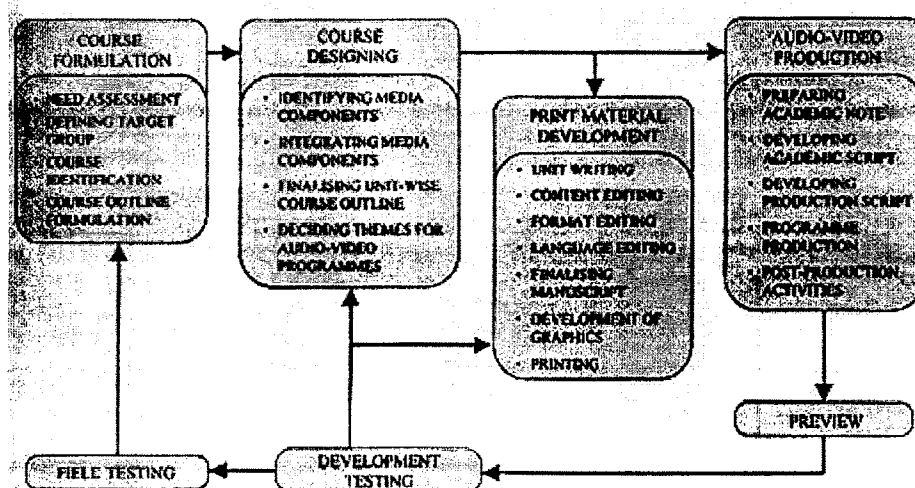
1. School of Humanities
2. School of Social Sciences
3. School of Sciences
4. School of Education
5. School of Continuing Education
6. School of Engineering & Technology
7. School of Management Studies
8. School of Health Sciences
9. School of Computer & Information Sciences
10. School of Agriculture
11. School of Law
12. School of Journalism and New Media Studies
13. School of Gender and Development Studies
14. School of Tourism Hospitality Service Sactoral Management
15. School of Interdisciplinary and Trans-disciplinary Studies
16. School of Social Work
17. School of Vocational Education and Training
18. School of Extension and Development Studies
19. School of Foreign Languages
20. School of Translation Studies and Training
21. School of Performing and Visual Arts

Academic Programmes:

The University at present offers 140 academic programmes ranging from Doctoral to Certificate levels, catering to all sections of the society. A candidate is awarded his/her degree after the successful completion of the chosen programmes. IGNOU engages experts from all over the country for the design and development of their courses and programmes ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the study materials.

A Diagrammatic representation of the course Development process is given below:

COURSE DEVELOPMENT



(Source: www.ignou.ac.in)

Credit System:

IGNOU follows a credit that is based on the time factors involved in studying. One credit is equivalent to 30 study hours inclusive of all learning activities. Different programmes have different credit requirements. Students have the right to collect credits at their own pace, convenience and according to their own capability. IGNOU also provides

a credit transfer facility whereby credits may be transferred from any other University to IGNOU after fulfilling the necessary requirements.

Support Services:

In order to provide individualized support to its learners, the University has a large number of study Centres, Programme Study Centres and Work Centres throughout the country. These are coordinated by 59 Regional Centres, 6 Sub-Regional Study Centres, about 1600 learner support Centers and 45 overseas partner institutions as on date. At the Study Centres, the learners interact with the Academic Counselors and other learners, refer to books in the Library, watch /listen to video/audio cassettes and interact with the Co-ordinator on administrative and academic matters. Support services are also provided through Work Centres, Programme Specific Centres, Skill Development Centres and Special Study Centers.

Programme Delivery:

The methodology of instruction in this University is different from that of the conventional Universities. The Universities follows a multimedia approach for instruction. It comprises:

- a) ***Self Instruction Written Material:*** The printed study material for both theory and practical components of the programmes is supplied to the learners in batches of blocks for every course.
- b) ***Audio-Visual Material Aids:*** The learning package contains audio and video cassettes which have been produced by the University for the better clarification and enhancement of understanding of the course material given to the learner. A video programme is normally of 25-30 minutes duration. The audio tapes are run and

video cassettes are screened at the Study Centres during specific sections which are duly notified for the benefit of the learners. The video programmes are telecasts on National Network of Doordarshan and Gyan Darshan. Some of the selected stations of All India Radio are also broadcasting the audio programmes. Learners can confirm the dates for the programme from their study centres. The information is also provided through the National Newspapers and IGNOU Newsletters sent to the learners periodically.

- c) ***Counseling Sessions***: Normally counseling sessions are held as per schedule drawn by the Study Centres. These are mostly held during the non-working hours of the host institutions where the Study Centres are located.
- d) ***Teleconferences***: Live sessions are conducted via satellite through interactive Gyan Darshan channel from the University Studies at EMPC, the schedule of which is made available at the study centres.
- e) ***Practical / Project Work***: Some programmes have practical/project components also. Practicals are held at designated institutions for which schedule is provided by the Study Centres. Attendance at practicals is compulsory. For project work, Study Centres will provide the necessary guidance but the learner will have to manage his/her own resources.
- f) ***Gyan Darshan Educational Channel***: Collaboration between MHRD, Prasar Bharti, IGNOU and other organizations has resulted in launching DD Gyan Darshan, the Educational Channel of India. The channel is providing educational programmes on a

variety of subjects for 24 hours a day to enhance the learning process.

- g) **Gyan Vani:** IGNOU has been offered FM Channel adios in 40 cities and towns for education and development. There were as many as 17 FM Radio Stations broadcasts in English, Hindi and regional languages and provide the educational programme for learners.
- h) **Interactive Radio-counseling:** Interactive radio counseling is a recent concept in distance learning in India. Live counseling is provided on Radio by invited experts. Students can ask questions right from their homes on telephone. These sessions are conducted foe an hour on Sundays from 189 Radio Stations in the country.

Evaluation System:

IGNOU has a three-tier system of evaluation

1. Self-assessment exercises within each unit of study.
2. Continuous evaluation mainly through assignments which is tutor-marked practical assignments and seminar/ workshops.
3. The term-end examination and / or project work.

Establishment of IGNOU Regional Centre, Pune:

IGNOU has established its Regional Centre at Pune in the year 1991 with 13 Study Centres aiming to cater to the needs of aspiring learners of Maharashtra. At present, Pune Regional Centre has 55 study Centres spread over the State of Maharashtra for various Programmes.

IGNOU has Study Centres in the following districts of Maharashtra:

Mumbai, Mumbai Suburban, Navi Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Jalgaon, Nashik, Pune, Satara, Kolhapur, Solapur, Aurangabad, Beed, Nanded, Amarvati, Yawatmal, Wardha, Nagpur and Chandrapur.

Activities of Regional Centre:

- Pre-counseling to the aspired learners
- Admission
- Learner support services
- Administrative Counseling
- Conduct of Induction Programmes
- Conduct of Orientation Programmes
- Conduct of Seminars/Awareness Programmes
- Participation in national & international exhibitions
- Publicity and promotional activities
- Establishment of new Study Centres/Programme Study Centres/
Special Study Centres
- Conduct of teleconference/videoconference
- Conduct of viva-voce for the various programmes
- Conduct of Term End Examinations/Practical Examinations
- Organizing Regional Convocation
- Liaison with various Govt. /Private organizations/NGO
- Payments to Study Centre staff
- Renewal of Coordinators/part-time staff
- Identification of Academic Counselors & Project Evaluators

- Post Counseling
- Placement assistance and
- Coordination between IGNOU headquarters and Study Centres

Indira Gandhi National Open University, as the National Resource Centre for Open and Distance Learning with its international recognition and presence providing seamless access to sustainable and learner centric quality education. IGNOU has developed networks using emerging technologies and methods with global reach for effective programme delivery and also developed an intelligent flexible system of education to meet out the challenges of access and equity and work towards the development of knowledge society.

So far we have discussed a brief profile of IGNOU regarding its objectives, functions, special features, admission, instruction system, support services, Study Centre and their various activities. This chapter is mainly based on secondary data.

We will now move to the next chapter regarding socio-economic characteristics of respondents.

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Website:

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