

# Faculty Development Programme on Serving Students with Disabilities in Open, Distance and Online Learning (Through Virtual Mode)

(26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2021)

**Coordinators:** Dr. Tata Ramakrishna, Dr. Pulla Lakshmi

## **Background**

"Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest activities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation." (John F. Kennedy)

For the exercise of human rights, the right to education is deemed as a central right and is considered itself as a human rights. The fundamental human right to education is protected by several international standard setting instruments and also by constitution of India under article 21A. People with disabilities have minimal access to mainstream education and this puts a challenge in the pursuit of their right to education. Specific provisions can “ensure the right to education and encourage countries to adopt an approach that is inclusive for all, including those with disabilities.”

In terms of educational needs, it is invidious to treat disabled students as a separate category. Rather, these students fall along with a range of learner differences and share similar challenges and difficulties that all students face in getting an education. Sometimes the barriers are more severe for them, but sometimes not. Arguably, in the long run, the main beneficiaries of disabled-friendly mechanisms and the need to make suitable adjustments in advance are the non-disabled students because many of the adjustments, such as well-prepared handouts, instructions given in writing as well as verbally, notes put on-line, and variety and flexibility in forms of assessment, are simply good teaching and learning practices which benefit all students. One unintended consequence of these (disability) support mechanisms is that as departments and institutions introduce more flexible learning and alternative ways of assessment for disabled students, demand is likely to rise for giving greater flexibility for all students. Therefore, let people know that the doors of all the educational institutions are open to everyone in the community.

In this backdrop, the teaching and academic staff of an organization plays a vital role for its smooth and effective functioning. It is well accepted that they are the pillars of any educational organization. In the context of IGNOU, they are the first persons who designed and developed the curriculum for all the academic programmes. The teachers at various schools of studies and the academic serving at Student Evaluation Division, Student Registration Division and at various Regional Centers are directly engaged in carrying out all the teaching learning activities related to the students; starting from their admission till the declaration of results. Therefore, these staff should have all the necessary information available for providing better services to the students.

Many students with disabilities are seeking admission to various programmes /courses offered by IGNOU. At present there are thousands of students with different categories of disabilities on the rolls of IGNOU under various academic programmes. These students need some special/additional services and aids in order to realize independent forms of studying and living. The teaching learning system must take into account their individual needs and should provide alternative and additional reliable special support services. The faculty and academics should have adequate knowledge and information about the students with

disabilities and should adopt various inclusive methods in designing and development of curriculum for providing them with equal opportunities and quality education at par with their fellow students.

Hence, a faculty development programme in this regard with hands-on experience will enable them to reflect their experiences and learn more about the students with various disabilities and their problems, So that they could effectively design and develop more inclusive curriculum to cater to the individualized needs of the students' with various physical abilities. As per the demand and need, STRIDE has been organizing faculty development programmes/workshops on a regular basis for teacher and academics of IGNOU under various aspects of Open, Distance and Online Education System.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the proposed training programme are:-

- Discuss the concept of disability and its Indian perception with different models, approaches and categories;
- Trace the historical development of the educational system followed in India for persons with disabilities;
- List and describe various policies, programmes, schemes and facilities available for the education of the disabled;
- Underline the importance of ODL and to analyse the hands-on issues concerning disabled students in Open, Distance and Online Education system;
- Design inclusive curriculum (programmes/courses) in ODL for the disabled by using the principles of universal design and accessibility;
- Analyze different support mechanisms and develop various assessment techniques for providing quality education to the students with special needs;
- Discuss the application of assistive technologies and explain the ways for designing accessible WebPages;
- Identify the training needs and role of various personnel involved in providing education to the disabled at IGNOU; and
- Analyze the steps taken by IGNOU for the education of the persons with disabilities and suggest implementation strategies;

## **Participants**

The teachers at various Schools of Studies, Centers, Cells and the Academics at various Regional Centres, Divisions and Units of IGNOU who have been involved in design, development and delivery of academic programmes will be the participants. This Faculty Development Programme would accommodate at most 40 participants who will be given hands-on experience on various issues related to students with disabilities.

## **Mode of the Programme**

By keeping the COVID-19 pandemic situation this Programme will be conducted on Virtual Mode through Google meet.

## **Duration**

The duration of this faculty development programme will be five (05) days, i.e. 26 -30 April, 2021

## **Methodology**

The concept of disability and the problems related to the education of the disabled students will be explained in a simple and systematic manner. Focus will be given on group discussions and sharing individual experiences of working with disabled students. Attention will be paid to individual participants in practical and hands-on experience.

## **Resource Persons**

Faculty from STRIDE and other Schools of Studies, National Centre for Disability Studies, Equal Opportunity Cell and some external experts on disability would act as Resource Persons in this five days faculty development programme.

## **Resource Materials**

Soft copies of relevant Handbooks and other material developed by STRIDE and others (e-copies) shall be used as the base material for the programme.

## **Expected Outcomes**

At the end of this faculty development programme each participant is expected to have awareness about the persons with various disabilities. He/she would be able to assist the students with disabilities more effectively and

- Identify the needs and difficulties of students with disabilities and solve them efficiently.
- Reflect on new ideas and suggestions to think further to solve the issues related to disabled in ODL and online learning more efficiently.
- Discuss the facilities and opportunities available at IGNOU for the students with disabilities.
- Discuss the Challenges before the ODL Institutions to provide quality education to the disabled students.

## **Programme Coordinators:**

- 1) Dr. Tata Ramakrishna, email id: [tataramakrishna@ignou.ac.in](mailto:tataramakrishna@ignou.ac.in), 011-29572608, M. no. 9868722107
- 2) Dr. Pulla Lakshmi, email id: [p.lakshmi@ignou.ac.in](mailto:p.lakshmi@ignou.ac.in), 011-29572611, M. no. 9810957625