

Innovation & Startup Initiatives at IGNOU (2020-2025)



Indira Gandhi National Open University
New Delhi-110068



“शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है आज के युग में तो यह लोकतन्त्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।”

— इन्दिरा गाँधी

"Education is liberating force, and in our age it is also democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

- Indira Gandhi

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Foreword

It gives me immense pleasure to present the *Report on Innovation and Startup Initiatives @ IGNOU (2020–2025)*, which encapsulates the University’s sustained efforts to foster creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit among learners, faculty, and staff. As the world moves towards knowledge-driven economies, higher education institutions are increasingly being recognised as key drivers of innovation and societal transformation. In this context, IGNOU, as a national university established by an Act of Parliament, has been proactively integrating innovation and entrepreneurship within its academic and administrative ecosystem.



During the period 2020–2025, IGNOU has undertaken several initiatives aligned with the *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020*, promoting innovation, research, and skill-based learning. The University has encouraged a culture of ideation, experimentation, and problem-solving through diverse programmes, incubation support, and collaborations with national and international agencies. These initiatives aim to empower learners to become job creators rather than job seekers, while also strengthening the University’s role as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable development.

This report documents IGNOU’s institutional mechanisms, innovative practices, and startup-related activities undertaken across Schools of Studies, Centres, and Regional Centres. It highlights the University’s commitment to providing a conducive environment for innovation, in keeping with its mandate to democratise education and extend quality learning opportunities to all sections of society.

I appreciate the dedicated efforts of the *National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE)* in creating and strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem at the University. I also commend their work in preparing this comprehensive report. This document will serve as a valuable resource for future planning and implementation of innovation-led initiatives at IGNOU.

I am confident that this document will inspire our academic community to continue nurturing innovation and entrepreneurship in the Open Distance and Digital Learning (ODDL) system and contribute meaningfully to the nation’s vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat @ 2047*.

Prof. Uma Kanjilal

Vice Chancellor

Indira Gandhi National Open University

Acknowledgment



In alignment with the strategic objectives of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and in view of its continued commitment to institutional excellence, the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) undertook the task of developing a comprehensive calendar of activities to guide and support preparations for the second cycle of NAAC accreditation and the NIRF 2026 ranking process. These activities were designed to address critical domains, including NAAC-related documentation and data validation, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 implementation, data capturing and analysis for the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), and the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), policy documents and best practices to streamline internal processes and ensure compliance with national quality benchmarks.

To accomplish this multifaceted undertaking in a time-bound and systematic manner, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor constituted a series of committees comprising academic and administrative professionals from across the University. Each committee was entrusted with a specific thematic area, with the responsibility of planning, preparing, and reviewing documentation and institutional practices in accordance with the evolving frameworks of quality assurance and regulatory expectations.

The Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) sincerely acknowledges and appreciates the outstanding commitment, scholarly engagement, and collaborative spirit demonstrated by all committee members. Their meticulous attention to detail, academic rigour, and deep understanding of the institutional processes were critical to the successful preparation of comprehensive and credible documentation in support of the University's goals. The committee members undertook additional responsibilities beyond their regular duties, working diligently to collate data, contribute to narrative reports, validate evidence, and ensure alignment with national quality parameters.

The committees' collective efforts have nicely documented and showcased the innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives taken by the University and have contributed meaningfully to projecting IGNOU's commitment towards *swadeshi for Atmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat @2047*. Their work reflects not only professional excellence but also a shared vision of advancing IGNOU's mission of fostering the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem across the country and beyond. CIQA acknowledges the contribution of the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education in developing the document on "Innovation and Startup Initiatives @IGNOU."

CIQA places on record its deep gratitude to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor for her support, insightful leadership and guidance. Above all, CIQA extends its heartfelt thanks to each member of the preparation team for their valuable contributions, without which the timely completion of this critical institutional endeavour would not have been possible.

Prof. Vijayakumar P.
 Director, CIQA
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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is a Central Open and Distance Learning University established in 1985 through an Act of the Parliament of India. With a total active enrollment of over 3.5 million students from all over the country and different other countries, IGNOU is the largest university in the world. IGNOU has been providing high quality, innovative, and need-based academic opportunities at different levels throughout the country and overseas through its 21 Schools of Studies, around 29 Centres and Divisions, and a network of 67 Regional Centres and around 1961 Learner Support Centres. IGNOU is not only innovating in the field of providing new programmes through a technology-enabled system of teaching-learning, but it is also enabling and empowering its faculty and students towards innovation, entrepreneurship and startups. The mission of the University is to develop a culture of continued search for new and innovative solutions to issues and problems in offering seamless education across the various levels, to achieve cost efficiency in its operations and provide borderless access to quality education and training.

1.1 Dedicated Centre for Innovation – IGNOU’s Innovation Mandate

Recognizing the importance of innovation, in the year 2005, a vision was born, and a seed was planted with the establishment of the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE)- a department dedicated to innovation. Since then, the NCIDE has been promoting, supporting and disseminating innovations and re-engineering the processes in Open and Distance Learning systems. It is a ground for nurturing bright and inquisitive minds whose ideas and explorations are expected to revolutionize the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system and thus, help transform India into a learning society. The goal of the Centre is to develop a culture of continued search for new and innovative solutions in the University’s mission to offer seamless education across the various levels, achieve cost efficiency in its operations and provide borderless access to quality education and training. Its aim is to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem of the University by encouraging various innovation and entrepreneurship activities among the students. The objectives of NCIDE include:

1. Providing intellectual, financial and technological support to stakeholders for the growth and development of the ODL system.
2. Encouraging innovations in Distance Education (DE) through collaborations within the University and with other institutions in India and abroad for re-engineering and sustaining open and distance learning.
3. Promoting and developing innovative learning solutions through emerging technologies and serving as a resource centre for prototype development of innovative solutions.
4. Conducting research studies to explore the areas of innovation in Distance Education and suggest workable solutions, thus, providing research-based framework and guidelines for standardization and total quality management of all facets of ODL.

5. Documentation and dissemination of innovations and best practices in distance education.
6. Capacity building of the ODL functionaries for innovations in DE and creating an environment for innovations.
7. Developing a network of innovative individuals, institutions and industry dedicated to R&D in the ODL system.
8. Development of innovative programmes, guidelines, mechanisms and modalities for convergence of different systems of education for seamless access.

To achieve its objectives, the NCIDE has been focusing on the seven thrust areas including the Development of Innovative Learning Solutions; Development of Innovative Support Solutions; Research and Benchmarking for Quality Management; Documentation and Dissemination; Capacity Building; Collaboration and Networking; and Incubation and Nurturing Innovators (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Seven Thrust Areas of NCIDE

Vision of NCIDE

To foster the spirit of Innovation in the organisation and to provide the platform for testing, implementation, and application of Innovations, in constant search of solutions for progressively higher effectiveness, quality, and reach of the ODL System.

Mission of NCIDE

NCIDE envisions itself as an Apex Centre for Innovation in the University for promoting, supporting and incubating Innovations by students and faculty; and finding innovative solutions for systemic issues and problems in a cost-effective manner.

1.2 The Innovation Journey at IGNOU

In alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, IGNOU's efforts through NCIDE are directed at achieving key policy objectives such as expanding access to innovation-driven education, fostering entrepreneurship among learners, and establishing a robust digital ecosystem for lifelong learning. These initiatives also contribute significantly to NAAC criteria such as 'Curricular Aspects', 'Research, Innovation and Extension', and 'Institutional Values and Best Practices'. Through its multi-tiered innovation framework, IGNOU aims to strengthen its institutional ranking and position itself as a global leader in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) with a strong commitment to quality, equity, and innovation.

NCIDE stepped in as a resource centre, a think tank, and a creative lab offering intellectual and technological support to educators, administrators, and learners. Initially, the Centre collaborated with Schools of Studies and Divisions, developed and piloted prototypes, and created models that could eventually be adopted by the larger system through the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model. Since its inception, NCIDE has worked on documentation and dissemination from policy documents to programme design, and from admission processes to evaluation techniques, NCIDE introduced a 'Gold Medal' to recognise innovators within the ODL community.

The team at NCIDE built several innovative teaching, learning and support solutions in the areas of mobile-enabled teaching, learning and training, interactive multimedia-based content, audiobooks, virtual labs, On-Demand Examination System, Multipurpose Digital Question Bank, E-Test, Science@Mobile, ShodhDhara, Research Repository, Research-Mate, Innovation Management System, Web Enabled Academic Services (WEAS), etc. NCIDE also developed products and services in project mode with funding from external agencies like UNICEF, WHO, and Vigyan Prasar.



NCIDE was continuously engaged in developing products and prototypes for IGNOU and simultaneously embarked on a journey to create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among the students, alumni and faculty of IGNOU through setting up Innovation Clubs at IGNOU headquarters and RCs, establishing an Institution Innovation Council (IIC), organizing Festival of Ideas, Smart IGNOU Hackathon, Student Innovation Award, Startup Award, Student Empowerment programmes in the areas of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, etc. as a step further to implement NEP-2020 in the University. NCIDE rolled out several activities that have not only created an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem within the University but also significantly strengthened it through various initiatives including the Institution’s Innovation and Startup Policy, Pre-Incubation Program, Incubation Centre, Patent Facilitation Unit, and Mentoring Scheme.

1.3 Innovation and Startup Achievements at a Glance

During the last five years, NCIDE has created a culture of Innovation and Startup in the University by organizing a large number of activities and programmes. Due to its endeavours, NCIDE has also received several recognitions and awards.

A quantitative analysis of the innovation and startup initiatives and achievements is presented in the following chart (Figure 2).

Over the last two decades, the seed has blossomed into a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem deeply rooted in innovation, empowerment and transformation.

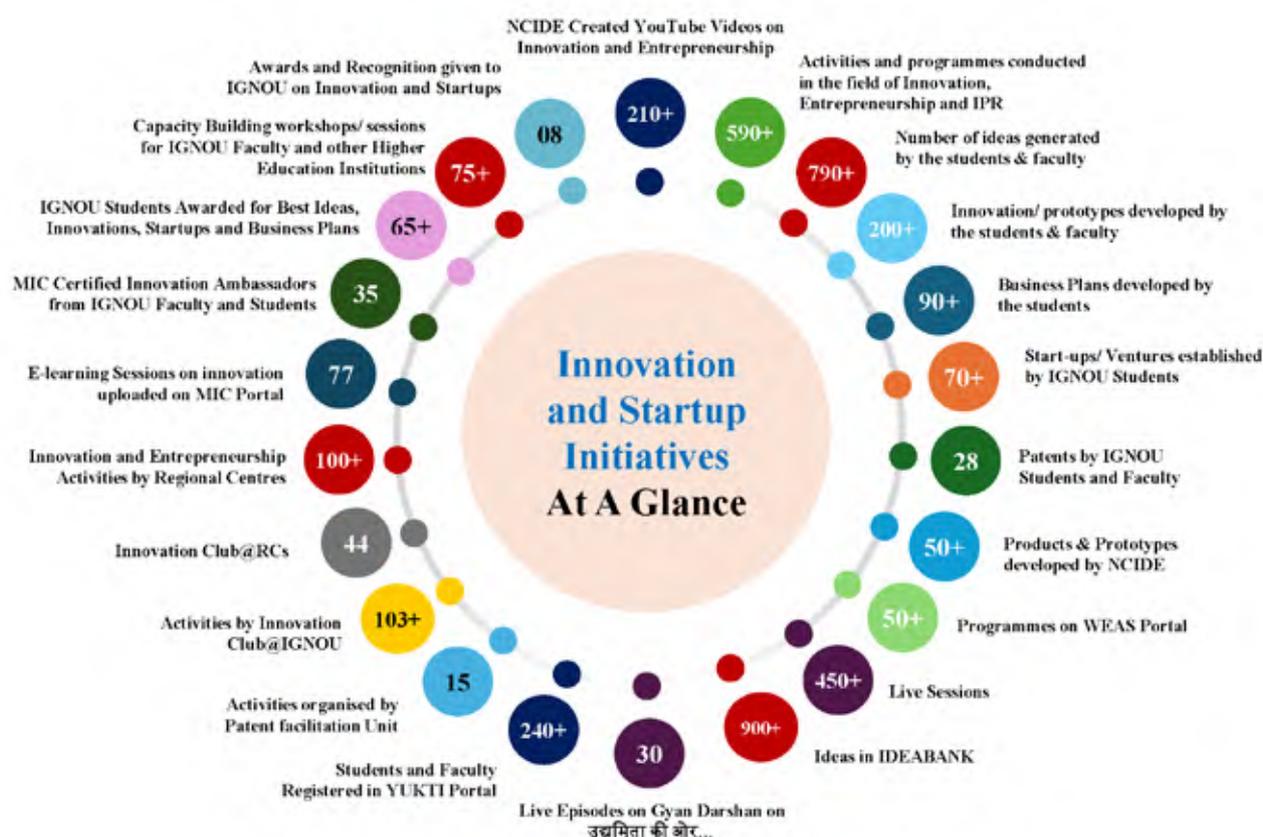


Figure 2: The Innovation Journey: Innovation and Startup Initiatives at a Glance

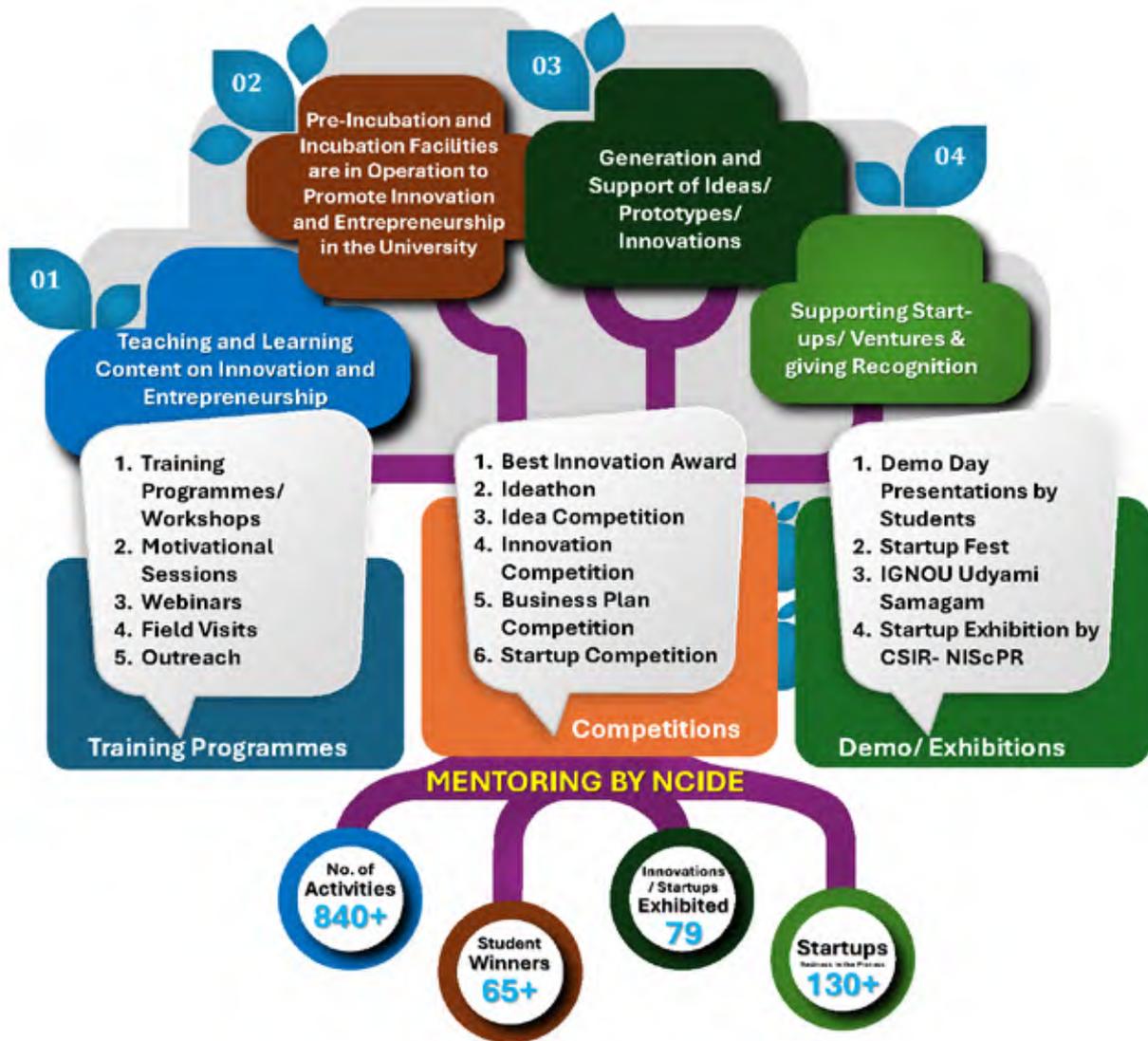


Figure 3: Activities for Mentoring and Supporting Budding Entrepreneurs at NCIDE

1.4 Conclusion

Over the last two decades, the seed has blossomed into a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem deeply rooted in innovation, empowerment and transformation. The evolution reflects the commitment of visionary leadership, dedicated faculty and motivated students.

2. Institutional Ecosystem for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

2.1 Introduction

Following the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, research and innovation in Indian educational institutions, particularly at the higher education level, have become key focal area. In addition to developing new and innovative teaching, learning, and support solutions that address specific needs, the National Centre for Innovation and Developing Education (NCIDE) is actively promoting and nurturing innovation and startups within the University. NCIDE has tried to develop a culture of innovation in the University by organizing a variety of innovation and entrepreneurial activities for the students as well as the faculty. As a result, a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship has been created in the University. The main components of the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem at IGNOU are shown in the Figure 4. The details are provided in the sections below.

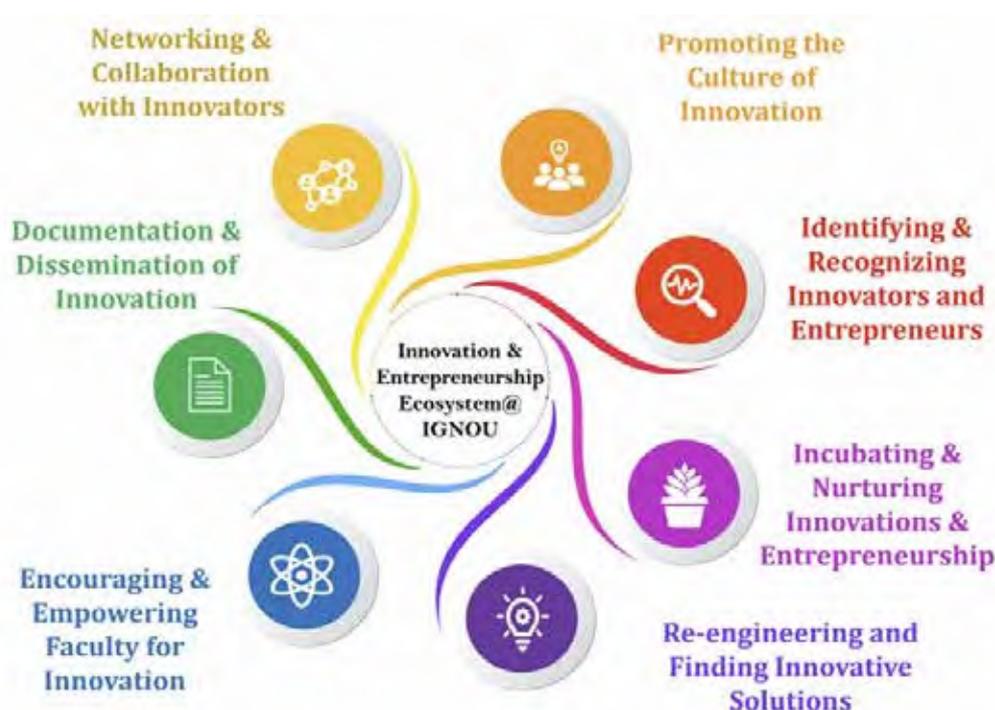


Figure 4: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem@ IGNOU

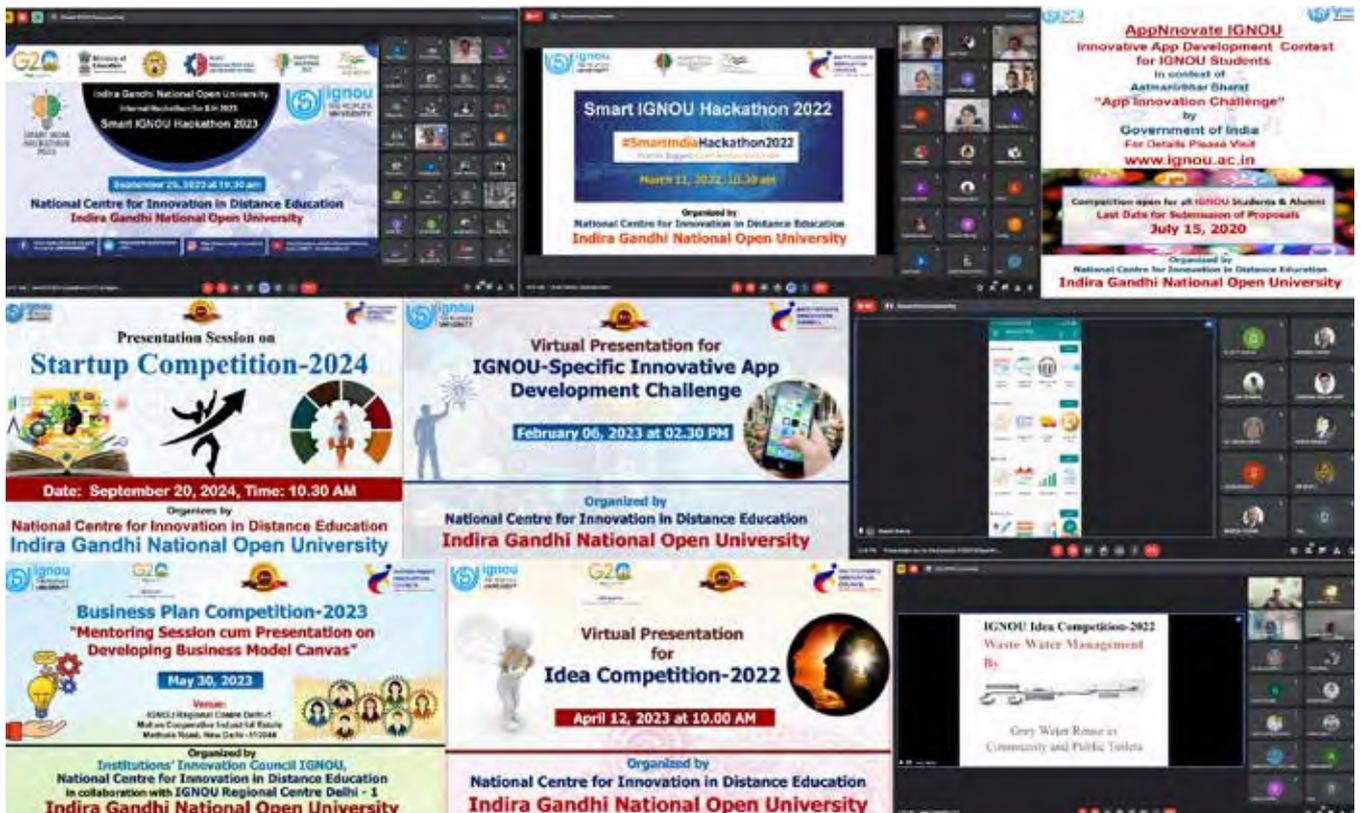
2.2 Promoting the Culture of Innovation

To increase awareness and motivation among students and faculty about innovation, entrepreneurship, and startups, NCIDE organised various awareness and motivational sessions. This included 49 Facebook Live sessions on innovation and startups, as well as 30 bimonthly teleconferencing sessions titled *Udyamita Ki Ore*. The Innovation Club@IGNOU Headquarters and IGNOU Regional Centres (RCs) also played a crucial role in promoting and nurturing the culture of innovation in the University.



2.3 Identifying and Recognizing Innovators and Entrepreneurs

Many students at IGNOU have an innovative and entrepreneurial mindset and have established their own startups or are interested in developing their enterprises. To identify these students and



provide them the necessary guidance, training, and academic support, NCIDE organised various competitions, challenges, and instituted awards and prizes. Some of the well-established initiatives in this direction include the IGNOU-Udyami Online Portal, Startup Fest, Student Innovation Awards, Innovative App Development Challenge, Creativity Challenge, Idea Competition, Business Plan Competition, Smart IGNOU Hackathon, and Startup Competition. A significant number of students and alumni participated in these competitions and challenges.

2.4 Incubating and Nurturing Innovations and Entrepreneurship

After identifying and recognizing potential innovators and entrepreneurs, NCIDE provided them with regular incubation and nurturing support. For this purpose, the NCIDE provided technological, and intellectual assistance to individuals, institutions, and organisations desirous of integrating technology into their research and educational instruction. NCIDE encouraged faculty and students to generate new ideas and develop innovative solutions for a variety of problems, providing incubation for these initiatives. Student Empowerment programmes on various aspects of innovation, entrepreneurship, and intellectual property rights (IPR), were organised on a quarterly basis. These programmes not only nurtured innovation and entrepreneurship among students but also provided training and guidance to aspiring innovators and budding entrepreneurs.



2.5 Re-engineering and Finding Innovative Solutions

Re-engineering involved identifying and developing innovative learning and support solutions for the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system, addressing issues related to access, quality, and equity. The ideas generated by the faculty members and staff of IGNOU for finding innovative solutions to various challenges have been stored in the IDEABANK@IGNOU portal. IGNOU faculty and staff can access these ideas from the portal to develop prototypes and test solutions collaboratively. The National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) also focused on the development of ICT enabled solutions for effective and learner friendly instructional systems, including e-learning, multimedia learning, mobile learning, and other web-based learning and support solutions.

2.6 Encouraging and Empowering Faculty for Innovation

NCIDE collaborated with the Schools of Studies to develop prototypes and products aimed at providing innovative learning and support for IGNOU students. The focus was on identifying key areas for innovation based on the needs of the University and the challenges faced by students. In addition to creating prototypes and products, NCIDE organised workshops for faculty members covering topics such as innovation, entrepreneurship, and the use of innovative technologies. The Innovation Club@IGNOU played a crucial role in encouraging faculty members to generate new ideas and find innovative solutions to systemic problems. This was achieved through monthly brainstorming sessions, discussions, presentations, seminars, panel discussions, and the sharing of innovative practices among faculty members.



2.7 Documentation and Dissemination of Innovation

To share and promote innovative ideas and practices, the Centre publishes a monthly eNewsletter called 'Ennovate'. This newsletter features articles and contributions from the faculty of NCIDE, IGNOU faculty, and other distinguished experts. It includes reports on various innovative practices and activities carried out by faculty and staff at both the Headquarters and Regional Centres. Additionally, Ennovate contains several articles addressing innovation and related topics. In a way, it has become an important resource for documenting innovation and innovation-related activities within the University. In addition to the e-newsletter, the Centre also produces various reports, research studies, abstracts, and other publications, including books, to disseminate information about the various innovative initiatives taken up by the faculty and students.

2.8 Networking and Collaboration

Networking and collaboration with innovators are an integral part of the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem at the University. This is a shared space where ideas are nurtured, challenged, and mentored, enabling students to engage with each other, as well as with other inventors and experts. Within the University, fostering collaboration among students, alumni, faculty, and industry professionals has cultivated a thriving culture of innovation. Initiatives such as the Institution's Innovation Council, the Mentor-Mentee Scheme of MIC, and the Mentoring for Startups program have provided vital support for innovators. Additionally, the WhatsApp group created by NCIDE allows innovators from PAN-India to come together and discuss new ideas and innovations, thus fueling creativity and sustainable growth.

NCIDE has been collaborating with the Schools of Studies and IGNOU Regional Centres to promote and support innovation and entrepreneurship within the University. Over the past five years, various exhibitions and fests, including the Festival of Ideas, Innovation and Startup Fest, IGNOU Udyami Samagam, and IGNOU Udyamotsav, have been organised to engage students in innovation and entrepreneurship activities and to showcase their innovations and startups.

2.9 Conclusion

The innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem at IGNOU empowers students to transform their ideas into viable enterprises. The University has redefined the way innovation and entrepreneurship are perceived in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system.

3. Policies, Guidelines and Incubation Support System

3.1 Introduction

NCIDE has developed a robust pre-incubation and incubation support system for the potential innovators and budding entrepreneurs. For effective planning and timely implementation of various schemes and initiatives, NCIDE has developed guidelines and policies. These guidelines and policies not only give clarity about the objectives, processes and expected outcomes, but also help the various stakeholders to understand these schemes.

3.2 Policies and Guidelines

In order to promote and support innovation, entrepreneurship, and startups in the University, NCIDE has developed and implemented different types of policies, guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures. A brief description of such policies and guidelines developed by NCIDE during the last five years is given below.

3.2.1 IGNOU's Innovation and Startup Policy

NCIDE designed and developed the IGNOU Innovation and Startup Policy (IISP) based on the National Innovation and Startup Policy (NISP) recommended by the Ministry of Education. The policy aims to create a robust innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in the University by promoting, supporting and nurturing innovation, entrepreneurship, and startup among students and faculty. It provides guidelines in areas such as imparting training and guidance to students and faculty to inculcate an innovative and entrepreneurial mindset. Additionally, it enables them to set up their own enterprises/startups as a contribution by the University towards sustainable growth and the nation's self-reliance mission. The IISP has been approved by the University's Statutory Bodies, including the Academic Council and Planning Board.



3.2.2 SOPs for Web Enabled Academic Support

NCIDE introduced an innovative and low-cost scheme of Web-Enabled Academic Support (WEAS) for its various distance mode programmes to provide technology-based academic support to the learners. WEAS is a Single- Window Platform providing various kinds of academic support including the study material, audio-video, quizzes, discussion forums, calendar of activities, web-based video counselling, links of various web-based resources to the distance learners by using simple and easily available ICT tools. A proposal to develop WEAS portals for all the ODL programmes of IGNOU was passed in the 75th meeting of the Academic Council. Accordingly, NCIDE developed Standard Operating Procedures for providing academic support to the Distance Mode programmes through WEAS.



3.2.3 Guidelines for Patent Facilitation Unit

NCIDE has established a Patent Facilitation Unit (PFU) to support IGNOU students and innovators in developing their innovations and to enable them to protect their Intellectual Property Rights. The PFU also provides carried out in accordance with the guidelines developed by the PFU, NCIDE.

3.2.4 Guidelines for Best Innovation Awards

IGNOU instituted the “Student Innovation Award”, which has been renamed the “Best Innovation Award”. This award is presented annually to the best student innovators of IGNOU from across the country. NCIDE has proposed guidelines for the Best Innovation Award that outline the background of the award, eligibility requirements, benefits for applicants, theme areas, the process for submitting entries, and frequently asked questions related to the award. These guidelines are updated every year according to the current needs and developments.

3.2.5 Guidelines for Best Startup Awards

To identify, recognise, and promote startup initiatives among IGNOU students and alumni, NCIDE has established an annual “Startup Competition”. Entries are invited from both current students and alumni of IGNOU, following the guidelines by NCIDE. These guidelines are reviewed and updated each year to reflect current needs.

3.2.6 Guidelines for Business Plan Competitions

Every year, students and alumni of IGNOU are invited to participate in the Business Plan Competition, following the guidelines set by the NCIDE. These guidelines outline the eligibility criteria, the process for submitting business ideas, and details on themes and benefits for the applicants. These guidelines are updated and revised annually.

3.2.7 Guidelines for Ideathon

The “Ideathon” is organised to inspire students and alumni to think innovatively about addressing the various societal issues. The guidelines for the Ideathon include eligibility conditions for submitting ideas on various themes.

3.2.8 Guidelines for Smart IGNOU Hackathon

Since 2019, NCIDE has been organising the “Smart IGNOU Hackathon” as an internal event for its students, conducted in virtual mode. The winners of this event are nominated to participate at the national level in the Smart India Hackathon, which is organised by the Government of India. The guidelines for the Smart IGNOU Hackathon are prepared by NCIDE, based on the framework of the Smart India Hackathon and the specific needs of IGNOU students. These guidelines are updated and modified annually to reflect any changes in the structure and design of the Smart India Hackathon.

3.2.9 Guidelines for Functioning of Innovation Club@RCs

To reach out to the large number of IGNOU students and alumni through innovation-related

activities, Innovation Clubs, referred to as Innovation Club@RCs, have been established at the Regional Centres (RCs) of IGNOU across the country. Specific guidelines for these Innovation Clubs outline their composition, roles, responsibilities, and suggested activities for the Regional Centres.

3.3 Pre-Incubation Support

Throughout the academic year, pre-incubation activities were conducted to engage students in continuous training and hands-on experiences. These activities aimed to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of innovation and entrepreneurship, progressing systematically from foundational concepts to advanced applications. The stages evolved gradually, beginning with ideation and concept generation, then advancing to proof-of-concept development and prototype creation. By the end of this journey, the students were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to initiate the formation of startups. These stages are discussed in sections below.

3.3.1 Identifying Potential Innovators and Entrepreneurs

Potential innovator students were identified through various programmes offered by NCIDE, including the *IGNOU Udyami Scheme* and a range of events and competitions organised by the centre. At present, there are over 3000 potential innovator students at NCIDE, who are at different stages of their innovation and entrepreneurship journey.

3.3.2 Idea Generation

Idea generation is a crucial step in the innovation journey. In this phase, innovators are motivated through lectures and discussions focused on identifying problems and brainstorming potential solutions. To inspire students in their journey, motivational talks by successful innovators and entrepreneurs were organised. Further, field visits to local areas and communities, were conducted periodically, facilitated by IGNOU Regional Centres to help identify real-world problems. During this stage, Idea Competitions and Ideation sessions were held to create a competitive environment that encourages the students to showcase their best ideas, with awards for the top submissions. Finally, dedicated mentoring support was provided to help refine these ideas, guiding students in developing them into tangible proof of concepts (PoCs). In this context, IGNOU organised various events such as the Festival of Ideas (2019), Ideathon (2021), Idea Competitions, and Idea Generation Workshops.

3.3.3 Proof of Concept and Prototyping

The proof of concept and prototyping stage aimed to equip students with practical skills necessary for transforming their ideas into tangible solutions. This process helps to foster a problem-solving mindset and instills an entrepreneurial spirit among students. They learned to refine their concepts and achieve “Problem-Solution fit”, ensuring that their innovations address real-world needs. Further, innovation competitions and exhibitions were organised to provide students with a platform to showcase their work and reward the most promising innovations. During this stage, mentoring support is provided to guide students in developing their Proof of Concepts (PoCs) into functional prototypes.

3.3.4 Business Plan Development

The Business Plan Development phase focused on transforming the Proof of Concept (PoC) into a refined prototype, which set the stage for future commercialisation. Importantly, this stage ran parallel with the development of a robust business model and plan. During this stage, a Business Plan Competition was conducted, which was usually held in two rounds.

In the first round, the participants received training on how to develop a Business Model Canvas, after which they developed their own Business Model Canvas. From these participating teams, shortlisted teams advanced to the next phase, where they were provided training sessions on how to develop a comprehensive business plan. Over the past five years, three Business Plan Competitions were organised in 2021, 2022, 2024 and 2025, during which participants received training on development of both the Business Model Canvas and business plan.

3.3.5 Pitching the Business Plan

Students presented their best business plans in a Business Plan Competition designed to identify and reward promising ventures. Mentoring support was provided to help students in refining these business plans.

3.3.6 Converting Innovation to Startup

The activities at this stage focused on enabling the students to establish a tangible enterprise or startup based on the innovative idea identified and developed in the previous stages. Awareness was generated regarding startups and related ecosystem support services for startup development. The concepts taught in this stage included topics, such as “Prototype Validation”, “Achieving Value Proposition Fit and Business Fit”, “Lean Start up and Minimum Viable Product” and “Angel Investment/VC Funding Opportunities”. At this stage startup exhibitions or contests were organised for the students to showcase their enterprises and pitch for funding, wherein the best startup is selected and rewarded. Throughout this final stage, ongoing mentorship provided crucial guidance and support to nurture these budding startups.

3.4 Incubation Support Systems

One of the main objectives of NCIDE is to work towards identifying, recognising, nurturing, promoting, supporting IGNOU students interested in innovations, startups and setting up their own enterprises. It has been observed that many IGNOU learners are interested in developing their enterprises. However, they did not have proper guidance and support needed to take their business ideas or startups to the next level. In fact, they need continuous mentoring, hand holding, and initial financial support to help them succeed.

3.4.1 Virtual Incubator

IGNOU students are distributed all over the country. They need to be identified, nurtured and also connected with each other as well as with the mentors. In the case of IGNOU, it is possible through technological support. Keeping this in view, NCIDE designed and developed a Virtual Incubator named as NCIDE’s Virtual Resource and Incubator for Entrepreneurship Training and

Innovation (NVRIETI) (Figure 5). The NVRIETI was launched on 29 April, 2020 as a basic version of a virtual incubator. This is a knowledge bank with learning resources, a virtual training platform for the students interested in Innovation and Entrepreneurship and a platform for IGNOU students to showcase their innovations and startups. Since then, it has been used by 1,14,903 end-users from India, United States of America, Australia, Indonesia, Canada, Japan, Italy, and France.



Figure 5: NCIDE's Virtual Resource and Incubator for Entrepreneurship Training and Innovation (NVRIETI)

3.4.2 Incubation Centre

Apart from pre-incubation facilities, NCIDE has initiated the process of setting up a Physical Incubation Centre on its premises for IGNOU students and even other institutions in 2024. The incubation centre will also have its setup as Innovation Hubs in various RCs to reach students at the grassroots. The scheme will work on a hub-and-spoke model.

The objectives of the Incubation Centre are to:

- Create sector-based innovation hubs at various Regional Centres of IGNOU.
- Identify individuals who are interested and passionate for setting up their startups and providing training and mentoring to them in generating ideas, conducting market research, creating proof of concept, prototyping, testing and creation of pitch decks with the help of a network of experts and other incubators/incubation centres.

- Nurture and support the incubatees in developing business models that are desirable, feasible, viable, scalable, and sustainable, and that are socially relevant and impactful in the core sectors of the economy; and
- Facilitate startups and early-stage companies to grow and succeed by providing mentoring, access to a network of investors, and supporting them for legal, financial, and commercialisation services.

The major activities to be undertaken at the Incubation Centre are presented below in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Proposed Activities of the Incubation Centre at IGNOU

3.4.3 Innovation Hubs

India has strong innovation and entrepreneurship caliber across metro cities, tier 1, 2 and 3 towns; and since IGNOU has well-developed facilities across the country, the Incubation Centre will support the innovators and entrepreneurs at grassroots levels through Innovation Hubs at

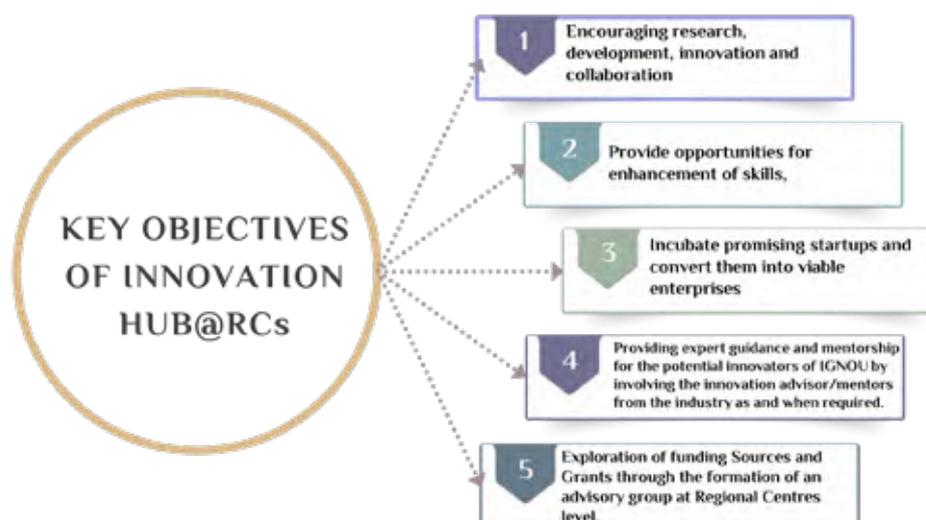


Figure 7: Key Objectives of the Innovation Hub@RCs

various Regional Centres. This pioneering step to further foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and research at the grassroots was initiated in 2024. This initiative is an important pillar in extending and strengthening the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem at the University. It is envisioned that the Innovation Hub@RCs (**Figure 7**) will provide a conducive environment for collaboration between students, faculty, alumni, and industry experts.

3.5 Conclusion

The policies, pre-incubation and incubation support system developed by the University have successfully aligned with the national vision of self-reliant and sustainable growth and created a foundation for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within IGNOU.

4. Government Schemes and Programmes

4.1 Introduction

NCIDE, IGNOU has taken several new initiatives and has launched a number of schemes to identify and recognise the potential innovators, create a culture of innovation and strengthen the innovation and startup ecosystem in the University. A brief about such initiatives is given below.

4.2 IGNOU Udyami – A Scheme for Recognising IGNOU Student Entrepreneurs (RISE)

NCIDE has designed and developed an innovative scheme, IGNOU Udyami (इग्नू उद्यमी), which was launched by the Vice Chancellor on December 12, 2020 (Figure 8). The scheme aims to Identify and recognise the innovator and entrepreneur students of IGNOU interested in developing their enterprises or who have already developed the same. The scheme enables the registered students to get training and guidance, from mentors in taking their ideas or startups to the next level. So far, around 3000 students and alumni of IGNOU have registered on IGNOU Udyami Portal.

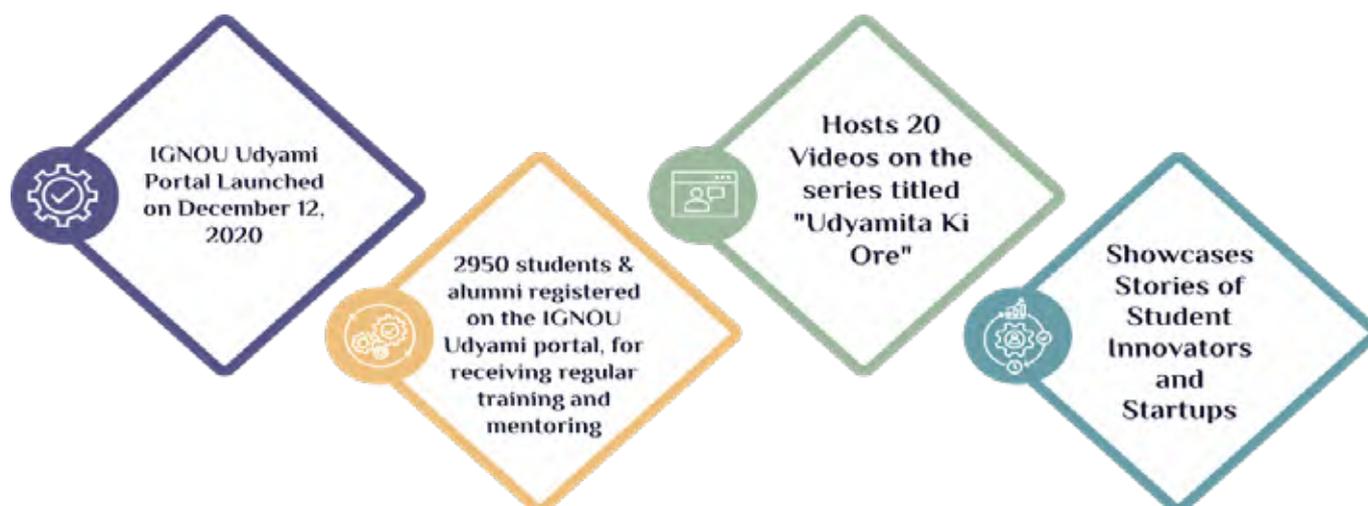


Figure 8: IGNOU Udyami Scheme

4.3 Idea to Startup Scheme

In alignment with the Startup India Mission of Government of India, NCIDE launched “Idea to Startup” – an Innovation Scheme for Nurturing Startups@IGNOU. The main aim of the scheme is to enhance awareness among IGNOU students about the Startup India initiative, the startup ecosystem within IGNOU, and the various policies and support schemes provided by both the central and state governments. The focus is on guiding students who are interested in starting their own ventures by organising regular boot camps, orientation sessions, and skill development programmes that are tailored to their specific startup needs (Figure 9). The scheme also helps students connect with organisations and government bodies that offer funding support for new businesses. Another important goal of the scheme is to highlight and document the innovative work accomplished by IGNOU students, sharing their startup stories and achievements through a dedicated platform.

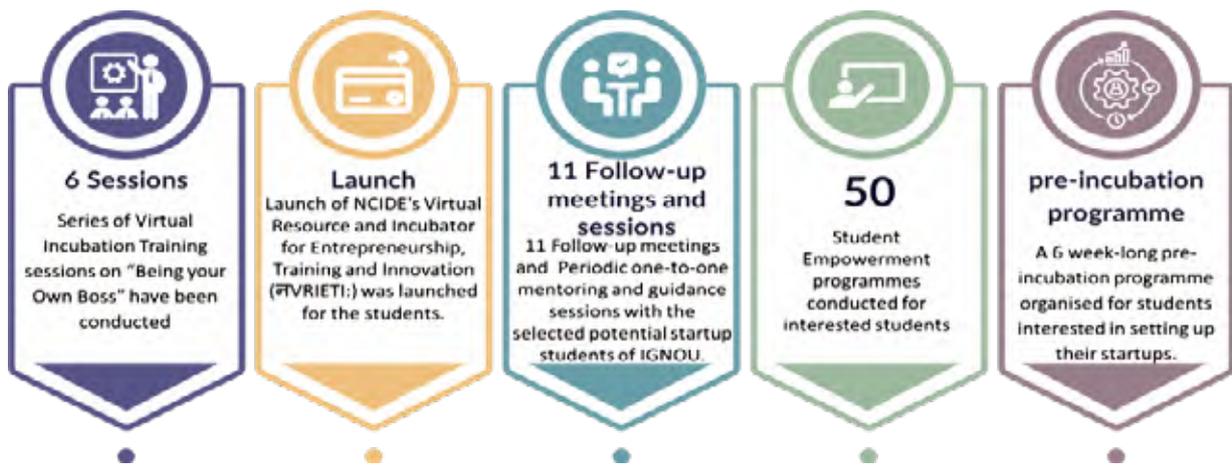


Figure 9: Idea to Startup Scheme

4.4 Mentoring for Startups Scheme

NCIDE, IGNOU has a database of approximately 3000 students/alumni interested in setting up their startups, identified through IGNOU Udyami, and various competitions. NCIDE, IGNOU is regularly interacting with many students from the database through training sessions organised by NCIDE in synchronous/asynchronous mode, and many of them now need incubation and personal guidance support to convert their ideas/prototypes into minimum viable products or take their minimum viable products to the next level or even for registering their startups. The Mentoring for Startups scheme was launched to provide personalized guidance and support to the selected students/alumni of IGNOU (Figure 10). Under this scheme, students/alumni are attached with experienced mentors both internal and external, who provide guidance on the process of starting a business, from idea development to launch.

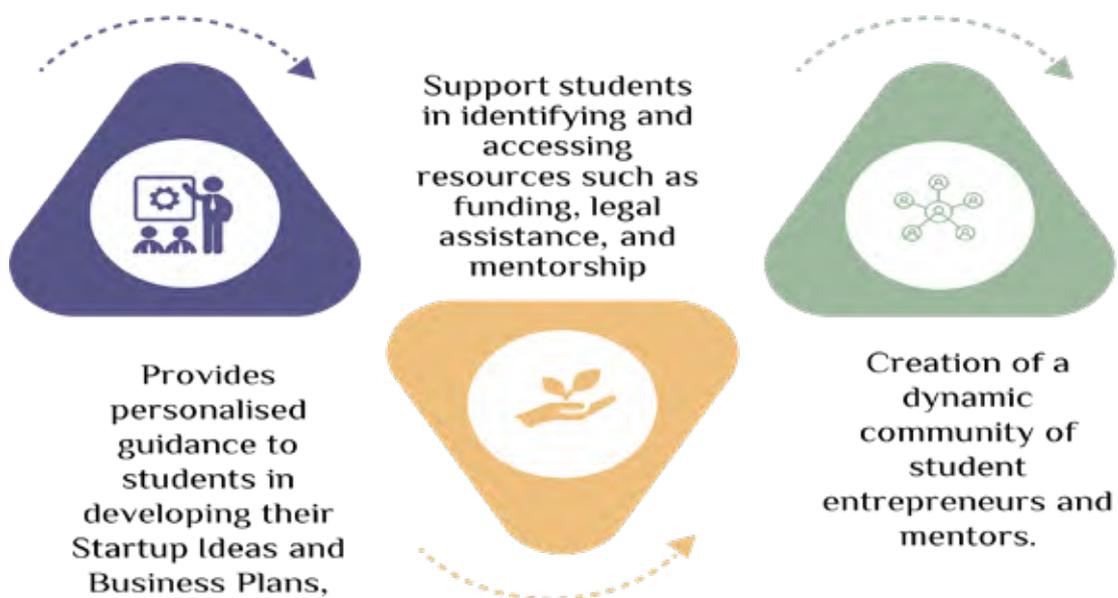


Figure 10: Mentoring for Startups Scheme



4.5 Innovation Club@IGNOU

As per the directions of the Hon'ble President of India as well as the Hon'ble **HRD Minister** (HRM), the Innovation Club@IGNOU was set up at NCIDE in April 2015, with the aim of creating a culture of innovation among the faculty members, staff, and IGNOU students in the University. The club was envisioned as a structured platform to promote creativity, innovation, and awareness of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in alignment with national priorities like the Atmanirbhar Bharat and Digital India missions. In the last 5 years, the club successfully organised around 54 activities, including eight talks/sessions, 13 brainstorming sessions, four workshops on future technologies like the use of AI, two webinars, 16 panel discussions, 15 sessions on showcasing innovative practices by 21 students, faculty and staff of IGNOU (Figure 11).

The Innovation Club@IGNOU has become a dynamic platform for ideation, collaboration, and experimentation, supporting IGNOU's broader mission of providing inclusive, flexible, and quality education. By nurturing an innovation-friendly environment, the club is contributing to a future-ready, knowledge-driven academic ecosystem, helping IGNOU align more closely with national development goals and global educational standards.



Figure 11: Innovation Club@IGNOU

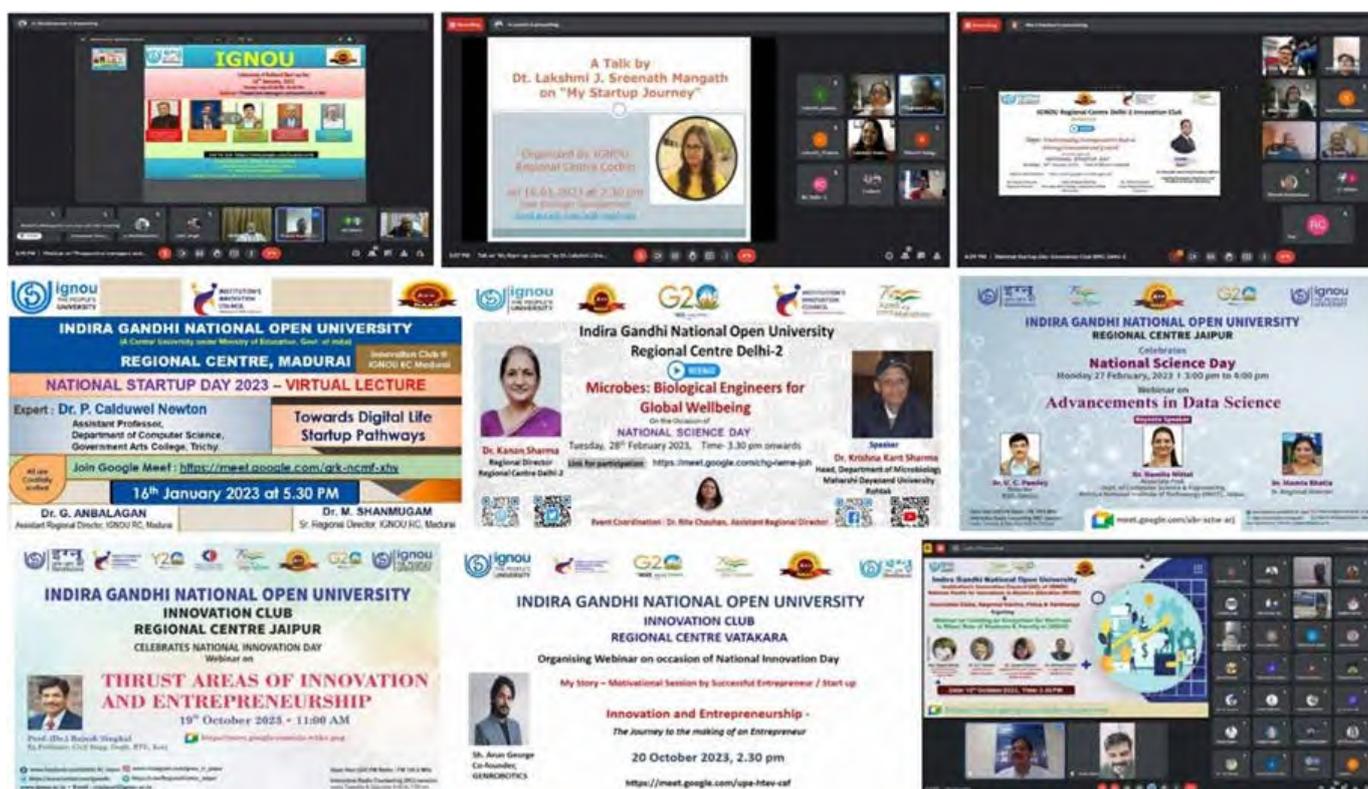


4.6 Innovation Club@RCs

NCIDE recognised that innovation should not be limited to the University headquarters, thus the Innovation Club@RCs were set up. The aim was to create a vibrant and sustainable culture of innovation at the Regional Centre (RC) level and reach the grassroots by engaging faculty members, staff, and students across its widespread regional network. The primary objectives of the Innovation Club@RCs are to generate awareness about creativity, innovations, and IPR, and to nurture an environment that encourages idea generation, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial thinking among the IGNOU community at the regional level. The gist of activities of the Innovation Club@RCs is given below.

- Making students aware of Innovation, Startups and Entrepreneurship through induction and orientation Programmes
- Organising Brainstorming sessions to generate new ideas for improving the ODL System and enhancing the learning experience of students
- Documenting on Innovation Club@RCs website for further dissemination*
- Facilitating presentations by students, faculty, and staff on their innovative projects and ideas and documenting on Innovation Club@RCs website for further dissemination
- Organising Group discussions on the latest trends and developments in the field of distance education*
- Inviting experts to speak on topics related to innovation, entrepreneurship etc..
- Inviting successful entrepreneurs or business professionals to speak about their experiences and share tips for success
- Conducting workshops to teach new skills and technologies to members
- Organizing the IIC Calendar activities as assigned by the MOE's Innovation Cell

By 2025, Innovation Clubs have been established at more than 45 Regional Centres across India. These clubs act as local hubs of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. They organise a variety of activities throughout the year, including brainstorming sessions, student and faculty presentations, interactive workshops, local innovation exposure visits, and observance of special days like National Innovation Day and National Startup Day. The various activities not only provide a platform to students and faculty at Regional Centres for showcasing their innovative ideas, prototypes, and products but also serve as a facilitator for discussions and learning on innovation-related topics that are relevant to both the local context and broader academic and developmental goals.



4.7 Idea Bank@IGNOU

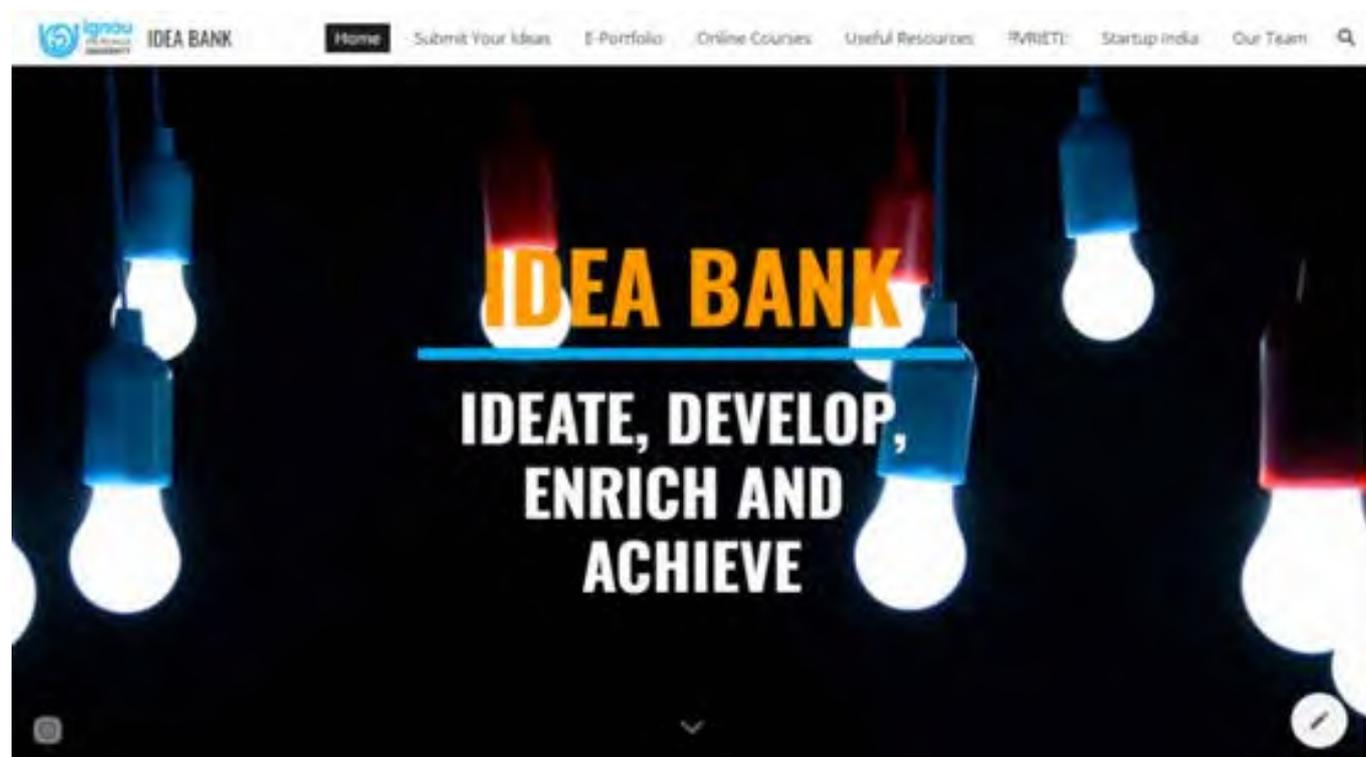
Recognising the need for fresh thinking and innovation within Open and Distance Learning (ODL) systems is more critical than ever. NCIDE at IGNOU, designed a transformative digital initiative known as IDEABANK@IGNOU is a virtual reservoir of ideas and innovations contributed by stakeholders and functionaries across the ODL ecosystem. Ideas from various stakeholders and functionaries of IGNOU are gathered and disseminated. It is



a one-stop portal at IGNOU to submit and discuss ideas, develop ideas for prototypes or products, collaborate in teams, and document and disseminate ideas and innovative practices. It is user-friendly, mobile-friendly, and accessible to all the users. The idea architecture is well planned, with simple navigation, etc. It is hosted on a cloud architecture which is robust, flexible, and reliable with multiple layers of security, including HTTPS and TLS. Over time, IDEABANK@IGNOU has showcased ideas and prototypes developed by the NCIDE and IGNOU faculty at headquarters and RCs. During 2020-25, the Idea Bank@IGNOU was updated and the total number of ideas and prototypes in Idea Bank reached over 310.

4.8 IDEABANK for IGNOU Students

IDEABANK for IGNOU Students is an online portal for creating a repository of the ideas of the students. Through the portal, students involved in various activities and workshops organised by NCIDE submit their ideas. It is a portal where students can document their journey from ideas to startups through the e-portfolio component of the portal.



4.9 Instructional Design and Pedagogical Innovations in Offering Practical Based Course

NCIDE, in collaboration with SOHS designed an innovative delivery strategy for the students of the PGDMCH programme who are health professionals and are involved in the care of children. There are several components in this programme, Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI) is one of the key components of the curriculum. It is usually imparted as a 5-day face to face (f-2-f) training package by Government of India (GOI). Many such f-2-f training programmes for the health professionals have been conducted by the GOI, and agencies

like UNICEF and WHO. The challenges faced by the training programme are making the training accessible to health professionals at the grassroots level, tailoring the quality of the programme in accordance with the needs of the people, and meeting the timelines which are quite stringent. Other challenges include ensuring cost-effectiveness, establishing an effective follow-up through a suitable feedback mechanism, and periodically updating the training content.

In this context, a digital package on IMNCI was developed with financial assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO) in which it was designed to allow the students to study at their own pace. The students attended one-and-a-half day f-2-f practical sessions at the hospitals. The digital package has 27 units. Each unit has many structured components with videos, learning opportunities, and self-evaluations. As the IMNCI package follows an algorithmic approach, units appear in a sequential fashion. Once the students complete a unit of the course, they are given the flexibility to skip between the various units for any review or recall during learning. A link to access the chart booklet is also available. Moreover, gamification techniques were applied to motivate the students to complete the course on time. Innovative pedagogical and technological features are shown in Figure 12.

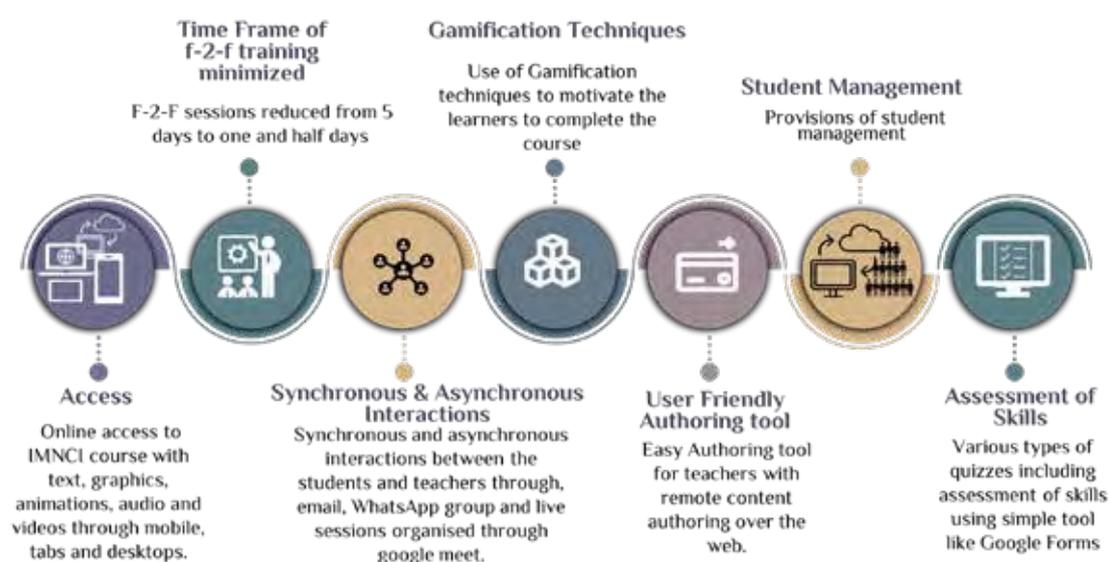


Figure 12: Innovative Features of the pedagogical and technological innovations



The package has recently been field-tested by WHO and has been observed to be superior to the 5-day f-2-f training package.

of programme-related learning resources such as articles, audio-video resources, YouTube videos, useful websites, digital libraries, journals, etc.

- **Multimedia-Supported Online Web Counselling:** Online web-based video counselling and recorded video sessions are provided on a regular basis.
- **Online Interaction Among Students:** Enables online interaction among students through discussion forums, web conferencing, chat, blog, e-mail, etc. Students of WEAS are in direct contact with their teachers and fellow students.
- **Online Updated Single-Window Information System:** Provides different types of online information to the students related to curriculum, important dates, announcements, Interactive Radio Counselling (IRC), *Gyandhara/ Gyanvani*, and *Gyan Darshan*, important downloads, etc. at a single portal.
- **Cost-Effective and Easy-to-Use Technology:** It is highly cost-effective and developed using low-cost simple technology (G-Suite for Education). There is no need for any additional infrastructure for hosting and implementing the WEAS portal. It is easy to handle and maintain by the programme coordinators.



Figure 13: Screenshot of WEAS Platform accessed across the globe

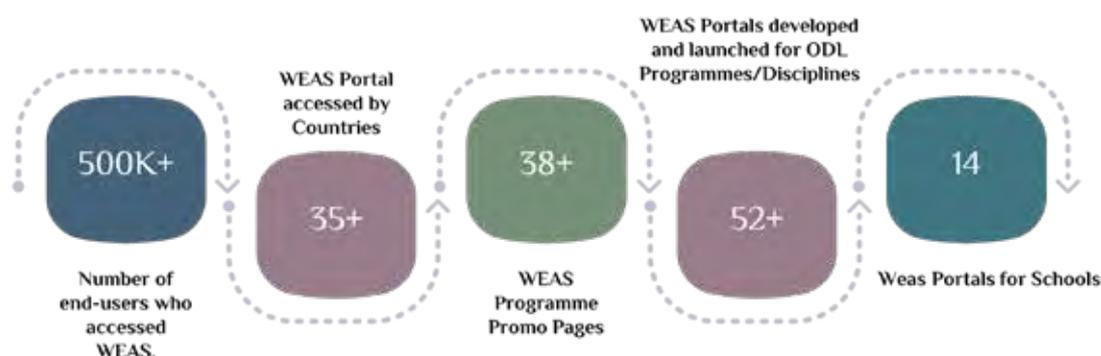


Figure 14: Web Enabled Academic Support (WEAS)

The portal is available anywhere anytime to students across the globe. More information is presented in Figure 13 & 14.

4.11 Web Based Video Counselling for Distance Mode Programmes of IGNOU

NCIDE, through the Web Enabled Academic Support (WEAS) initiative, got actively involved in supporting the IGNOU faculty in providing online counselling sessions from their homes through Web- Based Video Counselling. The important and innovative features of the web-based video counselling sessions organised by the University are presented in Figure 15.

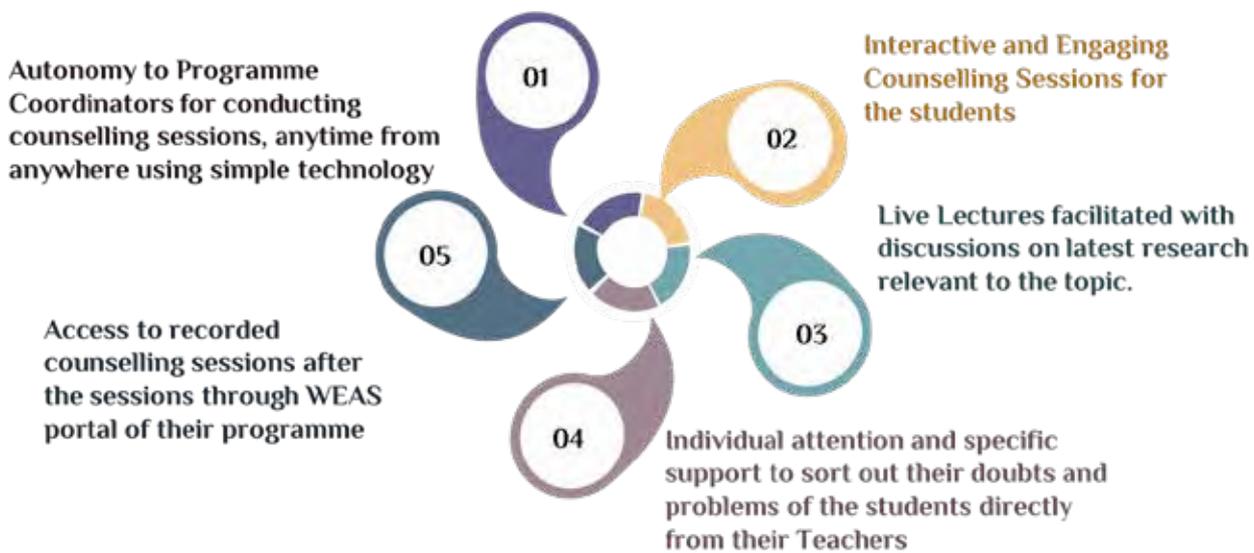
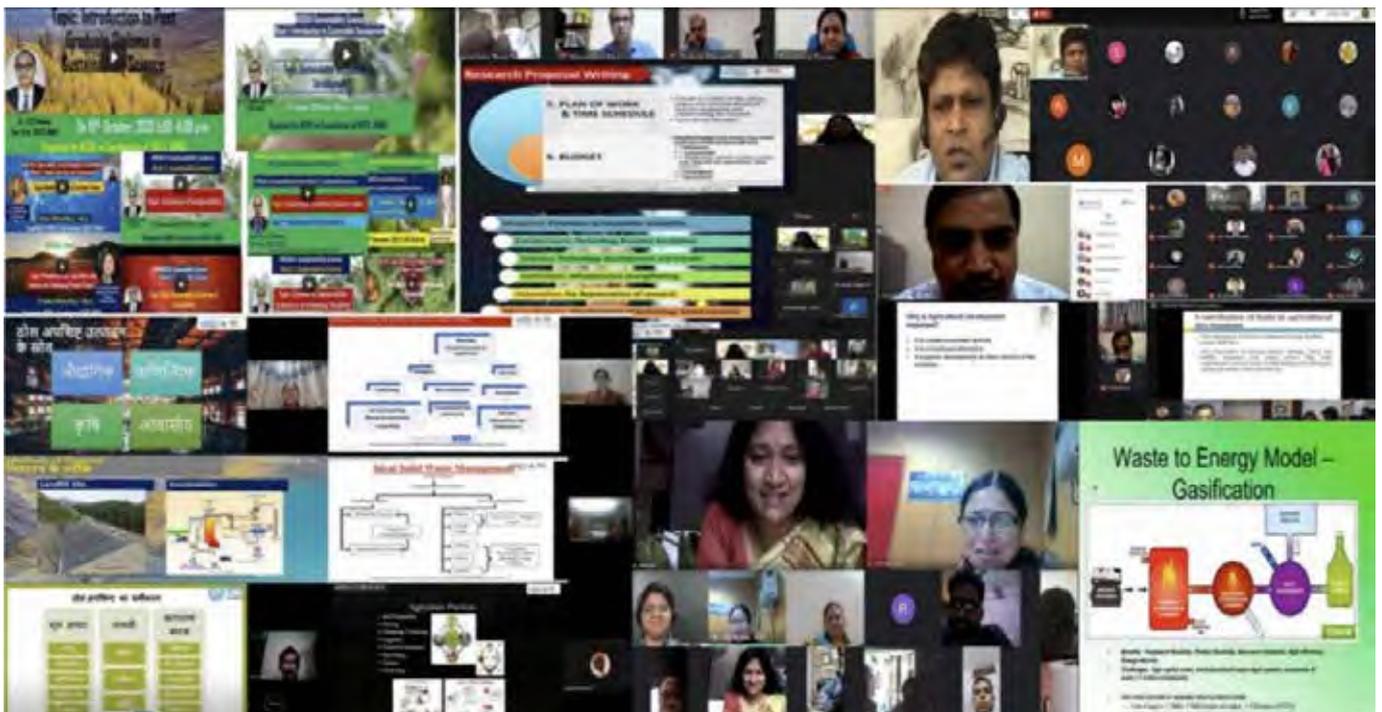


Figure 15: Features of the Web Based Video Counselling for Distance Mode Programmes of IGNOU



Faculty members from IGNOU and external experts conducted online sessions for various programmes (Figure 16). The WEAS Team at NCIDE technically coordinated the sessions. Initially, topics with multimedia components were presented to the students, followed by discussions. Concepts were explained using case studies and real-life examples for better understanding of the topics. The web counselling sessions were also uploaded on the WEAS Portal for students' easy access and reference.

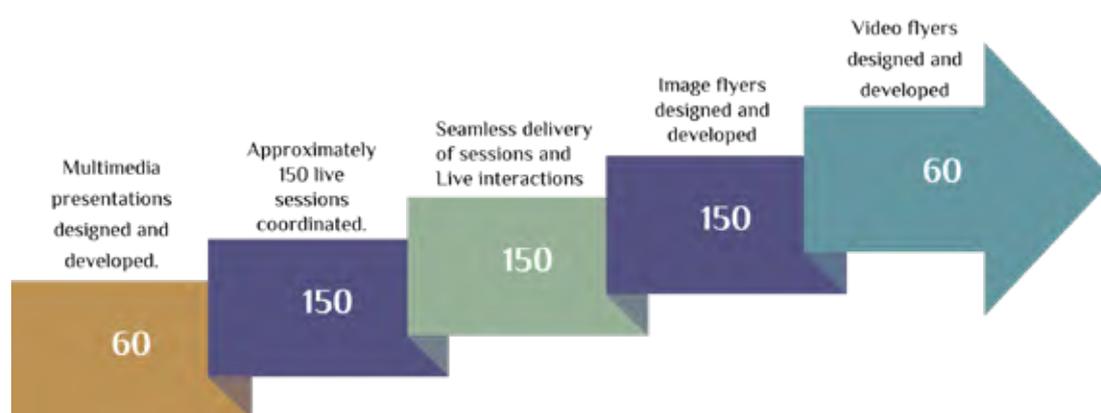


Figure 16: Web Based Video Counselling Sessions Conducted

4.12 WEAS-IGNOU Mobile App

The WEAS-IGNOU mobile app was developed during 2020-2021 and was made available on the Google PlayStore. Students were able to download the app and join the WEAS portal of their programme provided under the Web Enabled Academic Support scheme of IGNOU.



4.13 WEAS@RCs

One of the goals of the NEP-2020, is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education. For that purpose, to reach out to the prospective learners and provide the right kind of support at the right time to the existing learners, NCIDE designed a prototype of WEAS@RCs. Web -Enabled Academic Support @RCs, commonly known as WEAS@RCs, aims to provide an interactive one-stop portal to facilitate the students in obtaining informational support from the RCs (Figure 17). It has three major components viz. WEAS@RCs for prospective students, WEAS@RCs for existing students, and WEAS@RCs for alumni. The main highlight of WEAS@RCs is a student centric portal with elements of interactivity and multimedia-enabled information. A prototype of WEAS@RCs for prospective learners has been developed in collaboration with RC Delhi-1 and RC Noida.

The portal has other components also, like 'Why to choose IGNOU to learn', how to apply for admissions, the instructional system, FAQs, what students say, and a dedicated page about STAR Students of IGNOU. The uniqueness of this portal is that most of it judiciously uses text with multimedia-enabled information through 3-5-minute video. This enables visitors to quickly gather information in a nutshell.

INNOVATION & STARTUP INITIATIVES AT IGNOU (2020-2025)

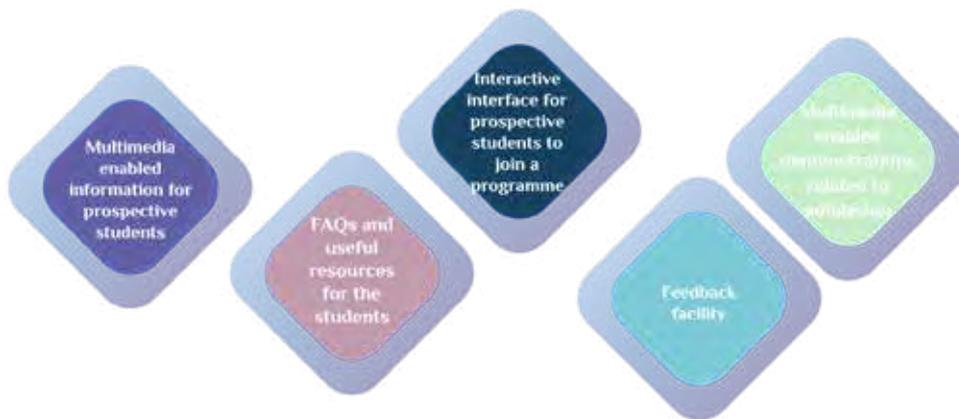
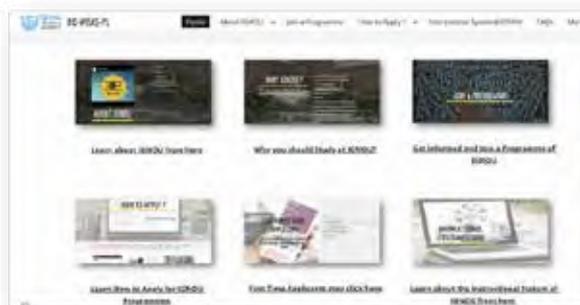
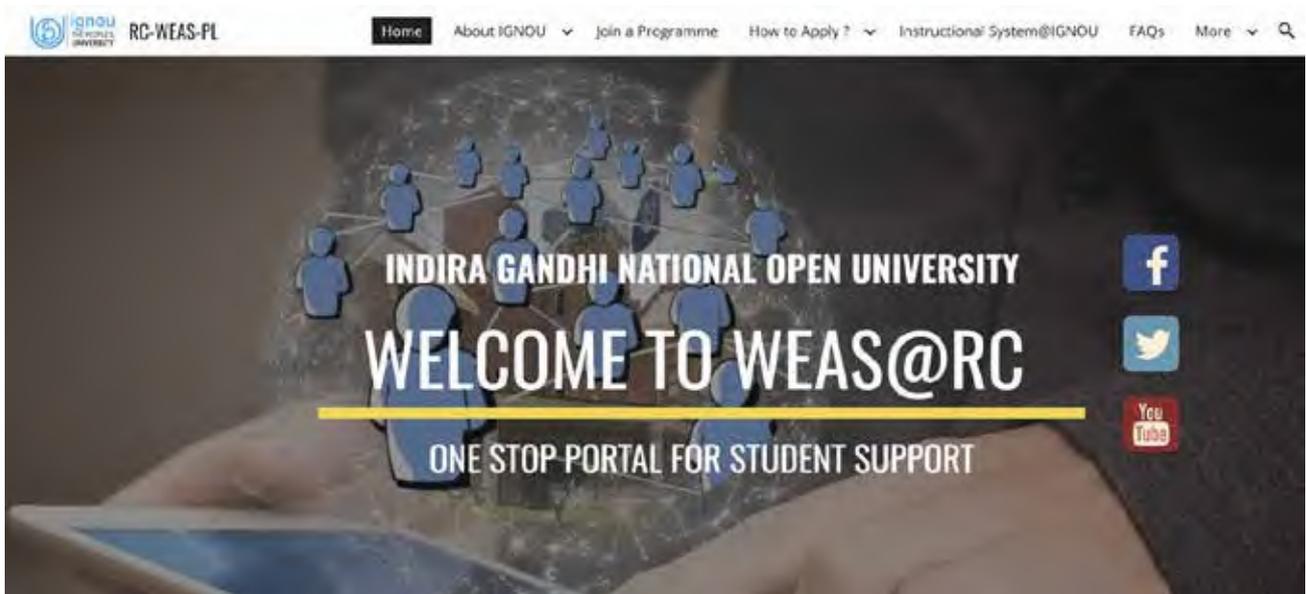


Figure 17: Features of the WEAS@RCs

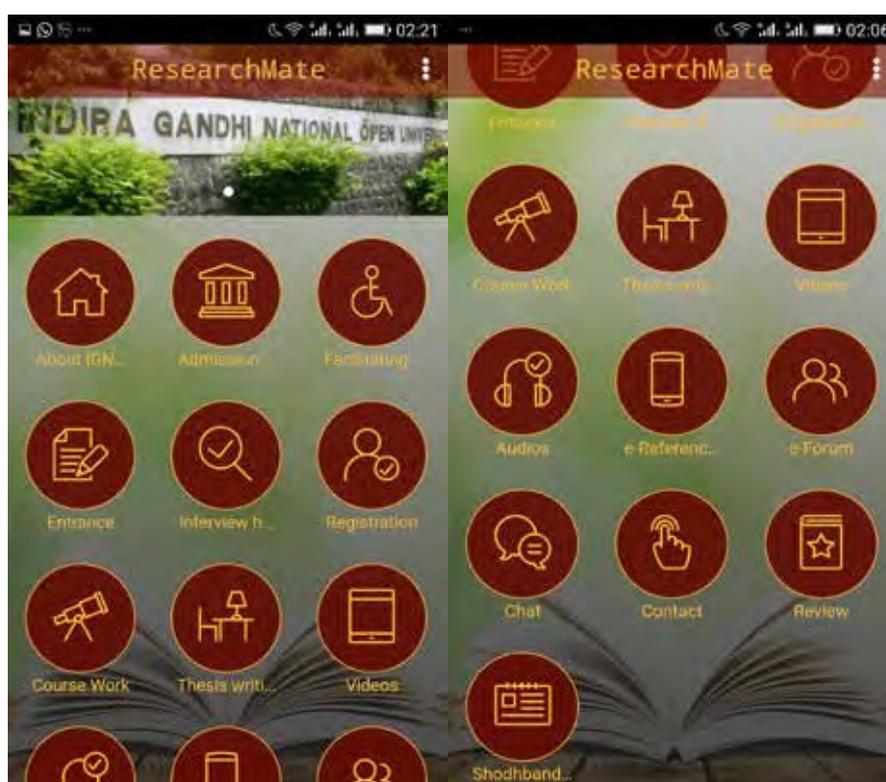


4.14 ResearchMate: A Mobile App for Research Scholars

A mobile app named ResearchMate has been conceptualized, designed and developed specially for the IGNOU research scholars. The prototype app has been developed using free app builder software. This app is a one stop portal for the research scholars in their life cycle as an IGNOU student. The app has innovative features to nurture their research skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills and academic scholarship to help them be successful. The app also provides learner support by providing information on various requirements pertaining to their course of study. This app has been transferred to the Research Unit of IGNOU for implementation.

Some of the unique features of ResearchMate are highlighted below:

- Provides anytime, anywhere access to IGNOU research related information (IGNOU, Research Unit, SRD, SED, Schools).
- Facilitates direct communication with IGNOU functionaries for learner support (Research Unit and Schools).
- Facilitates quick and easy interaction with Programme Coordinator; supervisor and co-supervisor.
- Facilitates quick and easy interaction with the peer group. Provides academic support during entrance examination, proposal writing during interview, presentation, and communication skills through various media, such as audio, video, blog, and website links.
- Provides administrative and academic support on IGNOU guidelines, literature review, tips for finalization of proposal, research methodology, writing and editing skills and publishing, using various media.



4.15 Online Training Portal “Virtual Training Lounge”

NCIDE has been organizing various capacity building programmes for the students and faculty of IGNOU. In order to sustain the learning experience beyond the capacity building programmes, a Virtual Training Lounge (VTL) was designed by NCIDE. It fills the gap, at a centralized, flexible, and sustainable training space that could be accessed from anywhere. It is a platform for trainers and trainees to sustain their teaching-learning experience. It is designed not only to provide synchronous training, but also to support continued learning for trainees online. The VTL can be accessed through personal mobile phones. Its ease of access anytime and from anywhere makes it an ideal platform for training and long-term engagement. The portal is available at the **Link: <https://sites.google.com/ignou.ac.in/vtl>**



4.16 Patent Facilitation Unit

IGNOU has established a Patent Facilitation Unit (PFU) that organises lectures, talks, and workshops to raise awareness about Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and patent protection of innovative ideas and initiatives among the students, faculty, and staff. The Patent Facilitation Unit aims to guide and support IGNOU students in understanding IPR and the patent filing process, emphasizing the significance of patents in innovation and startups, along with various related aspects. The Patent Facilitation Unit regularly organises several activities, lectures, and webinars on various aspects of IPRs for the benefit of the student innovators. In the year 2021-22, five patents were granted to IGNOU students and faculty members, followed by ten patents in 2022-23, and seven patents in 2023-24.

4.17 Conclusion

The innovative initiatives and schemes launched by NCIDE, IGNOU show a paradigm shift in the way the ODL system engages with innovation and entrepreneurship.

5. Government Schemes and Programmes

5.1 Introduction

In order to promote and support innovation and startups in the University, IGNOU has launched a number of schemes and programmes on its own. At the same time, the University has very successfully implemented various Government Schemes and Programmes including Institution's Innovation Council, Mentor-Mentee Scheme, Smart India Hackathon, YUKTI Programme, KAPILA Scheme, and Toycathon, etc. A brief description of such National and International Schemes implemented by IGNOU is given below.

5.2 Institution's Innovation Council

The University established the IGNOU Institution's Innovation **Council** (IIC) to systematically foster and strengthen the culture of innovation on the recommendation of the Ministry of Education. The main objective of the IIC is to encourage, inspire and nurture young students towards innovation and entrepreneurship (I&E) by guiding them to work on new ideas and to establish their enterprises and startups. The IIC has a diversified representation of experts from different fields including industry and academia, faculty from different disciplines and departments of IGNOU including the Regional Centres, and student members from across the programmes of the University. Additionally, there are external experts as members, who are from incubation centres, lead investors, academia, startup founders, and industry and IPR experts.

During the last five years, the IIC organised hundreds of diverse I&E activities, events and programmes, such as expert talks, motivational talks, seminars and webinars, virtual workshops, training programmes, competitions, demo days, and outreach programmes for students and faculty members across India. The IIC activities are being conducted at both the Headquarters and the Regional Centres to reach out to the maximum number of students and faculty. The year-wise number of activities undertaken and the performance of the IIC during the past years are given in Table 1.

Table 1: IIC Activities from 2019 to 2025

Year	IIC Calendar Activity	MIC Driven Activity	Self-Driven Activity	Celebration Day	Total
2019-2020	15	32	25	NA	72
2020-2021	32	8	59	NA	99
2021-2022	26	7	63	7	103
2022-2023	30	8	66	14	118
2023-2024	29	5	46	14	94
2024-2025	30	10	51	11	102
Total	163	70	310	46	589

Hundreds of students across India participated in these activities and generated a considerable number of ideas, proof of concepts and prototypes, and viable business plans. Some of the shortlisted

Ideas, proof of concepts and prototypes, and viable business plans were also recommended for the activities and programmes organised by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell. The year-wise numbers of activities, ideas generated, prototypes developed, IP generated and startup ventures supported are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Ideas Generated, Prototypes Developed, IP Generated and Startup Ventures Supported Year-wise

Year	Number and Different Types of I&E and IPR Activities Conducted	Number of Student and Faculty Ideas Generated	Number of Student and Faculty Innovation/Prototypes Developed	Number of IPs Generated, Published and Granted	Number of Student and Faculty Startups/Ventures Established/Supported
2020-21	98	98	16	None	02
2021-22	103	194	30	0	11
2022-23	122	195	37	15	40
2023-24	96	34	22	15	16

5.3 Mentor-Mentee Scheme

In view of the consistently good performance of IGNOU-IIC, the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) has assigned IGNOU to mentor various other institutes with funding



support under its Mentor-Mentee Scheme twice, during 2021-22 and 2023-24. The objective of the Mentor-Mentee Scheme for IIC institutions is to engage high-performing IIC institutions to mentor and support selected IIC institutions that require guidance. This twinning programme aims to help the IIC institutions facilitate knowledge exchange and resource mobilization between institutions through inter-institutional collaborations. During these two sessions, ten institutions received mentorship from the NCIDE throughout the year which included about 40 programmes, activities, and training sessions.

5.4 Innovation Ambassador

The Innovation Ambassador Scheme is offered by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) to empower faculty members and students at higher education institutions by training them in the key concepts of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E). This initiative enables them to nurture and participate in an ecosystem of I&E in their university. By June 2025, a total of 27 faculty members including academics and 8 students of IGNOU have been certified as Innovation Ambassadors by the MIC. These Innovation Ambassadors, including faculty members and students (Figure 18), are actively involved in promoting a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship both within the university and in the wider community. They also participate in mentoring and guidance sessions with selected potential startups.





Figure 18: Innovation Ambassadors at IGNOU (including faculty members and students)

5.5 Smart India Hackathon

Smart India Hackathon (SIH), launched by the Ministry of Education, is a nationwide product development competition conducted every year. In this event, students are presented with problem statements for innovative solutions to some of the pressing problems we face in our daily lives. The aim is to foster a culture of innovation and a mindset of practical problem-solving. SIH serves as a dynamic platform for students to develop and showcase their creative solutions to real-world problems. By encouraging participants to think critically and innovatively, the hackathon aims to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application. IGNOU has participated in multiple editions of SIH, including SIH 2019, SIH 2020, SIH 2022, SIH 2023, and SIH 2024.

In 2020, a total of 15 teams registered for the IGNOU Internal Hackathon (see section 8.2.8 for more information), and nine of those teams competed. Seven teams were selected and nominated to participate at the national level in the Smart India Hackathon 2020, organised by the MHRD and AICTE. In 2022, four teams were nominated to participate at the national level in SIH 2022. One team from IGNOU emerged as the first-prize winner in the Grand Finale of the Smart India Hackathon 2022 and was awarded a cash prize of Rupees One Lakh by the Ministry of Education (MoE) (see Section 10.3.7 for more information). Another team from IGNOU secured the position of first runner-up. In 2023, 18 teams were nominated to participate in the Smart India Hackathon 2023. Similarly, in 2024, eight teams were selected through IGNOU's Internal Hackathon and were nominated to participate at the national level in the Smart India Hackathon 2024.

5.6 National Innovation Challenge

The YUKTI-National Innovation Challenge is organised periodically by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) aimed at identifying students who have creative minds, engaging them in building innovations, and nurturing them through a series of mentoring sessions and bootcamps. This contest is a 360-degree approach to complete a cycle of Innovation and entrepreneurship through a process of problem identification, ideation, and enterprise building in a time period of half to one year. Every year, potential innovators from IGNOU are also nominated for this challenge.



A total of 75 entries from IGNOU students from all over India were received, out of which 18 students were selected and nominated to the National Innovation Challenge-2020. Three students were shortlisted by the MIC, and one student among them, won a grant of Rupees Seven Lakhs from the MIC for his innovation “OncoSense.”

The YUKTI National Innovation Challenge-2023 was organised by MIC, in which, out of a total of 5000 entries, 441 teams were selected for the final round for funding assessment phase. Finally, a total of 135 innovations were found eligible to receive funding support from AICTE and MIC to work on their innovations to refine further and transform it into startups.

One IGNOU student was selected for the National Innovation Challenge 2023 from among these finalists, with a funding grant of five lakh rupees.

5.7 Atmanirbhar Bharat Scheme

The government of India announced the “*Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan*” to revive every sphere of the economy from demand and supply to manufacturing and make India self-reliant. It calls for encouraging the youth of the country towards entrepreneurship with the aim of making the country independent against the tough competition in the global supply chain. NCIDE has taken several important initiatives to encourage and empower IGNOU students towards *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, such as conducting an eleven-day online training programme “Student Empowerment for Entrepreneurial Development (SEED)” and “Being Your Boss” programme for IGNOU students, organising various competitions, and identifying and supporting budding innovator students of IGNOU, etc.

5.8 Yukti Scheme

The YUKTI Innovation Repository was launched by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC), Government of India. The aim was to recognise, promote, and nurture innovative ideas, prototypes, and entrepreneurial initiatives in higher education institutions. It is a centralised digital platform serving as a pipeline of ideas, innovations, and startups. NCIDE, IGNOU is very actively involved in developing the YUKTI Innovation repository with 57 ideas, 28 innovations, and 17 startups.

5.9 Kapila Scheme

AICTE and Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) launched the KAPILA scheme to provide financial assistance to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for filing patents. The objective of KAPILA scheme is to recognise, facilitate, and felicitate the intellectual property, innovations, and best practices in HEIs. The Kapila scheme aims to establish the IP filing ecosystem in HEIs and facilitate a culture of systematically protecting new ideas, research, and innovation having national and global relevance. IGNOU is part of the Kapila scheme.. Under the Kapila scheme, IGNOU in collaboration with AICTE and MIC, will be conducting IPR Awareness programs for students and faculty to create awareness regarding the need of IP filing, and the mechanism of IP filing in India and abroad.

5.10 Conclusion

The initiatives taken by IGNOU, under various national and international schemes, have acted as a catalyst in shaping the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Over the years, IGNOU has not only implemented these schemes effectively but has also tailored them to fit its Open and Distance Learning (ODL) framework.

6. NEP-2020 and Viksit Bharat@2047

6.1 Introduction

During the last five years, the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 and the launching of *Viksit Bharat@2047* mission by the Government of India have been very important initiatives to revolutionise, the innovation and startup culture in the country. IGNOU has taken several initiatives in both the cases. A brief description of such initiatives is given below.

6.2 Implementation of NEP-2020 to Promote and Support Innovation and Startup in the University

To implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, IGNOU has taken several initiatives to create an innovation ecosystem in the University. As emphasized in NEP-2020, to promote creativity and innovation among the faculty, various events, such as National Webinars, brainstorming sessions, panel discussions, talks and workshops were organised by NCIDE under the aegis of the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC), Innovation Club@IGNOU, and Innovation Clubs at IGNOU Regional Centres.

6.2.1 A Series of Panel Discussions cum Brainstorming on “Developing Implementation Strategies for NEP-2020

For developing implementation strategies for NEP-2020 and exploring areas of innovation, NCIDE organised a Series of Panel Discussions. The aim of the series was to create awareness about the implementation of the provisions and recommendations of the NEP-2020. The faculty members and academics of IGNOU Headquarters and academics of Regional Centres from across India participated in the deliberations. Several panel discussions have been organised on the following topics:

- “Revisiting the Admission System at IGNOU: In Context of NEP-2020” on November 30, 2022.
- “Restructuring Curriculum and Pedagogy with Special Focus on Flexibility and Multiple Entry/Exit Provisions of NEP-2020: Innovative Practices and Interventions” on December 22, 2022.
- “Multidisciplinary Programme Development and Delivery in context to NEP-2020: Innovative Practices and Interventions” on January 18, 2023.
- “Towards Inclusive, Participatory and Holistic Higher Education in Context to NEP 2020: Innovative Strategies and Approaches for Implementation” on February 08, 2023.
- “Innovations and Innovative Practices in the Assessment and Evaluation System for IGNOU Programmes offered through Online Mode” on February 24, 2023.
- “Vocational Education and Skill Development at Higher Education Level in Context to NEP-2020: Innovative Strategies and Approaches for Implementation” on April 17, 2023.
- “Exploring the Possibilities of Promoting Innovation and Startup through Projects of Different Programmes of IGNOU – Towards Implementation of NEP 2020” on May 29, 2023.
- “Vocational Education and Skill Development at Higher Education Level in Context to NEP-2020: Innovative Strategies and Approaches for Implementation” on August 17, 2023.



Based on the panel discussions, several action points were suggested, which include: designing, developing, and delivering programmes in local languages for effective implementation of inclusive, participatory, and holistic higher education in the context of NEP 2020; utilising innovative pedagogies and curriculum, with emphasis on increased community participation, minimising the exclusion of students on the basis of language and disability; developing programmes focused on skilling and employability in the areas of environment education, value-based education, and community engagement; and re-evaluating programme design and delivery at IGNOU in the context of NEP-2020 to make it more holistic, inclusive, and participatory.

6.2.2 Webinar on “Enhancing Enrolment in Higher Education: Innovative Initiatives to Achieve the NEP 2020 target of 50% GER”

A one-day webinar on “Enhancing Enrolment in Higher Education: Innovative Initiatives to Achieve the NEP-2020 target of 50% GER” was organised jointly by the NCIDE and School of Education, IGNOU on 21st July 2023. The webinar was organised as a forum for sharing experiences and exploring the application of new and innovative initiatives to help the University consider and

implement strategies for enhancing enrolment as targeted by the IDP 2030 of IGNOU. The basic objectives of the webinar included to i) discuss the unique and innovative practices, success stories, best practices undertaken to enhance enrolment, ii) deliberate and showcase media and technology use for promotional and other academic activities performed by the University for enhancing enrolment, iii) explain the role of students' feedback and alumni network to address student satisfaction aimed at enhancing enrolment, and iv) focus on priorities of activities at the pre, during and post phases of students' engagement aimed at enhancing enrolment.



In the webinar, four basic themes focusing on enhancing enrolment in Higher Education were deliberated upon. Based on these themes, there were four technical sessions along with an inaugural session and valedictory session which included Pre-Admission Initiatives and Practices in IGNOU; Role of Post Admission Learner Support System in Enhancing Enrolment; Media Use and Technological Interventions and Practices in Enhancing Enrollment; and Role of IGNOU Alumni and other Stakeholders in Enhancing Enrolment. A total of 153 participants were present in the webinar, who took part in the deliberations that involved sharing experiences and best practices for enhancing enrolment in the University. Each session had a chairperson, an invited speaker, a special talk, and paper presentation by the faculty.

6.3 A Series of Brainstorming Session on NEP-2020

In context of the NEP-2020 and its implementation in IGNOU mainly focusing on innovation, startup and entrepreneurship related recommendations, NCIDE organised a series of brainstorming and discussion sessions. The main objectives of these sessions were to generate ideas and implementation strategies.

6.3.1 A Brainstorming Session on Innovative Approaches towards Developing Multidisciplinary Programmes in the context of NEP 2020

Innovation Club@IGNOU housed at NCIDE organised a brainstorming session on “Innovative Approaches towards Developing Multidisciplinary Programmes in the context of NEP 2020” on March 23, 2021, in virtual mode. The main objective was to have a discussion on the various innovative approaches that may be adopted for developing multidisciplinary programmes as mandated in NEP-2020. About 40 members, including the faculty members and academics from



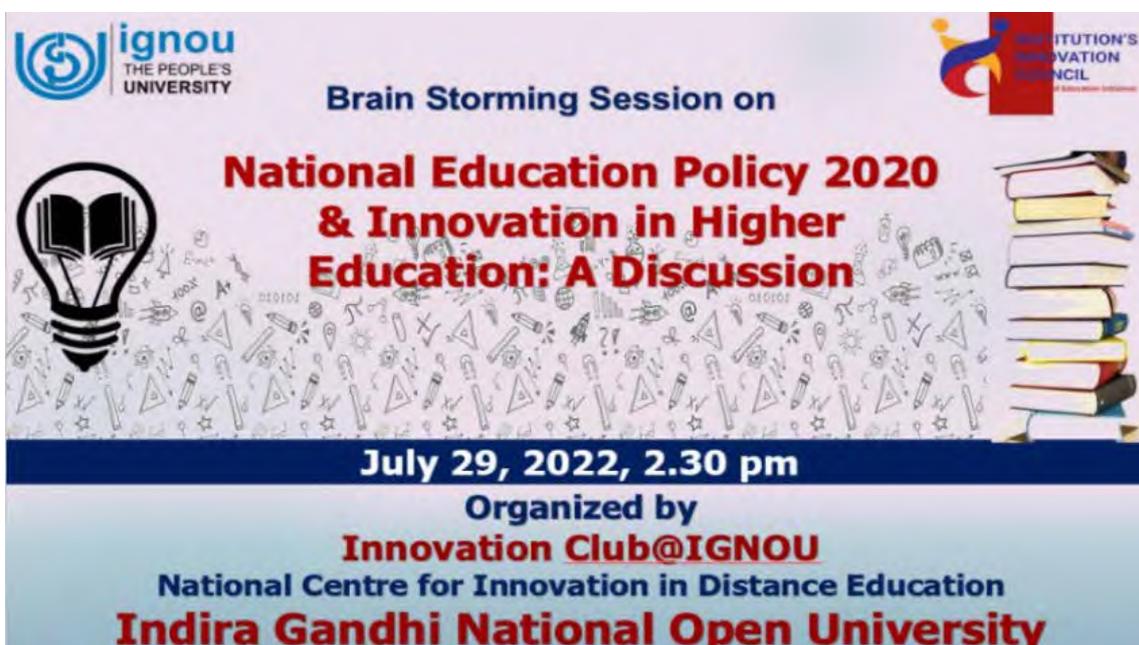
IGNOU Headquarters and various Regional Centres, participated in the virtual meeting and deliberated on the different aspects of the seminar theme.

6.3.2 Brainstorming Session on National Education Policy 2020 and Innovation in Higher Education: A Discussion

In order to discuss the main thrust areas of innovation and innovative initiatives suggested by the NEP-2020 and to generate new ideas for their implementation, a brainstorming session on “National Education Policy 2020 and Innovation in Higher Education: A Discussion” was organised by the Innovation Club@IGNOU on July 29, 2022.

The main objective of the meeting was to have a discussion on the innovation-related aspects of NEP- 2020 and how the concept of innovation, creativity, critical thinking, and analytical thinking

can be integrated into the education system, particularly at the higher education level. About 36 members, including faculty members and academics from IGNOU and various Regional Centres, participated in the virtual session.



6.4 Online Portal on NEP-2020 Initiatives

The Online Portal on NEP-2020 Initiatives is dedicated to showcasing the various initiatives taken by the NCIDE aimed at implementing NEP-2020. With a user-friendly interface and regularly updated content. The “Ideas Generated” section of the portal hosts innovative suggestions (ideas) contributed by faculty, staff, and academic bodies for effective implementation of the NEP-2020. It is a collaborative approach towards educational reform, emphasizing multidisciplinary learning, academic flexibility, technology integration, and learner-centric models. The portal also highlights a series of panel discussions organised by IGNOU to deliberate on the implementation of the National



Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This portal serves as an informative resource for faculty, students, and stakeholders to understand IGNOU's progress and contributions toward transforming higher education in line with NEP 2020 especially, in the context of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The link to the portal is :<https://sites.google.com/ignou.ac.in/NEP-2020>

6.5 Viksit Bharat@2047 Initiatives

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji called upon students, teachers, and Heads of Institutions/Universities to participate and contribute to India's bold, ambitious, and transformative agenda of *Viksit Bharat@2047*. *Viksit Bharat @2047* is a vision to make India a developed nation by 2047, the 100th year of independence. The vision encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.

IGNOU has a wide reach among the people of the country and has the potential to mobilise the youth towards this great vision to become *Viksit Bharat@2047*. IGNOU has taken up this agenda in a big way by involving the Regional Centres and the Schools of Studies to organise various types of activities and programmes to motivate and encourage the youth, particularly IGNOU students and alumni, towards this mission in a phased manner (Figure 19). In this context, a number of activities like Ideation Workshops, Panel Discussions, Idea, Essay, and Poster Competitions have been conducted.

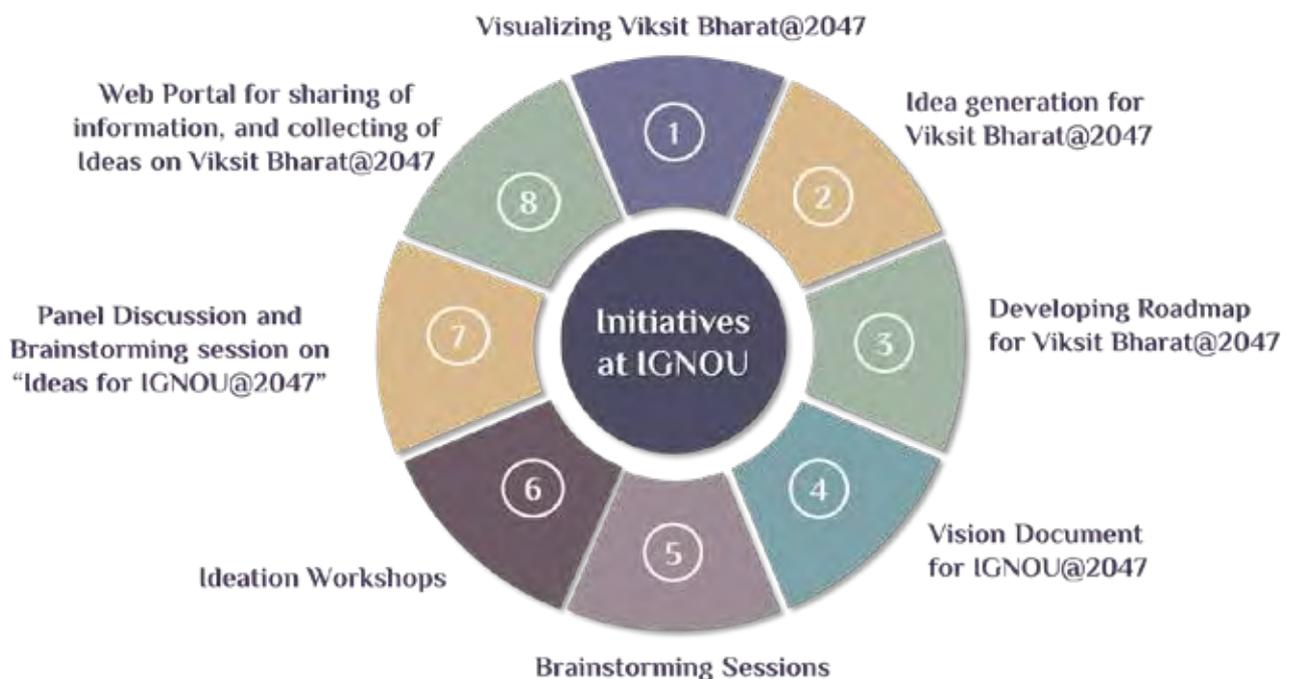


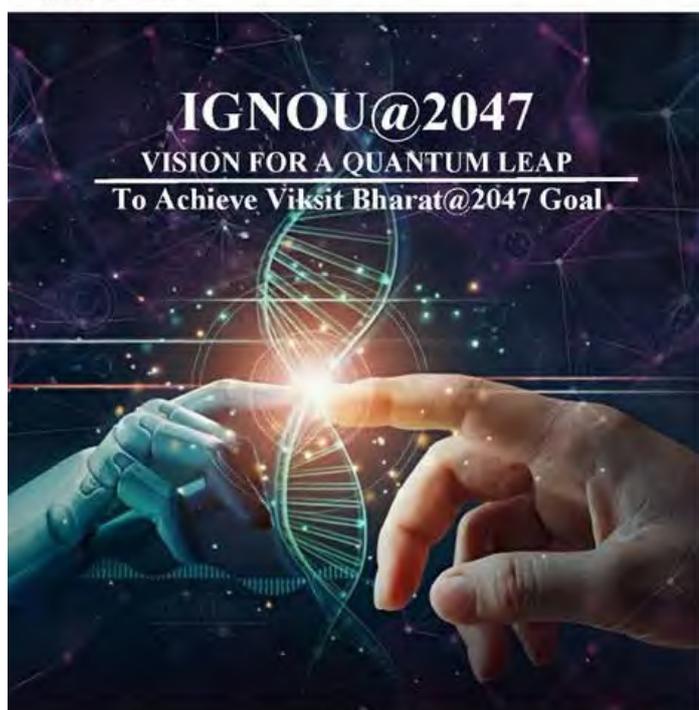
Figure 19: *Viksit Bharat@2047* Initiatives At IGNOU

6.5.1 Preparation of a Blueprint Document “Vision for a Quantum Leap to Achieve Viksit Bharat@2047 Goal”

Preparation of a Blueprint Document on “IGNOU@2047 - Vision for a Quantum Leap to Achieve Viksit Bharat@2047 Goal”: A document on the vision of IGNOU for Viksit Bharat titled “IGNOU@2047-Vision for a Quantum Leap to Achieve Viksit Bharat@2047 Goal” was developed.

IGNOU's Blueprint for *Viksit Bharat@2047* focuses mainly on eleven (11) goals by 2047, which are as follows:

- (i) Development and Implementation of an Education Framework Aimed at the Holistic Development of an Individual;
- (ii) Reaching the Unreached in the Remotest Parts of the Country Aiming at 10 million Enrolments by 2047;
- (iii) Achieving CogniTech IGNOU through a Holistic Digital Inclusion Ecosystem which includes Blended Mode;
- (iv) Strengthening an Innovation and Research Mindset among all students by 2047;
- (v) Creation and Implementation of a Multilingual Learning Ecosystem;
- (vi) Integrating Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge in the Education System;
- (vii) Implementation of an AI-Based Automated Learner Support System Aimed at Minimal Grievances;
- (viii) Implementation of an Automated Continuous and Comprehensive Assessment and Evaluation System;
- (ix) Expansion of IGNOU at the International Level for Global Presence;
- (x) Strengthening Alumni Involvement in the Growth and Development of IGNOU by 2047, and
- (xi) Developing an Intelligent Governance System and World-Class Smart, Digital and Physical Sustainable Infrastructure at Headquarters and Regional Centres.



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IGNOU's Blueprint for *Viksit Bharat@2047* is presented in this document focusing mainly on the following 11 Goals by 2047:

GOAL-01	Development and Implementation of an Education Framework Aimed at the Holistic Development of an Individual.
GOAL-02	Reaching the Unreached in the Remotest Part of the Country Aiming at 10 Million Enrolment by 2047.
GOAL-03	Achieving CogniTech IGNOU through Holistic Digital Inclusion Ecosystem which includes Blended Mode.
GOAL-04	Strengthening an Innovation and Research Mindset among all the students by 2047.
GOAL-05	Creation and Implementation of a Multilingual Learning Ecosystem.
GOAL-06	Integrating the Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge in the Education System.
GOAL-07	Implementation of an AI Based Automated Learner Support System Aimed at Minimal Grievances.
GOAL-08	Implementation of an Automated Continuous and Comprehensive Assessment and Evaluation System.
GOAL-09	Expansion of IGNOU at the International Level for Global Presence.
GOAL-10	Strengthening Alumni Involvement in the Growth and Development of IGNOU by 2047.
GOAL-11	Developing an Intelligent Governance System and World Class Smart Digital and Physical Sustainable Infrastructure at Headquarters and Regional Centres.

In order to take views and suggestions from other faculty members of IGNOU, on the draft blueprint for IGNOU@2047, the document was discussed with various faculty members and a series of panel discussions of each theme area were organised over a period of 5-6 months in the year 2024. Details of the same are presented in the sections below.

6.5.2 Various Competitions for *Viksit Bharat @ 2047* and *Viksit IGNOU@2047*

An Idea Competition, an Essay Writing Competition, and a Poster Competition were organised in the year 2024 for the students and alumni of IGNOU in collaboration with Regional Services Division (RSD), IGNOU. Promoting the vision of ‘Vocal for Local’, the first round of competition was organised at the Regional Centre (RC) level and the second round was held at the headquarters. The competitions aimed to inspire innovation and creativity among the participants. These competitions encouraged the students to learn about the *Viksit Bharat@2047* mission and to reflect on their vision and possible role to making India a developed nation by 2047.

(i) Idea Competition-2024: Ideas 4 *Viksit Bharat@2047*

An Idea Competition-2024: Ideas 4 *Viksit Bharat@2047* was organised to showcase and recognise, share, nurture, and promote ideas of the students/alumni of IGNOU for the themes of *Viksit Bharat@2047* and *Viksit IGNOU@2047*. The main aim of the idea competition was to recognise and promote original ideas aligned with national and institutional development goals. After evaluation, three entries won the first, second, and third prizes and two entries were selected for consolation prizes (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Winners of Ideas 4 *Viksit Bharat@2047* Competition

(ii) Essay Writing Competition-2024 on Viksit Bharat@2047

An Essay Writing Competition-2024 on *Viksit Bharat@2047* was organised to motivate IGNOU students and alumni to present their vision about *Viksit Bharat@2047*, including enhancing their writing skills, critical thinking, and communication skills, and to provide them with both opportunities and recognition. After evaluation, three entries won the first, second and third prizes and two entries were selected for consolation prizes (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Winners of Essay Writing Competition-2024 on Viksit Bharat@2047

(iii) Poster Competition on Viksit Bharat@2047

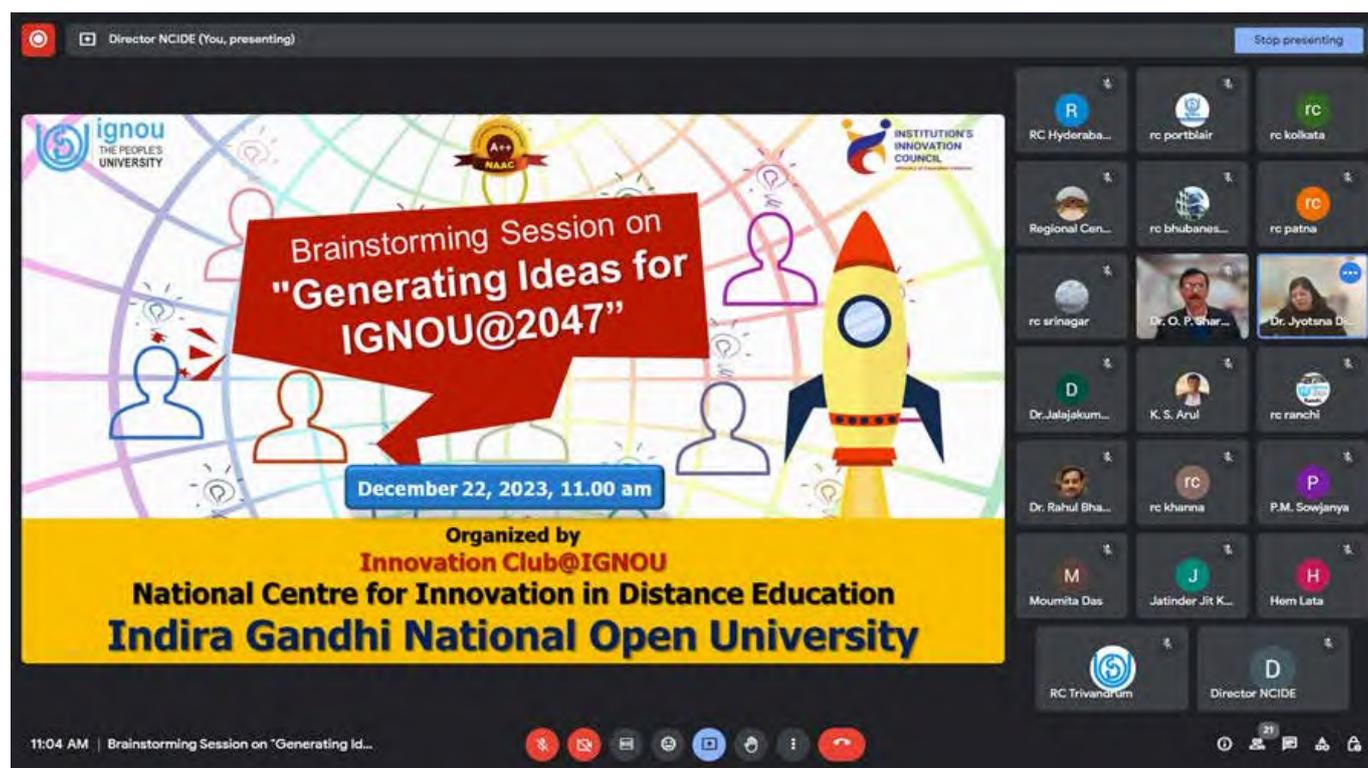
A Poster Competition on *Viksit Bharat@2047* was organised to promote creativity and innovation among IGNOU students and alumni and provide them with an opportunity to showcase their artistic expressions and vision for the themes of *Viksit Bharat@2047* and *Viksit IGNOU@2047*. After evaluation, three entries won the first, second and third prizes (Figure 22).



Figure 22: Winners of Poster Competition on Viksit Bharat@2047

6.5.3 Brainstorming Session on IGNOU@2047

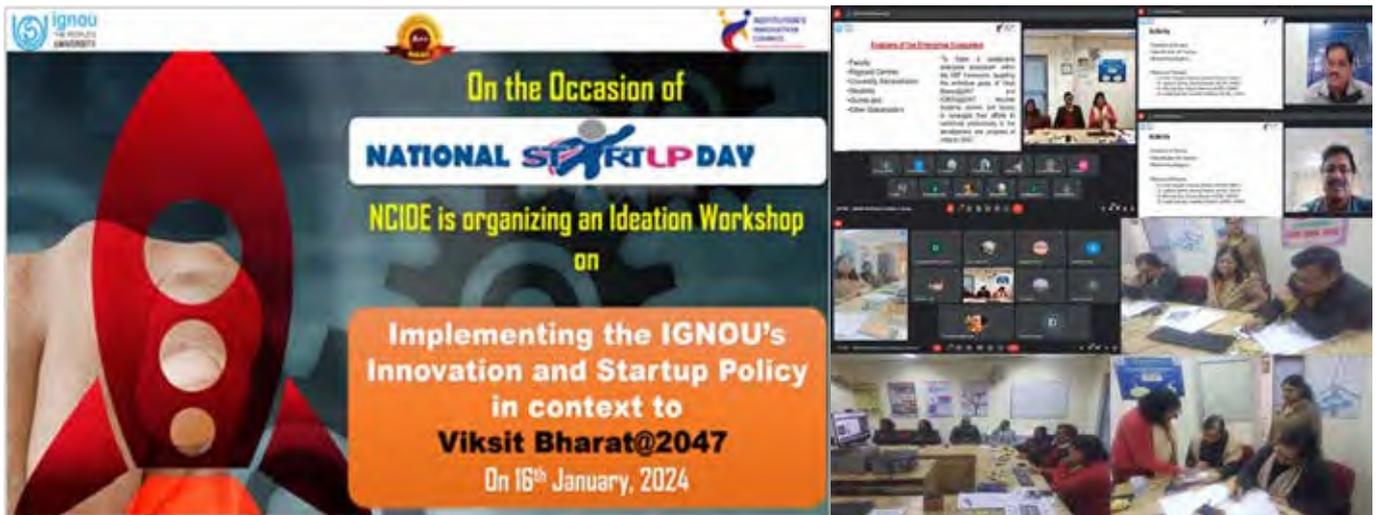
A Brainstorming Session on the topic “Generating Ideas for IGNOU@2047- An Initiative Towards Viksit Bharat” was organised for faculty members from IGNOU Headquarters and Regional Centres on December 22, 2023. Various ideas were presented at the brainstorming session on how to move forward towards achieving *Viksit Bharat@2047*. Based on the initial ideation session, a strong need was felt to conduct focused group ideation sessions on various themes and goals and to develop a document of ideas and implementation strategies for the University.



6.5.4 Ideation Workshop on Viksit Bharat@2047

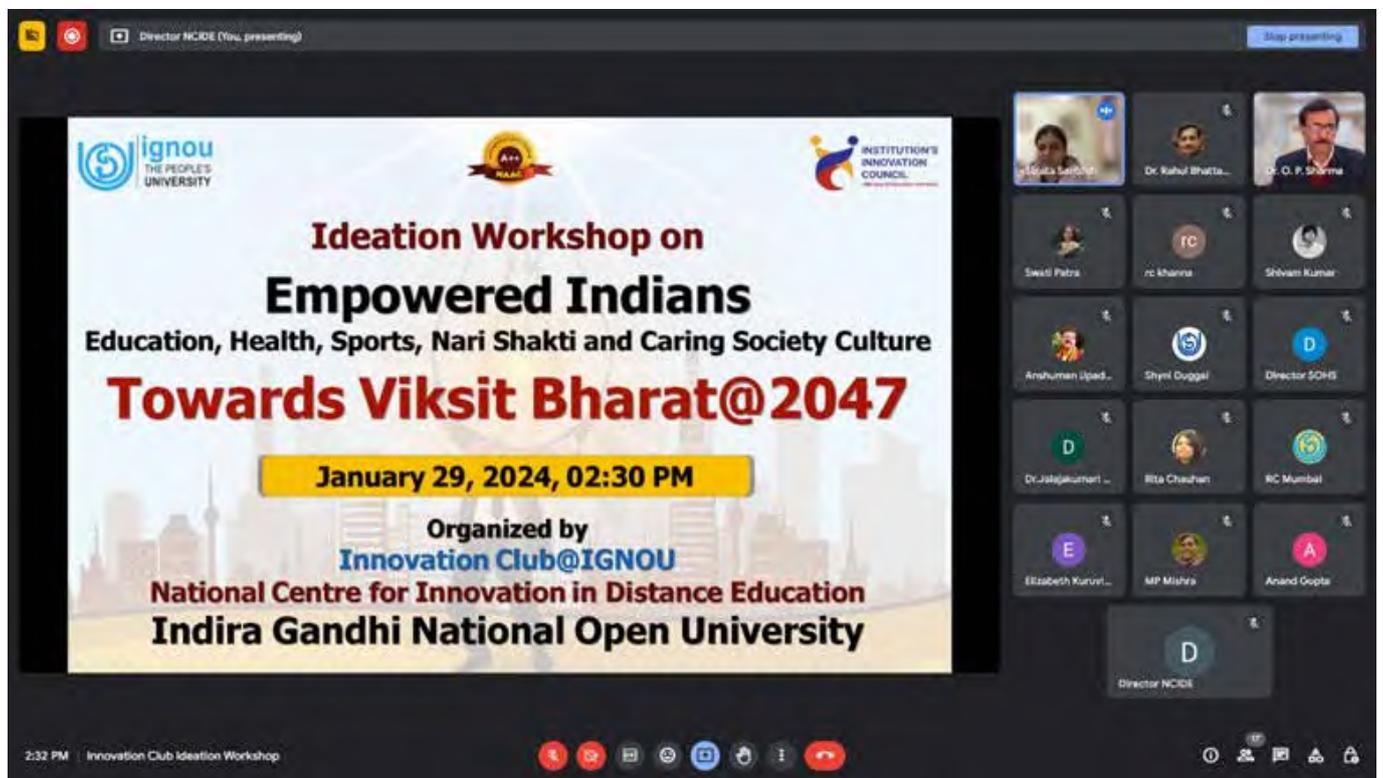
An Ideation Workshop was organised for the Innovation Ambassadors of IGNOU and internal faculty members of the Institute's Innovation Council 6.0 on implementing IGNOU's Innovation and Startup Policy in the context to *Viksit Bharat@2047* on January 16, 2024. At the beginning, faculty members of NCIDE presented their views on “Strengthening a Sustainable Enterprise Ecosystem by Implementing the IGNOU's Innovation and Startup Policy in Context to *Viksit Bharat@2047* and *IGNOU@2047*.”

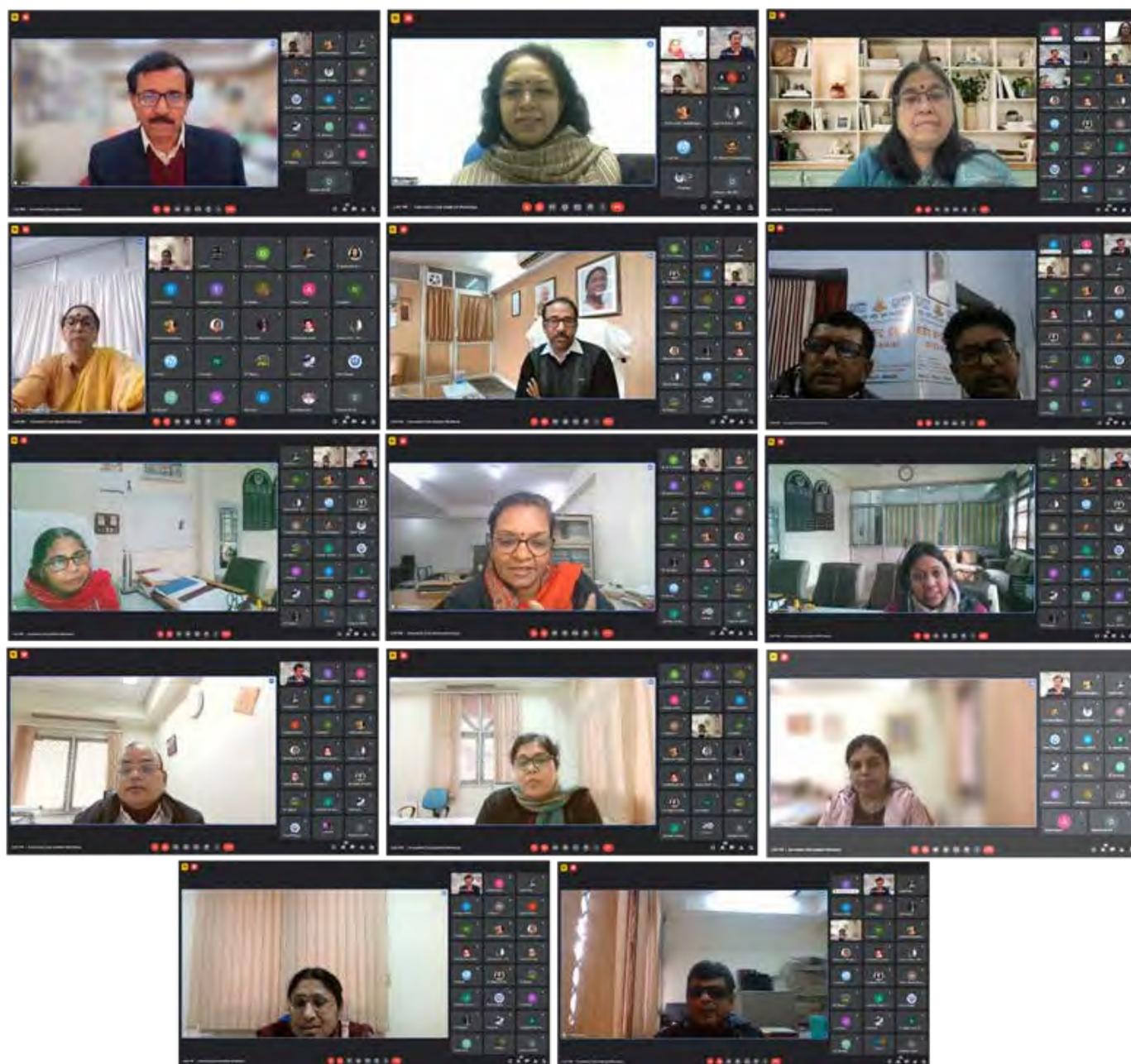
This was followed by the generation of ideas by the participants using ideation tools. Nearly 150 ideas were generated on how faculty, research scholars, alumni, and students could contribute towards *Viksit Bharat@2047* by way of innovation and by strengthening the enterprise Ecosystem at IGNOU.



6.5.5 Ideation Workshop on Empowered Indians-Towards Viksit Bharat@2047

A brainstorming session on Ideas for IGNOU@2047 on the related theme “Empowered Indians– Education, Health, Sports, Nari Shakti (Women’s Empowerment), Caring Society Culture” on January 29, 2024. In the discussion, the participants presented their views and gave various ideas and suggestions.





6.5.6 Panel Discussions and Brainstorming Sessions

Eleven Panel discussions followed by brainstorming sessions on the following goals of Ideas for *IGNOU@2047* were organised.

- “Ideas for *IGNOU@2047* – Development and Implementation of an Education Framework Aimed at the Holistic Development of an Individual” held on March 28, 2024.
- “Ideas for *IGNOU@2047* – Reaching the Unreached Aiming at 10 Million Enrolment by 2047” held on April 08, 2024.
- “Ideas for *IGNOU@2047* – Achieving CogniTech *IGNOU* through Holistic Digital Inclusion Ecosystem” held on April 30, 2024.
- “Ideas for *IGNOU@2047* – Strengthening an Innovation and Research Mindset among the

Students and Faculty by 2047” held on May 13, 2024.

- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047 – Creation and Implementation of a Multilingual Ecosystem” held on May 28, 2024.
- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047 – Integrating Indigenous.
- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047 -Implementation of an AI Based Automated Learner Support System Aimed at Minimal Grievances” held on July 16, 2024.
- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047 –Implementation of an Automated Continuous and Comprehensive Assessment and Evaluation System” held on July 31, 2024.
- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047 – Strengthening Alumni Involvement” held on August 30, 2024.
- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047: Developing an Intelligent Governance System and World Class Smart Digital and Physical Sustainable Infrastructure at Headquarters and Regional Centres “ held on September 24, 2024.
- “Ideas for IGNOU@2047 – Expansion at the International Level for Global Presence” held on September 30, 2024.



Approximately 40 experts expressed their ideas in the panel discussions. A number of faculty members from Headquarters as well as Regional Centres gave their ideas and suggestions. More than 170 ideas for IGNOU@2047 have been generated.

6.6 Launch of Web Portal for ViksitBharat@2047

A web portal for the sharing of information, and the collecting of Ideas on *Viksit Bharat@2047* was launched. The portal has components like Idea Bank for *Viksit Bharat@2047* and *IGNOU@2047*. (<https://sites.google.com/ignou.ac.in/ignou-viksitbharatat2047/viksit-bharat2047?authuser=0>)



6.7 Conclusion

IGNOU has embraced the implementation of NEP-2020 and the vision of *Viksit Bharat@2047* with a commitment to innovation, inclusion, and lifelong learning. IGNOU's blueprint for *Viksit Bharat@2047* is a long-term vision to reach the goal of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

7. Capacity Building and Outreach Programme

7.1 Introduction

Training workshops and programmes are organised for the capacity development of the faculty and students towards innovation and startups, IPR and innovative use of ICT in teaching, learning and student support, etc. A brief description of these initiatives is given below.

7.2 Capacity Development of Students

From the years 2020-2025, NCIDE organised several training workshops for students to inspire and motivate them towards innovation, entrepreneurship and startups.

7.2.1 Sessions for Awareness Generation on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

NCIDE has organised more than 250 awareness programmes and sessions in the field of innovation, startup, IPR and entrepreneurship, etc. aimed at encouraging and motivating the students towards entrepreneurship and startups. Awareness programmes on innovation and entrepreneurship are organised very frequently in online, offline and hybrid modes. For this purpose, stories of successful innovators and entrepreneurs are shared with the students from time to time. Around 50 weekly Facebook Live sessions on innovation and startup awareness and motivational programmes were organised during 2022-23. *Udyamita ki Ore*, a fortnightly series of teleconferencing sessions on innovation, entrepreneurship, and startups was organised during 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Udyamita Ki Ore – A Fortnightly Series of Sessions on Innovation and Startups

NCIDE is actively involved in creating a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship and startups in the University by organizing various types of programmes and activities for IGNOU students, alumni and faculty. As an initiative in this direction, NCIDE organised, *Udyamita ki Ore*. The fortnightly series is an initiative of the NCIDE, IGNOU towards strengthening the ecosystem of innovation and startups in the University. This is a unique programme where entrepreneurial opportunities in specific subject areas or sectors are highlighted. The objective was to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among students and faculty in the University, thus working towards achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. The episodes were designed to empower them to generate new, Innovative Ideas and build businesses in different areas. The programme was conducted on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. The sessions covered topics on innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities in various sectors including, food processing, waste management, healthcare, tourism, environmental sciences, urban planning and development, geographical sciences biochemistry, e-commerce, fintech, agritech, edutech, medicinal plants, and business incubator.

Weekly Facebook Live Sessions on Innovation and Startups

To generate awareness about innovation, entrepreneurship and startups among the students and faculty, and motivate them towards startups, NCIDE has organised Facebook Live Sessions that were delivered through the Official IGNOU Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/>

OfficialPageIGNOU/. A total of forty-nine sessions by experts have been organised for IGNOU students and faculty on various innovation, entrepreneurship and startups related topics. The sessions have been watched by thousands of students across India on Facebook and YouTube Channel of the University.

7.2.2 Student Empowerment for Entrepreneurship Development (SEED) Programme

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of identifying and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship skills among the youth of India. Immediately after the implementation of the NEP-2020 in July 2020, NCIDE conceptualized and developed a series of specialized training workshops as an initiative towards achieving *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

The specially designed training programs, known as Student Empowerment for Entrepreneurship Development (SEED), encompass a variety of awareness initiatives and workshops. These workshops are aimed at encouraging and motivating the IGNOU students towards innovation, entrepreneurship, startups and skill development.

The basic objectives of the SEED programme include:

- harnessing the potential of IGNOU students and supporting them in the growth and development of the country to make them self-reliant,
- encouraging and motivating the students of IGNOU towards entrepreneurship and startups,
- explaining the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in the making of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*,
- making students aware of the IPR and patenting laws pertaining to the setting of business and startups,
- incubating ideas and helping the students to convert their ideas into a business plan, and
- guiding the students in developing bankable business proposals and connecting them with the suitable incubators.

The training programmes support students on their journey from the ideation stage to the startup stage, providing pre-incubation assistance. The focus is on topics such as ideation, problem-solving, proof of concept, prototype development, IPR and patent filing, innovation, entrepreneurship, and startups. These programs are organised on a quarterly basis and provide tailored training to the selected students and alumni of IGNOU.

The training programmes are conducted virtually through a specially designed online training portal for SEED. Online training sessions are held every other day via Google Meet. After each session, students receive recordings, web resources, book chapters, and important links related to the session through the SEED Training Portal. An e-activity is provided for students to complete based on each session. Additionally, after each session, students must complete an e-assignment within a specified timeframe to be eligible for a certificate. A discussion forum is also available on the portal, allowing students and mentors to interact with each other.

Each SEED programme lasts for two to three days and consists of six to seven sessions. Finally, students have the opportunity to showcase their startups at a national level by participating in events such as the Startup Fest, Startup Mahotsav, IGNOU Udyami Samagam, and Startup Meets.

SEED Programmes Conducted at IGNOU

The first one in the series was an eleven-day online training programme “Student Empowerment for Entrepreneurial Development (SEED)” for IGNOU students organised during July 27 to August 22, 2020. Total 65 students attended the full programme. These sessions included

- (i) Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Atmanirbhar Bharat,
- (ii) Being a Creative and Innovative Entrepreneur;
- (iii) Developing Entrepreneurial Skills;
- (iv) Protecting Ideas and Commercialize the product;
- (v) Converting an Idea into Business and Setting Up Enterprise;
- (vi) Conducting Market, Financial and Technological Research;
- (vii) Developing Business Model Canvas for an Idea;
- (viii) Developing a Bankable Business Proposal;
- (ix) Various Funding Opportunities; and
- (x) Marketing of the Product with Focus on Digital Marketing.

Besides, the students were also given an opportunity to interact with a few successful innovators and entrepreneurs. The various sessions of the SEED programme were taken by experts from industry as well as academicians from IGNOU and other organisations.

A series of student empowerment programs were organised annually from 2021 -2025. All sessions were conducted primarily in a virtual format, allowing students from across the country to participate. The sessions proved to be highly interactive and informative.

Main Segments of the SEED Programme

The SEED programme is divided into five main segments. These are:

- (a) **Creating awareness on innovation and entrepreneurship:** The first component of the SEED programme focused on creating awareness on innovation and entrepreneurship. Sessions covered the topics such as problem solving, ideation, design thinking, creative thinking, and pitching an idea for startup and IPR issues.
- (b) **Empowering students in problem identification and idea generation:** The second most important component was to empower students with skills for problem identification and the development of viable solutions. Four Student Empowerment programmes, focused on “Inspiration and Motivation for Ideation and Entrepreneurship” were conducted during the period of 2021 to 2025.

- (c) **Gaining skills in idea validation and concept development.** Three Student Empowerment programmes on idea validation and concept development were organised. The topics included validation of an idea, basics of startup, process of technology transfer, its commercialisation, and validation.
- (d) **Transforming ideas into prototypes and business plans:** The next stage of Student Empowerment programme focuses on prototype design and business plan development. The sessions covered topics such as prototype, product and process design and development, business model canvas, business plan development and related IPRs.
- (e) **Development of the startup ecosystem:** The next stage of the Student Empowerment programme focused on startup and related ecosystem development. The sessions were on various aspects related to converting a prototype into a successful startup and the funding opportunities for early-stage entrepreneurs.

Outcome of the Student Empowerment Programmes

The main outcomes of the Student Empowerment Programme included the creation of a motivated and empowered group of IGNOU students ignited towards setting up their enterprises, the development of various types of resources including PowerPoint presentations, videos, text, etc. on different topics covered under the training. It also included an inspired group of students harnessing their creative and innovative mindsets for the growth of the country, and networking among the like-minded students. Another outcome of the Student Empowerment programmes was the development of a Virtual Incubator for supporting and guiding the budding innovators and entrepreneurs, which is now in the process of turning into a physical incubator at the headquarters of IGNOU. As a result of these programmes, IGNOU has been able to create a strong ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in the University. It is encouraging to see that the students are picking up grassroots-level issues and coming up with innovative ideas relevant to society, contributing towards a *Viksit Bharat@2047*. It is hoped that as envisioned in the NEP-2020, these empowered students will not only be job seekers but may be job providers as well.

7.3 Capacity Development of Faculty

After the implementation of NEP-2020, NCIDE organised various faculty empowerment and training programmes. The basic purpose of such empowerment programmes was to orient the faculty for innovative use of technology and ICT tools for better and effective teaching-learning and support services to distance learners. During the faculty empowerment programmes, faculty members were also encouraged and imparted training on the concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship and to find out innovative solutions to the various problems and challenges faced by the students and other stakeholders. IGNOU has been using multiple media to offer innovative learning content and student support services. These innovative solutions have been developed by the faculty members of the University. To create such innovations, many of which require the use of technology, the capacity building of the faculty members have been a continuous effort by the University. E-packages were

also developed and pilot testing was conducted with a focus from trainer centric approach to trainee centric approach.

As the NEP-2020 recommends that the existing digital platforms and ongoing ICT based educational initiatives must be optimized and expanded to meet the current and future challenges in providing quality education for all. Thus, after implementation of NEP-2020, it became more important to empower the faculty for the innovative and optimised use of the technology for providing more effective teaching, learning and support to the distance learners at IGNOU. Keeping it in view, NCIDE organised innovatively designed capacity development programmes for the faculty.

7.3.1 Innovative Design of Faculty Empowerment Programmes

Capacity development programmes on innovative use of technology and tools were planned based on the needs discussed during the brainstorming sessions of the Innovation Club@IGNOU, ideas available in IDEABANK@IGNOU, requirements of government schemes, policies and needs of the University. The capacity development programmes are conducted in online, hybrid and f-2-f modes. At the end of the training programme, the participants are required to submit live projects to be implemented in the system. Innovative features of the Capacity Development programmes conducted by the NCIDE include the creation of various types of e-content for various training programmes and making them available to the participants for recall and use after the workshop through Virtual Training Lounge; Conducting virtual and f-2-f follow up sessions for the participants of the capacity development programmes; and to generate interest and motivation in the participants through gamification.

Keeping this in view, NCIDE organised a number of online and offline training workshops, sessions, and faculty empowerment programmes for IGNOU faculty.

7.3.2 Empowering faculty for Innovative Use of ICT Tools for Providing Web Enabled Academic Support

NCIDE organised a Faculty Development Programme for the faculty members of IGNOU on 'Innovative Use of ICT Tools for Providing Web Enabled Academic Support for Distance Mode Programmes' during January 8-14, 2020, at the Conference Room, NCIDE, IGNOU.



The main objectives of the workshop were to sensitise the participants about Web-Enabled Academic Support (WEAS); to empower the participants to use innovative tools for providing web based academic support to the students; and also, to enable the participants to develop and deploy the Web Based Academic Support scheme for their distance mode programmes.



Each participant was technologically empowered to use ICT Tools to design and develop video programmes and web portals, and each of them recorded, edited, and developed promotional videos and programme welcome videos for their respective programmes.



7.3.3 Sensitizing Faculty Towards Innovative learning and Support Solutions in Open and Distance Learning System

NCIDE organised a session on Innovative Learning and Support Solutions in the Faculty Development Programme on Integrating Technologies in Open Distance Learning organised by STRIDE from 24-28 February 2020. The main objective of the session was to appraise the faculty about the various innovations taking place in the field of ODL across the world and to encourage them to take up innovative initiatives in their respective fields. In order to think of innovative ideas or solutions for various problems and issues at IGNOU, an idea generation activity was conducted. The Session on Group Ideation Activity was conducted by the NCIDE team. Five groups were constituted and each group was asked to select one problem area of the given problem statements in the field of ODL. All the groups generated several innovative ideas through brainwriting method as instructed by the NCIDE team. Finally, each group presented their best five to six ideas before all the participants. The ideas were then discussed and other members also gave their suggestions to improve or modify the ideas.

7.3.4 Online Training Workshop on Use ICT Tools for Interactive Web Based Video Counselling for Distance

NCIDE conducted an online training workshop on the use of Interactive Web Counselling Tools for the Mathematics Faculty of the School of Sciences on 24th April, 2020. The main objective of the workshop was to enable the faculty to use various easily available ICT tools for creating events for the students and organising interactive web-based video counselling sessions with presentation, and demonstration activities. Initially, the session started with a brainstorming activity on the various freely available tools. This was followed by a demonstration of tools to create event and hold web counselling sessions.



7.3.5 Online Training Workshop Empowering for Faculty of SOS on using Web Counselling Tools

NCIDE conducted a series of online training sessions on Web Counselling Tools for the faculty of School of Sciences (SOS) on 12th May, 20th May, 21st May and 27th May 2020. The main objective of the training sessions was to train the faculty to provide web-based video counselling sessions using various kind of tools like YouTube and OBS Studio. The participants were given a demonstration on how they can create a YouTube channel and use it for conducting online live sessions for distance learners.



The first online training session conducted on 12th May, 2020 was followed by group wise personalised and hands-on oriented online training sessions on innovative ways of using advanced Live Video Streaming tools, held on

20th May, 2020 at 11.30 am and 21st May, 2020 at 4.30 pm. As an output of the training sessions, a few faculty members developed sample videos. These online training sessions were followed by a troubleshooting session held on 27th May, 2020. A manual was also provided to all the participants of the session to facilitate them in handling web counselling sessions and video recordings.

7.3.6 Online Training Workshop for Empowering IGNOU Faculty on Developing WEAS System

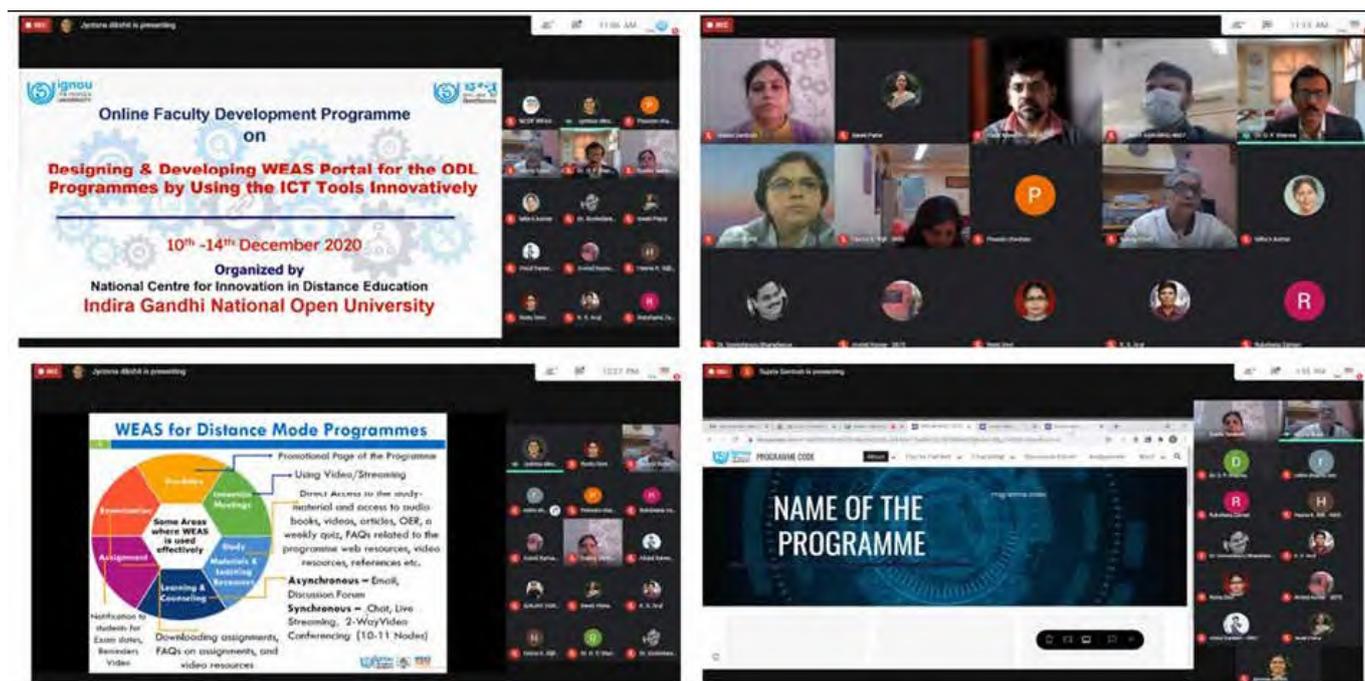
NCIDE conducted an online training programme on Developing WEAS System for Distance Mode Programmes during June 02-05, 2020. The training programme was organised for the programme coordinators of IGNOU who are engaged in offering distance mode programmes. As NCIDE has developed one-stop Web-Enabled Academic Support (WEAS) portal for providing different kinds of technological support to the learners, a need was felt to empower the faculty and technically support them in reaching out to their students. Around 20 faculty members participated in the training programme. The participants were given an introduction to the WEAS portal and how the various ICT tools can be used to reach out to the distance learners through online mode.



The workshop had eight informational and hands-on sessions which gave an overview of the Web-Enabled Academic Support (WEAS) to the participants and provided them with information about the various components of the WEAS and how innovatively programme coordinators could use them for their teaching and learning purposes. The participants were provided with detailed description, and guidance on how to use every tool being used in WEAS. Each session also had hands-on component which enabled the participants to practice both in synchronous and asynchronous modes. Discussion forum was used to discuss the problems faced by the participants and troubleshoot them.

7.3.7 Online Faculty Development Programme on “Enabling the Faculty to Design and Develop WEAS for their ODL Programmes by Using Easily Accessible ICT Tools Innovatively”

NCIDE conducted a five-day Faculty Development Programme on enabling the faculty to design and develop WEAS portals for their ODL programmes by using easily accessible and simple ICT tools innovatively during 10-14 December, 2020. The programme was organised in virtual mode.



The main objectives of the Online Faculty Development programme were to sensitise the interested teachers and academics about how to use innovatively the various freely available ICT tools to develop WEAS for their ODL programmes; enable teachers analyse the content and develop various components of WEAS like learning resources; empower the teachers in designing and developing WEAS Portal for ODL programme; and finalizing the WEAS Portals of various programmes. A total of twelve participants attended the workshop.

The focus of the workshop was on hands-on experience, enabling development of new skills. For the initial two days the training programme was conducted in online mode. The training sessions were activity based and focused on various tools such as an orientation and overview of WEAS platform and how it can be used for supporting teaching and learning. The participants were provided with templates of WEAS portals for their programmes, which were further designed and developed in the programme portal in the next two days.

7.3.8 Training Workshop on WEAS Portal Development for IGNOU Faculty

NCIDE organised a three-day online training workshop (Capacity Development/ Faculty Development Programme) on Creative and Innovative Use of Google Tools to Create Programme Specific WEAS Portals from October 17, 2022-October 19, 2022. The workshop was organised through Google Meet as well as f-2-f mode. The main objectives of the training workshop were to enable the programme coordinators of limited-enrolment programmes to use creatively and innovatively the Google tools to develop WEAS portals of their programme with extensive hands-on practice; and to skill them in creating their programme specific WEAS portals, conducting web counselling sessions, integrating discussion forums, adding students to the WEAS portal, and creating MCQ based online assessments using Google tools. The participants were involved in the creation of the basic structure of the programme portals; the creation and finalisation of

programme-specific intro pages and WEAS portals, with various pages and course pages, uploading and integration of SLMs, learning resources, and references. The workshop was fully hands-on and practice oriented. The participants demonstrated the WEAS portal developed for their respective programmes/courses during these three days.



7.3.9 Faculty Empowerment of Programme for Coordinators of ODL programmes offered through WEAS

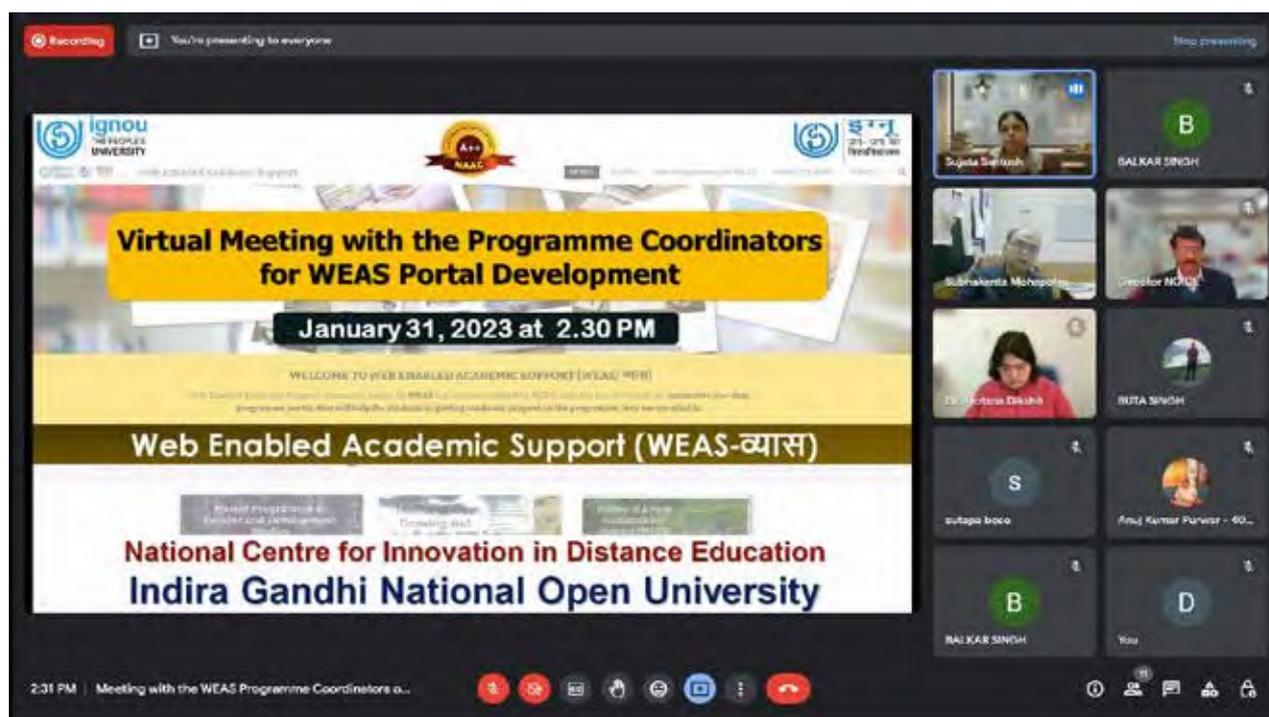
A Virtual Meeting with the Programme Coordinators of ODL Programmes being offered through WEAS was organised by NCIDE on January 30, 2023. The aim was to discuss the status and requirements of WEAS portals for the various programmes. About 19 participants, including the programme coordinators of various programmes being offered through WEAS, participated in the virtual session.



The participants shared the status of their programmes, discussed the problems that they are facing, and gave various suggestions in this regard.

7.3.10 Empowerment of Programme Coordinators of ODL programmes offered through WEAS

A Virtual Meeting with the Programme Coordinators of ODL Programmes being offered through WEAS was organised by NCIDE on January 31, 2023.



The basic objective was to discuss the status and requirements of WEAS portals (under development) for various programmes, so that they could be finalised, launched, and made available to the students. The programme coordinators of various programmes being offered through WEAS participated in the virtual session.

7.4 Outreach Programmes on Innovation and Startup

NCIDE, through partnership with the vast network of Regional Centres, was uniquely positioned to champion innovation outreach by conducting various Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) activities for the learners. In the past five years, the Centre has conducted various student outreach programmes on I&E throughout the country in collaboration with the Regional Centres. The activities included awareness sessions on I&E related topics, such as design thinking, ideation, creativity, innovation development process, prototyping, etc. Idea competitions are organised for the students across India. The winners are nominated to national level competitions. Thereafter, field visits to local areas for problem identification and to innovation and Incubation Centres for awareness, are being organised for students every year.

This outreach enhanced student access to creative thinking by encouraging research and practical application of innovative solutions that address real world problems. Diverse segments of students were empowered to become problems-solvers and creators, thus contributing to the innovation-driven economy as envisaged in NEP-2020.



RC Bhopal conducts Field Visit for identifying Real Time Issues, 2025



RC Trivandrum conducts Field Visit to Incubation Centre, 2024



RC Lucknow conducts Outreach Programme on National Startup Day, 2024



RC NOIDA organises Student Participation in MIC Regional Meet, 2024



RC Srinagar conducts Outreach Programme in 2023

RC Jaipur presents in MIC Regional Meet, 2023

7.5 Presence on Social Media

NCIDE has the following social media accounts and have been promoting the IIC activities through these media regularly.

1. Twitter: @InnovationsIGN1 (5850 followers),
2. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070296926197> (780 followers),
3. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJpZv17kJ22OD3GJu4vFmlw> (596 subscribers).

7.5.1 Special Social Media Campaign

To unlock entrepreneurial potential at IGNOU, a Social Media Campaign was launched on Innovation and Startups on January 13, 2025. The target audience of the social media campaign included current IGNOU students and alumni, aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs, investors and industry leaders, all other stakeholders of IGNOU, and general public interested in innovation and startups. Efforts were made to post at least three posters on different social media platforms including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.



7.4 Conclusion

Over the past few years, the Capacity Building and Outreach Programmes on innovation, startups, and IPR and innovative use of ICT in teaching, learning and student support, has evolved into a vibrant ecosystem for capacity development.

8. Recognising and Showcasing Innovations and Startups

8.1 Introduction

To identify and recognise potential innovators and entrepreneurs among the IGNOU students and alumni, the NCIDE organised a variety of contests, competitions, and challenges, including Idea Competition, Innovation Contests, Startup Competition, and Business Plan Competition. The selected innovators and entrepreneurs were provided with both online and offline platforms to showcase and present their innovations and startups. To support this initiative, various events such as Startup Fest, Innovation and Startup Fest, Festival of Ideas, IGNOU Udyami Samagam, and IGNOU Udyamotsav were organised periodically. A brief overview of these events is provided below.

8.2 Identifying and Recognising Innovations

It is noticed that a number of IGNOU students and faculty have very innovative ideas. Many of them have developed innovative products or services, and some have set up their startups. In order to identify and recognise such innovators, and entrepreneurs, NCIDE, IGNOU has started several schemes. These schemes not only help in identifying the best innovation or startup, but also help in identifying the potential innovators and entrepreneurs.

8.2.1 Best Idea Award

To encourage IGNOU students to generate new and innovative ideas as solutions to various problems around them, NCIDE organises various types of Idea Competitions and Ideathons. This activity is linked to the MoE's initiative to create a National Innovation Repository-YUKTI. IGNOU students and alumni are invited to submit their original and creative ideas that can solve daily life problems in any of the prescribed areas. The ideas are evaluated on the criteria followed by YUKTI, which includes right identification of the problem, relevance of the solution, quality features of the solution and uniqueness of the solution. Under this scheme, several programmes including Idea Competitions and Festival of Ideas have been organised since 2019, and students have been awarded prizes.

8.2.2 Best Innovation Awards

As recommended by NEP-2020 to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, IGNOU instituted the "Student Innovation Award" launched in 2018 renamed as the Best Innovation Award, to be given every year to the best innovator students across the country. This award aims to identify, recognise, and nurture innovative ideas and prototypes developed by IGNOU students, fostering a culture of creativity and entrepreneurship within the University. Besides awarding the best three-four innovators every year, the potential innovators are also identified, who are further nurtured and mentored to take their innovations to the next level.

INNOVATION & STARTUP INITIATIVES AT IGNOU (2020-2025)



Figure 20: Students Conferred with the Best Innovation Awards

8.2.3 Best Business Plan Awards

To foster and promote the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship among students and alumni, NCIDE and IIC-IGNOU organised Business Plan Competitions. The Business Plan Competition is not just a contest, it is a platform for aspiring entrepreneurs to present their ideas, receive expert mentoring, and move a step closer to building their own ventures (Figure 21). The competitions were conducted in two phases. In the first phase, interested participants registered for the competition. After registration, they were provided training on how to develop a Business Model Canvas. Participants were invited to a mentoring and presentation session, where they received feedback and guidance from experts on their Business Model Canvas. In the second phase, the shortlisted participants underwent a short training programme on how to develop a detailed business plan. Following the training, they submitted a comprehensive Business Plan. Finally, the top three participants were awarded with the Best Business Plan Award.

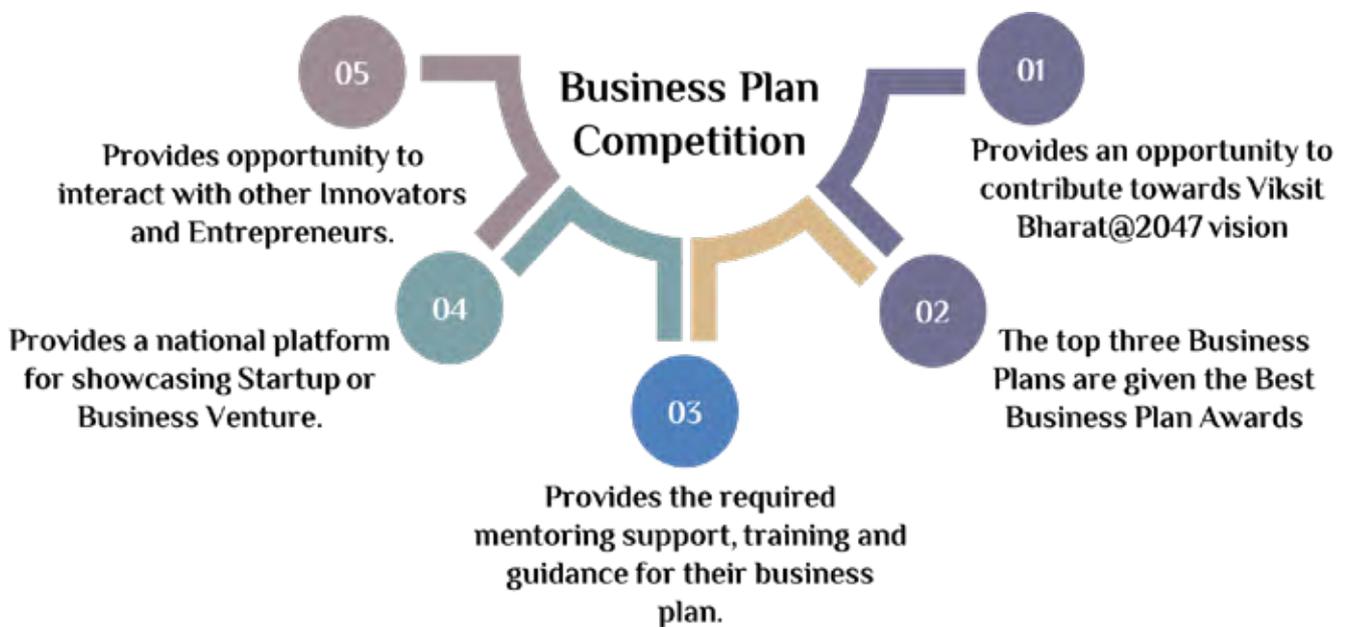


Figure 21: Business Plan Competition

So far, three Business Plan Competitions have been organised during 2021, 2023 and 2024.



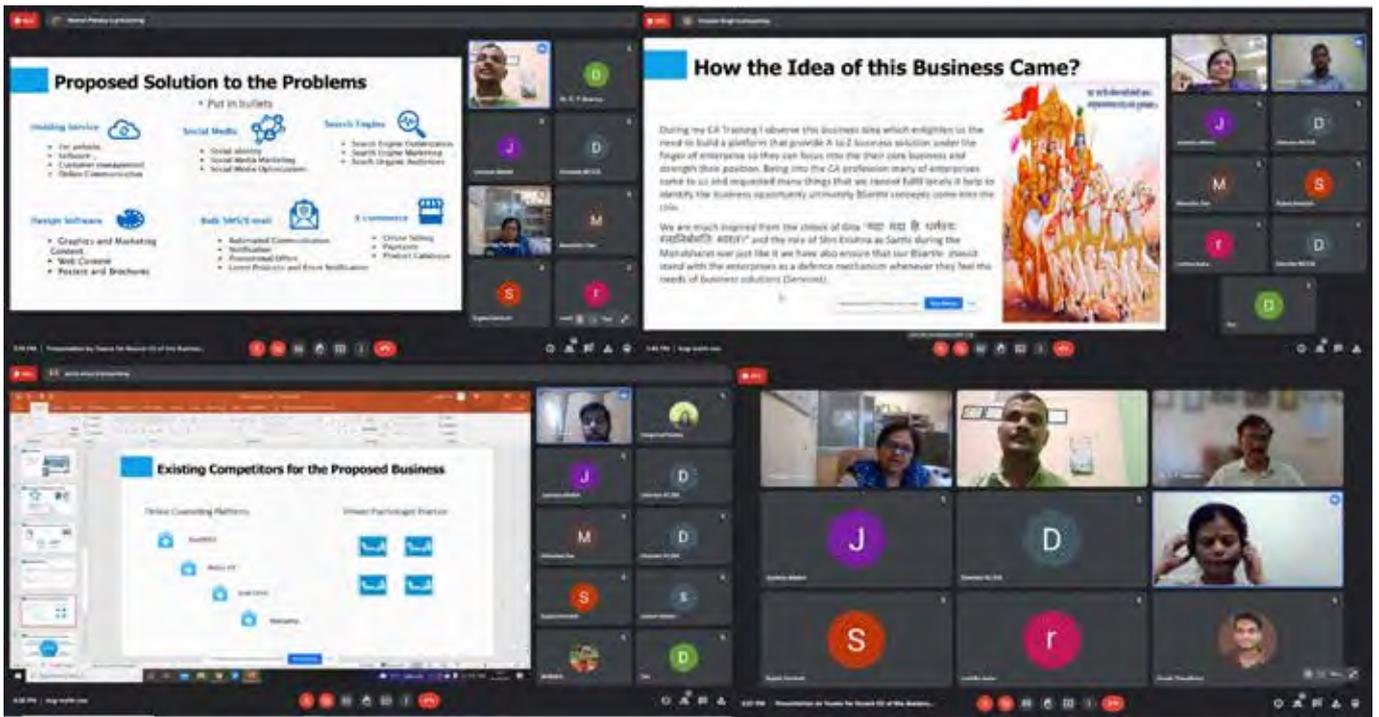


Figure 22: Business Plan Competitions (2021)



Figure 23: Business Plan Competitions (2023)



Figure 24: Business Plan Competitions (2024)

8.2.4 Best Startup Awards

In 2025, the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) established a scheme for identifying and recognising the startup initiatives by students and alumni of IGNOU. As part of this initiative, the “Best Startup Award” was created to honor outstanding startup efforts by IGNOU students and alumni from across the country each year. Since its inception, the award has been presented through annual Startup Competition. In addition to recognizing these startups, NCIDE has provided mentoring and support to many more through a comprehensive mentoring scheme. This initiative aims to take the startup initiatives to the next level by offering various forms of guidance and training. So far, a total of ten students and alumni from IGNOU have received the Best Startup Award in 2023 and 2024. Five ventures were conferred awards in 2023 and five in 2024 (see Figures 25 and 26).

INNOVATION & STARTUP INITIATIVES AT IGNOU (2020-2025)



Figure 25: Best Startup Awards (2024)



Figure 26: Best Startup Awards (2023)

8.2.5 Best Innovative Practices Award

To acknowledge and recognise the innovative initiatives implemented by the staff and faculty at IGNOU, the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) has launched an initiative called “Recognizing and Nurturing Best Innovative Practices at IGNOU.” This initiative gathers, compiles, and documents the best innovative practices from both the IGNOU Headquarters and its Regional Centres. The collected practices will be utilized for improving the University’s NIRF and NAAC rankings, as well as for system re-engineering. In 2024, three outstanding innovative practices were awarded and will continue as an Annual Event (Figure 27).





Figure 27: Best Innovative Practices Award (2023)

8.2.6 Creativity Challenge

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the students and faculty members were studying and teaching from their homes, respectively. In spite of that, they were addressing different problems in very creative and innovative ways. In order to foster the culture of creativity and innovation during this period, NCIDE organised a series of Creativity Challenges for IGNOU students and fraternity. The themes of the problem areas were related to health, food, studies, office work, connecting with students or any other household problem. In the months of April and May 2020, NCIDE conducted four Creativity Challenges. The first Creativity Challenge was on the topic “How innovative are you in solving day-to-day problems in emergency situations and how creatively do you describe that innovative solution?” The second challenge was on the topic “How creative have you been in the gainful engagement of yourself and your family members during the COVID-19 lockdown period?” The topic of the third challenge was “During COVID-19 which new skills have you developed and how Innovatively have you applied them?” The fourth challenge was on the topic “Post COVID-19 healthcare challenges to innovate”. Several thousand students from all over India sent their entries to the challenges meant for the students. Several hundred teachers, academics and staff members from the Regional Centres, Study Centres sent their entries meant for the IGNOU fraternity. The best ten student entries and the best five IGNOU fraternity responses were awarded Certificates of Merit in each Creativity Challenge. All the participants were provided an e-Certificate of Participation.

8.2.7 AppNnovate IGNOU-2020

As a step towards *AtmaNirbhar Bharat*, IGNOU announced a university-level Innovation Challenge – AppNnovate IGNOU for IGNOU students and alumni. The aim was to promote app development among IGNOU students and motivate them in this direction. The competition was the first of its kind initiative taken up by the University. The selected best four innovative apps were awarded with the AppNnovate IGNOU-2020 prizes.

8.2.8 Smart IGNOU Hackathon

NCIDE, IGNOU organised an Internal Hackathon named as the Smart IGNOU Hackathon for its students. The objectives were to familiarize the distance learners with the hackathon and its process and to select the teams for participation in the SIH 2020 at the national level. For this,

ideas were invited from the interested students and after screening of the submitted ideas, selected teams are invited to participate in the Internal Hackathon in virtual/face-to-face mode. The teams selected in the hackathon were sent for participation in the Smart India Hackathon by MoE. The first of its kind event organised in the University was designed to provide an opportunity to the distance learners of IGNOU to get familiarized with participation in a Hackathon and also to receive guidance from the experts on their proposed solutions for the problems.

The Smart IGNOU Hackathon have been organised during 2020, 2022, 2023, and 2024. The teams selected through these hackathons were nominated for the National Level Smart India Hackathon every year. A total 04 teams were nominated during 2022; 18 teams were nominated during 2023 and 08 teams were nominated during 2024 to participate in SIH.

8.2.9 Toycathon

IGNOU students were nominated to participate in Toycathon-2021, which was an inter-ministerial initiative organised by the MoE's Innovation Cell with support from All India Council for Technical Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Toycathon-2021 was a unique opportunity for Students, Teachers, Start-ups and Toy Experts/Professionals in India to submit their Innovative Toys/Games concepts. A total of 14 student teams were nominated in January 2021 by NCIDE to participate in the event.

8.2.10 Incentivizing Patentees

Patent Unit housed at NCIDE also takes initiatives to incentivize and facilitate the patentees (students, faculty members and staff of IGNOU). The aim is to encourage legal ownership of ideas and inventions among the innovator students and faculty members. For this initiative, entries are invited from the IGNOU students and faculty members who have registered or filed for or received a patent. The selected patentees are felicitated for grant of patent. In 2024, an event was organised as part of the celebration of the World IPR Day on April 26, 2024 in blended mode. In this regard, 02 faculty members and 09 students/alumni were felicitated for grant of patent. In 2025, 02 faculty members and 04 students and alumni of IGNOU were selected for felicitation.

8.2.11 Other Competitions

National Science Day Competitions

NCIDE and SOS, with the help of the Regional Services Division and the Regional Centres, celebrated the National Science Day over a period of one month. Three competitions were organised for the IGNOU students and alumni through all the Regional Centres. These were:

- (i) Poster Making Competition on Science, Technology and Innovations for National Development.
- (ii) Essay Writing Competition on Science, Technology and Innovations for National Development.
- (iii) Ideathon – Idea Competition on Science, Technology and Innovations for National Development.

The basic objectives of these competitions were to encourage IGNOU students towards creativity,

critical thinking and innovation, and to inculcate scientific temper among IGNOU students and make them think scientifically. All the Regional Centres of IGNOU organised these activities at the Regional Centres level and also encouraged students to participate in these activities. The selected winners were invited to join the Award function and the final National Science Day programme held on February 28, 2023. The final concluding programme was organised in hybrid mode.

Swachhata Abhiyan Competitions

As part of the Swachhata Abhiyan, NCIDE, IGNOU conducted certain competitions. These were:

- (i) **Swachhata Ki Ore – Innovative Approaches towards Cleanliness:** Under this initiative, various innovative approaches towards cleanliness by the faculty members of IGNOU were identified and highlighted.
- (ii) **Swachhata Ideathon-2024:** An Idea competition was organised inviting entries from IGNOU students on ideas, business idea and prototypes developed towards Swachhata.

The objective was to identify, recognise and highlight various innovative initiatives towards cleanliness by the faculty members and students. The names of the winners were announced virtually on the occasion of World Environment Day 2025.

8.3 Showcasing Innovation and Startups

A large number of IGNOU students and alumni have developed innovations and have set up their startups. In order to provide them an opportunity to showcase their innovations and startups. NCIDE, IGNOU has been organizing events, fests, and exhibitions. These events help them to come on one national platform, showcase their work and network with other innovators, mentors, investors and industry people.

8.3.1 IGNOU Udyami Samagam-2023

An event to showcase innovations and startups was organised on July 14, 2023 as IGNOU Udyami Samagam-2023. Shri Om Birla, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Government of India visited IGNOU on July 15, 2023, and inaugurated the *IGNOU Udyami Samagam*, an exhibition to showcase the startup initiatives by IGNOU students and alumni. The selected 13 students/alumni, mainly from Delhi NCR and surrounding states, were invited to exhibit their venture. The basic objectives of the IGNOU Udyami Samagam were to showcase the startups and entrepreneurial initiatives of the IGNOU students and alumni, and provide a national platform to the IGNOU Udyamis' to network with each other.





8.3.2 IGNOU Innovators' Meet

On the occasion of World Creativity and Innovation Day, and National Innovation Day NCIDE, IGNOU organised Innovators' Meet in 2023 and 2024 in online mode. The objective was to share and showcase various innovative initiatives taken up by IGNOU students. Student innovators of IGNOU, particularly, Student Innovation Awardees during the last few years, were invited to present their innovations in front of other students and teachers. Some programmes were telecast live on YouTube and Facebook for wider reach to the students and alumni.



8.3.3 IGNOU Startup Fest-2023

For the first time to recognise the innovative efforts made by the students and alumni to set up their business ventures and to provide them a common platform in physical form, IGNOU organised a Startup Fest-2023 on July 02, 2023. In this event, nine startup initiatives by IGNOU students and alumni from Delhi NCR were exhibited. The idea was to recognise and appreciate the effort towards becoming job providers rather than job seekers.



Hon'ble Minister of State for Education, Dr. Subhas Sarkar inaugurated the Startup Fest-2023 organised by the NCIDE, IGNOU.



8.3.4 Innovation and Startup Fest-2024

On the occasion of the 39th Foundation Day of the University held on November 19, 2024, IGNOU organised an *Innovation and Startup Fest-2024: An Exhibition of Innovations and Startups by IGNOU students*. The event was meant to recognise the efforts of our talented students and alumni, and inspire others to explore innovation and entrepreneurship. The aim was to showcase the achievements of IGNOU students and alumni in the field of innovation and startups. The event was graced by the presence of Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Hon'ble Minister of State, Ministry

of Education, Government of India, Prof. T. G. Sitharam, Chairman, AICTE, and Prof. Uma Kanjilal, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU. A total 17 startups and innovations by IGNOU students/alumni participated in the Innovation and Startup Fest-2024. These also included the winners of the Best Startup Award-2024, Best Innovation Award-2024, and Best Business Plan Award-2024.



8.4 Conclusion

Showcasing these innovations through platforms like Udyami Samagam, and Startup Fests provided valuable visibility to the innovator and entrepreneur students of IGNOU. Through these initiatives IGNOU enlightened the path for a large group of learners to innovate and inspire. The recognition of faculty through the Best Innovative Practices Award has enabled the University to identify the innovative practices and implement them across the system.

9. Publications and Documents

9.1 Introduction

To facilitate easy reference by scholars, policymakers and other stakeholders, the NCIDE documents and disseminates the policies and practices of innovations in distance education throughout the entire ODL system in the country and abroad. The reports of the research studies, seminars, conferences, etc. are prepared and published from time to time. Innovations, innovative practices and startup initiatives by the students and faculty are documented in the form of books and booklets, and they are disseminated both in print and digital forms.

9.2 Monthly Newsletter on Innovation

To share and disseminate innovative ideas, innovations and innovative practices, the Centre brings out an eNewsletter 'Ennovate' with articles/contributions from IGNOU faculty and eminent experts. The eNewsletter is brought out every month and is disseminated among the various stakeholders of the Higher Education System including IGNOU faculty and staff.



9.3 Publication of Books and Booklets

In order to document innovations and startups in different fields and create reference material, NCIDE has published several books and booklets as listed below:

1. Stories of Innovations by IGNOU Students, 2023
2. IGNOU's Initiatives towards *Atmanirbhar Bharat*
3. Innovation by IGNOU Students-2024
4. Innovation by IGNOU Students-2023
5. Innovation by IGNOU Students-2022

6. Innovation by IGNOU Students-2021
7. Innovation by IGNOU Students-2020
8. Innovation in Open and Distance Learning for Students Education



9.4 Publications of Reports

During the last five years, NCIDE has brought out detailed reports of various activities, programmes, and research studies for the purpose of documentation and future reference. A list of the same is given below:

1. Report of Mentor-Mentee Programme-2021-22
2. Report of IGNOU IIC 3.0
3. Report of IGNOU IIC 4.0
4. Report of IGNOU IIC 5.0
5. Report of IGNOU IIC 6.0
6. Report of Mentor-Mentee Programme-2023-24
7. Report of SEED Programme
8. Report of EMPC Research Study the Utilization of Gyan Darshan TV and Gyan Vani FM Channels of EMPC, IGNOU

9.5 Learning Resources on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

NCIDE has generated a large body of useful knowledge and information on innovation and entrepreneurship related topics for the innovators. The Centre has been organising various activities and generating resources on innovation, entrepreneurship, and startups. Several eminent experts have contributed their knowledge to these topics. NCIDE faculty have been developing resource materials on innovation and creativity for the benefit of the faculty and students. NCIDE faculty have been delivering expert lectures online and has also been writing articles and papers from time to time which are published in different IGNOU social media platforms (Facebook and YouTube channels), magazines, books and newsletters, etc.

9.6 Conclusion

The Centre has developed a strong culture of sharing knowledge and best practices through its various publication initiatives. Through methodical documentation, NCIDE ensures that the achievements of IGNOU's innovator students and faculty are preserved for future generations.

10. Awards and Achievements

10.1 Introduction

As a result of large number of activities, programmes, and workshops, undertaken by the NCIDE, IGNOU, the University as well as the students have gained recognition and received several awards. Below is a summary of the various achievements and honors received.

10.2 Awards and Achievements by the University

Over the last several years, NCIDE has been consistently providing and supporting the culture of innovation and startup in the University. Both students and faculty are being encouraged, motivated and empowered to do innovation and take entrepreneurial initiatives. As a result of which, IGNOU has received several awards and received recognition by the Ministry of Education and other organisations.

10.2.1 IIC-IGNOU Awarded 5 Stars Rating by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC)

For fostering innovation and startup in the University, the IIC was awarded 5 Stars rating by the Ministry of Education for organizing various kinds of activities to promote and support innovation, startups and entrepreneurship in the University during 2019-20. The IGNOU IIC innovation rank is among the top 25 higher education institutes in the country and it stands among the best five institutes in the North-West region.



10.2.2 IGNOU Ranked Number-1 in Atal Ranking of Institutions for Innovation Achievements-2021 (ARIIA-2021)

IGNOU was Ranked Number-1 in Atal Ranking of Institutions for Innovation Achievements-2021 (ARIIA-2021) by the Ministry of Education under the category of Institutes of National Importance, Central Universities and CFI (non-technical) for promoting Innovation and Startups in the University.



10.2.3 Continued Top Star Rating for IGNOU in Promoting Innovation and Startup during 2020-2024

IGNOU has been continuously ranked with Four Star Rating as one of the top performers in the field of promoting Innovation and Startup during 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC).



10.2.4 Best Centre Award-2022 to NCIDE by IGNOU

The National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education was awarded with the Best Centre Award-2022 by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Culture, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal ji in the presence of Prof. Rakesh Sinha, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, Prof. Nageshwar Rao on the Foundation Day of the University i.e. on November 19, 2022. The performance of the centre was evaluated mainly on the four parameters including the Achievements and Recognitions, Innovative Initiatives, Technological Interventions and other New Initiatives.



10.2.5 Entrepreneurship Catalyst Award-2025

Indira Gandhi National Open University was awarded with the Entrepreneurship Catalyst Award -2025 in an event 'SBI College Youth Ideathon -2025' organised jointly by the Think Startup, IIT Delhi and Management Entrepreneurship and Professional Skills Council (MEPSE) on 05th April, 2025 at IIT Delhi.



10.3 Awards and Achievements Received by the Students

For the last several years, the NCIDE at IGNOU has been recognizing, supporting, guiding and mentoring several such startup initiatives by IGNOU students and alumni. Many of them have been recognised by other organisations.

10.3.1 Anveshan: Research Convention of Association of Indian Universities (AIU), New Delhi

The NCIDE nominates IGNOU students to participate in “Anveshan: Student Research Convention,” an initiative of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) held annually at the North Zone level. This convention aims to identify young and rising talents and to promote them through appropriate encouragement and incentives, while also seeking to commercialize their research projects in collaboration with industry. NCIDE provides mentoring support to help these students effectively participate and succeed in this event. Since 2019, NCIDE has



nominated students to attend Anveshan. In 2024, five students were nominated, and two of them won the first and third prizes in the north zonal competition.



10.3.2 IGNOU Student Innovator Selected at National Level with a Grant of Rs. 7.0 Lakhs by MIC

One of the students from IGNOU, Mr. Nandu Surendran, was selected in the final round of the National Innovation Contest 2020. He received a financial grant of ₹7 lakh for his innovation, “Oncosense,” awarded by the Ministry of Education’s Innovation Cell. Mr. Surendran is pursuing a BSc program at IGNOU. The National Centre for Innovation and Development in Education (NCIDE) has provided guidance and encouragement throughout his innovation journey.



He participated in the National Innovation Contest 2020, which aimed to recognise innovative ideas, and award to the winners. Out of approximately one hundred shortlisted candidates from across India, a total of 45 candidates were selected. OncoSense is a revolutionary next-generation MRI Contrast Media containing super paramagnetic iron oxide nanoparticles conjugated with a patent-pending tumour targeting peptide, which can be used for very early diagnosis of carcinomas.

10.3.3 IGNOU Student Mr. Dhruven Dilip Bhalerao Awarded First Prize in the AMRUT- AICTE Millet Recipe Unleashing Talent – A Millet Recipe Preparation Competition

AMRUT – “AICTE Millet Recipe Unleashing Talent” was India’s first campaign to promote millet globally through a recipe preparation competition. The Grand Finale took place at the AICTE Headquarters in New Delhi. AICTE Chairman, Prof. T. G. Sitharam, recognised and rewarded the winning teams for their outstanding culinary creations. A total of more than 1,200 teams from across India participated in AMRUT. After rigorous evaluation by an expert committee, 88 teams across nine categories were shortlisted for the Grand Finale. Each of the nine winning teams received a cash prize of Rs. 1 Lakh.



Mr. Dhruven Dilip Bhalerao, a student from IGNOU, was the only solo participant and competed in all categories. He was selected in two categories: starters and dessert, using 30-50% millet in his recipes. Dhruven was awarded first prize in the dessert category during the Grand Finale at AICTE Headquarters in New Delhi. He received a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 1 Lakh.



10.3.4 IGNOU student, Mr. Dhruven Dilip Bhalerao Wins the PREserve Global Student Entrepreneurship Award of Entrepreneurship Organisation (GSEA EO Pune) with cash prize of rupees 1 Lakh

Mr. Dhruven Dilip Bhalerao, an IGNOU student, was the winner of the PREserve Global Student Entrepreneurship Award (GSEA) from the Entrepreneurship Organisation (EO) Pune. He received a cash prize of ₹1 lakh and was subsequently nominated for the India Chapter of the Entrepreneurship Organisation, which is a global institution with 61 member countries.



10.3.5 IGNOU Student Dhruven Dilip Bhalerao Finalist at Startup Fest at BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus

Dhruven Dilip Bhalerao, Student Innovator of IGNOU participated in Launchpad Startup Fest at BITS Pilani Hyderabad Campus. He was a finalist in two events:

In Ground Reality – Startup Business Plan Competition, he received the Best Social Impact Award in this competition. The jury appreciated his venture and showed interest in funding it.



In Beyond Profits – Research Paper Presentation, he presented his research paper based on his ground report on water bodies, microplastics, and their effects and was declared the winner of the competition. He received a cash prize of Rupees Fifty Thousand.

10.3.6 Startup by IGNOU Student Receives the “Best Startup of the Year 2023” Award

Digital Labour Chowk – a startup by a IGNOU student Mr. Chandrashekhhar Mandal secured the coveted Best Startup of the Year 2023 award at Excelerate 2.0-Tech for Real event. This significant event, a leading platform exploring the fusion of technology and real estate, showcased Digital Labour Chowk’s dedication to innovation and its transformative influence on blue-collar employment.



10.3.7 IGNOU Students Win the Smart India Hackathon 2022

The team of 6 IGNOU students led by Kunal Ambasta was selected as the first Prize winner in Smart India Hackathon 2022 Grand Finale organised by the MOE on 25-26 August, 2022. The winning team was awarded a cash prize of Rs. One Lakh by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Kunal Ambasta is also IGNOU Student Innovation Awardee.



10.3.8 IGNOU Innovator Student Kunal Ambasta completes a course at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

IGNOU Innovator Student Kunal Ambasta completed a short-term course on “Innovation Leadership” from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is the winner of the Student Innovation Award for the year 2021 and SIH 2022 for his innovation KEYA-AI (AI Powered Total Offline Complete Home Automation System).



10.3.9 IGNOU Innovator Student Dr. Ajay Kumar Choubey awarded with the Best Innovation Award by MPCST

IGNOU innovator student, Dr. Ajay Kumar Choubey, was awarded with the Best Innovation Award by the Madhya Pradesh Council of Science and Technology (MPCST) in the 10th Bhopal Science Fair organised jointly by the MPCST and Vigyan Bharti from 15-18 September, 2023. Dr. Choubey was awarded the First prize for Grass Root Innovation. He was also awarded with the Science Pavilion Award. He won this award for his Manually Operated Briquetting machine. By this machine waste like stubble, sawdust, paper, biomass, can be converted into briquettes which can be used as fuel. The machine is low cost, manually operated, and easy to assemble. Briquettes which are produced can be used in restaurant, boiler-based industries, or various commercial purposes.



He was earlier awarded with the Best Innovation Award in the year 2022 by the NCIDE, IGNOU for his innovation. Recently he participated in the Startup Exhibition organised by the CSIR- NIScPR as part of the India Startup Revolution Programme 2023.

10.3.10 Dr. Ajay Kumar Choubey selected for Five Lakh rupees Grant under YUKTI National Innovation Challenge-2023 of MOE

MOE's Innovation Cell (MIC) organised YUKTI National Innovation Challenge-2023. More than five thousand entries from HEIs were received by the MIC. Out of which total 441 teams were selected for the final round for funding assessment phase. Finally, a total of 135 innovations were



found eligible to receive the funding support from AICTE and MOE's Innovation Cell to work on their innovations to refine further and transform it into startups. Dr. Ajay Kumar Choubey, was selected among these finalists with a funding grant of Five Lakh Rupees, under the YUKTI National Innovation Challenge-2023. He is working on his innovation under the mentorship of NCIDE to scale up his innovation and further improve upon the features and utility of the product.

10.3.11 IGNOU Student Mr. Tapanjeet Singh Participated in IDE Bootcamp

Tapanjeet Singh, IGNOU student, Founder and CEO of Creamymaza, participated in the 2nd Edition of the Innovation Design and Entrepreneurship (IDE) Bootcamp, which was organised by The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) collaboration from September 23, 2024-September 27, 2024 at Integral University, Lucknow. Tapanjeet Singh secured 2nd place in the Idea pitching competition, which showcased the potential of Creamymaza's innovative offerings.

The initiative, aims to nurture the innovation, design, and entrepreneurial skills of student innovators and innovation ambassadors from higher education institutes and schools.



10.4 Conclusion

The consistent recognition from the Ministry of Education and various national organisations demonstrates the University's commitment to progress. The achievements and awards received by IGNOU and its students exhibit an outstanding journey of excellence in innovation and startup.

11. The Way Forward

11.1 Introduction

To meet the current needs and future goals, it is essential to develop a robust and sustainable Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) ecosystem that aligns with key aspects of national policies on education, innovation, and startups. Aligning with the need of the hour and the futuristic goals, the roadmap to make the Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) ecosystem robust and sustainable must factor in the key aspects of the national policies on education, innovation and startups. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the National Innovation and Startup Policy, IGNOU's Innovation and Startup Policy, and initiatives like *Viksit Bharat@2047*, *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, and *Swadeshi* policies should be central considerations for IGNOU as it plans and designs the way forward. To achieve this, IGNOU must strategically leverage its unique distance and online learning model, along with its extensive regional network, while introducing new instruments for strengthening the I&E ecosystem. The key areas of the future roadmap are outlined below.

11.2 Seed fund for startups

For an early-stage startup, seed funding can be a deciding factor in ensuring its viability. Therefore, to ensure the success of the fledgling startups, IGNOU should establish a seed fund. This crucial financial assistance to the selected students and faculty would help them to convert their ideas into prototypes, IPR filing, and viable business ventures.

11.3 Physical incubation facility

The establishment of a physical incubation facility at the headquarters, along with innovation hubs at the Regional Centres in a hub-and-spoke model, will enhance outreach. This initiative will provide mentorship, support for business plan development, guidance on intellectual property, and access to a vast network of alumni and industry experts for aspiring innovators across various locations in the country. The output of IGNOU in terms of annual innovations and startups will achieve a significant boost, thus contributing to the goals of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat by 2047*. To support this, the University should establish zone-wise Innovation Clusters to systematically carryout the innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives for students and alumni.

11.4 Collaboration

Connections with industry experts, academia, alumni, government, and angel investors not only provide crucial experience and practical training to innovate and establish business ventures but also provide essential early-stage capital. Similarly, government schemes facilitate capacity building and funding for various business and startup related activities. IGNOU needs to focus on broadening the network of industry, academia, and alumni to facilitate the innovators of the University in all possible collaborations. Some of the ways could be collaboration between innovators and entrepreneurs, collaboration with other academic institutions, collaboration with other incubators, and collaboration with industry and corporate houses.

11.5 Industry 5.0 -Enabled Ecosystem for Incubation

A seamless smart digital ecosystem should be established using new technologies like AI and Industry 5.0 tools to provide personalised remote mentorship, business plan development support, intellectual property guidance, and access to an extensive alumni and industry expert network for aspiring student entrepreneurs across diverse locations.

11.6 Enriching existing curricula with practical entrepreneurship modules

The NCIDE should work towards integrating the practical aspects of entrepreneurship and design thinking courses into relevant curricula. Complemented by practical activities, such as regular online bootcamps, hackathons, and pitching competitions, such enriched courses will foster an innovation-driven mindset. This will ensure broad accessibility and nurture a vibrant, supportive community for its diverse aspiring student innovators.

11.7 Establishment of R&D Cell

To promote swadeshi, market and research driven innovations and entrepreneurship ventures for *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat @2047*, the NCIDE plans to establish an R&D Cell for Innovation, to facilitate multidisciplinary and translational research as institutional research facilities encouraging innovations. The cell envisions to support R&D to enhance creativity and research skills, and the commercialisation of new ideas. This will create a vibrant system that supports intellectual property generation, deep-tech research, and industry-academia collaboration, thus strengthening and sustaining Innovation and Entrepreneurship ecosystem in the University, contributing towards an *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat@2047*.

11.8 Conclusion

With the forward-looking government policies and the visionary ideas of *Swadeshi*, *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat @2047*, it is an opportune moment for IGNOU to steer its students and faculty towards innovation and entrepreneurship and turn its I&E ecosystem into a robust and sustainable environment. With the envisioned way forward, IGNOU is poised to strengthen its position as a leading higher educational institution thereby contributing significantly to the *Swadeshi*, *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and *Viksit Bharat @2047* missions of India.



**CENTRE FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (CIQA)
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI-110068**

**F. NO. CIQA/2/NAAC Act. Committ./2025/479
Date: 20th March 2025**

NOTIFICATION No. 2

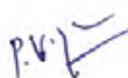
With the approval of the competent authority, a committee has been constituted to assist the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) in documenting IGNOU's best practices related to NAAC activities on "Innovation and startups ". This will ensure smooth coordination and timely completion of tasks for the 2nd cycle of NAAC accreditation and the NIRF 2026 ranking of the University.

The committee comprises the following members:

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| 1. Dr. O.P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE | - | Chairperson |
| 2. Prof. Vijayakumar P., Director, CIQA | - | Member |
| 3. Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit, Addl. Director, NCIDE | - | Member |
| 4. Dr. Sujata Santosh, Asst. Director, NCIDE | - | Member |
| 5. Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, OSD, CIQA | - | Member |
| 6. Dr. Shekhar Suman, AD, CIQA | - | Member |
| 7. Dr. Navita Abrol, DD, CIQA | - | Convener |

The task needs to be completed on or before 31st May 2025.

This notification is issued with the approval of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor.


(Prof. Vijayakumar P.)
Director, CIQA



**INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (CIQA)
MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI-110 068**

**MINUTES OF THE 1st MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON “INNOVATION AND STARTUPS” ON
8TH APRIL 2025 AT 11.30 AM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, NCIDE, IGNOU, MAIDAN GARHI,
NEW DELHI-110 068.**

Following attended the meeting on 8th April 2025:

Dr. O.P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE	Chairperson
Prof. Vijayakumar P., Director, CIQA	Member
Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit, Addl. Director, NCIDE	Member
Dr. Sujata Santosh, Asst. Director, NCIDE	Member
Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, OSD, CIQA	Member
Dr. Shekhar Suman, AD, CIQA	Member
Dr. Navita Abrol, DD, CIQA	Member & Convener

Proceedings of the Meeting

Dr. Navita Abrol, Deputy Director, CIQA and Convener of the Committee, welcomed the Chairperson and all esteemed members to the first meeting of the Committee on “**Innovation and Startups**.” She emphasized that the purpose of this committee is to holistically document the IGNOU’s efforts in innovation & Startups, Awards & Recognitions in the field of innovation & start-ups, achievements in the field of innovation & startups during the last five years. She requested Director CIQA, Prof. Vijayakumar P to elaborate the purpose of the meeting to the members. He briefed the committee about the purpose and expected outcomes. He explained that the Committee would be responsible for compiling a comprehensive and evidence-based document showcasing IGNOU’s innovation and start-ups practices, innovations in curriculum design, student support etc.

Dr O.P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE and Chairperson of the Committee, in his opening remarks, highlighted the continuous efforts made by the NCIDE in the field of innovations ad start-up. He emphasized that the innovations and start-ups are the USP of any institution, hence systematic documentation of related initiatives and innovations would contribute meaningfully to both institutional self-improvement and external quality assessments.

Tentative Structure and Allocation of Sections

After detailed deliberations the following structure was decided and responsibilities for drafting specific sections were allocated to the centres as under:

Structure and Responsibilities

S.No	Section	Responsibility
1	Introduction (Genesis of NCIDE, objective of the document,)	NCIDE
2	Innovation Ecosystem	NCIDE
3	Policies and Schemes (on innovation and start up)	NCIDE
4	Innovation & Startups	NCIDE
5	Awards & Recognitions	NCIDE
6	Achievements (Innovation & Startups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the University • By the faculty members • By the Students 	NCIDE
7	Collaboration and Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Institutions • Incubators • Alumni Entrepreneurs • Industry and Corporate houses 	NCIDE
8	Workshops & Training (Capacity Building on I & E) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners • Faculty 	NCIDE
9	Patents & IPR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patent Facilitation Unit 	NCIDE
10	Publications and Documents on Innovation	NCIDE
11	Innovative Best Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Design & Development • Instructional Design & Pedagogy • Learner Support Services • Examination & Evaluation • Promoting Innovation & Startups 	CIQA
12	Success Stories (at least 2-3)	NCIDE
13	Pathways to promote entrepreneurial skills (innovative pedagogy, skill-based courses, pedagogy to promote innovation & startups)	NCIDE
14	Incentivizing students, staff and faculty for their innovative pursuits and start-ups Incubation and pre-incubation centres to support innovation and start-ups &	NCIDE
15	The Way Forward (Institution of seed fund for innovation, collaborations for promoting innovation etc)	NCIDE & CIQA

Timeline and Next Steps

The chairperson co-opted Dr Moumita Das, Deputy Director of NCIDE as a member of the committee. It was decided that the first complete draft of the document is expected to be finalized by the **First week of May 2025**. CIQA will coordinate follow-ups and provide support in standardizing formatting and structure.

Dr O P Sharma
Chairperson of the committee

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