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UPGRADATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE 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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INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY (IGNOU)
MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI - 110068

Preparation Team



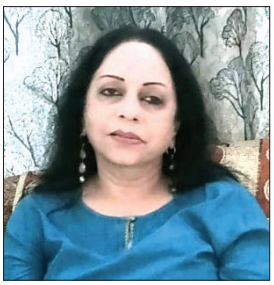
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Foreword



It gives me immense pleasure to present this comprehensive report on the recent initiatives undertaken by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in strengthening and upgrading its physical and technological infrastructure. As the world's largest open university, IGNOU has always endeavoured to provide accessible, flexible, and quality education to millions of learners, and such a mission calls for a robust support system that can keep pace with the dynamic demands of higher education in the digital era.

The document highlights three major areas of focus. First, the physical infrastructure upgrades ranging from the acquisition of land and construction of new Regional Centre buildings to the renovation of existing complexes, installation of solar power systems, energy-efficient lighting, and procurement of modern furniture and equipment. These measures not only expand IGNOU's reach across the country but also enhance the quality of facilities available to our staff, learners, and visitors.

Second, the technological infrastructure upgrades reflect IGNOU's commitment to harnessing the power of technology in education. The adoption of advanced systems such as SAMARTH ERP, the setting up of HD studios, digitisation of library resources, establishment of smart classrooms, and development of Learning Management Systems are critical steps in making education more interactive, learner-centric, and future-ready. Through these advancements, IGNOU continues to support large-scale initiatives like SWAYAM and SWAYAMPRABHA while also empowering learners through innovative digital platforms.

Third, the report underscores the maintenance of infrastructure, an often overlooked yet crucial aspect of sustainability. The active roles played by various divisions and centres *viz*. Construction and Maintenance Division, Computer Division, Material Production and Distribution Division, Centre for Online Education, Electronic Media Production Centre and Regional Centres ensure that the infrastructure remains efficient, resilient, and responsive to the needs of learners and educators alike.

Together, these initiatives reflect IGNOU's vision of continuous improvement, sustainability, and excellence in open, distance and digital learning. As we move forward, these infrastructural foundations will not only enhance the learning experience of our learners but will also contribute to building a stronger knowledge society in India and beyond.

Prof. Uma Kanjilal
Vice Chancellor
Indira Gandhi National Open University

Acknowledgement



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 task 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 greatly strengthened the University's internal quality systems and have contributed meaningfully to projecting IGNOU's distinct status as a national resource in the field of open and distance education, and online education. Their work reflects not only professional excellence but also a shared vision of advancing IGNOU's mission of inclusive and quality higher education across the country and beyond. CIQA acknowledges the contribution of the Centre for Online Education, Electronic Media Production Centre, Regional Services Division, Construction and Maintenance Division, Computer Division, Library and Documentation Division, and Administration Division, for providing the necessary information and access to its records which helped in completing the document on *"Upgradation of Infrastructure at IGNOU (2020-2025)"*.

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 preparation team from for their valuable contributions, without which the timely completion of this critical institutional endeavour would not have been possible.

Prof. Vijayakumar P.
Director, CIQA
Indira Gandhi National Open University

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985, notified in the Gazette of India on 20 September 1985. Today, IGNOU has emerged as a premier higher education institution in the field of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), catering to the educational aspirations of millions of learners across the country and abroad. To fulfil its mandate of democratizing education and reaching the unreached, the University relies extensively on its infrastructure, both physical and digital, which form the backbone of its operations. Since its establishment in 1985, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has consistently upgraded its physical and technological infrastructure to respond to successive generations of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and, more recently, open, distance and digital learning (ODDL).

In its first generation (mid-1980s to mid-1990s), the University focused on building a nationwide physical infrastructure to democratize higher education. This included the development of a vast network of Regional Centres and Study Centres across States and Union Territories, enabling last-mile learner support in urban, rural, and remote areas. Academic Blocks, libraries, laboratories for science programmes, and audio-video production facilities were established at the Headquarters located at New Delhi, while robust printing and distribution systems were created to support the large-scale production and dispatch of self-instructional study materials, the backbone of first-generation ODL.

During the second generation (late 1990s to 2009), the University expanded and modernized its infrastructure to integrate broadcast and teleconferencing technologies. Dedicated studio complexes and media production facilities were strengthened, leading to the launch of educational television and radio initiatives, including GyanDarshan and GyanVani channels, in collaboration with national agencies. Teleconferencing facilities were installed at Regional Centres, enabling two-way academic interaction. Computerization of administrative processes began in a phased manner, with digitized student registration, examination processing, and results management systems enhancing efficiency and transparency.

The third generation (2010 onwards) witnessed a decisive shift towards digital platforms and online learning ecosystems. High-capacity data centres, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and integrated student support portals were developed and deployed to manage the University's large learner base. The launch of dedicated online admission and re-registration portals significantly streamlined learner services. Learning Management System (LMS) was deployed to host programme content, facilitate discussion forums, and enable online assignment submission. The University strengthened its digital repository and e-content development infrastructure, aligning with national initiatives such as SWAYAM and SWAYAMPRABHA, and enhanced bandwidth and server capacities to support large-scale online delivery. Smart classrooms, video conferencing systems, and webinar platforms were installed to enable synchronous academic engagement across geographical boundaries.

In the post-2020 phase, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, IGNOU further consolidated its technological infrastructure by scaling up cloud-based services, virtual classrooms, online proctoring mechanisms, and digital evaluation systems. Physical infrastructure was simultaneously

modernized with upgraded learner support centres, improved ICT-enabled classrooms, and enhanced accessibility features to support inclusive education. The University also invested in cybersecurity frameworks, data protection systems, and integrated digital dashboards for academic monitoring, quality assurance and decision making. Across nearly four decades, IGNOU's infrastructure evolution reflects a calibrated transition from print-dominated correspondence education to a technology-enabled, multi-modal, and globally connected ODDL and online education system (Fig. 1). By continuously aligning its physical and digital capacities with pedagogical innovation and national policy directions, the University has strengthened its ability to serve diverse learners at scale with socially and academically relevant programmes while maintaining academic standards and operational resilience.

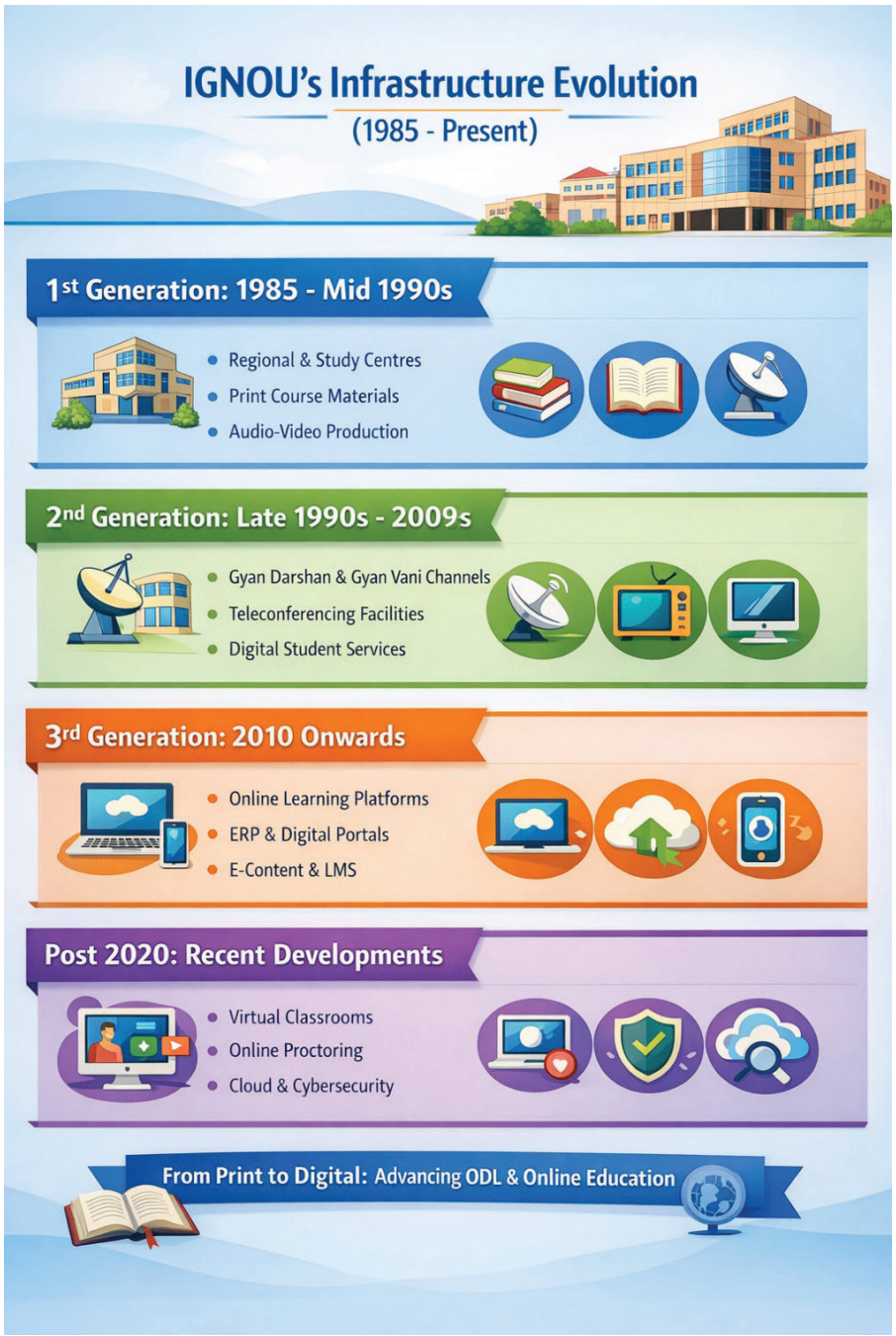


Figure 1: IGNOU's Infrastructure Evolution

2. THE GENESIS OF IGNOU'S INFRASTRUCTURE (1985–2019)

2.1 Development of Physical Infrastructure

Soon after its establishment in 1985, 150 acres of land at Maidan Garhi Village was allotted to IGNOU. The Foundation Stone of the University was laid on 19th November, 1985. Initially, the University became operational from hired office accommodation at YMCA Cultural Centre, Sarvapriya Vihar, and Hauz Khas locations in New Delhi. Subsequently, some more space was hired in East of Kailash, Safdarjung Development Area, and Tughlakabad Institutional Area.

Simultaneously, the construction activity at the IGNOU campus in Maidan Garhi commenced. In 1987, negotiations were started for construction of temporary structure at Maidan Garhi Campus. Work for construction of temporary structure was assigned to M/s Hindustan Prefab Ltd. and Campus Construction Division was created in the University to oversee the construction activities. The University shifted to the temporary structures at the Maidan Garhi Campus in August 1989. An Agreement was signed with Architect M/s Sharat Das and Associates for the construction of permanent buildings namely, the Academic Complex and Residential Complex and accordingly the contract for this was assigned to CPWD. The Design of IGNOU housing complex was finalised through an open competition. Accordingly, the Foundation stone for both the above projects was laid in 1994. During the same year, the construction of an Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC) (two video studios and two audio studios) began at IGNOU HQs and M/s Yamashita was appointed as consultants and, a consortium of M/s Mitsui Company and M/s Tomen Cooperation were chosen as contractors for the construction. The EMPC became operational in 1997. However, the Residential Complex at Maidan Garhi Campus was ready for occupation in 1998. Construction of Student Services Centre, new office block, two warehouses, a police post, and a bank building was completed in 1999. The Distance Education Council (DEC) building was inaugurated in 2000. Construction of Convention Centre, guest houses, and a part of residential campus was given to M/s Engineers India Limited in 2001. Construction of DEC 2 Building was completed in 2003. The Academic Complex became operational in 2004. The Convention Centre was completed in 2006. Extensive campus development activities were undertaken in 2010, and the work of construction of Vice Chancellor's Office (VCO), International Guest House at the headquarters (HQs) was awarded to M/s Roshan Real Estate Private Limited. The new classroom block was inaugurated in 2010. New building for VCO was inaugurated in 2011. Inauguration of Block 15 for new Schools took place in 2013. The Public Information Unit building was inaugurated in 2014.

2.2 Development of Technological Infrastructure

Post-production centre for development of audio-video programmes became operational at IGNOU in 1991. In the same year, Doordarshan started beaming IGNOU's video programmes. AIR started broadcasting IGNOU programmes from Bombay and Hyderabad. IGNOU-ISRO project for establishing a one-way video, two-way audio teleconferencing network and the establishment of audio teleconferencing facility connecting all RCs and 3 State Open Universities with IGNOU HQs

became operational in 1994. The Satellite Earth Station was inaugurated in 1999. IGNOU's national educational telecast channel GyanDarshan was inaugurated in 2000, which was made a 24-hour channel in 2001. First GyanVani FM radio channel at Allahabad was inaugurated and Interactive Radio Counselling (IRC) became operational in 2001. In September, 2004 EDUSAT, the dedicated satellite for education was launched. Prasar Bharati agreed to place two channels of Gyan Darshan i.e. GD-1 and GD-2 on Direct to Home (DTH) platform of DD Direct Plus.

In the year 1997, there was a major shift in the technological infrastructure of the University from DOS-based computers to WINDOWS-NT based Networking of HQs and RCs through LAN and WAN by providing email and internet facilities to Schools, Divisions and RCs. IGNOU website was launched and LAN was setup at IGNOU HQs in 2000. Virtual campus initiative through agreement with ED-EXEL Foundation was launched in 2000. IGNOU's Virtual Campus portal was inaugurated in 2004 for Foreign Service Officers Institute. 'ODL Soft (Smart Solution for Open and Distance learning)'-ERP Project was launched in collaboration with TCS in 2007 which became operational in 2010. IGNOU's new website was launched in October 2010 which was designed by Indo-Asian News Services. Three main gateways: About IGNOU, Student Zone and Bulletin Board were launched on IGNOU website. In 2011, an automated Admission Management System and an Automated Examination Management System were introduced in ORACLE environment. IGNOU's Student Management System (ISMS) was developed in 2012. In 2025, IGNOU was identified as the National Coordinator for the SWAYAM (for Diploma and Certificate level courses) and SWAYAM PRABHA project of the MOE. Under the SWAYAM PRABHA project, IGNOU was entrusted with managing 5 DTH channels. The Campus Wi-Fi Connect Project, Funded by Government of India was operationalized at the HQs in 2016.

Virtual learning environment was introduced at IGNOU HQs and RCs under NODLINET programme of IGNOU Library. The IGNOU Library acquired the core membership of e-*Shodhsindhu* Consortium providing access to an estimated 75,000 e-journals and 1711 e-books and signed an MoU with *Shodhganga*, a UGC-INFLIBNET project in 2016. GyanDhara an internet based interactive radio counselling / web radio service for the learners was launched in the same year. A new Online Admission software was developed in-house and launched by the University in 2017. Also, the soft copies of select courses were made available on demand to learners having visual impairment in the year 2017. An online grievance redressal mechanism named IGNOU Grievance Redressal Management (iGRAM) was launched in 2017. The University introduced QR Code to provide individual support to learners in 2019. The Social Media channels of the University on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were launched in 2019. The University started using Samarth platform provided by MOE for digitalization of various processes in 2020. Automation of Question Paper Bank, Printing, and Delivery of Question Papers (QPs) at the IGNOU Examination Centres was launched in 2021. Digitalization of Academic Certificate and Digital distribution of Degree/ Diploma /Certificate using Blockchain Technology was introduced in 2023.

2.3 Construction of Regional Centres' Buildings

For the first time in the history of IGNOU, the land for construction of permanent buildings for Regional Centres at Bhubaneswar, Patna, and Kochi was acquired in 1993. Thereafter, the process

for acquiring land for setting up of permanent buildings at Regional Centres continued. The State Governments of the various States provided the land to the University free of cost for five Regional Centres *viz.* Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Madurai, and Shillong. The land was leased at a nominal cost by the State Governments for two Regional Centres *viz.* Cochin, and Patna. The University purchased land for construction of the Lucknow Regional Centre from Uttar Pradesh *Avas-Vikas Parishad*. Buildings were purchased for three Regional Centres *viz.* Kolkata in 1997 (West Bengal Housing Board), Jaipur in 2002 (Rajasthan Housing Board), and Raipur in 2014 (Chhattisgarh Housing Board).

The details are provided in Table 1 and the pictures of the Regional Centre buildings are shown in Fig. 2.

Table 1: Details of Construction and Acquisition of Regional Centres Buildings (Since inception till 2019)

Sl. No.	Name of the Regional Centre	Year of construction of permanent building	Purchased/ acquired building	Expenditure incurred (in Rupees)	Source of funding
1.	Kolkata	-	1997	NA	IGNOU
2.	Ahmedabad	2001	-	1,70,93,677	IGNOU
3.	Khanna	-	2001	Leased by State Govt.	IGNOU
4.	Bhubaneswar	2002	-	10,78,71,473	IGNOU
5.	Jaipur	-	2002	10,26,6,256	IGNOU
6.	Kochi	2003	-	11,54,16,231	IGNOU
7.	Madurai	2010	-	5,00,00,000	IGNOU
8.	Bhopal	2013	-	6,56,00,000	IGNOU
9.	Raipur	2014	-	3,11,57,000	IGNOU
10.	Lucknow	2015	-	26,17,39,787	IGNOU
11.	Shillong	2016	-	8,72,78,468	IGNOU
12.	Patna	2019	-	16,63,00,000	IGNOU

Source: IGNOU, RSD Records



RC Ahmedabad



RC Bhopal



RC Bhubaneswar



RC Cochin



RC Jaipur



RC Khanna



RC Kolkata



RC Lucknow



RC Madurai



RC Patna



RC Raipur



RC Shillong

Figure 2: IGNOU Regional Centre Buildings

Source: IGNOU RSD Records

3. STRENGTHENING THE PHYSICAL ECOSYSTEM: EXPANSION, MODERNISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY (2020–2025)

During the period 2020–2025, IGNOU undertook a comprehensive programme to strengthen its physical infrastructure in alignment with its expanding academic mandate, learner base, and sustainability commitments. The initiatives were strategically planned to enhance regional outreach, modernise existing facilities, improve operational efficiency, and integrate environmentally responsible practices across the University's campuses at the Headquarters and Regional Centres.

3.1 Infrastructure Augmentation at Headquarters

During the period 2020–2025, the Construction and Maintenance Division (CMD) of IGNOU undertook several initiatives to modernise and strengthen the utility infrastructure at its Headquarters located at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi. These initiatives were aimed at improving the efficiency, reliability, sustainability, and technological readiness of the campus infrastructure to support the expanding academic, administrative, and digital operations of the University. The details are given in Table 2.

The year 2020–2021 did not witness any major construction or infrastructure development activities at the headquarters. This period largely coincided with the nationwide disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the execution of infrastructure projects across many institutions.

From 2021–2022 onwards, CMD undertook a series of significant infrastructure development and upgradation works, focusing on strengthening critical utilities and ensuring the smooth functioning of institutional systems. One of the key initiatives during this period was the procurement, installation, testing, and commissioning of precision air-conditioning systems for the Data Centre and Server Room in the Computer Division located in Academic Block 'A'. This upgrade was essential to maintain appropriate environmental conditions for the safe and efficient operation of digital servers and IT infrastructure that support the University's online and technology-enabled academic activities.

To enhance campus water sustainability and resource management, two bore-wells were drilled within the campus during the same period. In addition, IGNOU established two Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with capacities of 100 and 200 cubic metres per day, significantly improving waste water management and contributing to environmentally responsible campus operations.

Another major infrastructure initiative undertaken in 2021–2022, was the replacement of an existing 319 TR package-type air-conditioning system with a 560 HP VRV system along with Air Handling Units (AHU) at the EMPC building. This upgrade enhanced cooling efficiency and ensured better environmental control for facilities associated with media production and academic support services.

During 2022–2023, further improvements were undertaken to strengthen campus facilities and electrical infrastructure. Protective structural enhancements were carried out through the installation of profile sheets and polycarbonate sheets over the entrance areas of the Convention Centre and the Vice-Chancellor's Office, improving both functionality and aesthetic appeal. The University also initiated the replacement of an eight-passenger lift in the Academic Block to enhance safety and accessibility for students, staff, and visitors.

A major focus during this period was the modernisation of the electrical distribution system at the campus. The University undertook the replacement of Sub-Station No. 5 along with associated cable works, as well as the replacement of Sub-Station No. 4 and HT panel boards in other substations. These initiatives were critical in ensuring reliable and uninterrupted power supply to various academic and administrative facilities across the campus.

The modernisation of climate control systems continued in 2023–2024 with the replacement of a 420 HP VRF/VRV air-conditioning plant at Block No. 15, reflecting the University's continued efforts to upgrade energy-intensive systems with more efficient and technologically advanced solutions.

In 2024–2025, several initiatives were undertaken with a focus on facility optimisation and energy efficiency. A temporary shelter for the MPDD store between Warehouses 3 and 4 was constructed to support storage requirements. In addition, the University initiated the replacement of conventional ballast-based lighting fixtures with energy-efficient LED fittings, including LED post-dome lights across the Campus, which contributed to reduced energy consumption and improved campus illumination.

Another major project initiated during this period was the replacement of existing central air-conditioning plants at the Academic Block and Convention Centre, involving 4×300 TR and 2×100 TR systems. This upgrade significantly enhanced cooling efficiency and operational reliability in two of the most important academic and administrative spaces of the University.

All major infrastructure works during the period were executed through the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), ensuring adherence to established government standards and technical specifications. The projects were funded through the internal resources of the University, reflecting IGNOU's commitment to strengthening its institutional infrastructure.

Overall, the infrastructure initiatives undertaken during 2020–2025 demonstrate IGNOU's systematic efforts toward modernising campus utilities, improving energy efficiency, strengthening digital and electrical infrastructure, and promoting environmentally sustainable practices.

Table 2: Details of the Infrastructure Augmentation at HQs during 2020-2025

Year	Construction related activity undertaken	Activity undertaken in-house or outsourced	Source of funding	Expenditure incurred (in Rupees)
2020-21	Nil	-	-	Nil
2021-22	Procurement, installation, testing & commissioning of new precision type air-conditioners for Data Centre & Server Room at Computer Division, Academic 'A' Block, Maidan Garhi, N.D.-68.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	23,45,680/- AMC cost: 5,96,538 Total:29,42,218/- (Work completed & AMC work is in progress)
	Drilling of 02 No. of Bore-wells at IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	24,17,763/- (Work completed & fund utilization certificate is awaited from CPWD)
	Construction of two No. Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Capacity 100 & 200 cum/day at IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	4,17,83,240/- (Work completed & fund utilization certificate is awaited from CPWD)
	Replacement of 319 TR package type air conditioning by 560 HP VRV unit with AHU at EMPC building. IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	2,47,58,537/- (Work completed & fund utilization certificate is awaited from CPWD)
	Providing & Fixing of Profile sheet and polycarbonate sheet over entrance area of Convention Centre and VC Office at IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	47,21,759/- (Work completed & fund utilization certificate is awaited from CPWD)
	Replacement of 01 No. 08 passenger lift installed in Academic Block at IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-68.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	19,63,421/- (Work in progress)
2022-23	Replacement of sub-station No.5 including cable work at IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-68.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	3,92,36,957/- (Work completed & fund utilization certificate is awaited from CPWD)
	Replacement of sub-station No.4 including replacement of HT Panel Board in sub-station No.-3 & 10 at IGNOU campus, Maidan Garhi, N. D.-68.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	4,12,14,235/- (Work completed & fund utilization certificate is awaited from CPWD)

Year	Construction related activity undertaken	Activity undertaken in-house or outsourced	Source of funding	Expenditure incurred (in Rupees)
2023-24	Replacement of 420 HP VRF/ VRV air-conditioning plant at Block No.15, IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, N.D.-68.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	1,67,19,209/- (Work in progress)
2024-25	Construction of temporary shelter for MPDD Store between ware house 3 & 4 at IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, N.D.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	4,46,250/- (Work in progress)
	Replacement of existing ballast based light fixtures with energy efficient office building including replacement with poles by LED post dome fittings at IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	66,76,036/- (Work in progress)
	Replacement of existing 4x300 TR and 2x100 TR central AC plant at Academic Block & Convention Centre, IGNOU Campus, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	5,53,70,024/- (Work in progress)

Source: CMD, IGNOU records

3.2 Infrastructure Augmentation at IGNOU Regional Centres

During the period 2020–2025, the CMD, IGNOU undertook significant initiatives to strengthen its regional infrastructure through the construction of new Regional Centre (RC) buildings across different parts of the country. These initiatives form an important component of the University's strategy to enhance learner support services, expand institutional outreach, and strengthen the operational capacity of the open, distance and digital learning (ODDL) system.

The data given in Table 3 indicates that no new Regional Centre construction activity was recorded during 2020–21. This period coincided with the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected infrastructure development activities across institutions. However, eleven Regional Centres buildings were constructed during the period 2020-2025. The details of the construction of the regional infrastructure are presented in Table 3. The pictures of the Regional Centre buildings are given in Fig. 3.

Table 3: Details of Construction of Regional Centre buildings (From 2020 till 2025)

Sl. No.	Name of the Regional Centre	Year of construction of permanent building
1.	Karnal	2022
2.	Aizawl	2023
3.	Jodhpur	2023

Sl. No.	Name of the Regional Centre	Year of construction of permanent building
4.	Rajkot	2023
5.	Trivandrum	2023
6.	Agartala	2024
7.	Bangalore	2024
8.	Jammu	2024
9.	Noida	2024
10.	Port Blair	2024
11.	Pune	2024

Source: IGNOU Annual Reports



RC Jodhpur



RC Karnal



RC Bangalore



RC Karnal



RC Port Blair



RC Agartala



RC Trivandrum



RC Noida



RC Aizawl



RC Jammu



RC Pune

Figure 3: IGNOU Regional Centre Buildings constructed between 2020-2025

Source: RSD, IGNOU Records

The expansion of Regional Centre infrastructure began in 2021–2022 with the initiation of construction of the Regional Centre at Karnal. The project was executed through the Central Public Works Department (CPWD), with funding provided by the University. An advance amount of ₹9.75 crores was released for the construction, while the final expenditure details are awaited from CPWD.

Table 4: Details of Infrastructure Augmentation at Regional Centres during 2020-25

Year	Name of Regional Centre newly constructed	Specify whether the activity has been undertaken In-house or outsourced	Source of funding	Expenditure incurred
2020-21	-	-	-	-
2021-22	KARNAL	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Advance fund released amounting to Rs.9,75,00,000/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
2022-23	JODHPUR	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Final Expenditure incurred: Rs.7,15,35,135/-
2023-24	AGARTALA	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Advance fund released amounting to Rs.12,32,14,700/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	AIZAWL	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Advance fund released amounting to Rs.9,38,76,300/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	BENGALURU	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Advance fund released amounting to Rs.6,52,27,490/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	NOIDA	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Advance fund released amounting to Rs.10,62,53,323/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	PUNE	Outsourced through CPWD	HEFA	Advance fund released amounting to Rs.11,08,24,367/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	PORT BLAIR	Outsourced through CPWD	HEFA	Advance released Rs.6,92,81,920/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	RAJKOT	Outsourced through CPWD	HEFA	Advance released Rs.8,77,42,868/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
	TRIVANDRUM	Outsourced through CPWD	HEFA	Advance released Rs.11,38,93,440/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.
2024-25	JAMMU	Outsourced through CPWD	IGNOU	Advance released Rs.9,00,61,170/- and final expenditure is awaited from CPWD.

Source: CMD, IGNOU records

In 2022–2023, the University completed the construction of the Regional Centre at Jodhpur, which was also executed through CPWD and was funded by IGNOU. The project incurred a final expenditure of ₹7.15 crores, representing a major step in strengthening the University's infrastructure in the western region of the country.

A substantial expansion of regional infrastructure took place in 2023–2024, during which multiple Regional Centre buildings were initiated across different regions of India. These included IGNOU Regional Centres at Agartala, Aizawl, Bangalore, Noida, Pune, Port Blair, Rajkot, and Trivandrum. The task of execution of these projects was outsourced to CPWD, ensuring adherence to established government construction standards and technical expertise. The details of the infrastructure augmentation at Regional Centres during 2020-25 are given in Table 4.

The funding pattern during this phase reflects a combination of internal University resources and external financing through the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA). Regional Centres at Agartala, Aizawl, Bangalore, and Noida were funded through IGNOU resources, whereas those at Pune, Port Blair, Rajkot, and Trivandrum were supported through HEFA funding. Advance funds ranging from approximately ₹6.5 crores to ₹12.3 crores were released for these projects, while the final expenditure figures are awaited from CPWD.

The expansion of regional infrastructure continued in 2024–2025 with the initiation of construction of the Regional Centre at Jammu, again executed through CPWD with funding from IGNOU. An advance amount of about ₹9.00 crores was released for the project, with final expenditure details are pending submission from CPWD.

Overall, the data indicates a strategic and large-scale expansion of IGNOU's regional infrastructure during the period 2021–2025. The construction of Regional Centre buildings across multiple geographic regions particularly in the North-East, South, West, and island territories, reflects the University's commitment to strengthening decentralised learner support systems and improving accessibility to higher education through the ODDL mode.

The involvement of CPWD as the executing agency ensured professional implementation and compliance with government standards, while the combined use of institutional funds and HEFA funding enabled the University to undertake multiple infrastructure projects simultaneously. The details of the outside funding (Grant/ HEFA loan) taken during 2020-25 for the construction related activities are presented in Table 5. The year-wise expenditure incurred on augmentation and maintenance of infrastructure at Headquarters and Regional Centres during 2020-2025 is presented Table 6.

Table 5: Details of the outside funding (Grant)/ HEFA loan taken during 2020-25 for the construction related activities

Year	Amount (In Rs.)	Category (Grant/HEFA loan)
2020-21	47.25 crores	HEFA loan
2021-22	NIL	NIL
2022-23	NIL	NIL
2023-24	50.00 crores	HEFA loan
2024-25	NIL	NIL

Source: CMD, IGNOU Records

Table 6: Expenditure Incurred on augmentation and maintenance of infrastructure at Headquarters and Regional Centres during 2020-25

Year	Expenditure Incurred (In Rs.)
2020-21	10,07,26,114/-
2021-22	12,27,15,045/-
2022-23	16,19,75,564/-
2023-24	4,23,01,731/-
2024-25	7,86,76,665/-

Source: CMD, IGNOU Records

These developments have significantly contributed to strengthening IGNOU's nationwide academic support network, improving administrative efficiency at the regional level, and enhancing the quality of services delivered to learners across the country. Such infrastructure expansion is aligned with the University's mandate and need to widen access to higher education and to support inclusive and flexible learning opportunities for diverse learner communities.

3.3 Installation of Solar Power Systems at Headquarters

In line with Government's target of installation 40 GW of Grid connected Solar Rooftop Generation in country by 2022, IGNOU has signed MoU with HFM Solar Power Limited for installation of Grid connected Rooftop Solar Power Plant on its campus. The solar plant has been built in collaboration with MNRE, IPGCL, and EEREM, a Govt. of NCT Delhi Undertaking. As per MoU, the company has commissioned a 500 kWp Rooftop Solar Plant on a turnkey basis and it will operate and maintain it for the next 25 years under Renewable Energy Service Company (RESCO) model at zero cost to the University. Power generated from the plant will be supplied at a cost of Rs 3.13 per unit for a period of 25 years. Apart from saving in Grid tariff, solar plant will also reduce emission from Grid Power and backup diesel generators and will abate around 610 tonnes of CO_2. For the total installation of 500 kWp, 8 numbers of Rooftop Solar Power Plants distributed under 14 inverters have been installed across the University. The details are given below in Table 7. A separate Solar Energy Meter is also installed in each building to know about the energy production of each rooftop solar PV plant.

Table 7: Details of the Inverters in the University

S. No.	Name of the Building	Inverter No.
1	Block 15	Inverter- 1, 2 & 3
2	EMPC Block	Inverter- 4
3	Convention Centre	Inverter- 5 & 6
4	Academic Block D	Inverter- 7
5	Academic Block F	Inverter – 8 & 9
6	Academic Block C	Inverter- 10 & 11
7	Academic Block G	Inverter- 12 &13
8	VC Office	Inverter- 14

Source: CMD, IGNOU Records

3.4 Installation of Weather Station

IGNOU and IMD signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to install the Automatic Weather Station (AWS) at IGNOU Maidan Garhi Campus, New Delhi (Fig. 4). The Automatic Weather Station was inaugurated by Prof. Uma Kanjilal (VC, IGNOU) and Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra (Director General, IMD) on 5 Dec 2024 to provide real-time weather data, enabling more accurate forecasting and monitoring of weather patterns. The installation of a Weather Station at the Headquarters represents an innovative step towards environmental monitoring and climate awareness. The weather station facilitates real-time data collection on atmospheric conditions such as temperature, humidity, rainfall, and wind patterns. It also strengthens campus preparedness

and contributes to evidence-based planning. The AWS will be useful for project work, research, and awareness purposes, particularly for students and researchers in fields such as geology, geoinformatics, geography, environmental sciences, and agriculture.



Figure 4: Automatic Weather Station at IGNOU

4. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL MODERNISATION (2020-2025)

4.1 Augmentation of Internet Facilities

The Computer Division (CD) at the Headquarters plays a pivotal role in planning, managing, and sustaining the entire ICT ecosystem of the University. It is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring seamless delivery of IT-enabled services across the Headquarters as well as the extensive network of Regional Centres (RCs). This includes procurement, installation, and lifecycle management of high-end servers, data storage systems, and advanced networking infrastructure, which collectively form the backbone of the University's digital operations.

A major responsibility of the CD is the maintenance and continuous upgradation of the University's digital infrastructure. The main website of IGNOU, along with all 57 Regional Centre websites, is centrally hosted on virtual machines deployed on high-performance HPE servers. These websites serve as critical interfaces for learners, faculty, and other stakeholders, providing access to academic, administrative, and support services. In order to ensure real-time dissemination of information, access rights have been delegated to the RCs, enabling them to update dynamic content such as announcements, schedules, and learner support services directly at their end. This decentralized yet controlled approach enhances responsiveness while maintaining uniformity and quality standards. Over the past few years, there has been a significant and exponential increase in the use of digital infrastructure and internet-based services across all functional domains of the University. Teaching-learning processes, student support services, administrative workflows, and evaluation systems are increasingly being conducted through online platforms.

The internet backbone at the Headquarters is robust and designed to handle high traffic demands. Currently, two Internet Service Providers *viz.* NKN (National Knowledge Network) and Reliance (till 2023)/Airtel (from 2024) are providing leased line connectivity with bandwidth capacities of 2 Gbps and 140 Mbps, respectively (Table 8). This dual connectivity ensures redundancy, reliability, and uninterrupted access to online services. The entire campus is interconnected through a well-structured Local Area Network (LAN), enabling seamless communication and data exchange across various divisions and units.

To maintain optimal performance and security of the network, periodic maintenance and upgradation of networking equipment, including routers and switches, are carried out. These proactive measures ensure minimal downtime and an enhanced user experience. Additionally, during the year 2023–24, significant investments were made in strengthening end-user infrastructure, with the procurement and distribution of All-in-One (AIO) desktops, laser printers, and Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) systems at the Headquarters.

To strengthen its digital ecosystem and support the growing requirements of ODDL, IGNOU has undertaken continuous augmentation of its internet facilities across the University Headquarters, Regional Centres, and Learner Support Centres. The enhancement of internet bandwidth and network infrastructure has been carried out to ensure seamless access to academic and administrative services for learners, faculty, and staff.

The upgraded internet facilities enable uninterrupted access to the University's major digital platforms, including the Learning Management System (LMS), SAMARTH-based University Management System, *eGyankosh* digital repository, online admission and examination portals, and various learner support services. High-speed connectivity also supports online counselling sessions, virtual meetings, digital content delivery, and web-based academic activities.

The augmentation of internet services has further strengthened the functioning of IGNOU's Data Centre and cloud-based services, ensuring secure, reliable, and efficient access to digital resources across the University's extensive network. These improvements contribute significantly to enhancing the quality of technology-enabled teaching-learning processes and administrative efficiency at IGNOU.

Overall, the strengthening of internet infrastructure reflects IGNOU's commitment to leveraging information and communication technologies to expand access, improve learner engagement, and support the effective delivery of education through open, distance, and online modes.

Table 8: Internet Bandwidth at the HQs and RCs

Year	Internet Bandwidth at the HQs	Name of the Service Provider	Internet Bandwidth at the RCs in MBPS	Name of the service providers
2020-21	1Gbps, 1Gbps, and 512Mbps	NKN, MTNL & Reliance, respectively	12078 Mbps	BSNL, MTNL, Jio, ACT, Airtel, Asia net etc.
2021-22	1Gbps, 1Gbps, and 512Mbps	NKN, MTNL & Reliance, respectively	12378 Mbps	BSNL, MTNL, Jio, ACT, Airtel, Asia net etc.
2022-23	1Gbps, 1Gbps, and 512Mbps	NKN, MTNL & Reliance, respectively	12378 Mbps	BSNL, MTNL, Jio, ACT, Airtel, Asia net etc.
2023-24	1Gbps, 1Gbps, and 512Mbps	NKN, MTNL & Reliance, respectively	12378 Mbps	BSNL, MTNL, Jio, ACT, Airtel, Asia net etc.
2024-25	1Gbps, 1Gbps, and 512Mbps	NKN, MTNL & Airtel, respectively	12378 Mbps	BSNL, MTNL, Jio, ACT, Airtel, Asia net etc.

Source: *Computer Division and COE Records*

The Internet bandwidth infrastructure at the Headquarters (HQs) and Regional Centres (RCs) reflects a stable, robust, and scalable digital backbone that supports the University's extensive Open, Distance and Digital Learning (ODDL) and online education ecosystem.

At the Headquarters, a consistent high-capacity bandwidth of 1024 Mbps through NKN (National Knowledge Network) and 512 Mbps through Jio has been maintained from 2020–21 to 2024–25. This dual-provider arrangement ensures redundancy, reliability, and uninterrupted connectivity, which is critical for centralized digital services such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), e-content repositories, online admissions, examinations, and administrative operations.

The sustained bandwidth level over the years indicates that the existing capacity has been adequate to meet institutional demands, while also ensuring network stability and security without major disruptions.

At the Regional Centres, there has been a progressive enhancement in aggregate bandwidth, increasing from 12,078 Mbps in 2020–21 to 12,378 Mbps in 2021–22, after which it has remained stable through 2024–25. This marginal yet significant increase reflects a targeted strengthening of connectivity at the grassroots level to support learner services, counselling sessions, digital access, and regional academic activities as an emergency measure. The involvement of multiple service providers like BSNL, MTNL, Jio, ACT, Airtel, Asia net, etc. demonstrates a diversified and location-responsive approach, ensuring connectivity across geographically dispersed and sometimes remote regions of the country.

Overall, the data indicates that the University has adopted a balanced strategy of central stability and regional expansion. While the HQ maintains a high-speed, secure, and redundant network core, the RCs collectively provide extensive distributed bandwidth capacity, enabling seamless digital outreach. This infrastructure plays a pivotal role in supporting technology-enabled teaching-learning, online programme delivery, digital governance, and learner support services, thereby aligning with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the evolving demands of large-scale ODDL Operations.

4.2 Upgradation of Multimedia Production Facilities

The University has undertaken systematic procurement of hardware and software to strengthen its digital infrastructure and support the effective delivery of academic and administrative services. With the growing adoption of technology-enabled teaching–learning processes and online education, the University has continuously upgraded its computing facilities, networking equipment, and enterprise software systems.

The procurement of hardware includes servers, high-capacity storage systems, networking devices, desktop computers, laptops, smart classroom equipment, and other ICT infrastructure required for the smooth functioning of various divisions and centres of the University. These resources support key platforms such as the Learning Management System (LMS), online admission and examination systems, digital repositories, and other learner support services.

In addition, the University has procured licensed software solutions for academic, administrative, and research purposes. These include operating systems, database management systems, security software, learning management platforms, office productivity tools, and specialized applications required for content development, digital learning, and data management. The strengthening of hardware and software infrastructure has significantly enhanced the University's capacity to deliver quality education through ODDL (ODL and online modes), while also improving institutional efficiency and digital governance.

As part of its continued efforts to strengthen technology-enabled teaching and digital content production, IGNOU has established High Definition (HD) studios at its headquarters. These studios have been developed to support the production of high-quality educational audio-visual content for

the University's diverse learner base spread across the country and abroad. The establishment of HD studios marks a significant step in enhancing the University's capacity to produce professional-grade video lectures, instructional programmes, interviews, panel discussions, and live academic broadcasts aligned with contemporary standards of digital education.

The HD studios are equipped with advanced recording and broadcasting technologies, enabling the creation of visually rich and pedagogically effective learning resources. These facilities support the production of course-based video lectures for online and distance learning programmes, including those delivered through the LMS and national platforms such as SWAYAM. The availability of modern studio infrastructure allows faculty members and subject experts to record lectures in a controlled and technologically sophisticated environment, ensuring clarity of audio, high-resolution video output, and seamless editing capabilities.

The studios incorporate state-of-the-art HD cameras, professional lighting systems, chroma key (green screen) facilities, digital audio recording equipment, teleprompters, and advanced video editing and post-production software. These features facilitate the development of engaging multimedia content, including animated presentations, demonstrations, and interactive learning modules. The integrated production environment also supports live streaming of academic events, webinars, workshops, and special lectures, thereby expanding the University's outreach and enabling real-time academic engagement.

By establishing HD studios, IGNOU has significantly strengthened its media production ecosystem, supporting the development of high-quality digital learning materials that align with the evolving needs of ODDL. The initiative contributes to improving the accessibility, effectiveness, and overall learner experience in technology-mediated education, reinforcing the University's commitment to innovation and quality in digital teaching-learning processes.

The details of the upgradation of audio and video production facilities during 2020-2025 are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Augmentation of Media Production Facilities at the University

Upgradation of Facilities at Centre for Online Education			
S. No.	**Details of the audio production facilities at COE**	**Details of the video content production facilities at COE**	**Details of the e-content production facilities at COE**
1. Audio / video studios	2 numbers of professional wireless microphone	2 Numbers of HD cameras, Cool Lights and UPS	Scanners, high-end workstations, Adobe Editing Suite
2. Outdoor shooting equipment / Outdoor audio recording	2 numbers of professional wireless microphone	Outdoor Shooting Equipment	Outdoor Shooting Equipment
		i) Camcorder HD 3 nos.	i) Camcorder HD 3 nos.
		ii) Camera PD-170 – 2 nos.	ii) Camera PD-170 – 2 nos.
		iii) Portable Cool lights 1 set	iii) Portable Cool lights 1 set
		iv) Unikit lights 3 set	iv) Unikit lights 3 set

Upgradation of Facilities at Centre for Online Education			
S. No.	**Details of the audio production facilities at COE**	**Details of the video content production facilities at COE**	**Details of the e-content production facilities at COE**
3. Post production unit / Editing unit	5 numbers High-end workstation with editing software	5 numbers High-end workstation with editing software	5 numbers High-end workstation with editing softwares
4. Duplication unit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
5. Graphics workstation	Not Applicable	Graphics workstation (HD) - 4 Stations	Graphics workstation (HD) - 4 Stations
6. Direct Reception Sets (DRS)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
7. Set Scenic unit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
8. Make-up unit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
9. E-Platform	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
10. Workstations with broadband connectivity	5 numbers High-end workstation and 4 numbers of Low-end workstations (as mentioned at serial no. 3&5)	5 numbers High-end workstation and 4 numbers of Low end workstations (as mentioned at serial no. 3&5)	5 numbers High-end workstation and 4 numbers of Low end workstations (as mentioned at serial no. 3&5)
11. Cloud space	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
12. Licensed software	Adobe Creative Cloud License Cloud based for Education	Adobe Creative Cloud License Cloud based for Education	Adobe Creative Cloud License Cloud based for Education
13. Uninterrupted web connectivity	6 numbers Wi-Fi high end Access Point and LAN connections with backbone gateway on NKN and JIO	6 numbers Wi-Fi high end Access Point and LAN connections with backbone gateway on NKN and JIO	6 numbers Wi-Fi high end Access Point and LAN connections with backbone gateway on NKN and JIO
14. IT security system	1. Next Generation Firewall (NGFW)	1. Next Generation Firewall (NGFW)	1. Next Generation Firewall (NGFW)
	2. Load Balancer	2. Load Balancer	2. Load Balancer
	3. Dedicated DDOS Protection	3. Dedicated DDOS Protection	3. Dedicated DDOS Protection
	4. BOT Defence	4. BOT Defence	4. BOT Defence
	5. SSL Certificate (For Overloading)	5. SSL Certificate (For Overloading)	5. SSL Certificate (For Overloading)
	6. Proxy based traffic forwarding	6. Proxy based traffic forwarding	6. Proxy based traffic forwarding
	7. CCTV for monitoring infrastructure	7. CCTV for monitoring infrastructure	7. CCTV for monitoring infrastructure

Upgradation of Facilities at EMPC			
S. No.	**Details of the audio production facilities at EMPC**	**Details of the video content production facilities at EMPC**	**Details of the e-content production facilities at EMPC**
Audio/Video Studios	Not Applicable	Video Studio 2 with: (i) High Definition (HD) Professional Camera Setup – 4 Nos. (ii) HD Vision mixer (iii) Digital Audio mixer (v) LED lights with dimmer control (vi) XD CAM HD recorder- 2 (vii) Digital Audio & Video Peripheral Equipment (viii) Two UPS (ix) Intercom Unit (x) Miscellaneous equipment	Video Studio 2 with: (i) High Definition (HD) Professional Camera Setup – 4 Nos. (ii) HD Vision mixer (iii) Digital Audio mixer (v) LED lights with dimmer control (vi) XD CAM HD recorder- 2 (vii) Digital Audio & Video Peripheral Equipment (viii) Two UPS (ix) Intercom Unit (x) Miscellaneous equipment
2. Outdoor shooting equipment / Outdoor audio recording	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
3. Post production unit / Editing unit	Not Applicable	3 HD Non-Linear Editing (NLE) set up with EDS software & UPS	3 HD Non-Linear Editing (NLE) set up with EDS software & UPS
4. Duplication unit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
5. Graphics workstation	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
6. Direct Reception Sets (DRS)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
7. Set Scenic unit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
8. Make-up unit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
9. E-Platform	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
10. Workstations with broadband connectivity	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
11. Cloud space	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
12. Licensed software	Not Applicable	EDS Software	EDS Software
13. Uninterrupted web connectivity	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
14. IT security system	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Upgradation of Facilities at EMPC			
S. No.	**Details of the audio production facilities at EMPC**	**Details of the video content production facilities at EMPC**	**Details of the e-content production facilities at EMPC**
15. Others (Archival/ Uplinking Facilities)		Archival/Uplinking Facilities 1. Equipment for digitalization and Archiving of video content of the Tapes in EMPC's A/V Library 2. Gyan Darshan satellite transmitting system (C- Band) for 3 video channels (One HD & Two SD video channels)	Not Applicable

Source: IGNOU, COE and EMPC Records

4.3 Adoption of SAMARTH as ERP

The University has adopted SAMARTH, a Government of India initiative launched in January 2023 by the Ministry of Education (formerly MHRD) as a national Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform for higher education institutions. The initiative was introduced to provide a unified, cloud-based digital system for managing academic and administrative processes in universities and colleges across the country.

Through the implementation of SAMARTH (Fig. 5), the University has streamlined several key functions, including online admissions, re-registration, learner records management, examination



Figure 5: SAMARTH ERP portal

processes, certification, and administrative workflows. The portal functions as a centralised digital interface that integrates services related to ODL and Online programmes. Prospective learners can apply for admission through the portal, while enrolled learners can complete re-registration, register for examinations, update their profiles, download identity cards and hall tickets, and track their academic progress. The portal also enables learners to make online fee payments, monitor the status of study material dispatch, and access information related to Regional Centres, Study Centres, examinations, results, and programme updates.

In addition to learner services, SAMARTH supports institutional administration by digitising processes related to human resources, finance, recruitment, and other administrative workflows. By reducing manual interventions and enabling real-time data management and monitoring, the system facilitates informed decision-making and strengthens institutional governance. The adoption of SAMARTH thus, represents an important step in modernising IGNOU's digital ecosystem and ensuring that academic and administrative services remain transparent, efficient, and aligned with the scale and complexity of ODDL operations.

4.4 Workstations for SWAYAM and SWAYAM PRABHA Projects

The University has consistently adopted digital technologies to expand access to quality higher education. As part of the national digital learning ecosystem, the University actively contributes to the initiatives of SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) and SWAYAM PRABHA, both launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. IGNOU serves as a National Coordinator for SWAYAM for out-of-school learners and is also responsible for six SWAYAM PRABHA Direct-to-Home (DTH) channels, thereby playing a significant role in the development and dissemination of technology-enabled learning resources.

To support the production and management of these large-scale digital learning initiatives, the Centre for Online Education (COE) undertook the procurement of high-end and standard workstations (Fig. 6), through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal. These workstations are used for activities such as video recording, editing, graphics processing, audio production, and hosting of digital learning materials for SWAYAM courses and SWAYAM PRABHA broadcasts. The procurement was carried out during the period 2019–2020, including the COVID-19 lockdown phase, to ensure continuity in content development and digital broadcasting. The availability of advanced workstations, along with the use of smart classrooms and digital studios, has significantly strengthened IGNOU's capacity to create high-quality multimedia educational resources and support its expanding online and broadcast-based learning ecosystem.



Figure 6: Workstation at COE, IGNOU

4.5 Development of Learning Management System

To support the effective delivery of its online programmes, IGNOU has developed a robust and user-friendly Learning Management System (LMS) based on the Moodle platform. The LMS serves as a comprehensive digital environment that facilitates course delivery, learner engagement,

assessment, and monitoring of academic progress. Designed to support the diverse learning needs of learners across the country and abroad, the system provides an accessible and interactive platform that strengthens the University's technology-enabled teaching-learning processes.

The LMS integrates a wide range of multimedia learning resources to create an engaging and flexible learning experience. These include video lectures, audio sessions, digital reading materials, e-content modules, and interactive presentations that cater to different learning preferences. In addition, the system incorporates various pedagogical tools such as discussion forums, assignments, quizzes, and announcements, enabling continuous interaction between learners and instructors. The platform is designed with a user-friendly interface, allowing learners to easily navigate course content, track their academic progress, submit assignments, and participate in discussions and assessments without technical complexity.

The portal https://iop.ignouonline.ac.in functions as a comprehensive digital gateway for IGNOU's online programmes. It provides information and access to a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, postgraduate diploma, diploma, and certificate programmes offered in the online mode. Prospective learners can explore programme details, verify eligibility criteria, and complete the admission process directly through the portal.

Once admitted, learners gain access to an integrated set of academic resources that support the entire online learning journey. These include digital study materials available through the *eGyanKosh* national repository, live and recorded educational broadcasts through *GyanDarshan* and *GyanVani*, virtual classrooms for online counselling sessions, and the LMS for accessing lectures, course materials, assignments, and assessments. The portal also facilitates learner services such as registration, course enrolment, academic communication, and learner support.

Through the development of this LMS-based digital infrastructure, IGNOU has strengthened its capacity to deliver flexible, accessible, and technology-enabled education, ensuring that learners can effectively participate in academic programmes regardless of their geographical location.

4.6 Installation of Video Walls

The University has strengthened its digital and communication infrastructure through the installation of a state-of-the-art Video Wall at the Convention Centre, Board Room and Conference Room located at the Headquarters. This advanced display system has been designed to support a wide range of academic, administrative, and institutional activities by enabling high-quality visual communication during conferences, seminars, workshops, and other important University events. The installation represents a significant step toward integrating modern audio-visual technologies into the University's academic ecosystem and enhancing the overall experience of participants attending programmes and institutional functions.

The Video Wall consists of multiple high-definition display panels seamlessly integrated to form a large, unified screen capable of delivering ultra-high-resolution visuals (Fig. 7). This configuration ensures excellent clarity, brightness, and image quality even when viewed from a distance, making it suitable for large audiences attending academic gatherings and institutional events. The system is equipped with advanced audio-visual integration that supports the projection of multimedia-

rich content, including presentations, educational videos, live feeds, and digital graphics, thereby creating an immersive and engaging environment for participants.

Another important feature of the Video Wall is its capability for live streaming and recording. Through this facility, University's major events, academic discussions, conferences, and special lectures can be broadcast in real time, enabling wider participation from remote audiences and supporting the principles of openness and accessibility that characterize the University's educational philosophy. At the same time, the recording functionality allows for the preservation and archival of important institutional events for future reference and academic use.

The system also enables dynamic and interactive content display, allowing presenters to integrate multimedia elements and real-time information seamlessly. By providing a visually engaging platform for communication and knowledge sharing, the Video Wall contributes significantly to improving the quality of academic interactions and institutional presentations. Overall, this technological enhancement reflects IGNOU's continuing commitment to modernizing its infrastructure and leveraging digital technologies to create an enriched and effective learning environment for its diverse learner community.

4.7 Establishment of Smart Classrooms

Smart Classrooms have been established at its Headquarters, as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen technology-enabled teaching and learning. These classrooms integrate advanced digital tools and modern instructional technologies to enhance the quality of academic delivery, promote interactive learning environments, and support the University's mandate of providing flexible and inclusive education. The Smart Classrooms are designed to facilitate effective knowledge dissemination while enabling faculty to deliver enriched, multimedia-supported lectures and academic interactions (Fig. 8).

Each Smart Classroom is equipped with interactive digital boards that allow faculty members to present content dynamically, annotate in real time, and incorporate multimedia elements such



Figure 7: Video Wall at IGNOU Convention Centre

as videos, graphics, and presentations into their teaching. These tools significantly enhance learner engagement and help in explaining complex concepts through visual and interactive methods. The classrooms are further supported by high-speed internet connectivity, ensuring uninterrupted access to online academic resources, virtual learning platforms, and digital libraries.

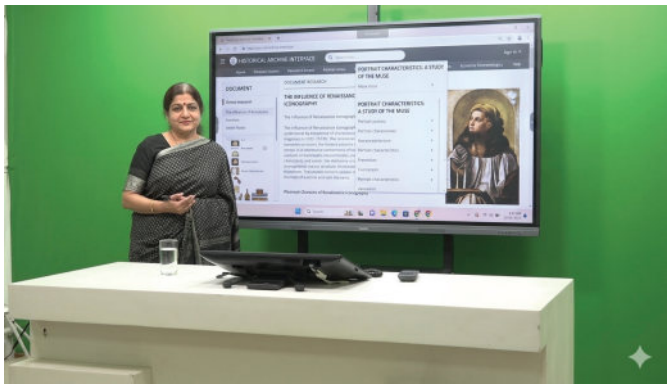


Figure 8: Smart Classroom at IGNOU Headquarters

To ensure high-quality communication and presentation, the Smart Classrooms are fitted with advanced audio-visual equipment, including high-definition display systems, microphones, and sound systems. These facilities enable clear audio and visual transmission during lectures, seminars, workshops, and academic discussions. Such infrastructure enhances the overall learning experience and supports effective interaction between teachers and learners.

Another important feature is the integration of Smart Classrooms with the University's Learning Management System (LMS). This integration enables faculty members to share course materials, manage assignments, monitor learner progress, and facilitate academic engagement through digital platforms. The classrooms are also designed with flexible seating arrangements, encouraging collaborative learning, group discussions, and participatory classroom activities.

In addition, the Smart Classrooms are equipped with recording and live-streaming facilities, which allow broadcast of lectures and academic sessions in real time and archived for future access. This feature is particularly beneficial for distance learners who may not be able to attend sessions physically, thereby extending the reach of classroom teaching to a wider learner community.

Overall, the establishment of Smart Classrooms represents a significant step in IGNOU's efforts to integrate modern educational technologies into its teaching–learning ecosystem. These technology-enabled learning spaces support the development of high-quality digital content and align with the broader objectives of expanding access to education and strengthening digital learning in accordance with the vision of NEP 2020.

4.8 Digitisation of Library

The Library and Documentation Division (L&DD) has significantly strengthened its digital library infrastructure to support technology-enabled teaching, learning, and research. With the implementation of the Koha Integrated Library Management System (ILMS), the library has achieved full automation of its core operations and services. This automation covers key functions such as acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, serial control, Web OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), patron management, advanced search facilities, reporting, and other administrative tools. The system has enhanced the efficiency, accessibility, and transparency of library services for learners, faculty members, and researchers. A collage of Digital Library Initiatives at IGNOU in presented as Fig. 9.

In addition to automation, the University has expanded its digital resource base to ensure wider access to scholarly materials. IGNOU provides round-the-clock access to a rich collection of electronic resources, enabling learners and faculty to access academic content both from the campus network and through remote login facilities.

Through the *e-ShodhSindhu* consortium, the University currently offers access to more than 7,900 peer- reviewed e-journals available across 10 major scholarly databases.

Further strengthening its digital resource ecosystem, IGNOU has also joined the Government of India's One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) initiative, which aims to provide equitable access to high-quality research resources across higher education institutions. This initiative further enhances the availability of academic literature and supports the University's mission of promoting research and lifelong learning. A collage of digital library initiatives at IGNOU is presented at Fig. 9.

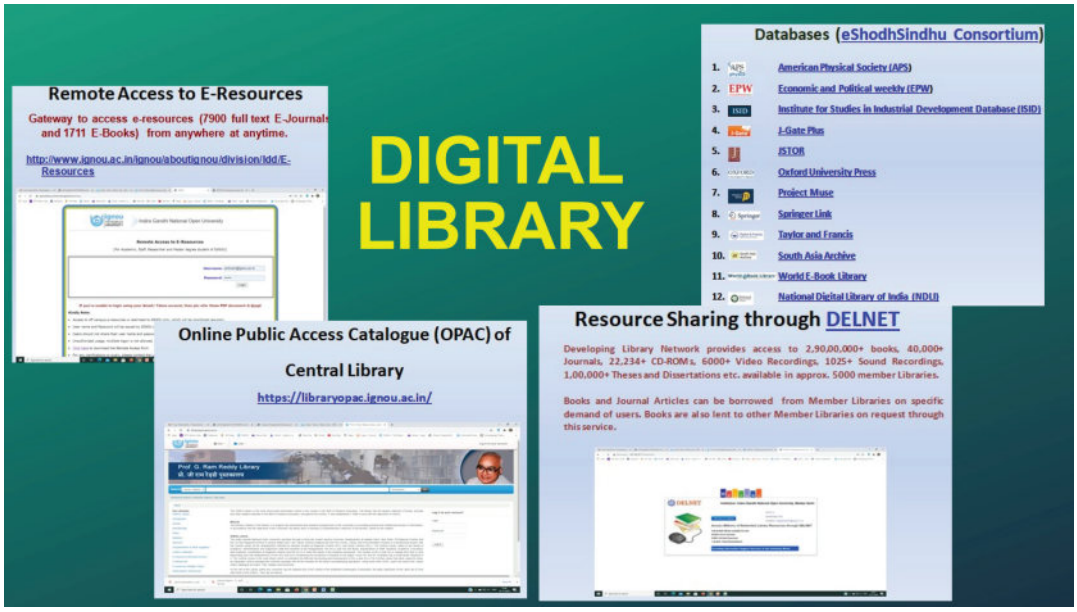


Figure 9: Collage of Digital Library Initiatives

In addition to automation, the library provides the following key services:

As a member of DELNET, the University library facilitates inter-library loan and document delivery services, enabling users to access a wider range of resources beyond the campus holdings. The library provides access to over 13,096 e-journals through 31 databases, along with the Web of Science citation database under the ONOS subscription. Additionally, select e-books with perpetual access are available. All e-resources can be accessed 24/7 from both within the campus and remotely using secure login credentials. In compliance with the UGC Notification (Minimum Standards & Procedure for Award of M.Phil./Ph.D. Degree, 2009), the library facilitates the submission of electronic versions of theses and dissertations to promote open access. To date, 1,089 theses have been uploaded to the *Shodhganga* portal, making them accessible to the academic community worldwide.

The library initially provided access to URKUND, an automated text-recognition system for plagiarism detection, through UGC-INFLIBNET from November 2018 to September 2023. From October 2023, URKUND was replaced by Drillbit, with login credentials issued to faculty members

for checking research papers and student theses. Furthermore, all Ph.D. theses require a plagiarism clearance report from the library before submission. Over 740 theses were processed using URKUND during its tenure.

4.9 Digitisation of Examination Question Papers

Since 2008, the library has digitised past University examination question papers. To date, over 2.5 lakh pages have been converted into digital form, ensuring easy access and long-term preservation. A Snapshot of the IGNOU website with the digitised examination question papers is presented as Fig. 10.

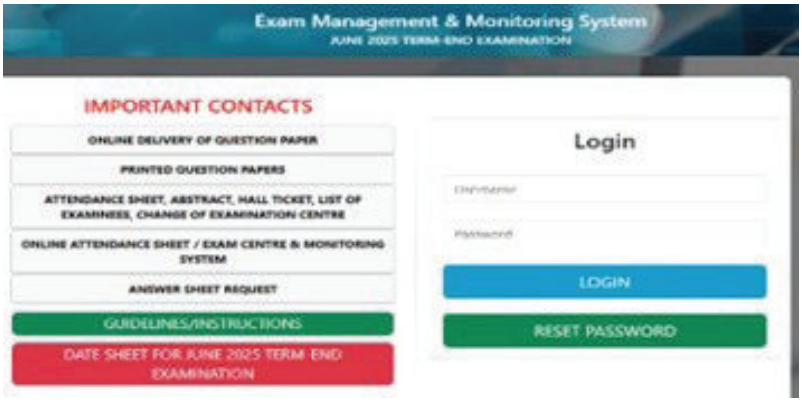


Figure 10: Digitisation of Exam Question Papers (IGNOU website)

Through these initiatives, the Library and Documentation Division has not only modernised its internal operations but also significantly enhanced access to resources, academic integrity, and research support for its community of learners and researchers.

4.10 Introduction of Blockchain Technology for Issuance of Digital Degrees

In order to enhance the security, transparency, and global verifiability of academic credentials, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) introduced blockchain-based digital credentialing in 2022. This initiative was implemented by the Student Evaluation Division (SED) with technical support from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur. The objective was to provide learners with secure, tamper-proof, and easily verifiable digital degrees and certificates alongside traditional printed documents.

The University awarded blockchain-based digital degrees and certificates for the first time during its 35th Convocation held on 26 April 2022. These digital credentials were digitally signed, immutable, and globally verifiable, enabling learners to securely store and access them through their personal digital wallets. The use of blockchain technology ensures that academic records cannot be altered or forged, thereby enhancing the credibility and authenticity of IGNOU's credentials.

Building on the success of Blockchain Technology initiative, IGNOU expanded the issuance of blockchain-based digital degrees during subsequent convocations. At the 36th Convocation held on 3 April 2023, more than two lakh learners received blockchain-enabled digital degrees, along with over 60,000 learners who had registered for the previous convocation. Further strengthening this initiative, more than three lakh learners registered for the 37th Convocation in February 2024 were provided with blockchain-based digital certificates and degrees, along with their physical documents. This initiative reflects IGNOU's commitment to leveraging advanced technologies to enhance academic services and ensure secure credential management.

4.11 Infrastructure Upgradation for IGNOU Online Services and Data Centre

To strengthen the technological backbone required for large-scale digital learning and academic administration, the Centre for Online Education (COE) has focused on establishing a Hyper Converged Infrastructure (HCI) system, functioning as a mini cloud environment to support the expanding digital ecosystem of the University.

The infrastructure is designed to enhance the efficiency, reliability, and scalability of various online services offered by IGNOU. It aims to support several key institutional initiatives, including the development and delivery of Online Programmes, online access to learning resources, online counselling sessions, and the Online Question Paper Delivery System (QPDS). In addition, the upgraded infrastructure is intended to strengthen the University Management System, improve data storage and processing capabilities, and ensure seamless integration of multiple academic and administrative platforms.

The Hyper Converged Infrastructure enables centralized management of computing, storage, and networking resources, thereby improving system performance, security, and operational efficiency. This modernisation of the University's data centre infrastructure is essential for handling the growing volume of digital transactions, learner interactions, and academic data. The upgraded ICT infrastructure has significantly enhanced the University's capacity to deliver technology-enabled education and services to its vast learner community.

4.12 Augmentation of Digital Infrastructure at Regional Centres

The University has started setting up digital recording studios at Regional Centres which are having own buildings under SWAYAMPRABHA project of Ministry of Education. The construction of digital studios at Regional Centres has been carried out by EDCIL (India) Limited. There are Twenty-one Regional Centres *viz.* Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Cochin, Jaipur, Jammu, Jodhpur, Karnal, Lucknow, Madurai, NOIDA, Patna, Port Blair, Pune, Raipur, Rajkot, and Shillong running from their own building.

The SWAYAM PRABHA studio has been already operational at the Regional Centre NOIDA. The virtual inauguration of the SWAYAM PRABHA studio at Regional Centre NOIDA was inaugurated by Shri Suman Berry, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, Government of India, on July 2, 2025, during the 30th Prof. G. Ram Reddy Memorial Lecture. A glimpse of SWAYAMPRABHA Studio at RC NOIDA is presented at Fig. 11.

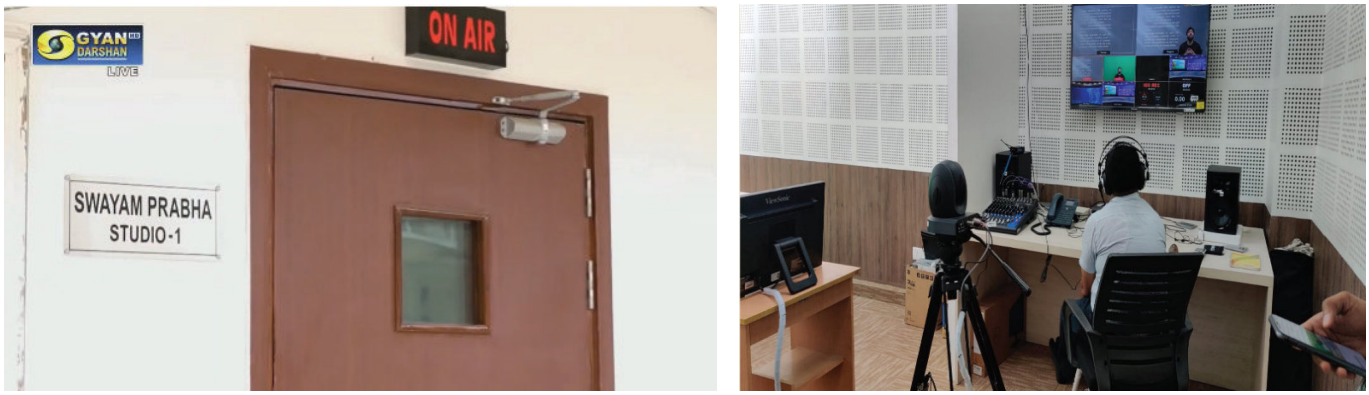


Figure 11: Swayam Prabha Studio at RC NOIDA

5. SUSTAINING EXCELLENCE: EXPENDITURE ON MAINTENANCE (2020-2025)

The University has consistently prioritised the upkeep and augmentation of its physical and technological infrastructure through systematic allocation under various heads of repairs and maintenance. The expenditure pattern over the last five financial years (2020–21 to 2024–25) reflects a balanced approach towards infrastructure sustainability, operational efficiency, and resource optimisation, as reflected in Table 10.

Table 10: Year-wise Expenditure on Maintenance

Sl. No.	Particulars	2020-21 (Rs.)	2021-22 (Rs.)	2022-23 (Rs.)	2023-24 (Rs.)	2024-25 (Rs.)
1.	Maintenance of Substation & Cable	1,44,10,733	37,75,182	68,19,862	1,77,25,414	92,05,169
2.	Maintenance of Lawn	46,420	75,798	82,003	1,80,253	1,80,590
3.	Maintenance of Buildings	1,24,67,134	92,65,843	86,34,652	1,80,21,215	1,35,21,059
4.	AMC	19,36,300	12,59,094	13,05,019	13,23,999	13,59,882
5.	Maintenance of Office Equipment	75,84,001	88,14,605	86,72,431	85,77,810	59,34,034
6.	Maintenance of Computers & UPS	65,39,750	73,37,178	42,19,068	49,83,499	39,32,558
7.	Maintenance of Vehicles	14,50,748	10,49,078	7,33,260	7,11,351	3,46,445
8.	Maintenance Furniture & Fixtures	3,98,674	3,49,088	8,37,629	6,69,964	6,66,661
9.	Total	4,48,33,760	3,19,25,866	3,13,03,924	5,21,93,505	3,51,46,398

Source: IGNOU Annual Accounts, Finance & Accounts Division

5.1 Infrastructure Maintenance (Sub-station and Cable)

Infrastructure maintenance constitutes the backbone of institutional sustainability, ensuring that academic and administrative activities are conducted without disruption. The expenditure on substation and cable maintenance reveals a cyclical pattern, characterised by periods of moderate spending interspersed with phases of significant investment. The relatively high expenditure in 2020–21 and the sharp increase in 2023–24 indicate major electrical overhauls, replacement of ageing systems, and strengthening of power distribution networks. Such investments were essential in the IGNOU Headquarters to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply, safety compliance, and energy efficiency.

5.2 Campus Upkeep and Environmental Maintenance (Lawn Maintenance)

The maintenance of lawns and green spaces, though relatively modest in financial terms, plays a vital role in shaping the institutional environment and enhancing the overall campus experience.

The data indicates a gradual and consistent increase in expenditure on lawn maintenance from 2020–21 to 2024–25, with a notable stabilisation in the last two years. This trend reflects a conscious institutional effort to prioritise environmental sustainability and aesthetic development of the campus.

The incremental rise in expenditure may be attributed to expanded landscaping activities, improved horticultural practices, and the adoption of regular maintenance schedules. It may also indicate the inclusion of additional green areas, plantation drives, or the introduction of sustainable practices such as water-efficient irrigation systems and organic maintenance techniques. The stabilisation of expenditure in recent years suggests that a steady state has been achieved, where routine upkeep is sufficient to maintain the desired standards.

Well-maintained green spaces contribute significantly to the well-being of learners, faculty, and staff by providing a clean, healthy, and visually appealing environment. They also align with national and global sustainability goals, including environmental conservation and climate sensitivity. The University's consistent investment in this area reflects its commitment to holistic campus development, where ecological considerations are integrated with academic and infrastructural priorities.

5.3 Maintenance of Buildings

Building maintenance represents one of the most substantial components of total expenditure. The observed fluctuations particularly the sharp rise in 2023–24 suggest comprehensive renovation works, structural repairs, waterproofing, and refurbishment of academic and administrative buildings. These interventions are often undertaken periodically rather than annually, leading to spikes in expenditure in certain years. The continued high allocation in 2024–25 further indicates that infrastructure maintenance is not a one-time effort but an ongoing institutional priority.

Overall, the expenditure pattern under this category demonstrates the University's commitment to maintaining safe, functional, and learner-friendly infrastructure. It also reflects adherence to regulatory standards, long-term asset preservation, and proactive planning to address wear and tear in critical infrastructure systems.

5.4 Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMC)

Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMC) form a critical component of the University's preventive maintenance strategy. The expenditure under this head remains relatively stable across the five-year period, indicating a well-planned and predictable approach to maintenance management. Such stability reflects the institutional emphasis on entering into long-term service agreements with vendors for the regular upkeep of essential equipment and systems.

The slight reduction in expenditure after 2020–21, followed by marginal increases in subsequent years, suggests optimisation and rationalisation of AMC arrangements. This may include renegotiation of contracts, consolidation of services, or improved vendor management practices. The consistency in AMC expenditure also ensures that maintenance activities are carried out systematically, reducing the likelihood of unexpected breakdowns and costly emergency repairs.

AMC-based maintenance is particularly important for specialised equipment and infrastructure, where periodic servicing is required to maintain performance and extend lifespan. It also contributes to operational efficiency by minimising downtime and ensuring continuity in academic and administrative processes.

Overall, the stable expenditure pattern under AMC highlights the University's proactive approach to maintenance, focusing on prevention rather than reactive repairs. This aligns with best practices in institutional management and contributes to cost efficiency, reliability, and long-term sustainability of assets.

5.5 Maintenance of Office Equipment and IT Infrastructure

The maintenance of office equipment and IT infrastructure is crucial for ensuring smooth administrative functioning and supporting technology-enabled learning. The expenditure on office equipment, although consistently high, shows a gradual declining trend in recent years. This suggests improved asset management practices, including better procurement decisions, enhanced durability of equipment, and reduced frequency of repairs.

Similarly, the expenditure on maintenance of computers and UPS systems demonstrates a noticeable decline after 2021–22. This trend may be attributed to the replacement of outdated systems with newer, more reliable technologies that require less frequent maintenance. It may also reflect a shift towards energy-efficient devices, cloud-based systems, and modern IT infrastructure that reduces dependence on physical hardware.

The declining trend does not indicate reduced importance of IT infrastructure; rather, it reflects increased efficiency and optimisation in its management. Investments in high-quality equipment and standardised systems often result in lower long-term maintenance costs. Additionally, improved technical support and streamlined maintenance processes contribute to cost savings.

In contrast, expenditure on furniture and fixtures remains relatively stable, with minor fluctuations. Occasional increases, such as in 2022–23, may indicate refurbishment activities, replacement of worn-out items, or enhancement of office and academic spaces. The overall moderate expenditure under this head reflects controlled and need-based maintenance, ensuring that functional requirements are met without excessive spending.

Together, these components highlight the University's balanced approach to managing auxiliary infrastructure. While ensuring that essential support systems remain functional and efficient, the institution also exercises financial prudence. This approach contributes to the overall sustainability of operations and ensures that resources are allocated effectively across priority areas.

Overall, the expenditure pattern in this category highlights the University's transition towards modern, efficient, and sustainable technological systems. It underscores a strategic approach to digital infrastructure, where initial investments in quality and innovation led to reduced maintenance burdens and enhanced operational efficiency over time.

5.6 Maintenance of Vehicles

The maintenance of transport facilities and minor assets, including vehicles, furniture, and fixtures, reflects the University's attention to operational support systems. The data indicates a consistent decline in vehicle maintenance expenditure over the five-year period. This trend may be attributed to several factors, including reduced dependence on institutional vehicles, improved fleet management practices, and the gradual replacement of older vehicles with newer, low-maintenance models.

The declining expenditure also suggests optimisation in transportation usage, possibly through better planning, outsourcing of services, or adoption of more efficient mobility solutions. Such measures contribute to cost savings and improved resource utilisation.

5.7 Overall Expenditure Trend and Institutional Implications

The total expenditure on repairs and maintenance over the five-year period exhibits a pattern of variability, with a significant peak observed in 2023–24. This peak indicates a phase of intensive maintenance and infrastructure strengthening involving major renovation, system upgrades, and preventive maintenance activities. Such periodic increases are characteristic of large institutions, where comprehensive maintenance is undertaken at planned intervals.

The subsequent decline in 2024–25 suggests a return to normalised expenditure levels following the completion of major works. This indicates effective planning and execution, where high-investment phases are followed by periods of routine maintenance. The overall trend demonstrates that the University does not rely solely on reactive maintenance but adopts a strategic and phased approach.

The analysis also reveals a shift towards efficiency and optimisation, particularly in areas such as IT infrastructure, office equipment, and vehicle maintenance. At the same time, sustained investment in core infrastructure highlights the institution's commitment to maintaining high standards of physical facilities.

In conclusion, the expenditure pattern reflects a comprehensive maintenance strategy that balances immediate operational needs with long-term sustainability. It aligns with the quality benchmarks of NAAC and NIRF, demonstrating the University's commitment to providing a safe, efficient, and conducive learning environment supported by robust infrastructure and effective resource management.

6. TOWARDS A SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND GLOBALLY CONNECTED ODDL UNIVERSITY

Building upon the significant advancements in physical and digital infrastructure during 2020–2025, IGNOU is well-positioned to transition into a next-generation Smart, Sustainable, and Globally Connected Open, Distance and Digital Learning (ODDL) University. The future of the University must be guided by a strategic integration of technological innovation, environmental responsibility, global engagement, and learner-centric governance, aligned with national priorities such as NEP 2020 and global benchmarks in higher education.

6.1 Smart University: Leveraging Technology for Intelligent and Adaptive Learning

The transformation into a SMART University requires a shift from digital enablement to a data-driven, intelligent ecosystem that enhances learning, governance, and operational efficiency. For Indira Gandhi National Open University, this transition is critical to effectively serve its large and diverse learner base within the ODDL framework.

A key priority is the adoption of AI-driven learning systems. Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) into the Learning Management System (LMS) will enable personalised learning pathways, predictive analytics to identify at-risk learners, and automated academic and administrative support to the learners. AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can further ensure seamless 24×7 learner support. Simultaneously, the University must strengthen its digital infrastructure by transitioning from Hyper-Converged Infrastructure (HCI) to a cloud-native architecture. This will ensure scalability, real-time access, and seamless integration across platforms such as SAMARTH ERP, LMS, and digital repositories, thereby improving efficiency and accessibility.

The development of Smart Campuses and digitally empowered Regional Centres is equally important. Internet of Things (IoT) enabled systems can optimise energy use, enhance security, and streamline operations, while Regional Centres can evolve into digital hubs supporting blended learning and content creation. Further, expanding blockchain-based credentialing to include transcripts, micro-credentials, and lifelong learning portfolios will enhance transparency, security, and global recognition of qualifications.

Finally, real-time analytics dashboards will enable data-driven decision-making by monitoring learner engagement, academic performance, and institutional efficiency. Together, these initiatives will create a SMART, responsive, and future-ready ODDL ecosystem, positioning IGNOU as a benchmark in technology-enabled higher education.

6.2 Globally Connected University: Expanding International Reach and Collaboration

To emerge as a globally connected ODDL institution, the University must strategically strengthen its international footprint through academic integration, digital outreach, and collaborative partnerships. A key priority is the internationalisation of programmes, involving the development

of globally relevant curricula, introduction of a joint degree programmes, and establishment of robust credit transfer mechanisms aligned with international frameworks such as European Standards Guidelines (ESG). This will enhance academic mobility and global acceptance of IGNOU qualifications.

The University should also expand cross-border digital education by leveraging its Learning Management System (LMS) and digital platforms to deliver programmes internationally, particularly targeting learners in the Global South, Indian diaspora, and emerging educational markets. This approach will extend IGNOU's reach beyond national boundaries while maintaining affordability and accessibility.

Strengthening global partnerships and accreditation is equally essential. Collaborations with international quality assurance agencies such as QAA (UK), along with leading global universities, will facilitate benchmarking, joint research, faculty exchange, and international accreditation, thereby enhancing institutional credibility.

The development of multilingual and inclusive digital content will further support global engagement by catering to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, ensuring equitable access to learning resources. In addition, active participation in global research and knowledge networks including Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives, will promote knowledge sharing and collaborative innovation.

Finally, the promotion of virtual mobility and global classrooms through online exchange programmes, international webinars, and collaborative teaching models will enable cross-cultural academic interaction without geographical constraints. Collectively, these initiatives will position IGNOU as a globally visible knowledge hub while reinforcing its commitment to inclusive and accessible education.

6.3 Strengthening the ODDL Ecosystem: Integration and Innovation

The future ODDL model at the University must evolve into an integrated, flexible, and learner-centric ecosystem, effectively combining the strengths of open, distance, and online learning. Central to this transformation is the development of a blended (phygital) learning environment, where physical infrastructure such as Regional and Learner Support Centres is seamlessly integrated with digital platforms to enhance accessibility and learner engagement.

The introduction of micro-credentials and lifelong learning pathways will further strengthen this model. Modular programmes, stackable credits, and skill-based certifications aligned with the National Credit Framework (NCrF) and global standards will enable learners to pursue flexible and continuous education tailored to evolving professional needs. Simultaneously, learner support systems must be transformed through multi-channel mechanisms, including digital counselling, AI-based assistance, and strengthened regional facilitation, ensuring timely and personalised academic support.

A robust framework for quality assurance and data governance will be essential for continuous monitoring, benchmarking, and institutional improvement. In parallel, innovation in content

delivery through HD studios and regional digital production facilities will enhance the quality, reach, and effectiveness of educational resources.

To sustain this transformation, institutional governance must be agile, transparent, and forward-looking. This includes capacity building of faculty and staff in digital pedagogy and emerging technologies, alignment with national and global regulatory frameworks such as NEP 2020, NHEQF, and NSQF, and ensuring financial sustainability through diversified funding and online programme expansion. Strengthened stakeholder engagement with government, industry, alumni, and learners will further support collaborative growth and innovation.

To further strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship within the ODDL ecosystem, the University has established Incubation Centres at the Headquarters and Incubation Hubs at Regional Centres as an integral component of its academic and skill development framework. The Incubation Centre at the Headquarters functions as a central innovation hub, supporting ideation, start-up development, research commercialisation, and industry collaboration through mentoring, funding linkages, and access to advanced digital infrastructure. Complementing this, the Incubation Hubs at Regional Centres promote grassroots innovation and local entrepreneurship, particularly in sectors aligned with regional needs, including skill-based industries, digital services, and social enterprises. These hubs actively engage learners, alumni, and local communities by providing training, co-working spaces, and expert guidance, thereby bridging the gap between education and employability. The integration of incubation activities with academic programmes, micro-credentials, and skill development initiatives further enhances learner outcomes and fosters a culture of innovation. This decentralised yet coordinated incubation ecosystem contributes to self-employment, start-up creation, and regional development, positioning IGNOU as a catalyst for innovation-driven, inclusive, and entrepreneurship-oriented growth within the ODDL framework.

The way forward for IGNOU lies in synergising technology, sustainability, and global engagement to redefine the ODDL paradigm. The infrastructure advancements achieved during 2020–2025 provide a robust foundation for this transformation. By adopting a smart approach through intelligent systems, ensuring sustainability through green and efficient practices, and fostering Global Community through international collaboration, IGNOU can emerge as a globally recognised, future-ready ODDL University. Such a transformation will not only enhance institutional excellence but also reinforce IGNOU's foundational mission of democratising education, reaching the unreached, and contributing to a knowledge-driven society at national and global levels.

Appendix-1

Notification of the Commitee

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. 4

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 **"Upgradation of Infrastructure".** 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. Manorama Singh, Director, RSD	-	Chairperson
2.	Prof. Vijayakumar P., Director, CIQA	-	Member
3.	Prof. V.V. Subrahmanyam, SOCIS	-	Member
4.	Dr. K.D. Prasad, Director, EMPC	-	Member
5.	Prof. Shachi Shah, Director, COE	-	Member
6.	Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, OSD, CIQA	-	Member
7.	Dr. Navita Abrol, DD, CIQA	-	Member
8.	Dr. Shekhar Suman, AD, 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

Under OU Category

Appendix-2

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 "UPGRADATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE" ON 11TH APRIL 2025 AT 11.30 AM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, CIQA, IGNOU, MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI-110 068.

Members Present

- **Dr. Manorama Singh**, Director, RSD (Chairperson)
- **Prof. Vijayakumar P.**, Director, CIQA (Member)
- **Prof. V.V. Subrahmanyam**, SOCIS (Member)
- **Dr. K.D. Prasad**, Director, EMPC (Member)
- **Prof. Shachi Shah**, Director, COE & Registrar SED (Member)
- **Dr. Navita Abrol**, Deputy Director, CIQA (Member)
- **Dr. Shekhar Suman**, Assistant Director, CIQA (Member & Convener)

Special Invitees:

- Dr. Ranjita Panda, Additional Director, RSD
- Dr. Akshay Kumar, Associate Professor, SOCIS

Member could not attend the meeting:

- Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, OSD, CIQA (Member)

Proceedings of the Meeting

The meeting began with a welcome address by the Convener, Dr. Shekhar Suman, who acknowledged the presence of members and special invitees. He briefly introduced the agenda of the meeting, which was focused on finalizing the structure of the report on Upgradation of Infrastructure (2020–2025) at IGNOU.

This was followed by an introductory briefing by Prof. Vijayakumar P., Director, CIQA, who highlighted the background, rationale, and relevance of the proposed document in capturing IGNOU's efforts over the past five years in enhancing physical and digital infrastructure. He emphasized the importance of documenting these developments in alignment with quality parametres and national policies such as NEP 2020.

The Chairperson, Dr. Manorama Singh, in her remarks, underlined the need for a comprehensive and evidence-based report that reflects IGNOU's commitment to accessibility, innovation, inclusiveness, and sustainability. She also stressed the importance of regional representation and digital transformation across the university system.

Review and Discussion on Proposed Structure

The draft structure of the documentation, developed by CIQA and circulated in advance, was discussed in detail. The committee reviewed the structure thematically and provided valuable inputs and suggestions to refine the structure further. It was agreed that the structure would be slightly revised to ensure clarity, coherence, and alignment with NAAC and other quality frameworks.

Finalized Structure and Allocation of Sections

The report on Upgradation of Infrastructure at IGNOU should comprehensively document initiatives and improvements made over the last five years (2020–2025) across the University's extensive physical and digital landscape. Following the discussion, responsibilities for drafting specific sections were allocated to members as under:

Section	Responsibility
Introduction	CIQA
Infrastructure and its Augmentation at Headquarters: Physical infrastructure available at IGNOU Headquarters: office spaces, classrooms, studios, labs in Schools of Studies, Centres, Divisions, and Units. Digital infrastructure available at IGNOU Headquarters: data centres, Fire wall server, Computers, Printers, IoT, wifi, Block-chain, smart classrooms, video walls, conference facilities, digital control rooms, ONOS, anti-plagiarism software and IT infrastructure in Schools of Studies, Centres, Divisions, and Units. Infrastructural changes to support blended and online learning environments. Infrastructure related to broadcast facilities at EMPC (Physical and Digital) Infrastructure related to broadcast facilities at COE (Physical and Digital) (Include timelines, funding sources, and specific technological enhancements)	CIQA, EPMC, COE
Upgradation of Infrastructure at Regional Centres Physical infrastructure at RCs (Provide data on construction, renovation, state-of-the-art additions, green infrastructure, solar installations, accessibility improvements, libraries, staff rooms, counselling halls, student facilities, and expansion projects undertaken in Regional Centres.) Digital infrastructure available at RCs. (computers, internet connectivity, smart devices, audio-video aids, digitisation of services, internet bandwidth upgrades etc.) Infrastructure related to broadcast facilities at RCs (Physical and Digital)	RSD
Infrastructure at Learner Support Centres Support infrastructure provided at LSCs including space for academic counselling, practical sessions, and learner interaction. Partnership-based infrastructure support from host institutions. Improvements based on feedback and monitoring with special mention on PwD and Woman.	RSD

Section	Responsibility
Suggestions for Upgradation of Common Infrastructures Suggest actionable steps for improvement of canteens/cafeteria, drinking water facilities, maintenance of toilets, common rooms for students, and creche facilities across IGNOU campuses. Recommend creation of inclusive, gender-sensitive, and environmentally friendly infrastructure to support learners and staff.	All

Members were requested to compile their respective sections using relevant data, examples of best practices, illustrations, and forward-looking strategies.

Timeline and Next Steps

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.

Vote of Thanks

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Convener of the Committee.


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