Printing

Due to restructuring of MDD and PPD in September, 1995 the printing job has been assigned to the Schools.

9. ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

9.1 STAFF TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (STRIDE)

IGNOU has been giving high priority to human resource development in distance education since its inception. For this purpose in 1986, a Division of Distance Education (DDE) was set up with a view to identify training needs of different categories of staff; build up resource base of information, training materials and trainers; and organise staff development programmes and activities. The initial focus was staff employed in IGNOU including staff in the DDE itself, who were first engaged in conducting seminars, workshops and programmes in distance education with the support of national and international experts. They also developed and implemented the Diploma Programme in Distance Education. Through these efforts, distance education methods, materials and formats suitable for IGNOU were developed and finalised.

In 1990, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) had organised a conference on Distance Education in Islamabad, Pakistan, at which a proposal to set up a training institute for Distance Education in the South Asian Region was mooted. In 1993, the COL undertook a study of the institutions engaged in training in Distance Education in member countries and after an evaluation of the training work done by the DDE, declared IGNOU as a COL Centre of Excellence in Training in Distance Education in South Asian Region for five years. The COL also undertook the responsibility of strengthening the training activities of IGNOU by setting up a regional centre. Following this, the DDE was upgraded to Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) in 1993. STRIDE was entrusted with the task of training not only the staff of IGNOU but the staff of all the Open Universities and Distance Education institutes in India as well as the region, particularly South Asia.

The objectives of STRIDE are:

* to identify training needs of different categories of personnel already involved, and expected to get involved, in open and distance education.

* to build up a resource base of up-to-date information, training materials, courses and expertise and make such resources available wherever needed.

* to develop suitable training strategies and relevant training materials to meet the varied needs of different types of individuals and distance teaching and training institutes.

* to organise and conduct training and staff development activities for the identified target groups and institutions through various strategies leading to completion certificates and/or award of certificates, diplomas and degrees.

* to promote and get involved in research in distance and open education at the fundamental, the experimental and the application levels in order to constantly enrich the training programmes, management process, distance education systems, and meet the challenges of the changing times and needs, new communication technologies and the expanding educational environment.

Currently, the Institute uses the following strategies to achieve its objectives:

i)   Providing various training programmes (leading to awards like PGDDE and MADE) using distance education methodologies as a long term measure to develop human resources in distance education.

ii) Organizing workshops, orientation programmes, attachment programmes, to meet immediate training needs of both the academic and the non-academic staff in distance education institutions.

iii) Conducting and supporting research studies in the form of tracer studies, general surveys, programme evaluation etc. to broaden research base in distance education in India for improving the quality of distance education all over the country.

iv) Developing indigenous literature on distance education including training handbooks and manuals etc.

v) Publishing a research Journal, the Indian Journal of Open Learning (IJOL).

STRIDE has undertaken several activities in development, training and research in distance education as explained below:

Development

The PGDDE programme has been restructured for students from eighteen commonwealth countries who have been enrolled under the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme. While 103 students enrolled initially, 68 of them remained active during the period.

Programme Guides of PGDDE, MADE and Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme, and 12 Assignments of DDE, 15 of PGDDE, 12 of MADE programme, and 15 for the students of Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme were developed.

Two issues of IJOL were published. These include the special decennial issue in its new format.

Training

In Service:

The following training programmes were organised by the STRIDE during this period:

For Academic Staff

1. Development of Self-Instructional Material in Distance Education (24.7.95 to 4.8.95). Participants were from State Open Universities, Centres of Distance Education in Conventional Universities besides IGNOU faculty members.
2. Preparation of Question Bank in Distance Education (11.3.96 to 15.3.96). Participants were mainly MADE Alumni and other experts in Distance Education.
3. Development of Self-Instructional Material in Distance Education (18.3.96 to 29.3.96). Participants were from State Open Universities, Centres of Distance Education in conventional universities and newly joined faculty members of IGNOU.

In all, about 40 academics from various institutions participated in these programmes.

For Non-Academic Staff

1. Orientation to use of Computers. This was designed and implemented for the Section Officers of IGNOU Hqrs. In all, 32 participants attended the programme. The course was conducted in 5 phases for 3 days each.

2. Two day workshops were conducted on "Student Registration and Evaluation Procedures in IGNOU" at Hyderabad Regional Centre (24.2.96 to 25.2.96) and Bhopal Regional Centre (23.3.96 to 24.3.96) respectively. About 45 academic & non-academic staff participated in these programmes.

In addition, STRIDE continued its training activities through tele-conferencing mode during the period. In all, 15 sessions were conducted on a variety of issues and concerns. They included programmes for students of PGDDE, MADE, concerned Counsellors and also non-academic staff of regional centres.

The faculty of the Institute explained the methods of development of self-instructional materials in six orientation programmes for course writers organised by various Schools of Studies.

STRIDE initiated action to extend the staff development facilities to the centres of Distance Education in the conventional universities and appropriate programmes are being planned for them during the next year.

The faculty of the Institute explained the distance education methods and materials and academic counselling techniques in eight orientation programmes for academic counsellors organised by the Regional Services Division.

The faculty and other staff of STRIDE participated in various training programmes/seminars as resource persons/participants organised by Schools/Divisions of IGNOU, AIU, NITIE, NCERT, NCTE etc.

Pre-service

The Institute did all the maintenance work of the programmes of DDE, PGDDE and MADE. Notably, it evaluated 37 project proposals from the students of DDE programme and commented and graded 218 assignments of MADE students. The evaluation of 515 assignments from the students enrolled under the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme were also completed during this period.

Specific need based orientation programmes for identified tutor-counsellors for RGF Scheme from various commonwealth countries were also conducted in Delhi, Solomon Islands and Tanzania. In all, 4 such programmes were conducted.

Other Activities

Dr. Derek Pollard of The Open University, U.K. visited STRIDE to review the designation of IGNOU as a COL Centre of Excellence in July, 1995. His report reiterates the sanction of the same in view of the enormous contribution made by STRIDE in the field of Distance Education in the country and abroad.

9.2 COMMUNICATION DIVISION

Since its inception, the Communication Division has been playing a crucial role in the preparation of the multi-media learning packages of the University. It has so far produced 543 videos and 632 audios.

The video programmes are regularly telecast through the National Network of Doordarshan. The audio programmes are broadcast from AIR Stations at Bombay, Hyderabad and Shillong.

The most significant development during the year under report was the completion and commissioning of the newly constructed 'Sanchar Kendra' at the Maidan Garhi Campus of the University. The Kendra which was completed with a Japanese grant of Rs.68 crores has two video studios and two audio studios, equipped with sophisticated modern facilities. The commissioning of this facility also led to a comprehensive review of the role, responsibility and directions of development of electronic media in the growth of

the open learning system in the country in general, and IGNOU in particular.

The Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC)

The Communication Division of IGNOU was renamed as the 'Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC)' in March '96. This Centre is poised to take off and make a significant contribution in the use of modern state-of-the-art technologies in the critical areas of education and development in the country.

The EMPC has the following 'critical' role to play in supporting the Open Learning system :

* production, transmission and distribution of curricula-based audio and video programmes through its network of over 244 Study Centres;

* enhance distance education through tele-teaching. In this, the audio and video programmes are broadcast/telecast through the AIR/Doordarshan;

* develop into a training centre for media professionals through distance education; and

* serve as a unique 'mega resource centre' both within India as well as in the entire South Asia region.

A Management Committee comprising experts and specialists in different areas will oversee and advise on the working of the EMPC. It will be endowed with adequate functional autonomy in its working in the financial and administrative spheres. The Centre will also have, consistent with its professional role and status, sufficient flexibility in pursuing appropriate staffing policies and practices.

The EMPC will have several functional units. These are:

* Electronic Media Production Unit (Sanchar Kendra)

* Audio-Visual Library and Database Unit

* Training and Research Unit

* Customer Services Unit

* Educational Broadcasting Unit

* Engineering and Maintenance Unit

* Administration and Finance

The Sanchar Kendra produced 31 Video Programmes and 27 Audio Programmes during the year. It also organised the following training programmes:

* Two-week workshop for IGNOU academics in A/V production.

* A Script development workshop in audio and video production at the School of Correspondence Studies, Delhi University.

* A Script development workshop for M.Sc. Students of Lady Irvin College, Delhi.

The Training and Development Communication Channel (TDCC)

As reported in the previous year, the ISRO-tested, Satellite-based extended C-Band technology offered to

IGNOU for real time live tele-conferencing (one-way video, two-way audio) for voice-image transmission became fully functional during the year. This facility, named, "Training and Development Communication Channel (TDCC)" is a multi-instructional facility used by several institutions and agencies on a time-sharing basis. During 1995-96, about 400 hours of tele-conferencing activity was undertaken on this channel.

The Training and Research Unit had carried out a few research studies in the past. During the year, the Unit finalised the learning packages for the PG Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication which was launched in 1996.

Sanchar Kendra (SK)

The EMPC is housed in a newly constructed complex 'Sanchar Kendra' located within the Maidan Garhi Campus. It was completed under a project entirely funded by the Government of Japan (JICA) under its Grant-in-Aid programme at a total cost of Rs.68 Crores in two phases.

State-of-the-art equipment at the Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC)

The facilities include two mega video studios, two audio studios with all the associated technical facilities and infrastructure such as editing and post production suites, audio and sound studios, a highly sophisticated a/v library, a spacious preview theatre and so on in the ground floor with well conceived and spacious offices for the staff on the first floor. The video studios employ Betacam SP format for video production as well as post production.

The audio studios are fully digital with DAT (digital audio tape) facilities in order to conform to latest