5.2 Recognition of ODL Institutions

In the pursuance of its responsibilities for maintenance of standards of ODL in the country, the Council takes various steps, which include evaluating the ODL institutions for their preparedness to offer programmes through distance mode. The DEC has the major responsibility of giving institutional recognition and also recognition to their programmes which is mandatory for all ODL institutions as per the Gazette notification no. 44 of 1st March 1995 issued by the Government of India. As on date more than 200 institutions have applied to the DEC for recognition of their institutions and programmes by the DEC. Some of the milestones achieved during the period 2010-11 are as under:

- Initiated review of guidelines for regulating the establishment and operation of ODL institutions, for offering programmes through traditional distance education mode as well as for online education.

- Initiated review of programme specific norms and guidelines for recognition of programmes through distance mode.

- Expert Committees constituted by the DEC visited 34 institutions for granting recognition to them during this period.

- DEC in the year 2010-11 accorded programme-wise recognition to 35 more Institutions for offering programmes through distance mode.

5.2.1 Tripartite Committee of UGC-AICTE-DEC

To further streamline the process of recognition, the MHRD has constituted a Tripartite Committee consisting of Chairpersons of UGC, AICTE and DEC as a recommendatory group for approval of technical education or university education through the distance education mode. Two meetings of the Tripartite Committee were conducted during the year 2010-11.

5.2.2 Assessment and Accreditation

The Distance Education Council (DEC) has the mandate to promote, coordinate and maintain standards in Distance Education in the country.

In order to address the needs of the society on quality institutions, the process of accrediting institutions was launched by the DEC. Accreditation will be accorded to an institution that meets standards, or satisfies criteria laid down and meets the acceptable level of quality prescribed by the DEC. ODL Institutions will be graded based on the various quality indicators laid down by the DEC.

The DEC has developed a Scheme for Assessment and Accreditation of ODL Institutions on participatory basis with open universities in India. The Scheme of Assessment and Accreditation has been notified by the DEC and the proposals are expected.

5.2.3 Coordination of Activities

The DEC has provided financial assistance to various universities for organizing conferences/ seminars/ workshops pertaining to distance education for strengthening the academic capabilities of the ODL system. The DEC sponsored the PCF 6 Conference held in November 2010. During the year 2010-11, the DEC:

- developed formal guidelines for regulating the establishment and operation of ODL institutions for offering programmes offline and online.

- developed norms for Assessment and Accreditation of the ODL Institutions, with the SOUs. Workshops have been conducted to develop the criteria and parameters for assessment and accreditation. A Handbook of Assessment and Accreditation has also been developed.

- given provisional recognition to many ODL institutions to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications for eligibility to posts and services under Central Government jobs as per the Gazette notification of the Government of India. This recognition would continue till the visit of the Expert Committee constituted by the UGC-AICTE-DEC Joint Committee for according recognition to them as well as the programmes they are offering through distance mode for a specified period.

5.3 Research and Training in ODL

IGNOU, the leader in the ODL system in India, supports both institutional and action research for the qualitative improvement in various processes involved in the open and distance learning system.

To encourage system based research, every year DEC invites teachers and academics from all over the country to submit research proposals for considerations of funding. The research projects completed and submitted to DEC have been abstracted in the form of a document in 2008, entitled DEC Initiatives in Research and Development (1996-2006), in order to disseminate the findings and the recommendations made by the researchers.

The Staff Training Research Institute (STRIDE) of the University launched a new initiative Academic Counsellors' Training Online (ACT-Online) during the October 2010. Academic Counsellors' Training Online (ACT-Online) programme is designed specifically for those who are engaged in or wish to be engaged in the tasks of providing tutoring/counseling and other technology-mediated support to the distance learners. The ACT-Online is grounded in both the theory and practice of ODL. Some of the important contents covered in this programme are: ODL concept, models, development, student support, tutoring and counseling, importance of assignments, evaluation of assignment responses, development of study skills and self-learning, support to

the educationally disadvantaged students, use of new technologies for student support etc. The ACT-Online programme requires 90 hours or three credits workload and duration of 45-90 days (Min-Mix). STRIDE is also offering Post-Graduate Diploma in E-learning (PGDEL) to develope professional competencies in offering online programmes in India.

The STRIDE organized the following training programmes/workshops, seminars and conferences during the year:

Programme	Duration	Place
RefresherProgramme in Distance Educatio	22, March to 16 April, 2010	IGNOU, New Delhi
5-Day Induction Programme on "Distance Education: Theory and Practice"	25-29, October, 2010	IGNOU, New Delhi
PCF6, Pre-Conference on M-Learning	23rd November, 2010	Kochi
COMOSA-NIOS Workshop on Research Policy for Open Schooling	November 22-23, 2010	Delhi
National Workshop on Development of Self-Learning Materials for Distance and Online Learning	February 14–18,11	IGNOU, New Delhi
Workshop on Self-Learning Material Development for DE	February 24-26, 2011	DY Patil University, Pune
Orientation programme for JATs of IGNOU Newly Recruited	March 9-11, 2011	IGNOU, New Delhi
Orientation-cum-Induction Programme for Newly Recruited Data Entry Operators of IGNOU	March,21 -22, 2011	IGNOU, New Delhi
Workshop on DE and SLMD	March 17-19, 2011	GJTU, Hissar
National Workshop on Development of Self-Learning Materials for Distance and Online Learning	28 March - 1 April, 2011	IGNOU, New Delhi

The Inter-University Cosortium (IUC) was established as an education, training, development, research and service platform for ICT-enabled interactive multi-media and online education for the distance education system in the country. IUC is mandated on the lines of Pan-African e-Network and existing consortia of University Grants Commission and Association of Indian Universities. The IUC organised the following three training programmes for Research and Teaching Assistants/ Ph.D. scholars and faculty members of the University:

- A three day training programme of Research Methods for Research and Teaching Assistants/ Ph.D scholars of IGNOU was organized during February 01-03, 2011. Nineteen RTAs/Ph.D Scholars participated.

- A three day training programme on Development of Online Courses was organized during March 16-18, 2011 Twenty one faculty members from various State Open Universities/Private Universities participated in this training programme.

5.4 Indian Journal of Open Learning
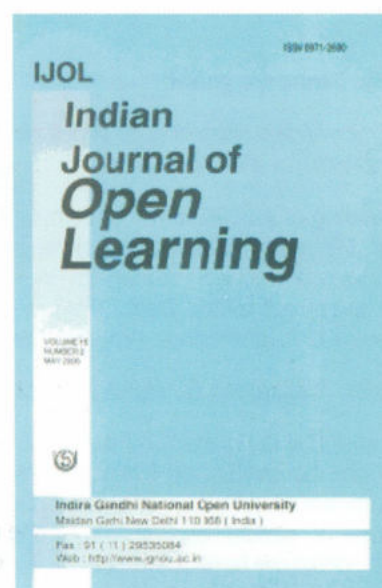
Since 1992 IGNOU has been publishing the Indian Journal of Open Learning (IJOL), a refereed/peer reviewed international journal to disseminate information about the theory, practice and research in the field of ODL. It is published thrice a year, in January, May and September. During the period of report the January , May, September 2010 and January 2011 issues were published.

In line with the core areas highlighted under 11th plan and projected for the 12th Plan, IGNOU adopted new approaches to strategically produce the desired results for achieving 'Inclusive Growth' by aligning all its key activities and events under two broad themes viz:

- Inclusion of the Excluded

- Education for the Marginalized

The various activities undertaken are classified under the following heads:

- Strategic Initiatives for Social Inclusion

- Strategic Initiatives for Economic Empowerment

- Strategic Initiatives for Upliftment of the Marginalized

- Strategic Initiatives for Gender Sensitization

- Strategic Initiatives for Sensitizing on Disability issues

6.1 Women Empowerment

6.1.1 Empowering Anganwadi Workers belonging to Madhya Pradesh State

Capacity building of 10,000 newly appointed Anganwadi workers of MP state was done through technical training modules developed in tune with 'Vidisha Training Model' and supported by the Dept. of Women and Child development, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh (MP).

6.1.2 Gender Budgeting for Women Empowerment

Launching an MPhil in Gender and Development studies has been done to encourage indigenous research for providing impetus to collection of gender disaggregated data and use of gender analysis tools. The research exercise will contribute to all major initiatives undertaken by the Govt. and NGOs for gender mainstreaming and gender auditing and budgeting.

6.1.3 Educational Empowerment to Provide Dignity to Sex Workers and Their Wards

IGNOU's free education scheme for sex workers and their wards has gone a long way in socially including this section of the society that has always been marginalized due to an occupational stigma. Children of sex workers will no longer have to bear the brunt of their parent's livelihood as they can now become socially inclusive and financially empowered.

6.2 Empowerment of Disabled

6.2.1 Digital Empowerment of Visually Impaired Youth for Livelihood Hunting

ACIIL along with IIT Mumbai conducted a workshop on Basic Computing and Internet Surfing for the visually impaired youth through the FOSS software to enable them hunt suitable livelihood to become economically and socially inclusive.

6.2.2 Special Study Centers for FCED programme for awareness on Disability Issues

100 RCI recognized Special Study Centres were activated for imparting a 3 months hands-on Practical Training Foundation programme meant for sensitizing the parents and care takers of children with disability to enable smooth t mainstreaming with social inclusion.

6.3 Addressing Special Groups

6.3.1 Empowerment of Farmers by ICRTA-Agartala

Farmers in Assam and Northeastern regions were provided extensive training on latest high crop yielding techniques through ICT. This has led to considerable saving of time, labor and money leading to financial benefits

6.3.2 Reaching out to the Peripherals by IIVET-Shillong

Establishing an Institute for Vocational Education and Training (IIVET) is a benchmark for revival and survival, as it has successfully linked indigenous knowledge with industry through strategic alliances with academia as well. Several certified short term, non-credit programmes on citizen journalism and folklore theatre performance were conducted across the Northeast region for economic empowerment and livelihood generation.

6.3.3 Free Education with New Lease of life for Jail Inmates

After providing prisoners with free access to education in jails across the country, IGNOU has gone one step further to provide the jail inmates a new lease of life after their release so that they do not return to the life of crime. This has been done by conducting the first ever placement drive within the Tihar Central Jail premises on 25th February where 7 companies participated to interview 46 IGNOU learners who had completed UG and PG Degree programmes. The