

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 350

HE 033 107

TITLE Guidelines for Support to State Open Universities and Correspondence Course Institutes.

INSTITUTION Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi (India). Distance Education Council.

PUB DATE 1997-07-03

NOTE 65p.; For a related document from the Distance Education Council, see HE 033 110.

AVAILABLE FROM Indira Gandhi National Open University, Distance Education Council, K-76 Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110016, India.

PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Computer Mediated Communication; *Computer Uses in Education; *Correspondence Schools; *Distance Education; Educational Change; *Educational Finance; Educational Technology; Faculty Development; *Financial Support; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Internet; Networks; Nontraditional Education; Online Systems; *Open Universities; Public Colleges; State Universities

IDENTIFIERS *India

ABSTRACT

This report presents a comprehensive set of guidelines approved by the Distance Education Council (India) in July 1997 for funding open universities and correspondence course institutes and describes policies and programs to promote distance education through communication, industrial, and academic networks. The first section, which summarizes the recommendations, lists guiding principles for support of state open universities and correspondence course institutes, as well as similar guidelines for institutional and academic reforms, staff development, student support services, and computerization. Other sections of the report discuss major considerations and guidelines for the nurturing phase of distance education and outline future development plans and funding for state open universities and correspondence course initiatives. The discussion in these sections touches on guiding principles, academic and institutional reforms, infrastructure development, curriculum development, student services, staff development, technology support systems, performance review and assessment, and research and development. A final section discusses the relationship of the Distance Education Council vis-a-vis open universities and distance education institutions. Appended are copies of the Distance Education Council proposals for establishing state open universities and its action plan for upgrading correspondence courses to distance education. (SM)

ED 443 350

DISTANCE EDUCATION COUNCIL

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORT TO STATE OPEN UNIVERSITIES AND CORRESPONDENCE COURSE INSTITUTES

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These Guidelines
Were
Considered and Approved
By
The Distance Education Council
At its
13th Meeting Held on
3rd July, 1997

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Prof.R.V.R.Chandrasekhara Rao
Chairman, D.E.C. Committee

Dt:21.6.1997.

Dear Prof.Takwale,

I have the pleasure of enclosing the Report of the DEC Committee for Revision and Development of Norms and Guidelines for Support to State Open Universities and Correspondence Courses which you constituted in February, 1997.

While the Committee endeavoured to indicate a comprehensive set of guidelines for funding Open Universities and Correspondence Course Institutes, the main thrust has been to put in place a funding policy that will promote a distance education net-work both in terms of communication net-work and instructional and academic net-works. The evolution of such a comprehensive net-work would, in short, be the main thrust behind the funding policy. No doubt, other significant considerations have been taken into view in evolving the criteria for funding.

I and my colleagues on the Committee are thankful for the confidence you have reposed in us in entrusting this important task.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,


(R.V.R.CHANDRASEKHARA RAO)

Prof.R.G.Takwale
Chairman
Distance Education Council
Indira Gandhi National Open University
New Delhi.

I. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

- i. With the commencement of the Ninth Plan, DEC will assume the responsibility for the promotion, coordination and development of the open university and distance education system in the country comprising all State Open Universities and the Correspondence Course Institutes of the traditional universities in the country.
- ii. All the State Open Universities in the country will be developed into an Open University Network sharing programmes, courses, delivery networks, etc.
- iii. The Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs) of the dual mode universities will be supported, to transform themselves into mainstream Distance Education Institutions (DECs) as recommended in the UGC's plan of action and on completion of this nurturing phase, they will be enabled to join the Open Universities Network.
- iv. The DEC will perform the functions of promotion, coordination and development in an integrated manner and will participate in all stages of the development process in respect of OUs and CCIs.

SUPPORT TO STATE OPEN UNIVERSITIES

- i. **Guiding Principles**
 - a. The initial infrastructure and its maintenance shall be fully funded by the State Governments in accordance with the DEC norms and guidelines.
 - b. Programmes and courses as well as the technology support system for delivery shall be provided by the DEC as development support. DEC will also establish the common pool of programmes that can be shared by all open universities.
 - c. All operating cost for providing various services to the students may be met fully by the open universities from the fees collected .
 - d. The cost of quality improvement and maintenance mechanisms shall be the responsibility of the DEC.
 - e. All DEC support should be on project basis.
 - f. Open Universities should generally meet all additional man-power needs for development by engaging the services of appropriate personnel on contract or on other short-term assignment for the duration of each Project.
- ii. **Infrastructure Development**
 - a. The three state open universities which are receiving DEC support will continue to receive support for the programmes which are already recommended by the DEC

and which have not been completed so far.

- b. Those open universities which fulfil the existing requirements may approach the UGC to expedite the consideration of their cases for declaration of fitness; the remaining universities may take early steps to provide initial infrastructure as per the revised DEC guidelines.
- c. DEC will vigorously pursue with the remaining State Governments the proposal to establish Open Universities.

iii. **Development of Programmes and courses**

The DEC will provide financial support for development of programmes and courses with focus on

- (a) professional and career orientation of degree and diploma programmes
- (b) redesigning of the academic Programmes
- (c) expansion of continuing and extension education and
- (d) introduction of programmes of technical / vocational education.

iv. **Student Services**

The DEC will provide assistance for organising various student services like pre-admission counselling, computerisation of student information systems and diversification of the delivery of programmes and services. Joint efforts by open universities in diversifying their delivery systems will be given special encouragement.

v. **Staff Development**

The DEC will support staff development programmes ranging from pre-induction orientation to regular refresher and advanced training programmes in distance education methodology, education technology and its applications, development and delivery of multimedia learning packages, technology driven student assessment systems etc.

vi. **National Technology Support System**

DEC will give special attention to the development of a National Technology Support System which involves

- a. capacity building in terms of hardware, courseware, expertise and networking and
- b. development of tele-conferencing / broadcasting network including presentation transmission ends with up-linking facilities and receiving ends at several centres

vii. **National Resource Development**

a. **Common Pool Programmes:**

The DEC will establish and maintain a common pool of programmes that can be shared by all open universities. Open Universities will be supported in developing programmes for the common pool and also for adoption, adaptation or translation of programmes for their use. The management of the pool will be mediated by the DEC.

b. **Quality Assurance and Accreditation:**

The DEC will develop appropriate norms and standards for design, development and delivery of programmes and also establish suitable mechanisms for accrediting the programmes and courses. Only those programmes which fulfil certain norms and guidelines in respect of their quality and standards will be placed in the Common Pool.

viii. **Research and Development**

a. DEC will extend support to State Open Universities to initiate research in the thrust areas of communication technology, development and production of learning packages, technology-driven student evaluation systems, discipline communication etc.

b. Assistance to SOUs will be provided to institute programmes of fellowships to attract talented researchers.

c. Special assistance will be made available to SOUs to establish instruments/mechanisms in collaboration with National / State level institutions, professional bodies/organisations and well-established research institutions to initiate joint programmes of research and development in training technology and competence building.

ix. **Performance Review and Assessment**

Joint review of all development programmes by teams drawn from DEC, the concerned open university and external assessors at regular intervals so that corrective action where necessary is taken at the right time and also the experience of each university is shared by others.

SUPPORT TO CORRESPONDENCE COURSE INSTITUTES

i. Those CCI's which fulfil the following criteria would be eligible for DEC support in the nurturing phase

a. the aggregate enrolment in the institute is not less than 10,000;

- b. only these programmes which have an enrolment of less than 1,000 or more would be supported for transformation into distance education;
- c. programmes of a highly specialised nature and which fulfil a specific national purpose will be considered for support irrespective of the enrolment and
- d. any programme which will enrich the common pool of programmes of Open University Network will be considered for support

ii. The DEC support to CCIs will be available on the following basis:

- a. all programmes are formulated as specific projects
- b. the DEC will provide 50% support for the inputs required, the remaining 50% being met by the CCIs from their own resources
- c. a higher level of assistance from the DEC may be considered for a project which contributes to the enrichment of the network
- d. manpower inputs required will be provided in terms of manmonths for each project

iii. INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

- a. The organisational and governance structure should be reviewed to ensure more functional autonomy with Advisory Committees overseeing programme developments, innovations and performance;
- b. A separate Board of Studies in Distance Education responsible for designing and developing programmes and courses may be set up;
- c. Core faculty should comprise of Professors, Readers and Lecturers. Director should be a Professor. Terms and conditions of services shall be at par with other teachers in the department
- d. DEI should have sufficient functional autonomy and should have adequate physical facilities.

iv. ACADEMIC REFORMS

- a. Transformation of the printed course material into self-instructional distance education format should receive high priority.
- b. The possibility of sharing study materials, through adoption / adaptation should be explored.
- c. Introduction of non-conventional and need based vocational /technical and professional courses should be considered.
- d. Provision for equipment and facilities for the play-back of audio-video cassettes, recording and playing-back of radio broadcasts and telecasts be made.

e. Institutes should develop their own electronic media production capacity

v. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a. Institutions should organise orientation programmes for teachers in writing / transforming course materials in the self-instructional format, evaluation of students response-sheets and organisation of other support services.

b. Short-term measures to meet staff development should be organised in consultation with STRIDE, IGNOU.

vi. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

a. DEIs should set up information cells and should also undertake promotional efforts.

b. Study Centres may be established at places having adequate student enrolment in a programme. Arrangements for continuous evaluation of student progress through assignments should be made.

c. Provision for Library facilities at study centres may be made.

vii. COMPUTERISATION

DEIs should have a good computer centre with LAN facilities for computerising students records, administration, production of learning materials, development and use of multimedia packages, evaluation of student assignments etc. DTP facilities desirable for preparation of learning packages.

viii. NETWORKING

a. The re-organisation and development of DEIs should be taken up urgently. With their eventually becoming part of the Open University Network (OPENET) with the advantages that the students will have a wide range of programmes and courses to choose from; this will avoid duplication of efforts and will make programmes economically viable and effective.

b. DEIs may adopt / adapt programmes of IGNOU and State Open Universities and could join the telecasting / broadcasting network by installing down - link facilities at their premises.

ix. DUAL MODE SYSTEM

a. The dual mode system can reach out to a much larger number of students through their participation in distance education.

b. It is necessary to strengthen (a) mobility of students from DEIs to conventional universities and colleges (b) permitting students to do some course from DEI / Open Universities and rest from conventional universities / colleges; and (c) some

programmes by incorporating learning packages developed by OUs.

x. GENERAL

DEIs will adopt the norms and guidelines laid down by the DEC in the design, development and delivery of programmes. The performance of DEIs will be reviewed and assessed by the DEC as in the case of SOUs.

xi. STRENGTHENING THE DEC

- a. The DEC should be restructured to provide it with a distinct identity.
 - b. The management and operationalisation of networks will devolve on the DEC and therefore; it is necessary that DEC is strengthened to undertake this task.
 - c. DEC should develop competence in mediation of the common pool of programmes, accreditation, sharing of delivery networks.
 - d. DEC should establish a pool of resource persons to assist the Open Learning System.
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II. INTRODUCTION

The Distance Education Council at its twelfth meeting held on 18th December 1996 authorised its Chairman to constitute a Committee for the Revision and Development of Norms and Guidelines for Support to State Open Universities and Correspondence Course Institutes during the 9th Plan Period. Accordingly, the Chairman, DEC appointed a Committee consisting of the following members :

1. Prof. R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao
Former Vice-Chancellor, BRAOU and
Former Director, Asian Programmes, COL, Hyderabad - Chairman
2. Prof. S.K. Verma
Former Vice-Chancellor, CIEFL, Hyderabad - Member
3. Prof. B.S. Sharma
Vice-Chancellor, Kota Open University, Kota - Member
4. Shri C.R. Pillai,
Adviser to Vice-Chancellor, IGNOU - Member
5. Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya
Professor of Cinema Studies,
Jadavpur University, Calcutta - Member
6. Prof. S.L. Goel
Professor Public Administration
Punjab University, Chandigarh, - Member
7. Dr. M. Shanmugham
Director
Correspondence Course Institute
Madras University, Chennai - Member
8. Prof. V.S. Prasad
Director
Distance Education Council - Member
Secretary

DEC Secretariat

Dr. R.R. Rausaria
Deputy Director, DEC

2. The terms of reference of the Committee are :

- (a) To revise and develop guidelines for providing central assistance to State Open Universities;
- (b) To formulate norms and guidelines for assistance to Correspondence Course Institutes of conventional universities during the Ninth Plan Period; and
- (c) To suggest measures for the strengthening of Distance Education Council.

The Committee held four meetings, on 28th February, 1997, 17th March, 1997, 16th April, 1997 and 21st June, 1997.

At the final meeting held on June 21, 1997, the Committee authorised its chairman to submit the report to the Chairman, DEC.

III THE DISTANCE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

As is well known, the distance education scenario in India is characterised by the presence of the over three-decades old generation of distance education institutions in the shape of Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs), and the more recent decade-and-half- -old version, the open universities. Of the latter, IGNOU was established not only as the national level of Open University (OU) but also as the apex body of distance education. The apex body role envisages overseeing the maintenance of standards in distance education and, in the performance of that function, acting as the development funding agency for distance education. The latter role is entrusted by IGNOU to Distance Education Council (DEC) created in 1992 under the IGNOU Act. DEC's assumption of this role so far has been confined to State of Open Universities (SOUs) as it chose to move cautiously in bringing the CCIs under its scope of activity. Even in the case of SOUs, DEC has been wise enough to hasten slowly. For, its new initiative has to dovetail appropriately with the existing UGC's policies and procedures which were till then operating vis-a-vis SOUs. Therefore, DEC sought to evolve guidelines for its funding-role having in view the UGC guidelines. A Committee was constituted by DEC in 1992 to recommend guidelines which so far are in operation. Now that DEC has decided to project its role in its entirety, new guidelines have become necessary with regard to CCIs (which are for the first time brought under DEC's purview) along with revised guidelines for the funding of SOUs. Hence this present Committee.

The task of this Committee is to revise and develop norms and guidelines for extending support to SOUs and the CCIs. The revision mostly relates to the existing guidelines developed by DEC for funding OUs. The 1992 guidelines of the DEC presupposed that, to become eligible for DEC funding, OUs will have gone through the process of admission to grants under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act. It will be recalled that this process governed the admissibility of Universities to development grants of the UGC. While framing the 1992 guidelines, the DEC had recommended a review of this process and replacement of the conditionalities for fitness in the case of open universities. We understand that this review is receiving serious attention and that there will be major modifications in these conditionalities.

Major Considerations for Funding Policy

- (a) Any set of guidelines should not forget the fact that the basic methodology of distance education is the same -- existing differences and variations should only be considered as transitory,

destined to evolve into a uniform pattern. Thus while the present diversity in distance education set-up may call for different funding criteria, the ultimate aim is to ensure a coherent and unified system of open learning functions.

- (b) The funding policy for the CCIs should be formed by the recognition of the reality of the structural linkages of the CCIs with the conventional universities, while ensuring directional change in their functional aspects.
- (c) Ideally, the OUs are regarded as incorporating the full range of the functions and instrumentalities associated with distance education whereas CCIs are at best designed as approximation to these functions and instrumentalities. Both of these versions incorporate the open access principle (in the sense requiring no rigid entry qualification for admission to their programmes) and also adopt flexible methodologies of instruction. But the comparison ends there. In what can be regarded as the crucial function of the nature of the programmes undertaken, there is a discernible qualitative difference. OUs adopt a far more innovative 'menu' in their programme offering, while CCIs almost entirely adhere to offering formal courses and that too often omitting the science/technology programmes from their menu. Additionally, there is the significant difference in their shying away from adopting the multi-media approach, particularly in their total eschewal of the electronic media, like radio and T.V. in their instruction and delivery. Of course, at the root of this non-adherence to the core of the distance education mode lies the fact that many CCIs do not provide even skeletal student support services.

The above points are of seminal importance to the funding function. For, funding for distance education will have to be, above all, faithful to the promotion of distance education methodologies, if the distance education mode is to be accepted as credible both inside India and outside its territory. While, no doubt, given the inevitability of the existence of the binary system, funding mechanisms will have to cater to upgradation of CCIs to distance education patterns, still the steering of the distance education system as a whole towards the goal of credible distance education methodologies and programmes cannot but be the determining criteria in funding patterns. This could be called the **nurturing phase** of the CCIs. In view of this consideration the following parameters need to be posited in addressing the nurturing needs of CCIs in their distance education quest:

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- (i) A funding policy designed to give development incentives to CCIs to move forward towards distance education goals with all deliberate speed. This in turn would entail a fixed annual allocation of development grants or a one-time grant, with appropriate monitoring devices to oversee their programmes in this regard.
- (ii) A second stage of the funding process involving further progression towards distance education status by the CCIs should also be incorporated. The expected progression at this stage will have to be in the area of course material development (e.g., adaptation of material to the self-instructional pattern), and the establishment of viable student support services.
- (iii) Obviously the above stage will mean laying down criteria for admissibility to development grants. Such admissibility criteria may still have to be different from those to be applied to OUs for admission to grants from DEC. **In other words, for sometime to come at least, the movement from CCI stage to DE stage will constitute a distinct phase which is yet different from the promotion of Distance Education Institutions (DEIs) belonging to the genre of OUs.**

It should of course be mentioned that such a policy is already in vogue since the UGC itself had sanctioned grants for upgradation of CCIs. But this has so far been nothing more than tokenism, with neither the CCIs exhibiting interest in gearing themselves to the upward movement nor the funding agency showing interest in monitoring. May be, the promotional grant is not sufficient to effect even a cosmetic change in the profile of the CCIs.

Guidelines for the Nurturing Phase of CCIs

Now that the DEC is to stand forth as the promoting and funding agency, it is time to evolve a more detailed system of grants allocation for this nurturing phase of the CCIs.

It should also be realised that a complete transformation of CCIs will take time. A root and branch transplanting of CCIs into the ecology of distance education is not an easy process. The ties with conventional universities cannot be severed and especially the programme menus of CCIs (as different from their instructional patterns) may have to remain closely patterned on the lines of the academic programmes of the parent conventional universities. Further, a total delinking of the earnings of CCIs

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from the revenues of the parent universities will also remain problematic for some time to come.

However, DEC should require the fulfilment of the following conditions from the conventional universities:

- (a) An ascertainable measure of financial autonomy for the CCIs thus ensuring a dedicated source of funds. While the ratio of the revenues accrued from CCI operations (e.g. the students fees, etc) to be earmarked for CCIs needs to be fixed, to start with, what is needed is that a major portion of CCIs revenues will have to be exclusively set apart. The observance of this condition by the conventional universities needs to be monitored by DEC as well as by UGC. The latter's role will be crucial. This can be written into UGC's quinquennial process of granting development funds to such universities.
- (b) Conventional universities should also accord autonomy to CCIs in developing new programmes either through the mechanisms of existing Boards of Studies/Academic Councils, or through the establishment of separate mechanisms ensuring that the degrees/diplomas awarded to CCIs students have identical accreditation.

This is necessary to enable CCIs to develop innovative programmes that may depart from the more conventional type of programmes that the parent universities want to pursue. This would further push the CCIs in the direction of distance education oriented teaching enabling them to join the wider distance education programme networks that the OUs would be forming.

- (c) Some structural alterations in the status of CCIs are also necessary. It is a fact that still, by and large, CCIs only enjoy a 'department' status in the academic institutional hierarchy of conventional universities. Though in some instances CCIs' are styled as Centres, Directorates, Institutes, autonomy-wise, it seems these are typical instances of distinctions without real difference. A uniform and standardised nomenclature is necessary with appropriate level of structural and functional autonomy.
- (d) Legal provision for students enrolled in one CCI to enrol in courses offered by another would be yet another enabling device for developing programme networks. This would reduce to some extent the present pattern of different universities offering identical programmes in various disciplines. At least parts of some

programmes could form the unique items of academic offerings of one CCI which students of other CCIs could choose as partial fulfilment of their programme requirements.

- (e) One of the most crucial asymmetries prevailing in the distance education arena is the disjunction in the thinking of state governments in establishing CCIs as distance education agencies, and the very philosophy of distance education as it was evolved by now. Governments conceive of distance education as an alternative avenue for formal education and a cheaper one at that. The theoretical underpinnings of distance education on the other hand strongly push forward the mounting of academic programmes of a new genre. Theoretically speaking, the nature of academic agenda that distance education is to cater is conceived in a widely different pattern. DE's scope now ranges from concerns of HRD in general, to incorporating programmes hitherto held to be beyond the pale of formal education. In view of this, a certain amount of divergence of outlook remains though mostly hidden from the outside in routine discourse on distance education. State governments, in particular, look to distance education as primarily a supplement to the formal educational system providing easy access for many people to acquire diplomas and degrees and thereby also secure gainful employment. While they admit to the other rich potentialities that the new mode is capable of, nevertheless their horizons in reality are confined to viewing the mode in the former perspective. Given the disjunction in perspectives, state funding for innovative programmes, or for even the conventional programmes to be brought into mainstream distance education pattern, may not be forthcoming to any appreciable level. **This has a bearing on funding guidelines. For even for those CCIs which are evolving into mainstream distance education profile, the maintenance grant versus development grant dichotomy may become less relevant.** We will have more to say on this aspect of the problem in other contexts of this report.
- (f) Apart from involving the parent universities in the process of funding CCIs, DEC will have to involve the state governments too, though not to the same extent. In view of the changed context of CCI funding, there is the prospect of the state governments withdrawing their funding even on the so called 'maintenance' front. Persuading governments to retain their present levels of funding is a daunting exercise. To have their increased funding may prove well nigh impossible. Still, until state governments sincerely upgrade the CCIs, DE will remain upstaged. **It is in this context**

that DEC will have to assume the advocacy function in a big way. Now that a few more state governments are proposing to start OUs, a proper understanding of what OUs signify and what sort of inputs they require is imperative lest OUs become one more ornamentative items in the educational landscape of states. Both the political and civil service components of state executives need to be oriented to the concept, composition and curriculum concerns of distance education.

- (g) The establishment of new OUs would occasion the reopening of the debate on the desirability or otherwise of the merging of the existing CCIs into the newly to-be-opened OU in the concerned state. Experience so far has been mixed. Only a few of the existing OUs were founded through merger of CCIs. Viewing from the point of view of bringing the CCIs to the norms of distance education institutions, new OUs may be regarded as windows of opportunity for the CCIs. But there is the counterpoint that such a merger may turn out to be window of vulnerability to the new OUs in general and consultant-at-large for individual initiatives in particular. The issue has a bearing on the strategies for funding of both CCIs and OUs.

STATE OPEN UNIVERSITIES

In so far as the guidelines for the SOUs are concerned, our task is made easy. We have the advantage of having with us existing guidelines developed in 1992 even as DEC was set up. These guidelines provide us with an excellent exposition of the background to the growth of distance education in India, the origins of OUs, the role entrusted to IGNOU as the apex body in the sector and, in particular, the role assigned to DEC just then established. In fact, coming as it does when DEC was for the first time assuming the role of the funding agency for SOUs, (pending its entry into the field vis-a-vis the CCIs) the previous set of guidelines is of great relevance. The background to the origins of distance education it provides us is so comprehensive that we can safely refrain from restating the same once again.

Our task now is to revise and modify the guidelines as much water has flown under the Yamuna since the last guidelines were formulated five years ago.

This passage of five years has witnessed other quantitative and qualitative changes in the SOU's scenario. Three more SOUs have come up since then, bringing the total to 7. What is more, a few more states

have decided to establish OUs of their own. Qualitatively, the relatively older SOUs which have been admitted to development grants under the earlier UGC regime, are now at the take-off stage of development seeking Central assistance for further advancement of their existing programmes and for launching new programmes of an innovative kind. Even more important is the altered scene characterised by the challenge and opportunity of incorporating advanced electronic media. Its imperatives for distance education to stand forth as the instrument of revolutionary change in defining educational curriculum and attending to the gamut of HRD concerns cannot be overstated. The installation of the National Technology Network under the aegis of IGNOU, in collaboration with ISRO and other agencies, casts a challenging responsibility on the SOUs and the State Governments. The highest priority is now to be accorded to SOUs becoming partners in the electronic network, constituting perhaps one of the primary determinants of guidelines for assistance. In other words, the areas of programme content and programme delivery will at once have undergone altered emphasis on consideration of the nature and scope of funding. **While the CCIs will be encouraged in bringing their course material contents and student support services in line with genuine distance education norms, the OUs will have to be persuaded through funding incentives into acquiring and utilising the advanced technology networks.**

This is not to say that the erstwhile items of claim for development funding will get low priority. Still infrastructural development for audio/video programmes, special assistance for innovative non-formal academic initiatives enabling SOUs to move away from the traditional type of programmes, and particularly developing common pool programmes with other distance education agencies, will have to receive priority in funding. In this context, closer collaboration of SOUs with CCIs should also receive incentive grants. This way DEC will have to re-engineer the rigidities of the present binary system in distance education by bringing down the walls separating SOUs and CCIs.

Yet another major consideration in developing guidelines relates to the dichotomy of maintenance and development grant. The former is regarded as the responsibility of the state governments while the Centre, through agencies like the UGC and DEC, grants development funding. There is always some vagueness and overlap in the items each of these two categories cover. Given the existing limitation on the enthusiasm and capabilities of state governments to fund distance education institutions, their readiness to be free with funding distance education is always rather inhibited, notwithstanding their policy statements on distance education. Therefore, there is scope for a review of DEC's strict adherence to the dichotomy. The new guidelines will address this problem further. For

example, in distance education contexts, a strict separation between faculty-staff and administrative staff is not viable because course-teams are so constituted as to cut-across such a division. This Committee will endeavour to address these concerns while recommending guidelines.

At the same time, the pattern of 'permanent' staff positions needs to be reviewed. Innovative academic programmes in the distance education set up do not necessarily require overloading of staff positions. Contract-type appointments for specific time-bound assignments will have to be introduced, especially in electronic course development and, for that matter, even in print-material development. The fact that free-lancing technological expertise is available gives us confidence that non-permanent staffing pattern is feasible. Still, any major shift towards contract-based tenures may come in conflict with social justice expectations, and the overall paucity of jobs should underscore this caution. **Thus the inauguration of contract-based staffing should be experimented for new programmes, but we have no hesitation in recommending that the experiment will have to start.**

Promotional Funding Pending Eligibility Fulfilment by SOUs

While flexibility in the implementation of grants criteria takes care of 'hard' cases or claims, there needs to be provision for meeting initial 'eligibility' problems of SOUs. There are instances of SOUs languishing in suspended animation due to the absence of strong initial leadership, lackadaisical approach of state authorities and such other debilitating factors. These may prove to be intractable cases defying even a soft-pedalled approach for recognition for eligibility by DEC. Transition from candidate-status of OUs to full recognition may require a push-factor from DEC. Already some aid pending full-fledged admission to grants is available; what is needed is provision for more comprehensive aid-packages from DEC. Facilitating adoption of other OU course-material, intensive training opportunities for staff at STRIDE, constant 'advocacy' on the University's behalf with governmental authorities, for example, will all go a long way in bringing up such institutions. While adding strength to strength is always a known and approved policy, DEC will have also to resort to curing chronically adolescent cases to adulthood.

DEC's Role as the Participant Monitor

Eligibility for admission to grants normally involves a process of preparation of plan proposals, their submission to the granting authority followed by a paraphernalia of visiting/inspection committees scrutinising the proposals and finally the recommendations of sanctions. The process

almost assumes the shape of adversary proceedings, with the University playing the client and the visiting committee playing the judge. Often times this generates an atmosphere vitiating the true nature and purpose of the exercise. DEC should initiate new ground rules for this game. It may be mentioned that in England where Quality Assurance Mechanism involves despatch of visiting teams to individual universities, precisely such a role is performed by the teams so as to be perceived as the gentle critic and the benign benefactor and not as interloping inquisitor and a jealous safeguarder of the granting authority's coffers. We are gratified to note that DEC seeks involvement with OUs in their very process of development proposals preparation, monitoring the process even before the proposals they make come up for scrutiny. In this manner universities could obtain strategic and technical advice to present their most presentable profiles. Indeed such a procedure would itself constitute an aspect of development assistance. We very strongly advise DEC to make its involvement in this regard an integral part of its funding role.

While the aforesaid deal with some crucial factors that have a bearing on the nature and type of guidelines to be evolved, there are, of course, well known criteria germane to the distance education paradigm which are to form part of any set of guidelines. Criteria like initiating innovative programmes, strengthening audio/video production capabilities, initiatives in pooling programmes through inter-institutional collaboration, programmes tailored to special target groups (like tribal populations, disabled peoples) and particularly women empowerment programmes are some of these. In general, movement in the direction of non-traditional educational development should find priority for funding. Many of these already figure in the 1992 guidelines document and are endorsed by this Committee too. These will be dealt with in other sections of the report. To repeat, the purpose in focusing on some criteria in this chapter is more by way of referring to the salient trends in the distance education landscape, the trends that directly and indirectly influence the development of guidelines.

IV DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO STATE OPEN UNIVERSITIES

We are glad to know that at the initiative of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), a document entitled "Distance Education : Vision & Strategies" was prepared in 1996 and that this document formed the basis for preparation of the Ninth Plan proposals for the Open Learning System (OLS) by a separate Working Group. In our view, this is a significant development that acknowledges the role of distance education in the emerging educational scenario in the country.

The document indicates the directions for development of the distance education system in India in the years to come. Broadly these directions are :

- (i) Expansion of the Open Learning System;
- (ii) Introduction of new and innovative programmes and courses;
- (iii) Major expansion in student enrolment;
- (iv) Networking the physical and intellectual resources and technology support;
- (v) Provision for more efficient student services;
- (vi) Expansion of continuing and extension education programmes; and
- (vii) Development of national resource bases for programmes and courses, delivery system, media networks, training, system development, etc.

One of the most discernible trends in the development strategies for distance education is the emergence of the Open Learning System as a major technology network. In a fundamental sense, therefore, the development efforts in the Ninth Plan have to address issues involved in the establishment of the Open Learning System as against the traditional approach of providing inputs for institution-specific development. It will follow that provision of development support from the Distance Education Council (DEC) in the Ninth Plan will be focussed on programmes and activities that support distance education as a networked system.

The basic features of the development of the Open Learning System in the Ninth Plan would be :

- (i) establishment of an Open University Network (OPENET) in which IGNOU and all the State Open Universities will be networked. In other words, each open university will be a networking, as well as a networked, institution;
- (ii) programmes and courses produced by open universities will be pooled for sharing by all open universities through adoption, adaptation and/or translation;
- (iii) delivery systems will be established and strengthened with a view to develop a national technology support system that can be drawn upon by all open universities;
- (iv) provision of support to facilitate effective networking rather than creation of assets and facilities specific to individual universities;
- (v) institution of quality assurance mechanisms for a range of concerns from programme design and development to delivery of all services and student evaluation systems; and
- (vi) introduction of programmes of continuing and extension education on a massive scale.

The guidelines framed by DEC in 1992 to provide support to state open universities had set out several criteria for providing financial support. One of the major recommendations made in those guidelines was that the establishment of new state open universities would require the preparation of a detailed project report outlining the objectives, the approaches and strategies, the staffing policy, the provision of infrastructure, the organisation of the delivery system, etc., and that new universities should be admitted to the funding regime on the basis of an assurance given by state governments of their support, as well as the merit of the project report itself.

We are informed that this recommendation has not yet been acted upon and that the declaration of fitness of state open universities for development support from central agencies continues to be governed by the 1988 rules which emphasise the creation of infrastructure in terms of land, building and staff, analogous to those required by the traditional universities. We are convinced that the open universities should move away from this traditional concept of institutions owning resources; they

have to become essentially institutions that can mobilise resources required for teaching and learning without necessarily owning them. It is this operational advantage which makes open universities cost-effective. Accordingly, an open university should be a thin and lean organisation, and any insistence on the creation of all infrastructure as a pre-condition for fitness will seriously compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Open Universities. We are glad to know that the Government is seriously considering the modifications in the fitness rules and we hope that the revised rules will be notified, as recommended by the DEC, soon enough to facilitate establishment of more state open universities in the early part of the Ninth Plan.

Guiding Principles

It is important at this stage to set out the broad principles of the funding regime for the Open University Network (OPENET). In our view, the broad principles of the regime should be :

- (i) the initial infrastructure and its maintenance shall be fully funded by the State Governments. The DEC had recommended certain norms and guidelines for establishment of new open universities. These include essential building, equipment, and staff of a modest type which can be provided at the cost of approximately Rs. 1 crore per annum over a five-year period;
- (ii) programmes and courses as well as the technology support system for delivery shall be provided by the DEC as development support to state open universities. In other words, a new open university can draw upon the common pool of programmes of the network and can also share the delivery networks to which DEC can provide access with its support;
- (iii) all operating cost for providing various services to students can be met fully by the open universities from the fees collected. It would follow that all the universities should prescribe their scales of fees so as to recover the full cost of delivery of programmes;
- (iv) the cost of quality improvement and maintenance mechanisms shall be the responsibility of the DEC.

In setting out these principles, we have drawn upon the experience in the last decade or so. In our view, the most serious challenge before a new open university is its ability to design, develop and produce programmes and courses to be offered by it. With the state open universities constituting a network and the responsibility of programme development being shared among them, this constraint should no longer be an impediment in new open universities becoming fully functional soon after their establishment. If they can acquire programmes and courses from other universities in the network, the revenues that they can generate would be adequate to meet the operating cost. It is for this reason that we are advocating the principle that the essential infrastructure for start-up should be provided by the State Governments which, in our view, will be a small contribution considering the significant advantages that open universities can ensure in the development of education in our country.

We had occasion to make a reference to the dichotomy between the maintenance and development funding that has been a major constraint in the growth of higher education in the country. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has generally been following the principle that development funding of universities and colleges is a joint responsibility of the UGC and the State Governments. The funding regime was developed on this principle. Most items of capital expenditure required a shared funding and in the case of recurring items an assurance from the State Governments to maintain that level of expenditure on cessation of UGC support was essential. In the implementation of this pattern of funding, a major bottleneck was the pre-condition that State Governments should underwrite the maintenance of the posts created with the UGC's development support after a period of five years.

In the case of open universities, within the framework of the broad funding regime that we have indicated above, we recommend that all DEC support should be on a Project basis. This would mean that all development activities taken up by the universities have to be structured as specific Projects for each activity indicating, its purpose and duration, the specific inputs required, dates of commencement and completion and also the outcome. The inputs required should be indicated specifically, in terms of manmonths, equipment and other facilities. In other words, development support will not carry with it any sanction for creation of posts and their maintenance. Such an approach will enable an open university to engage the services of appropriate personnel on contract or on other short-term assignments for the duration only of each Project.

This approach does not necessarily suggest that development efforts will not leave behind any burden of maintenance. Experience of open universities suggests that this burden will be a small fraction of the development load which can be met by creating permanent positions at the appropriate levels as part of the institutional infrastructure. In appropriate cases, the development funding could also include, for the relevant period, the support required for sharing the maintenance load devolving from development.

Within these broad parameters, we now turn to the specific guidelines for providing development support to the state open universities in the Ninth Plan.

Infrastructure Development

- A Existing state open universities which are already getting DEC support :** Three state open universities in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan will continue to receive support for the programmes which are already recommended by the DEC and which have not been completed so far. In particular, the areas in which they will receive support are : development of audio/video production capability; computerisation of operations; and provision of multi-media learning facilities.
- B State open universities which are still to become eligible :** Four state open universities in Bihar, Gujrat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh which were established by the State Governments concerned have still to be declared fit for central assistance under the UGC Act. Pending revision of the rules for declaration of fitness such universities as fulfil the existing requirements may approach the UGC to expedite the consideration of their cases. The remaining universities may take early steps to provide the initial infrastructure as per the revised DEC guidelines. These include :
- (i) preparation of the detailed project report;
 - (ii) establishment of delivery systems including provision of staff;
 - (iii) provision of Rs. 5 crore in the Ninth Plan for infrastructure and securing the commitment from the State Government to strengthen the OLS.

- (iv) though financial assistance to these universities may have to wait till the formal declaration of fitness by the UGC the DEC may provide them with technical/consultancy support for preparing the project report and in putting the systems and procedures in place. They can also obtain some programmes from other open universities and commence their operations.

C New State Open Universities : In order to ensure the development of an effective open university network with countrywide coverage as early in the Ninth Plan as possible, the DEC should vigorously pursue with the remaining State Governments the proposal to establish open universities. The establishment of such a network is necessary to extend the outreach of the OLS and also to ensure that worthwhile programmes and courses are available to large numbers of people in all major languages in the country. It is only when such a network is established that the system can penetrate all regions and areas. In the establishment of these new open universities, the DEC may provide the technical/consultancy services in the preparatory work including project formulation.

Development of Programmes and Courses

The focus in programme development during the Ninth Plan period will be on :

- (i) professional and career orientation of degree and diploma programmes through integration of education and training;
- (ii) redesigning the academic programmes to provide for flexibility, modularity, multiple entry and exit points, incorporation of greater application content, etc;
- (iii) expansion of continuing and extension education programmes in collaboration with existing institutions of higher education, professional bodies, industries, etc; and
- (iv) introduction of programmes of technical/vocational education.

The DEC will provide financial support for development of such programmes. Special consideration will be given to proposals which involve development of programmes by two or more universities jointly and those which can enrich the common pool of programmes of the

network. Proposals for these will have to be developed as specific projects.

Student Services

The OLS will have to develop and institute, pre-admission counselling service to advise and guide students on combinations of courses, flexible study arrangements, credit transfer facilities, etc. Besides computerised student information systems, diversified approaches to the delivery of programmes and services will get priority in the Ninth Plan in providing financial support. Special encouragement will be provided to joint efforts by open universities in diversifying their delivery systems.

Staff Development

State Open Universities will require to organise on a continuing basis a variety of staff development programmes ranging from pre-induction orientation to regular refresher and advanced training programmes in distance education methodology, educational technology and its applications, development and delivery of multimedia learning packages, technology-driven student assessment systems, etc. Special assistance will be provided to state open universities for organising such programmes and state open universities also should make budgetary provision and organisational arrangements for staff training and development activities.

National Technology Support System

The major features of the educational technology network proposed to be developed in the Ninth Plan are :

- (i) capacity building in terms of hardware, courseware, expertise, and networking of all physical and intellectual resources in the open universities; and
- (ii) tele-conferencing/broadcasting network including presentation/transmission ends with up-linking facilities and receiving ends at several centres.

National Resources Development

The DEC has taken several initiatives in the Eighth Plan to operationalise the Open University Network. Broadly, these initiatives envisaged the establishment and management of certain academic resources at the national level in the areas of academic programmes, delivery systems,

establishment of structures for provision of a variety of services to the students as well as to the management of the system itself. Open universities will be supported to distil from their experience of the continuing education programmes organised with the support provided by various agencies, a technology for the design and development of appropriate training packages as a core competence.

Establishment of a Pool of Resource Persons : The DEC will endeavour to establish a pool of resource persons in the open university system in such areas as planning and management, programme development and delivery, media production, educational technology, student evaluation systems, performance review and monitoring, etc. These resource persons will provide technical assistance to state open universities in designing appropriate systems, procedures and practices. Compatibility with existing system is essential for the new open universities to participate in the network effectively

Performance Review and Assessment

Success of the Open University Network will depend largely on the commitment of each open university to contribute to the common goal of the network, namely, widening access, diversifying programmes, courses and services, as also in promoting an efficient, cost-effective and innovative system of education. Continuous review and assessment of the performance of each university and its contributions to the common goals are therefore of utmost importance. We had made a mention of the DEC's role as a participant monitor in the development of open universities at all stages of their development as an integral part of its funding role. This would also include joint review of all development programmes by teams drawn from DEC, the concerned open university and external assessors at regular intervals so that the experience of each university is shared and corrective action where necessary, is taken at the right time.

communication and computer networks, human resource development, etc. These efforts will be further strengthened and consolidated in the Ninth Plan as indicated below :

- (1) **Common Pool of Programmes** : The pool will be a repository of programmes and courses developed by open universities in the country. The DEC will provide development support to open universities in developing programmes for the common pool. It will also provide support to offer programmes through adoption, adaptation or translation. The management of the pool will be mediated by the DEC.
- (2) **Quality assurance and accreditation** : With the establishment of common pool, it will become necessary to ensure that only those programmes which fulfil certain norms and guidelines in respect of their quality and standards will be placed in the common pool. In this context, the DEC will develop appropriate norms and standards for design, development and delivery of programmes, and also establish suitable mechanisms for accrediting the programmes and courses. Such quality assurance mechanisms will consist of representatives of provider universities as well as experts.

Research & Development

Development of distance education system and methodology will be a major thrust area for research in the Ninth Plan. Communication technology, development and production of learning packages, technology-driven student evaluation systems, discipline communication, etc., are some of the areas that will receive high priority in research funding. DEC will extend support to state open universities to initiate such programmes of research through appropriate projects.

Assistance will also be provided to state open universities to institute programmes of fellowships to attract talented researchers to the distance education system. The DEC will encourage research projects in which distance educators and academics will have opportunities to undertake studies and find innovative solutions.

Special assistance will be provided to open universities to establish instruments/mechanisms in collaboration with National/State level institutions, professional bodies/organisations and well-established research institutions to initiate joint programmes of research and development in knowledge technology and competence building in distance education methodology, design, development and production of multimedia learning packages, development of systems and

V DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT TO CORRESPONDENCE COURSE INSTITUTES

Soon after the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established in 1985, the Central Advisory Board for Education (CABE) recommended in 1987 that each state should have an open university and that all the open universities in the country should constitute a network, sharing programmes, facilities and services. The first major step towards the establishment of an Open University Network (OPENET) was taken in the Eighth Plan after the Distance Education Council (DEC) was established.

Meanwhile, when the Programme of Action (POA) for implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, was reviewed in 1992, it was proposed that DEC should ultimately assume the responsibility for developing the correspondence education programmes of dual mode institutions and converting them into distance education programmes. However, the POA suggested that, for the time being, the responsibility for the development of distance education programmes in the conventional universities should continue to be with the University Grants Commission (UGC).

During the last five years, this issue was considered at length at several conferences jointly organised by the UGC and the DEC at which Vice-Chancellors and Directors of Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs) of the conventional universities participated. The consensus at these conferences was that correspondence education programmes required to be transformed into distance mode, and that the DEC should provide assistance to the dual mode institutions to expedite the processes of transformation. Following these discussions, the UGC formulated a Plan of Action for restructuring the correspondence education programmes and circulated it to all the universities for implementation.

In the Ninth Plan (1997-2002), IGNOU-DEC had made proposals for bringing correspondence education programmes within the umbrella of distance education for development. The Ninth Plan outlay when finalised would include a component for the development of correspondence education programmes which will be part of the DEC allocation.

We had mentioned earlier in this report that upgradation of CCIs to distance education patterns, which we called the nurturing phase of CCIs, is an important stage of their development into full-fledged Distance Education Institutions (DEIs). However, it has to be kept in mind that the development of CCIs in the country has been uneven. Nearly three-

fourths of all the enrolment in correspondence education are in the southern region whereas the presence of correspondence education in the eastern region is only nominal. Further there are states in which generally every university is offering correspondence education programmes with the result that there is enormous duplication of efforts. The same programmes offered by different universities attract different levels of enrolments, some of which are not economically viable. The existing dispersal of correspondence programmes among regions and among universities within states therefore calls for some rationalisation. The cost-effectiveness of the distance education system depends essentially on its ability to reap the benefits of economies of scale while pursuing the approach of division of labour in its processes. Such a strategy implies that the best courses produced by one university is used by a number of universities.

As a general principle, and on the basis of the suggestions made by the UGC in its Plan of Action, we recommend that a CCI should fulfil the following criteria to become eligible for DEC support in the nurturing phase:

- (a) the aggregate enrolment in the Institute should be not less than 5000,
- (b) any programme with enrolment of less than 500 shall not be supported for transformation into distance education;
- (c) programmes of a highly specialised nature which are not generally offered by the CCIs, and which fulfil a specific national purpose will be considered for support irrespective of the enrolment; and
- (d) any programme which will enrich the common pool of programmes of the open university network will be considered for support.

Within this broad framework, the DEC will provide support to CCIs during the Ninth Plan on the following basis :

- (a) all programmes should be formulated as specific projects indicating the activity, its purpose and duration, specific inputs required, dates of commencement and completion, and also the outcome;
- (b) the DEC will provide assistance to meet 50 per cent of the inputs required for each project activity the remaining 50% being shared by the CCIs from their own resources;

- (c) in exceptional cases, where a project contributes to the enrichment of the network, a higher level of assistance from the DEC may be considered; and
- (d) all manpower inputs required will be provided in terms of manmonths for each project. In other words, no support will be provided by the DEC for creation of posts on permanent basis and/or for their maintenance.

Keeping these broad parameters in view, we recommend the following guidelines which are based on the UGC's Plan of Action for providing development support to CCIs during the nurturing phase :

A Institutional Reforms

- A.1 The existing CCIs should be upgraded to DEIs. The organisational structure should provide for efficiency in functioning with strong and effective academic and administrative structures.
- A.2 The governance structure should provide for an Advisory Committee for overseeing programme development, innovations and performance. The Advisory Committee's recommendations will be considered only by the Syndicate/Academic Council/Senate.
- A.3 There should be a separate Board of Studies in distance education responsible for designing and developing programmes and courses. This Board could work jointly with other Boards of Studies of the University.
- A.4 The DEI should be headed by a Director (who should be a Professor). It should have a core faculty comprising of Professors, Readers and Lecturers whose recruitment and terms and conditions of services shall be at par with other teachers in the departments.
- A.5 Each DEI should have adequate physical facilities (building, library, conference rooms, students hall, etc), and should have sufficient functional autonomy in all academic, administrative and financial matters.
- A.6 The Institutes should ensure that surplus funds available are utilised for the development and upgradation of their programmes, courses and services.

B. Academic Reforms

- B.1** The Institutes should closely review their printed course materials and transform them into self-instructional distance education format. The course contents should be evaluated, revised and edited by outside experts.
- B.2** The possibility of sharing/adopting/adapting study materials in several subjects developed by other universities and institutions, should be explored. This is necessary to ensure good quality course materials and also to avoid duplication of efforts.
- B.3** The Institutes should consider introduction of non-conventional and need-based vocational/technical and professional courses relevant to the needs of learners and job potential.
- B.4** The Institutes should seriously consider incorporation of audio-visual components in their learning packages. To begin with, they could use the audio-visual cassettes of IGNOU and those produced by the UGC Countrywide Classroom Project.
- B.5** The Institutes should provide equipment and facilities for the play-back of audio-video cassettes, recording and playing-back of radio broadcasts and telecasts.
- B.6** In the long run, each Institutes should be able to develop its own electronic media production capability.

C Staff Development

- C.1** Orientation programmes and workshops should be organised for training teachers in writing /transforming course materials in the self-instructional distance education format, evaluation of students response-sheets and organisation of other support services. Such orientation programmes and workshops should be a regular feature in all DEIs.
- C.2** Teachers in DEIs should be encouraged to enrol in the distance education programmes leading to post-graduate, diploma or masters degrees offered by the IGNOU.
- C.3** Some short-term measures to meet immediate needs of staff development should be organised in consultation with Staff Training and Research Institute in Distance Education (STRIDE) of IGNOU. These may include intensive orientation programmes to

familiarise teachers with various aspects of the distance education system or distribution of relevant materials from the IGNOU programmes including the manuals developed by the IGNOU for various functionaries in the system.

D Student Support Services

- D.1** Every DEI should set up appropriate machinery to provide information regarding programmes, courses, admission formalities, examinations, etc., to students in time. Such Information Cells should also undertake promotional efforts to inform the public and potential learners about their structures and functions, programmes offered, admission criteria, fees, nature of services available, etc. Adequate attention should also be given to the redressal of students' grievances.
- D.2** Study centres may be established in places where adequate students have enrolled for any programme. The study centres should provide some minimum facilities like information about programmes, time table for submission of assignments, examinations and also counselling and tutorials, besides stocking study materials in print as well as in electronic media.
- D.3** Arrangements should be made for continuous evaluation of student progress through assignments. The study centres should make arrangements for distribution of assignment formats, collection of completed assignments from the students, their evaluation and feedback.
- D.4** Library facilities may be provided at the study centres with lending facilities wherever feasible. Schemes like book banks may be considered for provision of books and reading materials to students.

Computerisation

- E.1** Every DEI should be a good computer centre with LAN facilities for the purpose of computerising students records, administration, production of learning materials, development and use of multi-media packages, etc. These centres should also be used for providing learning support to students enrolled in programmes of computer applications.
- E.2** Efforts should be made to evaluate student assignments by the computer;

E.3 Institutes should also develop desk top publishing facility for preparation of learning packages.

F. Networking

F.1 All the open universities are being networked for the design, development and delivery of programmes and courses. Eventually, the DEI of traditional universities are also expected to join this network. The re-organisation and development of these Institutes should therefore, be taken up with a view to their eventually becoming part of the Open University Network (OPENET).

F.2 The advantages of such networking are that the students will have a wider range of programmes and courses to choose from; sharing of programmes will make for greater efficiency and economy by avoiding duplication of efforts; good quality material will be available to all students; and they will have the advantage of mobility among institutions and programmes.

F.3 DEIs, if they so wish, may adopt/adapt programmes of IGNOU and state open universities including relevant audio-video programmes.

F.4 Those Institutes which adopt learning packages of IGNOU and state open universities could join the telecasting/broadcasting network by installing down-linking facilities at their premises to receive the telecasts.

G Dual Mode System

G.1 The dual mode system will play a crucial role in the overall development of higher education in the country. Already most of the faculty support for distance education comes from teaching departments of conventional universities. Their participation in designing, developing and delivering distance education programmes ensures adequate recognition for DEIs and their programmes. Moreover, traditional institutions and their faculty can reach out to a much larger number of students through their participation in distance education.

G.2 It is necessary to strengthen this relationship by making specific provision for : (a) mobility of students from DEIs to conventional universities and colleges; (b) permitting students to do some course from DEI/open universities and rest from conventional universities/colleges; and (c) some of the conventional universities

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could restructure their own programmes by incorporating learning packages developed by open universities, especially Foundation Courses and the Application Oriented Courses developed by IGNOU for the Bachelor's Degree Programme.

H General

- H.1 The transformation of CCIs into mainstream Distance Education Institutions (DEIs) with DEC support implies that these institutions will eventually join the Open University Network as partners. It would also follow that the DEIs will adopt the norms and guidelines laid down by the DEC in the design, development and delivery of their distance education programmes.
- H.2 In the case of DEIs also, the DEC will play a similar role in performance review and assessment. Participatory mechanisms will be set up with representatives of the concerned DEIs, the DEC and external experts to undertake performance reviews and assessment of the DEIs and to feed the results of such reviews back into the system for its growth and development.

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VI STRENGTHENING THE DEC

We have made a mention of the evolving relationship between the Distance Education Council (DEC) and the Open Universities/Distance Education Institutions. We are deeply impressed by the nature of this relationship which is not a patron-client relationship that often characterises the ways in which funding agencies deal with fund seekers. In fact, the DEC has sought to provide this relationship a refreshingly different dimension characterised by its involvement with the open universities in their development with a sense of partnership. We are convinced that the development of a network should necessarily underscore the value of such a relationship and the ways in which the DEC has sought to forge its relationship bodes well, for the blossoming of the network.

The performance of a such role by the DEC pre-supposes that it functions basically in the roles of a friend, philosopher and guide to the open universities/distance education institutions. We believe that it will not ultimately be the quantum of financial support that the DEC can disburse which will determine its effectiveness; it will be the DEC's innate strength and vision to fashion and guide individual institution's development efforts in a focussed and purposive manner for the growth of the system as a whole, that will measure its success.

From this point of view, we suggest that the DEC should be sufficiently strengthened in the Ninth Plan Period to play a lead role in the development of the Open University Network (OPENET). For this purpose we recommend that :

- (a) The DEC should be restructured to provide it with an independent status. We are conscious of the fact that DEC has been set up under the provisions of the IGNOU Act. While the DEC owes its existence to the IGNOU Act, it is not necessary that it should be perceived as a sub-structure of the National Open University. Organisationally therefore, it is necessary that DEC is structured as a separate identity through appropriate Statutes within the framework of the IGNOU Act.
- (b) The crucial functions of the DEC will continue to be promotion and coordination of the distance education system. The directions of development in the Ninth Plan indicate the establishment and development of a substantial infrastructure for the system as a whole consisting mainly of telecasting and computer networks. The management and operationalisation of this network will devolve on

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the DEC and therefore, it is necessary that DEC is strengthened to undertake this task.

- (c) Initiatives like mediation of the common pool of programmes, accreditation of programmes to the common pool and facilitating the sharing of delivery networks will all require talent and competence of a kind which is new to our education system. It is necessary that the DEC should develop competence in these fields and establish a pool of resource persons to assist the Open Learning System and the DEC in this task.
- (d) The fulfilment of the objectives envisaged for the Open Learning System in the Ninth Plan would require the DEC to **vigorously pursue its promotional role**. Discussions have to be held with policy makers in the Governments as well as educationists at the regional/state levels to secure their support and commitment to the development of the Open Learning System. The DEC will have to assume a much larger promotional responsibility in this endeavour. As a part of this effort, **the DEC should establish comprehensive data bases on distance education (institutions, programmes, courses, facilities, delivery systems, multimedia packages, etc)** which should be disseminated widely to institutions as well as the general public : **Every Open University and Distance Education Institution should be required to maintain an Information Dissemination Centre for Distance Education.**
- (e) Administration Structure : Simultaneously, the administrative structures within the DEC to perform all these functions will also need to be upgraded and strengthened.

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ANNEXURES

PREPARATION OF NINTH PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- A. The Ninth Plan Development Proposals may be prepared in two parts. Part-I providing the information on the state of the art of the open university/ correspondence course institutes and Part-II on detail Proposals, for which funding assistance is needed.
- B. **Part-I Institutional Profile:** The detailed profile of the open university/ correspondence course institutes will help to take stock of the existing physical and human resources, the range of activities and programmes, delivery mechanism to support services, administrative arrangements for implementation and the achievements and limitations. Special attention should also be given for a critical review of activities and utilisation of resources during the eighth five year plan period. This applies particularly to SOUs which received eighth plan assistance from DEC.

Part-II Ninth Plan Development Proposals: The Plan Proposals may be prepared on "Project Mode". Project here refers to a set of interrelated activities leading to achievement of a desired goal/purpose. For example revision of learning materials or development of an innovative programme or use of multi-media for delivery of support services etc can be developed as Projects. The Project approach takes an integrated view of inputs, processes and results of all the interrelated activities leading to the achievement of the goal/purpose. The Plan Proposals developed on this approach consists of a cluster of 'Projects' related to activities/goals. The inputs, processes and results of each projects should be clearly identified with specifications of financial and other resources required. In developing the projects the broad directions of system development should be kept in mind. The projects also may be arranged in clusters of priorities, of first phase, second phase etc.

In order to integrate the proposal from all the Open Universities and CCIs, it would be helpful if each Institution prepares its programmes in the following format.

- i. Project/Activity and its objective
- ii. Proposed dates of commencement and completion / period of the project
- iii. Inputs required for execution
 - a. Manpower (specify in terms of man-years/man-months)
 - b. Equipment or facilities (specify)
 - c. Other services (specify)
- iv. Expected outcome

DISTANCE EDUCATION COUNCIL

**Norms and Guidelines
for
Establishment of State Open Universities**



**Indira Gandhi National Open University
New Delhi - 110 068.**

Norms and Guidelines for Establishment of State Open Universities

1. The Need for Expansion of the Open University System.

The National Policy on Education - 1986 (revised in 1992) says:

"The open learning system has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education, as an instrument of democratising education and to make it a lifelong process. The flexibility and innovativeness of the open learning system are particularly suited to the diverse requirements of the citizens of our country, including those who had joined the vocational stream.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University, established in 1985 in fulfilment of these objectives, will be strengthened. It would also provide support to establishment of Open Universities in the States."

The CABE Committee on Distance Education had strongly favoured the establishment of an Open University in every State for the integrated development of open and distance education at the tertiary level. By the end of the Eighth Plan, only seven States have set up Open Universities.

The policies, programmes and methods adopted by the open universities have captured the imagination of the Indian education system. Its ideas and innovations and the application of technologies in providing convenient and cost-effective programmes of education are now widely recognised and appreciated. It has designed, developed and delivered high quality academic programmes; the learning packages produced by the open universities have been well received by the students, the professionals and the public.

The demand for expansion of higher education will continue to rise. An estimated two million additional students would be entering the higher education system in the ninth plan. There is also an ever increasing number of mature learners, including working people, who are looking for opportunities for higher education. The open university system is strategically placed to respond to this demand effectively.

The State Open Universities should:

- (a) design and develop distance education programmes relevant to the specific needs of the people of the State;
- (b) collaborate with IGNOU and other open universities in the country in extending educational opportunities particularly to the working people, women and persons residing in remote and inaccessible areas;

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- (c) design and develop education and training packages to meet the demand for technical and vocational manpower needed for the economic development of the state; and
- (d) establish mechanism through networking and other arrangements to share programmes, services, technology and other resources to ensure cost effectiveness of education and training.

2. **Steps in the Establishment of State Open University**

- (a) The first crucial step in the setting up of a State Open University is the preparation of a **Project Report** which should include:
 - (i) Need & Justification
 - (ii) Mission/Goals/Objectives
 - (iii) Teaching/Learning approaches and strategies
 - (iv) Administrative Arrangement/Management System
 - (v) Financial Resources
- (b) The DEC document on Guidelines for Support to State Open Universities had recommended certain guidelines for preparation of the Project Report. The Project Report should indicate clearly:
 - i) The justification for the establishment of the University : A brief review of the existing facilities; the extent of unfulfilled demand for higher education (both existing as well as anticipated); the break-up of the student groups for whom facilities will have to be provided (school leavers, serving personnel, unemployed youth working people etc.)
 - ii) The objectives of the new University: This section should explain in some detail the long-term mission of the University; its long-term and short-term objectives; the nature and type of programmes that will be taken up to meet these objectives, etc.
 - iii) The Approach and Strategies: The project report should specify the approaches and strategies to be followed in fulfilling the short-term and long-term objectives. For instance, in the short-term, the new Universities could acquire the programmes and courses already developed and are offered by other open Universities and adopt or adapt them for their own programmes. Some of them could be translated into the local language and offered through that medium. After some experience is gained in running distance education programmes, more courses and programmes could either be acquired from outside or developed in-house, and the approaches and methodologies for development of such programmes etc., should all be discussed in detail in the project report.

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- iv) The modular structure and flexible delivery systems make open university programmes ideally suited to meet the higher education needs of mature learners, many of whom might require training/re-skilling for their own professional advancement. Short-term, self-contained technical/vocational training modules to develop skills in new technologies and their applications would be of particular significance to a large number of young persons who may have missed relevant education in the past. Open Universities can establish strong and enduring linkages with employer organisations, non-governmental agencies and also government departments in the design, development and delivery of a variety of continuing and extension education programmes in the State. The project report should specifically address these issues and indicate the approach and strategies to be pursued in this direction.
- v) The project report should specify the staffing policies. It should be possible for open universities to accomplish their objectives by engaging a small number of permanent staff and a much larger number of persons working in other institutions on part-time engagements for performance of specific tasks and functions. The staffing policies should also consider various options relating to contract appointments, consultancy assignments, sub-contracting specific tasks to outside agencies, etc. The core faculty of the University should be appointed in the UGC scales of pay which have now been adopted throughout the country.
- vi) In the context of the variations in strategies and approaches that an open university can adopt, the provision for infrastructure will also vary considerably. It will not, therefore, be necessary or desirable that every open university should ensure a certain level of physical facilities on a uniform basis. For instance, an Open University, which, in the initial stages will acquire course materials and learning packages from other open Universities, may not have to make significant investments on course development and production, and/or on preparation of audio/video programmes. In other words, the provision for infrastructure in the form of buildings, equipment and other facilities should be commensurate with the initial phase of activities.
- vii) Even if investments on course development and preparation are on a low scale, it has to be ensured that the new University has an effective and efficient delivery system. The approaches and methodologies for setting up such a delivery system will have to be elaborated in detail in the project report. The major considerations that should weigh in the development of the delivery system are networking, drawing upon the services of teachers and professionals

working in various organisations for advising and counselling students, effective arrangements for the production and distribution of learning materials, etc.

viii) **Financial Estimates and Costs:** The project report should provide the complete details of the financial estimates and costs for the establishment for the new university and the proposed phasing of the expenditure. The details relating to capital and revenue expenditure should be given separately. In particular these estimates should indicate:

* **Land and Development:** Whether land is already available or is proposed to be acquired. If to be acquired, the area, schedule of acquisition, commencement and completion of construction, etc.

* **Buildings:** If buildings are available, the details indicating the area etc. should be given in the project report. If buildings are to be hired or constructed, the relevant details indicating the extent of accommodation available/to be made available should be indicated. The type of buildings to be provided would include administrative buildings, academic buildings including library, buildings for materials storage and distribution, audio/video production studios, Guest houses and Staff Quarters, Computer Centre etc.

* **Equipment:** This will include essential equipment for audio/video programmes, computers, office equipment and furniture etc.

* **Staff:** The staff requirements should be specified in detail indicating the number of positions in each category, their scales of pay etc. These estimates should be prepared separately for teaching and other academic staff, technical and professional staff, administrative and supporting staff, etc.

* **Student Support Services:** The project report should provide details of the organisation and development of the support services (Study Centres, arrangements for counselling, student assignments, evaluation etc.).

ix) An important aspect that the project report should emphasise is the commitment of the State Governments to promote the Open University System. An Open University can provide high quality education at a cost which may only be about one-third of the cost generally incurred by a conventional university or college. The open universities are also capable of generating substantial resources

through a higher rate of recovery from the students. Taking all these into consideration, the State Governments will have to make appropriate provision for the initial investments required to establish an open University.

- c. The DEC at its 11th Meeting held on 15th July, 1996 recommended that the States which desire to establish Open Universities should provide at least Rs. 5.00 crores for capital expenditure during the plan period. In the first phase, provision should also be made for 25 Senior academic/professional staff positions with necessary administrative and financial support staff. The initial infrastructure should include a minimum of 3000 Sq. Mtr of building space for undertaking core activities. Provision for more staff and building may be made in a phased manner to undertake new programmes.. The approach of the new State Open Universities should be to create flexible structures and processes to facilitate in-house development as well as adoption/adaptation/translation of learning materials produced by other institutions and outsourcing of a major part of the services and facilities.
3. Measures to be undertaken by State Governments in the Establishment of State Open University:

- (a) The Policy Commitment: It is necessary that the State Government should commit itself to the promotion of the Open University system as an instrument of its policy in higher education and make appropriate financial provision in the State Plan and budget. The initial investment on the infrastructure and the operating costs will have to be made by the State Govt.
- (b) The preparation of a Project Report: The project report can be prepared by a Committee/Working Group constituted by State Government. The DEC may be associated with this Committee/Working Group and a person with experience in distance education may be appointed as OSD for completing the task on schedule.

or

The DEC - IGNOU may be requested to prepare the Project Report as a consultancy assignment.

4. The DEC - IGNOU Role

As mentioned earlier the DEC would provide the technical/professional assistance in the preparation of Project Report by associating with the Committee/Working Group or by taking up the job on a consultancy assignment.

PLAN OF ACTION

UPGRADATION OF CORRESPONDENCE COURSES
INSTITUTES TO THE DISTANCE EDUCATION MODE

The UGC has been seriously considering ways and means to upgrade correspondence courses institutes to the distance education mode. There fore, in order to evolve a properly planned strategy, the UGC constituted:

A working group on Distance Education to suggest detailed proposals for discussion with Vice-Chancellors.

A High Level committee to examine the proposals to be discussed with Vice-Chancellors. The working group met on 21st and 22nd May, 1993 followed by a meeting on the High Level committee on 24th May, 1993.

On the basis of the recommendations of the working Group and the High Level Committee, a detailed agenda was drawn up for the meeting of Vice-Chancellors of 18 universities which have correspondence courses institutes. The meeting of the Vice-Chancellors was held on 26th May, 1993 and a consensus was evolved at the meeting regarding steps that need to be taken for upgrading CCIs to the distance education mode. The various suggestions that emerged at the meetings of these three committees have been classified under relevant categories as also the action required to be taken at different levels, as under:

I. INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

A number of Institutional reforms need to be effected to give a respectable status to the CCIs, Directors and the faculty members e.g.,

Action to be taken by

1. The UGC should make specific recommendations to the Secretaries of Education in the State Govts. and the state Councils of Higher Education wherever they exist, highlighting the need and urgency of revamping correspondence courses institutes so that they may be upgraded to the distance education mode and be able to cope with the future educational needs of the people.

The State Secretaries of Education and councils of higher education are being requested. In the meantime, the Universities concerned may please take action on various recommendations made in the meeting and referred to hereafter.

A data-base of distance education institutes and the programmes/courses offered by them needs to be built up by DEC.

Distance Education Council (DEC), IGNOU is taking action in this regard. The Directorates of Distance Education in the Universities may please supply necessary information to the DEC.

2. In view of the rapid proliferation of distance education since 1962 and the large-scale expansion that is expected by the end of the present century, the organisational side of the DDEs calls for serious attention on the part of the universities concerned to ensure efficiency and time-bound functioning. The CCIs should be re-designated as Directorates of Distance Education. These institutes must have strong and efficient academic and administrative wings which should work as a closeknit team.

Necessary action in this regard may please be taken by the Universities concerned.

- (a) A well-planned video cassette should be developed to explain in simple terms what distance education implies, its essential aspects, brief international scenario and the Indian scenario. The purpose of this video cassette should be to create awareness of the innovative distance education system among the public and the potential learners as also to provide information about the programmes/courses offered by CCIs/distance Education institutes.

Action to be taken by the DEC in collaboration with the Communication Division of IGNOU (philosophy & aspects of the system). It is expected that the cassette would be ready soon and made available to universities as well.

- (b) Every DDE should also develop such a cassette highlighting its brief history, achievements, programmes/courses offered, admission criteria, fees etc.

DDEs concerned may take action in consultation with DEC and Communication Division of IGNOU.

- 3 The DDEs must set up an information and publicity cell for the dissemination of information about their programmes/courses

Necessary action may be taken by the DDEs of the Universities.

etc and for providing guidance to the learners, regarding courses relevant to their need. The cell should also be responsible for supply of information brochures, prospectuses and admission forms. Special efforts should be made in collaboration with the State Public Relations Dept. to reach people in the remote rural and tribal areas and to attract larger number of women and backward sections of society.

4. Every DDE should have an Advisory Committee, for over-seeing its performance and looking into problems, programmes innovations etc. The Advisory Committee should comprise the Vice-Chancellor as Chairman, two Deans\Professors, two distance education experts, a UGC nominee, three faculty members of the DDE and the Director as convener. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee should go directly to the Academic Council for approval.
5. DDE must be given adequate functional autonomy-academic, administrative as well as financial within the university system. Academic autonomy is very essential to enable the institutes to innovate and launch new job-oriented professional and technical courses.
6. The CCIs be designated as Directorates\Centres of Distance Education. The Directorate must have a full time Director and Core Staff of its own as per UGC norms. The Director should be designated Professor cum Director and the faculty members as

Necessary action may be taken by the Universities having DDEs.

Universities having DDEs need to take action in this regard on priority basis.

The Universities having DDEs may take necessary action in this regard on priority basis.

Professors, Readers and Lecturers. The Director should be designated Professor cum Director and the faculty members as Professors, Readers and Lecturers. The Director & faculty members of the CCIs should have parity with their counter-parts in the university teaching departments in respect of pay scales, representation on university bodies etc. Some of the universities have already introduced this reform. Those universities which have not, must do so immediately in order to remove the long-standing irritation and feeling of insecurity among the faculty members of their CCIs.

7. The selection procedure for the post of Director, Professors, Readers and Lecturers in the CCIs should be the same as for the university professors, readers, and lecturers. Some qualification\ exposure to DE should be preferable.
8. Universities offering correspondence courses would allow mobility of students within the existing CCIs and permit migration to the teaching departments and vice-versa. Gradually inter-institutional migration should also be allowed.
9. DDEs must gear up their delivery system for proper assessment of students' assignments and their turnaround time. Complaints, regarding non receipt of lessons or corrected RSs should be properly attended to. Academic calendar & despatch schedule should be prepared and sent to the students.

The Vice-Chancellor of the universities having DDEs may review the procedure for recruitment and make necessary changes as suggested.

This is yet another important area which needs attention of the Vice-Chancellors of the University having DDEs for appropriate measures in their Universities to begin with.

The DDEs in the Universities may take appropriate steps in this regard.

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10. The universities offering correspondence courses and the State Govt. should ensure adequate investment\ploughing back of surplus for the development and upgradation of DDEs to the distance education mode. A part of the surplus may be kept as a reserve\endowment fund of the institute for meeting unforeseen expenditure.
- Universities having DDEs should please take necessary action in this regard. This will help in the strengthening of DDEs.
11. A proper system of feedback from the students should be developed in order to bring about improvements in the teaching-learning operations and methodology. Suitable questionnaires, students reactions and suggestions at the PCPs and their response sheets could be good sources for the feedback.
- Necessary action needs to be taken by the DDEs.
12. It is absolutely necessary that the DDEs must have adequate physical facilities for which a separate and well-planned building is a must for the academic and administrative wings, Library, conference room, students hall etc.
- This needs action by the Universities having DDEs.
13. Private appearance at university examinations for which distance education courses are available must be stopped as has already been suggested by the UGC.
- Necessary action be taken by the Universities having DDEs.
14. CCIs, with low enrolment (less than 10,000) should diversity their courses so as to make them relevant to the needs of people in their areas.
- Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs may have the programme reviewed and take appropriate action.

II ACADEMIC REFORMS

A number of academic reforms mentioned below are called for in order to ensure that the DDEs earn credibility with regard to the quality of instruction provide by them, and join the mainstream of distance education:

(a) **IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING \ COURSE MATERIAL**

Action by the DDEs & DEC in collaboration with UGC.

Printed course material is the mainstay of providing instruction to the distance learners. Since students have to study mostly on their won and away from their teachers, they have to primarily depend upon the printed course material supplied to them. It is therefore very necessary that the course material should be carefully planned and developed in the self-instructional distance education format. A serious attempt should be made to build the teacher into the course material. The course lessons / units must be presented in personal style and simple language to match the comprehension level of the target groups. The content of the lessons should be of good quality, relevant to the topics and presented in an easily comprehensible manner. The DDEs should therefore,

- (i) Have a look at their printed course material\lessons and take immediate steps to transform them into self instructional distance education format. The course content also should be got evaluated by outside experts and revised and edited accordingly. Good course material is bound to

Action by the DDEs of the Universities.

enhance the reputation of the institutions. Dr. Deshpande* has agreed to prepare a paper in this regard to be circulated to the DDEs. Orientation programmes and workshops need to be organised for training teachers in writing\transforming course material\lessons\units in the self-instructional distance education format, evaluation of student response sheets, Personal Contact Programmes. Such orientation programmes and workshops should become a regular inhouse feature in all the DDEs.

- (ii) Seriously examine possibilities of sharing\adopting\adaptation and joint development of course material in certain subjects in which there is not much variation in syllabus e.g., subjects like Science, Social Sciences, Mathematics etc This would help in providing good quality course materials to the learners, avoid unnecessary duplication and cut down costs. DDEs within the same region can easily try to adopt this kind of sharing. They can also make use of courses developed by open universities.

Universities having DDEs, UGC & DEC will help in this regard by arranging meetings of Directors, Secretaries of Education etc.

- (iii) Consider introduction of non-conventional and need-based vocational, technical and professional courses relevant to the needs of the learners and the job potential

Action by the DDEs of the Universities.

(b) ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Electronic media are of great importance in making distance education a multi-media teaching learning system. Audio-visual components make learning more effective and interesting for the

Action by the DDEs of the Universities.

students. With the advance of communication media, the distance education institutes all over the world have adopted very sophisticated communication media as an integral part of their teaching process. We may not be able to use all those media because of our limitations, but media which are readily available to us should be used to supplement instruction imparted through the printed lessons. The CCIs should therefore, plan to develop multi-media packages of teaching learning materials.

- (i) To begin with, the CCIs\DDEs should make use of the existing audio and video cassettes of IGNOU and the UGC country-wide class room.
- (ii) CCIDDEs within the same region can share radio-talks and telecasts etc.
- (iii) Now that Insat 2 has become operational and Doordarshan will have 4 more channels, the Ministry concerned should allot a good chunk of time slot on the enrichment channel for educational programmes of DDEs and Open Universities. T.V. Programmes can be very helpful in supplementing instruction provided through the printed course material.
- (iv) The Directorates of distance education and their study centres should be provided necessary equipment and facilities for the playback of audio\video cassettes, recording and playing back to radio broadcasts and telecasts. Universities may put up their

A list of these cassettes has already been supplied to DDEs by the UGC. Further action be taken by them.

DDEs & their Vice-Chancellor.

The DEC, IGNOU and the UGC will help the Universities in this regard. The DEC will further help develop a common time schedule for the use of the Doordarshan facilities for educational purposes.

Necessary action by the Universities having DDEs. UGC assistance may be available as per revised guidelines.

proposals to the UGC for financial assistance.

- (v). In the long run the EMRCs in the States should help in the development of video\audio cassettes for distance education institutes. Meanwhile, service of some private studios could be hired for this purpose.

III STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Staff development is of utmost necessity for the teachers and administrators in the CCNDDEs. Unfortunately this has been a neglected area and calls for serious attention.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs.

1. Now that we have regular courses like the IGNOU Diploma and MA in Distance Education, the staff members should be required to do one of these courses. As an incentive, the universities concerned should reimburse the course fee, etc.

Now that IGNOU has decided to set up a Distance Education Training Institute (STRIDE) we can expect extensive staff training facilities in due course of time.

2. As short term measures to meet immediate needs of staff development, the following steps need to be taken:
- (a) Organising intensive orientation programmes to familiarise teachers with the various aspects of distance education system.
- (b) Another way of familiarising teachers with the techniques of various aspects of distance educa-

DDEs to organise such inhouse programmes from time to time.

IGNOU requested to supply the material for the use of the DDEs in the Universities.

tion could be to supply them photocopies of relevant portions of IGNOU course materials for Diploma and MA in Distance Education and some manuals developed by IGNOU for the guidance of Coordinators, Counsellors, etc. Inhouse seminars should be organised by the CCIs \ DDEs to discuss various aspects of distance education. The CCIs may ask UGC \ IGNOU for consultants for such seminars.

3. As a long term measure, there is urgent need for organising:

a. Round-table for VCs, Directors of DDE, Education Secretaries and Directors of Higher Education Councils to highlight the potential of distance education and its role in meeting the colossal future educational needs of learners.

UGC & DEC may take action in this behalf.

b) Organising intensive workshops in different regions for providing a) Round Table for VCs, Directors of DDEs, Education Secretaries and Directors of Higher Education Councils to highlight the potential of distance education and its role comprehensive orientation and skills to the CCI teachers concerning various aspects of distance education system with special emphasis on the transformation of printed course material into self-instructional distance education format and improvement of the content of the lessons. At each of these workshop a few lessons of the participating institutes could be improved upon so that these might serve as model lessons. The DDEs could then improve their other lessons according to

STRIDE, DEC & UGC

their colleagues.

The Round Tables and the workshops suggested above could be combined by devoting the first day to the Round Table, second day to orientation of participants, third day to practical work for concerting a few lessons of each CCI into model lessons and giving them the final shape. (6 days in all). We can cover all the DDEs by organising three or four such workshops.

IV STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student support services have now become an integral part of most of the good distance education institutes, particularly in the open universities. It is now internationally recognised that adequate student support service must be provided to the distance learners who are most of the time studying in isolation, away from their institution, teachers and course mates. The purpose is to help these students to overcome the feeling of isolation and to facilitate learning.

It is therefore, necessary that DDEs should organise proper student support services as under:

1. Setting up a good library in the institute with proper borrowing facilities for students. It would be ideal if students are supplied library books, by post, on demand. The Postage should be borne by the institute. Students may return the books personally or by post (Regd Book Parcel) in which case the postage will be borne by the student.
Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.
2. DDEs should try to set up a Book Bank for providing text-books to students belonging to economi-
Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.

cally weaker section and other backward classes.

3. DDEs should make arrangements for supplying text-books on payment to the students residing at distance places.

Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.

4. Every CCI should have an adequate number of study centres in the ratio of one study centre per 500 students. Every study centre should act as an information, publicity and guidance cell.

Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.

5. The study centres must be well organised with proper facilities for library, personal contact Programmes and playback of audio and video cassettes, radio broadcast and T.V. telecasts.

Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.

6. Various forms of two-way communication between the institute/teacher and the students could be tried such as:

Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.

Postal, Face to face, Teacher Tutor/Group, Monitor/Group, Teacher Tutor/learner, computer-assisted learning.

7. Study centres should generally be located in education institutions. Possibilities of sharing study centres with other CCIs should be explored.

Vice-Chancellors concerned & Directors of DDEs.

V COMPUTERISATION

Computerisation of office work and tutor marked assignments should be introduced in the DDEs. This would add to their efficiency and eliminate certain cumbersome record keeping and other office procedures.

Vice-Chancellors & Directors of DDEs

Word-processing on PCs would facilitate preparation of course-material manuscripts and eliminate to a considerable degree the cumbersome work of proof-reading.

The idea of networking is catching up in all countries of the world. It has been adopted by a large number of distance education institutes and national and international associations of distance education. The concept of net-working has been introduced in the open universities in our country. It is expected to be developed further now that IGNOU has established the Distance Education Council.

The network should also include conventional Universities.

The advantage of networking would be:

- wider course offering
- economy
- better quality
- promotion of student mobility
- developing a dual mode system in higher education by allowing students to do some courses from the conventional university teaching departments, some from the open university and distance education institutes.

The areas in which networking is possible are:

- Programmes/courses and printed course materials
- Audio and Video cassettes
- Study centres
- Staff development

The DDEs should institute steps in this direction by thinking of

- sharing course materials with sister institutes.
- adoption/adaptation of courses of IGNOU and State Open Universities
- adoption of relevant Audio and Video cassettes of IGNOU and UGC country wide programme.

Vice-Chancellors & Directors of DDEs in each state may meet and decide. DDEs may request Director, DEC (IGNOU) to help in this regard.

DUAL MODE SYSTEM

Dual mode system is already there to some extent in the DDEs where faculty of the university teaching departments are associated with course writing, evaluation of RSs and lecturing at the PCPs. In a way this kind of dual mode exists in the OUs also because quite a number of teachers from the conventional universities and colleges are associated with writing and editing of course material, providing counselling at the study centres and evaluating SRSs of the learners.

However, this kind of dual mode should be further extended to include

- a) recognition of courses e.g., the courses offered by distance education institutes/Open Universities should be treated at par with courses in the conventional Universities.
- b) mobility of students from a distance education institute to the conventional Universities and colleges.
- c) permitting students to do some courses from the distance education institutes/Open Universities and some from the conventional Universities/colleges.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs in each State.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs in each State.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs in each State.

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This would promote inter university mobility of students and be specially helpful to students in the conventional system because the distance education system offers wider course offerings of which the conventional students can take advantage. This would also encourage inter-disciplinary studies.

- d) It would be good if most of the conventional Universities restructured their Bachelor's Degree courses as per UGC guidelines. They could then adopt the Foundation Courses and Application Oriented Courses developed by the Indira Gandhi National Open University of some State Open University.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs in each State.

- e) Now that certain international organisations like the ICDE and COL, as also some regional associations of distance education are actively working for the pooling of courses within the Commonwealth/within a country/ all over the world, a time will soon come when distance education will operate at the global level and there will be possibilities of the learners doing some courses from a DE institute in one country and some from an institute in another country. The DDEs should therefore move with the times by adopting this trend.

Vice-Chancellors of Universities having DDEs in each State.

NOTES

DEC-IGNOU/P.O. 5H/April 2000 (Reprint)

Printed and Published on behalf of Indira Gandhi National Open University by School of Distance Education Council.
Printed at Dee Kay Printers 5/37A Kirti Nagar Indl. Area, New Delhi-110015.



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Author(s): <i>Dr.</i>	
Corporate Source: <i>DEC, IGNOU</i>	Publication Date: <i>1997</i>

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