

Report of

InnovationClub@IGNOU

(2018-2019)



**National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068**

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Introduction

InnovationClub@IGNOU

Innovation is considered to be the key for growth and development of an institute. In order to promote the culture of innovation in the country, the Government of India has declared this decade as the innovation Decade. Moreover, recently the Hon'ble President of India as Visitor of Central Universities has also emphasized on the need of innovation in the education sector. Hon'ble President of India as well as the Hon'ble HRM has asked all the central Universities to constitute Innovation Clubs in the Universities. In view of this, the NCIDE also formulated an InnovationClub@IGNOU in April 2015. Though the NCIDE has already being promoting innovation in the university, the formation of InnovationClub@IGNOU will further strengthened the drive to create the culture of innovation in the University and monitor the faculty and students to do innovations.

Objectives of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

The basic objectives of the InnovationClub@IGNOU are as follows :

- to contribute creatively and actively in the innovation related activities of NCIDE,
- to generate awareness about creativity and innovations in the ODL System,
- to identify the grass-root level innovations by the faculty and the students of IGNOU as well as the ODL System, and
- to create a network of innovators and create a culture of innovation.

Proposed Activities of InnovationClub@IGNOU

In order to meet the objectives of the InnovationClub@IGNOU, a verity of activities are organized on regular basis. Some of such important activities initiated by the Club are as follows :

1. Organizing periodic meetings of the club members to generate new ideas and explore and identify innovations by students, faculty, and staff of IGNOU and the ODL System.
2. Invite students, teachers and staff members to share their innovative ideas and skills and showcase their innovative products and processes.
3. Organizing awareness campaign on Creativity and Innovations within IGNOU and across the ODL System in the country.
4. Organizing various competitions like quiz, debates, posters, etc. on innovation and creativity.

5. Provide a platform to the students, faculty and staff to be engaged in the activities and programmes related to NCIDE.
6. Contribution to the e-news letter/journal on innovation published by NCIDE.
7. To set up and coordinate the innovation club at Regional Centres/Study Centres of IGNOU.

Members of InnovationClub@IGNOU

Initially the following were the founder members of the proposed club :

1. Prof. S. V. S. Chaudhary, Professor, School of Education
2. Prof. Anu Aneja, Director, SOGDS
3. Prof. Madhu Parhar, Professor, STRIDE
4. Prof. M. K. Salooja, Professor, SOA
5. Dr. C. K. Ghosh, Regional Director, Dwarka
6. Dr. Shubha Gokhale, Associate Professor, SOS
7. Dr. Biplab Jamatia, Assistant Professor, SOHS
8. Ms. Neerja Sood, Assistant Professor, SOHS
9. Dr. Hemlata, Deputy Director, NCDS
10. Dr. Shubhangi Vaidya, Assistant Professor, SOITS
11. Ms. Jitender Jit Kour, Producer, EMPC
12. Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, SOA
13. Dr. Nisha Singh, Deputy Director, IUC
14. Dr. Moumita Das, Assistant Director, NCIDE
15. Ms. Sujata Santosh, Assistant Director, NCIDE
16. Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit, Deputy, NCIDE
17. Dr. O. P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE

However, the club aims towards engaging as many students, faculty and staff as possible in the innovative activities of the university.

Report of the 1st Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Half-Day Workshop on

“Leadership in Innovation”

A half-day workshop on “Leadership in Innovation” was conducted by NCIDE under the aegis of the InnovationClub@IGNOU on July 18, 2018. The aim of the workshop was to familiarize the members with the concept of leadership in innovation in education, especially in the open and distance learning system.

A total of 22 participants attended this workshop. The participants were drawn from the teachers and academics of IGNOU.

The resource person, Dr. Anupriya Pandey, Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies took the hands-on session. Using a game-based participatory approach she highlighted the importance of non-human and human resources in an organization, team work, efficient use of resources, and leadership in any project that is undertaken. Through this workshop the participants were sensitized to these aspects and were able to understand the role of team work and leadership in appreciating new ideas and taking innovative initiatives in their work.

Report of the 2nd Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Half-Day Seminar on

“Developing a Mobile App for IGNOU Students”

Mobile technology, such as mobile apps could be a very useful tool for establishing quick communications and social engagement with the distance learners and indeed many Universities and institutions are already doing so. The NCIDE is working towards the use of new and emerging technologies for the benefit of the learners and strongly believes that mobile technology can be developed for the facilitation of IGNOU learners.

The InnovationClub@IGNOU is a forum to brainstorm and discuss on the possibilities of developing innovative solutions for IGNOU. A meeting of the club was held on May 16, 2018, to discuss on the possibilities of developing a mobile app for IGNOU, in the presence of the Vice Chancellor.

The half-day Seminar deliberated on the two main themes of (i) evaluating the IGNOU Mate app and (ii) exploring the possibility of designing an app for IGNOU students. The event brought together about 30 teachers and academics of IGNOU who deliberated on the different issues of the seminar themes. The event also saw the participation of about ten research scholars, one of whom was a speaker in the seminar. There were other experts drawn from the IGNOU teachers and academics who made their presentations as follows :

It was recommended by the members that a mobile app for IGNOU may be developed in collaboration with Computer Division and SOCIS, and NCIDE should take the lead with the help of IGNOU MCA students.

It was proposed that the mobile app would be developed in a phased manner for IGNOU.

Phase I – Information Functionalities: In the first phase, the app interface with app icons can be developed and linked with website.

Phase II – Learner Support Functionalities: Database activities, log in password facilities and dashboard for interaction to be provided.

Phase III – Streaming Functionalities: Gyandhara, YouTube, Live events, Online classes, blogs, chats, apps for Regional Centers and Study Centers etc., can be integrated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. IGNOU needs have an official app hosted at IGNOU website.

2. IGNOU Mate will be further developed in phased manner. Phase-I to be initiated.
3. SOCIS in consultation with NCIDE, will invite the student, Mr. Shekhar Roy and speak to handover app to IGNOU.
4. Team should be constituted at IGNOU to work on it in mission mode.
5. NCIDE should take lead while taking cooperation with other concerned units like SOCIS and CD etc. in developing the App.
6. NCIDE should hold meeting with Computer Division (CD) for sharing data and updating website.
7. NCIDE will initiate the concept paper on this for the in-principle approval of the competent authority.
8. An App Development Competition can be organized at IGNOU HQs and Regional Canters along with the involvement of students for developing an App.
9. It was decided to organize next seminar on Use of ICT for the Online Programmes as per UGC Online Regulations, 2018 at earliest.

Report of the 2nd Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Discussion on

“Swachha Bharat : Innovative Initiatives of IGNOU”

A Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU was held on October 26, 2018 at the Conference Room of NCIDE, IGNOU.

At the outset, the coordinator, Dr. Moumita Das welcomed the members and provided a brief background of the meeting. She said that the NCIDE has recently established the Institution’s Innovation Council (IIC) with the approval of the Competent Authority. The IIC has been set-up at IGNOU under the Ministry of Human Resource Development’s (MHRD’s), Govt. of India, Innovation Cell (MIC) to systematically foster the culture of innovation. The IGNOU IIC aims to promote innovation at IGNOU through multitudinous modes leading to an innovation promotion eco-system in the campus. Further, she said that to ensure that innovation is primary fulcrum of the University, the MHRD has introduced “Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievement” (ARIIA). One of the main parameters of ARIIA is “Best Innovation Solutions developed in-house for improving governance of your Institutions”. One of the categories under this parameter is “Innovative solutions/approaches developed and deployed in your institutions for efficient waste management”. Keeping the above theme in mind, in this meeting a discussion and a brainstorming session would be held on the topic ‘Swacch Bharat : Innovative Initiatives at IGNOU’. She further said that in this meeting it was aimed to discuss efficient waste management in the following context :

1. Sharing of experiences
2. Best Practices
3. Ideas for implementation at IGNOU

She informed that members that Dr. O. P. Sharma had recently taken charge as the Director, NCIDE, and she invited him to address the members. The members congratulated Dr. Sharma.

Dr. Sharma welcomed the members and said that the InnovationClub@IGNOU is an important forum to discuss new and innovative ideas, and there will be meetings of the club regularly on a monthly basis. He further reiterated the establishment of the IIC and informed that the University needs to work towards achieving the ARIIA parameters. He requested the members to put forth their ideas to achieve the goal of making IGNOU as Swachh IGNOU. He requested Prof. Ruchika Kuba to present her talk.

Prof. Kuba gave an introduction to the programme Certificate in Health Care Waste Management, which she is coordinating, and requested the members for their views. Ms. Jatinder Jit Kour mentioned that the Health centre in the Maidan Garhi Campus –

does not comply with Biomedical Waste Rules and something must be done towards this.

Prof. Kamalika Banerjee raised the concern of the current use of plastic bottles for the meetings at IGNOU and said that alternatives must be explored. Dr. Bijaylaxmi suggested the use of paper cups, and cups made of biodegradable materials for the meetings.

Prof. Lalita S. Kumar said that the School of Sciences has a Committee that takes care of the cleanliness issues in the school. The committee meets every Friday and discusses the pertinent issues and possible solutions. She suggested that such committees should be constituted in every school, division, unit, institute of IGNOU. Dr. Deeksha Dave said that ranking of the schools may be done as per the cleanliness they maintain and the best school may be provided incentives.

Dr. Heena Bijli said that a behavioural change needs to be brought about among all in the University regarding all aspects of cleanliness, and motivation is to be provided.

Dr. Shubhangi Vaidya pointed out that while considering the interventions on swacchata, the most important part of 'human aspect' has to be considered. Accordingly, the solutions may be suggested.

For the brainstorming on the topic "Swachha Bharat: Innovative initiatives of IGNOU" the following five areas were suggested by Dr. Shachi Shah :

1. Sanitation and hygiene
2. Waste Management
3. Water Management
4. Green Campus
5. Energy efficiency

Suggestions were invited from the members on the above areas.

Prof. Ruchika Kuba suggested :

1. For each intervention the concept of 'Reuse, Recycle, Reduce' should be followed.
2. Each floor should have two dustbins –one for solid and another for biodegradable waste.
3. The offices should use electronic facilities more than relying on paper.
4. A flipchart book could be developed for training illiterate waste workers.

Dr. Hemlata suggested :

5. Toilets in the university need to be maintained as there are several health and hygiene issues due to ill maintenance.
6. Recycling of paper needs to be done by the offices of the university. NGOs may be involved for creative recycling.

Dr. Heena Bijli suggested :

7. To bring about a behavioral change, topical start up at the School level should be initiated. Presentations should be invited for "Dos and Don'ts"
8. Switching off of lights when not in use.
9. Media initiatives may be taken to propagate swachh initiatives. A blog on the IGNOU Website by each stakeholder for sharing of experiences may be created, which should be used all over IGNOU. Put a rider "Message for each week" and let the message go out in a simple format.

Dr. Deeksha Dave suggested :

10. Sanitary Pad dispenser in different areas in the campus may be set up. In Goa University, such an initiative has been taken up in collaboration with the Rotary Club.
11. Composting of food waste from the University canteens and dhabas, and horticulture waste should be initiated in the campus.
12. A Waste Management Centre may be established to take care of these issues.
13. Credits to Students may be given on their swachhata initiatives.

Ms. Jatinder Jit Kour suggested :

14. The Sewage treatment plant (STP) in the housing complex is not working properly. Its fan not working and there are maintenance needs. This has to be addressed urgently. It is important to note that water from this STP is being used all over the campus for horticulture purposes. This might pose a threat to the horticulture workers and all who come in contact with the contaminated water.

Dr. Bini Toms suggested :

15. The campus may work towards becoming a Zero Waste Campus. For this a vision or objective needs to be developed. Implementation of the objectives followed by addressing the administrative and maintenance issues needs to be done.
16. Education and sensitization of the stakeholders regarding swachhata may be initiated. For this A Training Module on Awareness or Sensitization on

Swacchata may be developed. Further, an Application course or 10 day Module for IGNOU Employees as well as for all over India may be designed, developed and offered.

17. Circulate the "Dos & Don'ts" in the Campus.

Dr. Shubhangi Vaidya suggested :

18. Fun Workshop with children in the campus may be offered on the topic of cleanliness.
19. For the attendants, swacchata workshops may be offered.
20. An appropriate space in the campus may be provided for the campus dwellers for taking up swachhata initiatives.

Dr. Shachi Shah suggested :

21. A Swachh Policy and a Swachh Action Plan, focusing on the six core areas may be developed by the university.
22. Environment days and other days should be celebrated in a broader way.
23. Community Participation should be increased by creating Self Help Groups (SHGs) in and around the IGNOU campus.
24. Posters on various themes based on the six areas may be put up around the campus.
25. Several "Days" such as a Car Pool day, walking day in Campus may be observed. Cycles may be provided to be used inside the campus.
26. The Campus Maintenance Division may be asked to use green material for a green campus.

Prof. Lalita S. Kumar suggested :

27. These suggestions may be taken on a Project Mode. Proposals may be made, core teams may be constituted for different areas, and work towards their implementation.
28. Solid Waste Management should be initiated in the campus.
29. Solar Panels should be set up in the campus.

Ms. Neerja Sood suggested :

30. The food handlers, such as those in the canteen, guest house, and dhabas, may be sensitised about not only their health and hygiene, but also of the general hygiene around their workplace.
31. The concept of deworming by Health Centre may be introduced.
32. Re-use of old furniture may be done.

33. Packing Material in Exam Centre SED, and the paper may be reused using creative solutions.
34. Light, ventilation, and occupation environment needs to be developed in the godowns of the SED.

Dr. Susmita suggested :

35. Segregation of waste in the campus may be practiced.
36. Street lights with solar panel may be installed.
37. Water waste may be minimized and managed.
38. ROs may be installed at appropriate places in the campus.
39. Washrooms should be cleaned and closed.
40. Incinerators and shredders may be installed.
41. Rain water harvesting may be practiced.
42. Fumigation may be done on a routine basis.

Prof. Kamalika suggested :

43. We must practice what we preach. Efforts should start at an individual level.
44. Plastic use may be reduced in meetings.

Dr. Bijayalaxmi suggested :

45. Immediate adoption by Administration and Campus Maintenance Division the following that are do-able:
 - i. Swachhata Policy has to be formulated in the University.
 - ii. Funding mechanism should be explored. For example, the MHRD & UGC might have provisions to fund the maintenance of the Sewage Treatment Plant.
 - iii. Disposal policy to be formulated.
 - iv. Liaison with NGOs, such as Vatavaran, and Bhagidari with Delhi Government
46. Health Centre should be strengthened.
47. Vending Zones may be set up in the campus.
48. Human Resource Management on the issues of swachhata may be practiced.

Dr. Sujata Santosh suggested :

49. Individual efforts need to be taken.
50. Reuse of paper needs to be carried out.

Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit suggested :

51. Individual efforts need to be taken to maintain swachhata in the campus.

Dr. Moumita invited interested members of the innovation club to develop projects on swachhata.

Recommendations

Based on the above brainstorming, the following short term and long term initiatives are recommended to be taken up by the University by the members :

1. Short-term initiatives
 - i. Individual Level efforts, such as switching off of lights when not in use, etc.
 - ii. Make a core team (Green Brigade) in the University, which includes students to implement, monitor and maintain cleanliness in the University.
 - iii. Dissemination in social media about the swachhata activities of IGNOU.
 - iv. Short Training programmes on swachhata for sanitation workers, food handlers, CMD and horticulture staff, etc. not only for maintaining their health and hygiene, but also for the development of their knowledge and skills for maintaining cleanliness in the campus.
2. Long-term initiatives
 - i. Developing a Policy on Swachh IGNOU.
 - ii. Swachhata Projects with NGOs and SHGs and other funding agencies.

“Regional Centre Pune established Innovation Club”

An innovation club was formed at the Regional Centre Pune on June 26, 2018 with eight members of the InnovationClub@RCPune. The members comprise the Regional Director, Assistant Regional Directors, Section Officer, PICs and Coordinators of SCs and about 185 IGNOU students.

The main objectives of the club are to :

1. Generate awareness about creativity and innovations in the ODL system,
2. Identify the grass-root innovations by the faculty and the students of the ODL system and
3. Create a network of innovators and create a culture of innovation.

The InnovationClub@Pune envisages the following activities :

1. Brainstorming session to be organized by inviting the members of InnovationClub@Pune.
2. Presentations/talks of innovative concepts.
3. Demonstration/showcasing of innovative products, etc.
4. Research activities in areas related to Students' need, Innovations, IGNOU programme delivery, evaluation of IGNOU Programmes, Employability skills etc.
5. A Seminar on Innovations to be organized by InnovationClub@Pune.

Report of the 3rd Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Presentation on

“Innovation Awardees for the Benefit of the IGNOU Fraternity”

A meeting of the Innovation Club was held on November 20, 2018 at the Committee Room V, Convention Centre, IGNOU. The 17 members were present in the meeting. Dr. Sujata Santosh, coordinator InnovationClub@IGNOU, welcomed the members and participants and initiated the meeting by giving a brief background. She said that the meeting had been organized to discuss the grass-root level innovations by the students of IGNOU who are also the winners of the Student Innovation Awards. She mentioned that the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) in IGNOU is aimed at promoting the culture of innovation in the university. This year, under the able guidance of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor and the efforts of Director, NCIDE, the university has taken steps to identify and recognise the innovations by instituting a "Student Innovation Award 2018" which will be given to first three innovator students across the country. She further said that this meeting of the innovation club would have presentations by this year's awardees who will be sharing their innovations, their ideas and experiences.

She then invited Dr. O. P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE, to address the members. Dr. O. P. Sharma welcomed the members and said that the IGNOU had initiated a new scheme this year which was aimed at identifying and promoting innovations among the students of IGNOU. He further introduced the Student Innovation Award Scheme and how the NCIDE is making all efforts to reach all the stakeholders of the system. The university has formulated a scheme for identifying and recognizing the innovator students of IGNOU and instituted a "Student Innovation Award 2018" to be given every year to first three innovator students across the country. This year entries were invited by the NCIDE from IGNOU students for the Student Innovation Award – 2018. The entries went through two rounds of evaluation by a Committee of Experts and finally four best entries were selected for the Student Innovation Award – 2018. He stated that there was a strong need to encourage and nurture innovation among the students and this scheme was a step in this direction. Dr. Sharma then requested Mr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore, Second Prize winner, to give his presentation.

Mr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore, who is also a PHD student of Foreign Language at IGNOU, gave a presentation on innovative French Song Book "Chantons en Francais" i.e., Learning French through Songs. His innovation is based on the Musical Intelligence Theory and teaches French to beginners to master the language competencies. He said that the course could be used as a supplement by anyone who is enrolled in a basic level French Language course. The main focus is on learning and teaching French in a melodious way through songs, as songs help in memorizing and pronouncing French in a better way. He highlighted the innovative features of the book, conception of the idea, approach adopted in the book and

different phases of the development of the project, and how it has been appreciated by the learners. Dr. Lalitha S. Kumar said that as someone needs to go to the class and as a supplement material the book can be used as a useful material for reinforcement. Dr Manoj Kulshrestha asked if it is developed for other similar languages used in various European languages. He further asked if it could be implemented for other Indian languages. Mr. Jaivardhan mentioned that it can be replicated for use in other languages also. Dr. Shubhangi asked if any folk songs were used in teaching of French. Mr. Jaivardhan mentioned that folk songs were used to teach local French words and were used for research. Dr. Nisha asked if the book was useful for the ODL learners. Mr. Jaivardhan said that the related research work also focused on the use of the book by the ODL learners.

This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Mukesh Chand Meena, First prize winner of Student Innovation Award. Mr. Meena, who is also a student of Post BSc. Nursing Programme of IGNOU, gave a demonstration on innovative Mobile Android Apps on Medical Awareness that he developed for the benefit of health workers and people in rural areas. He has developed seven health care mobile Apps on Maternal Care, Labour Process, Depression, Sex Education, Nursing Exam, Pediatric Nursing, and Immunization. He mentioned that these apps are about spreading awareness on maternal and child health and how to reduce maternal mortality. He also reported that his apps are being used by 80 thousand users.

Dr Neerja Sood suggested that the mobile application should be upgraded and Mr. Meena should try that it is a part of the Rajasthan Health Mission, so that it is adopted at village level at a wider scale.

Next presentation was by Mr. Ajay Kumar Sharma, Third Prize winner. Mr. Ajay, who is also a student of BSc, gave a presentation on Farmer Friendly Biogas Bottling Machine that he had developed. He gave a detailed description about his innovation and how he developed it. He highlighted the advantages of the machine and the transformation Potential of the machine. He said that the machine is portable and this makes it very useful in rural areas. It is also extremely cost effective, and it is directly related to the national priorities such as energy conservation and protection of the environment.

The final presentation was by Mr. Deepak Sharma, Consolation Prize winner. Mr. Deepak is a student of the MCA Programme of IGNOU, demonstrated his IGNOU Space App – An Innovative Android App for IGNOU Students. He mentioned that the app provides a one-stop platform for a number learner support services, such as information on Courses, Question Papers, Examination and various updates. It also contains innovative features as voice assistant and is presently used by 33 thousand students. Dr. Subhash Deshmukh mentioned that the aspect of data security should also be taken care of, in context of data related to students.

Report of the 4th Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Brainstorming Session on

“The Need of the Re-engineering the Evaluation System of IGNOU”

A meeting of the Innovation Club was held on January 11, 2019 at the Conference Room, NCIDE, IGNOU. The 15 members were present.

Dr. Sujata Santosh, coordinator InnovationClub@IGNOU, welcomed the members and participants and initiated the meeting. Dr. Oum Prakash Sharma addressed the members and said that evaluation is a very important component at IGNOU. There are several old practices and processes which need to be revamped in light of the present day scenario and technological developments. Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit, Deputy Director, NCIDE, then said that evaluation system in ODL is slowly being influenced by technology advancements. For example, she mentioned the problems faced by IGNOU learners while submitting assignments. She said that there is a need of process re-engineering and developing a robust technology enabled Evaluation Management System for the University. The members, one-by-one discussed the various components which exist in the evaluation system of IGNOU and gave their valuable suggestions and ideas. Assignment is one aspect of the entire evaluation system. It needs to be reviewed and made more student friendly. Dr. Shubha Gokhale said that in case of an online assignment system, it should be noted that there is no mechanism for online correction of assignments. She informed that an online evaluation system has failed in Bombay University. Prof. Lalita S Kumar mentioned that a proper evaluation strategy should be chalked out. Prof. Shubha Gokhale mentioned that assignment management is another aspect that needs to be looked into. Dr. Sudhansh Sharma mentioned that Innovative strategies and techniques can be used in preparation of assignments, evaluation strategies and also in how to make it evaluative online. He also mentioned that as a first step, teachers or course teams may decide on what kind of assignment they want. There should be a provision for catching plagiarism in assignments. Dr. Leena Singh, suggested that assignment counselling can be provided through video programmes. She also suggested that a Newsletter may be provided to students with details such as IRC sessions of GyanDarshan and GyanVani, assignment submission dates, etc.

Prof. Kamalika Banerjee, suggested that alerts about various activities pertaining to exams and various audio-video programmes should be sent to students through SMS and email. Dr. Shubha Gokhle mentioned that On-Demand scheme which was successfully launched and run by NCIDE should be revived. Members also suggested that there can be a mechanism for question paper generation from question bank.

All the members were of the view that there should be proper information flow through the various aspects such as assignment, counselor, examination, and evaluation. In order to ensure quality, Dr. Sudhansh Sharma suggested that Viva

component should be there for both theory and practical components. He had that the last counseling session can be had as a viva and made compulsory.

Dr. Mukesh Kumar, said that there should be proper interaction with the students after submission of assignments. This can be started with small programmes. The question of quality in assignment should be considered. The members also discussed issues related to disparity in payments for assignment and project evaluation among different programmes of study. Dr. Sudhansh Sharma suggested that assignment evaluation fee can be included in the course fee. Members expressed that there exists different models and mechanisms in evaluation strategies for different programmes. For instance there is practical fee in MCA but not in MBA for project/practical. He also mentioned that proper monitoring should be there. Counselors/examiners are different especially in BCA/MCA for project evaluation. There should be criteria for counsellors and paper evaluators. Some other aspects that are worth considering are : i) Tutor comments and ii) Objective/subjective type assignments

Dr. Shubha Gokhle suggested that assignments should not be objective, as CMA does not serve the set purpose. She mentioned that earlier there used to be three assignments but over the time it was found to be not of much use and hence was discontinued. Though it was found to be a failure, it has been again included in CBCS. Something which has been tried and tested and discontinued, should not be taken up again. Dr. M.P. Mishra, was of the view that in context to a mega university system like IGNOU there is a need of a strong and continuing technology support in the University to design develop and implement.

The members felt that a number of students copy the assignments from study material or from fellow students. To discourage this practice, a mix of theory and practice should be used. Application based assignments can be used to make the assignments engaging and useful.

- i. Level of program and solutions should be categorized. Then it should be decided if subjective or objective evaluation should be used.
- ii. There should be proper information flow through the four aspects: assignment, counselor, examination, evaluation.
- iii. There should be provision for assignment counseling for the distance learners, especially through audio/video programmes.
- iv. Schedule of the IRC sessions, Gyandarshan and Gyanvani should be provided on the IGNOU website.
- v. Provision for assignment tracking should be there linking from student to counselor to ACD. Students should be provided information through messages.
- vi. Newsletter may be provided to students with details such as IRC sessions of *GyanDarshan* and *Gyan Vani*, assignment submission dates, etc.

The members emphasized the need for re-engineering the process of assignment submission and evaluation.

Report of the 4th Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Brainstorming Session on

“Innovations in the Counseling Session for ODL Learners”

A meeting of the Innovation Club was held on February 21, 2019 at the Conference Room, NCIDE, IGNOU. The 10 members were present.

Dr. Sujata Santosh, coordinator InnovationClub@IGNOU, welcomed the members and participants and initiated the meeting. Dr. Oum Prakash Sharma, Director, NCIDE addressed the members and informed about the basic objectives of the Innovation Club. He said that besides brainstorming on the current and relevant issues of the ODL system, the innovation club aims at identifying the areas of innovation in the ODL system in general and IGNOU in particular. He emphasized that in the changing scenario there is a need of systemic changes and re-engineering the process in the ODL system. The various gap areas in the system and the existing problems need to be identified, and related solutions need to provide. Keeping that in view, specific topics and issues are discussed in the innovation club meetings. In the last meeting discussion was held on evaluation and examination related issues and in the present meeting focus is on Innovations in Counselling Sessions for ODL learners. Related to the previous discussion, Dr. Sudhansh Sharma suggested few improvements in the evaluation system. Firstly, he suggested that a blueprint of the question paper should be prepared. Second, a question bank of the questions with model answers for different courses and programmes should be prepared and be made available to the students. This will help the students in preparing for the exams and discourage the use of low quality help books among the IGNOU learners. It was also suggested that the question paper should be balanced covering questions from all the blocks and the quality of questions in the question papers should be good.

Dr. Hemlata suggested that a synopsis or gist of the course material in audio/video format should be provided to the learners. This will help in introducing uniformity and standardization in the system. This will be especially beneficial for the disabled/blind students as it will provide easy access to the basic information about the course.

Dr Neerja Sood suggested that there should be model counselling sessions for all the programmes to motivate the counselors. Dr. Kamalika Banerjee reiterated the need to motivate the counsellors and she suggested that proper orientation programmes should be organised for them highlighting the difference between classroom teaching and counselling. Dr. O P Sharma informed the members about specially designed personal contact programmes in NIOS. He suggested that similar kind of experiments should be done in IGNOU also for improving the quality of counselling session. Dr. Sudhansh Sharma Pointed out that at several study centres, the number of students in different programmes, particularly in computer science programmes is very less,

because of those sufficient counselling sessions are not held at those study centres. In this context, he stressed on the need for consolidation of counselling sessions, classes and study centres. There should be regular visits by visitors or observers. There is also a need to look into how exam centres are allocated to ensure fair and smooth conduct of exams.

The members felt that proper training should be provided to counsellors. There is a need to understand the various problems in counselling and how the available technologies can be used to address those requirements. Virtual counselling sessions could be used to reach out to the distance learners. Proper guidelines on how to conduct counselling sessions should be prepared. These should also have guidelines for use of existing and upcoming tools and technologies for counselling sessions. This will help in empowering the distance learners. Training and motivation of the counsellors are two aspects that need to be taken care of. Besides, the best practices in counselling should be identified, compiled and disseminated among the Academic Counsellors. Best innovation in Counselling Award can be constituted to encourage and motivate the counsellors. It was also suggested that programme or course coordinators should volunteer to be counsellors for the benefit of the distance learners.

The members emphasized the need for innovation in the academic counselling sessions for ODL learners.

Report of the 5th Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Brainstorming Session on “Exploring the Areas of Innovation in ODL System”

A meeting of the Innovation Club was held on March 15, 2019 at the Conference Room, NCIDE, IGNOU. The 14 members were present.

Dr. Sujata Santosh, coordinator InnovationClub@IGNOU, welcomed the members and participants and initiated the meeting. Dr. Oum Prakash Sharma addressed the members and said that there were different areas in the ODL system where innovative initiatives could be taken up to address the problem areas and also to update the system. Dr. Shubhangi Vaidya said that disability is a social problem. As a number of learning disabilities exist among learners, therefore there is a strong need to devise an innovative curriculum which is friendly to such varied group of learners. And in this scenario, open learning is a viable medium to make it inclusive for them. She suggested that the emphasis should be on designing a curricular which is more flexible for such learners. In some of the programmes, particularly in Bachelor degree programmes generic electives can have some out of the box topics/areas which have some social relevance. Dr. Kamalika Banerjee pointed out that we, the distance education providers, expect the learners to understand very fast, but the curriculum and the study material provided to the learner is overloaded. Sometimes, even normal children find it tough to cope up with the IGNOU study material. She said that, this issue needs a lot of deliberation. Dr. Shubhangi mentioned that the best approach will be to start by involving experts/ counsellors/ psychologists in the related fields, in the curriculum development process, consult them and take their help. Technology can also be used in this context. What is essential is to develop materials by keeping such kind of learners in mind. Dr. Sharma noted that same kind of study material is provided for all the learners. This should be re-looked. In the case of science courses, it is found that the learners in Study Centres are not able to complete the experiment. In such cases, it was suggested that the virtual science labs should be developed and enriched from time to time Virtual labs can be used to teach the distance science learners. Besides, this may also be useful for learners with disability. He further added that low cost Science Kits and home based experiments may be encouraged. Whenever you find constraints, you look for other innovative ways to do it. In fact, the Virtual Lab management system having a component of interactivity with teachers and fellow students should be made available to all the students.

Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit said that a need analysis can be done on the students passing out of class XII, to understand their educational requirements particularly in terms of learning abilities. Dr. Sharma mentioned that skill-oriented component could be introduced in the graduate level programmes, to make them more relevant for the learners. The skill-component can be integrated in the curriculum.

Dr. Kamalika Banerjee said that a provision can be made for providing additional certificates to the students, for such programmes like entrepreneurship, communication skills, soft skills, etc. This may help them in getting jobs when they go for an interview, etc. Therefore, such innovation in graduate level programmes will help to make it more useful and relevant for the learners. Dr. Heena Bijli spoke about the Diploma programme in Event Management. She said that while designing the programme many innovative components were incorporated in this programme through technology integration. For example, various events have been categorized based on the size, purpose and evaluation, and also as post event/per-event. A video wall of the event is provided, and also a showreel video of the company in social media is provided to the learners. She also informed that the programme is a new one developed by IGNOU, on the basis of industry requirements. Further, she said that no other such courses being offered by other traditional institution with such innovative components. The programme is being offered digitally and the industry experts have enrolled for this programme and they have appreciated the innovation and creativity aspects of the programme. Dr. Sharma said that in the move towards promoting innovation in various areas of distance education, NCIDE gives gold medal and one of the areas is innovation in curriculum designing. Therefore, there is a need to encourage faculty towards innovation in this field.

Dr. Hemlata said that a teacher has to innovate while teaching, as each child is different and to match the educational needs of the learners (including the disabled children) many things need to be changed and updated. Dr. Kamalika Banerjee said that the evaluation and examination system also needs to be changed and revamped to make it more inclusive. Dr. Heena Bijli said that guidelines are being prepared for writers. Dr. Sharma said that though some special measures are being taken to help the learners with disability, but it is important to consider about the steps that could be taken up in general also. He said that revisiting the SLM is also required. Dr. Hemlata said that a gist/synopsis of the study material may be provided and this could be useful for the learners with disability, and also for the general learners. Dr. Sharma said that providing the learning material in audio-visual format will be extremely useful for learners. Dr. Heena Bijli said that this could be in addition to the material provided in the form of audio books. It is important that we should bring in innovation in the study material in such a way that our students read and study the SLM, rather than using the guidelines and help-books available in the market.

Dr. Shubhangi said that the students with special need can be in touch with the counsellor through phone or any such device. It was felt that it is important to think of innovation not only in curriculum design, but also in delivery of instructions, evaluation and student support services. Dr. Heena Bijli said alternative exam system could be devised for people with disability (such as autism).

Dr. M. Abdul Kareem said that to address certain operational issues in the case of science and practical oriented courses, a mechanism should be devised where academic collaboration could be set up with some other institutes. Learners in such courses, who are passionate about learning – can go to such institutes and can perform practical work. Dr. Sharma said that a kind of internship component could be brought into the practical oriented courses. Internship in the related industry will

help the learners get hands on experience. There may not be the need for any exam after completion of the internship, but the students can be asked to give a presentation on the work that they have done. This component could be made a part of the curriculum. Dr. Shubhangi suggested that the project should be avoided to avoid mass copying and problem with funding. Dr. Nisha suggested that students need exposure to labs, and actual field work experience is necessary. Dr. Shubhangi said that all RCs need sensitization for disability training at all levels. There should be innovation in support services – both administrative and academic point of view. It was informed that an online forum for empanelment of counsellors has been developed in the University and it has proved highly useful. It was suggested that in similar way online counselling system can also be introduced to benefit all the learners. Along with the offline programmes, web based academic support can also be provided to the learners. Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit mentioned that from SLM to examination, facilitation can be done online – this includes providing online support to the learners. The School of Gender and Development Studies (SOGDS), IGNOU is also using a discussion forum to facilitate the learners. This can be implemented through all other programmes. Dr. Sharma said that in a web based academic support – you are using open source software and maintaining contact and support to the students, thus it becomes a value addition. Technical compatibility should be there/provided. Dr. Heena Bijli said that the programme on Event Management was launched on pilot basis. There were 84 students, but they were provided a soft copy of the study material. There are often problems in dispatch of study material to students, to overcome this it is essential that there is transparency in the area of distribution of study material, as it is very important to reach the students. Dr. Sharma mentioned that the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India has introduced the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) to systematically rank Educational Institutions and Universities primarily on innovation related indicators. In this context, facilitation for innovation in the university becomes very crucial.

The members emphasized the need for innovation in the ODL system.