

A Report of  
A Two-way Interactive NCIDE- CEE-NEP Floriculture  
Training Programme  
using EduSat  
*From Teleconferencing to Live Virtual Conference*  
(7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November 2006)



National Centre for Innovations in Distance Education  
Indira Gandhi National Open University

A Report of a Two-way Interactive NCIDE- CEE-  
NEP Floriculture Training Programme using  
EduSat- *From Teleconferencing to Live Virtual  
Conference* (7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> November, 2006)

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## **Background**

NCIDE, in collaboration with CEE and NEP, conducted a three-day training in floriculture in the North east using EduSat from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006 to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2006. The two-way interactive sessions had the resource persons at the EMPC, IGNOU end and participants at each of the regional centres at Gangtok (Sikkim) and Shillong (Meghalaya).

The aim of the programme was to harness the potential of EduSat based network for content delivery and training for the people of North east India.

The main objectives of the proposed training programme was to:

1. evaluate the potential of EduSat for imparting training in floriculture in the North East.
2. develop skills of the participants to enable them to set up their own floriculture enterprise.
3. analyse the problems and constraints faced in the North east in floriculture and suggest coping strategies.
4. test the ability of creating and utilizing dynamic e-content for training and development purposes in floriculture through this pilot project.

## **Expected Outcome**

After undertaking this training programme it was expected that:

1. the participants would be trained to undertake floriculture in the North East.
2. the participants would be motivated to train other groups in the region.
3. The trainer group would get inputs in utilization of EduSat for interactive learning and skill development programmes.
4. some reusable learning material in e-content format would get developed.

**Pre-Workshop Net-meeting (n-meeting):** A pre workshop n-meeting was arranged between the organizers at IGNOU HQ and RCs at Gangtok and a study centre in Shillong on 6<sup>th</sup> Novmber 2006. This n-meeting took the stock of the arrangements made at the

participants' end, including the effective working of the Satellite Interactive Terminals (SIT) and discussed the activities to be organized during the workshop. Some reference material was sent by email to the RCs, which had to be distributed to the participants by the RDs. It was discussed in the n-meeting how these materials were to be used by the participants.

### **Day I (7<sup>th</sup> November 2006)**

The workshop began with the Prof. M. Kaushik, Director NCIDE introducing the topic of the workshop to the participants. She talked about the importance of floriculture for employment generation in the north east. She then introduced the resource person Dr R.L. Mishra, *Gladiolus* Expert and Project Coordinator, Division of Floriculture and Landscaping, IARI, New Delhi, Dr S.D. Sharma, Director, CEE and Dr. Jayshree Kurup, DD, NEC, who coordinated the workshop.

There were a total of three sessions on Day I. As soon as the introduction was over, the participants from Gangtok and Shillong were asked to introduce themselves. As an innovative approach during the one-to-one interaction, the participants sitting at the other end were shown in the background and the face of the resource person speaking was shown in a box on the same screen, which gave a 'look n feel' of virtual face to face (f2f) interaction.

After the introductions of the participants, the session started with Dr. Mishra speaking on *Gladiolus*. He gave an introductory talk on what is *Gladiolus* and why is it an important crop for employment generation in the north east. He then proceeded to talk on the various cultivars of *Gladiolus* followed by the suitability of the climate in the north east for its cultivation. He also spoke about the methods of preparing the field for *Gladiolus* cultivation.

The talk was followed by an interactive session where the participants asked general questions about *Gladiolus*. The participants also clarified doubts about the field preparation. Both Gangtok and Shillong were connected on EduSat network through n-meeting.

In the second session on Day I, Dr Mishra spoke on how *Gladiolus* is propagated. This was followed by the methods of cultivation. This talk was followed by an interactive question-answer session.

In the third session, Dr Mishra spoke on “Nutritional requirements” and “Insect pests, diseases and disorders, and the remedial measures”. The talk was interactive with participants asking questions about the various pesticides available for eradicating pests.

## **Day II (8<sup>th</sup> November 2006)**

On the second day, two-way interactivity was maintained with Gangtok and Shillong through EduSat through n-meeting. The second day comprised three sessions. The speaker of the first session was Dr R.L. Mishra. Speaking on the “Harvesting of spikes and post-harvest operation”, Dr Mishra informed he participants about the various methods for harvesting and the precautions that need to be taken.

The second session of the day was also taken by Dr Mishra. He spoke on “Harvesting and storage of corms” and “Corm dormancy”. He explained how the corms can be harvested and stored for use in the next year as seed. The participants were inquisitive about corm dormancy and asked questions on how it affects the crop.

Interactivity during the sessions comprised the participants asking about the technicalities of post harvest operations. Several participants asked questions on the marketing of the flowers.

The third speaker of the session was Dr. S. S. Sindhu, Department of Floriculture, IARI, who gave his talk on “Marketing and Economics of Cut Flowers”. This was followed by a highly interactive session where the participants queried about the marketing prospects of *Gladiolus* in Delhi.

## **Day III (9<sup>th</sup> November 2006)**

The third day comprised three sessions. In the beginning Dr. Jayshree gave a brief overview of the last session and current session. The first session started with Dr Mishra discussing the “Cost of cultivation and income”.

The second session was an interactive discussion with the participants with Dr R.L. Mishra (Expert), Dr. S. D. Sharma (Director CEE) and Dr Jayashree Kurup (AD, NEC) in the panel at the EMPC end.

The third session started with a brief “Review of the training programme” by Dr Mishra, where he spoke on the topics that were discussed on the previous two days.

Prof Madhulika Kaushik, Director, NCIDE joined the discussion. The session ended with the vote of thanks by Prof. Kaushik thanking Dr Mishra for his valuable opinion, Dr Sindhu who had spared his valuable time and come for the training programme, the NCIDE team comprising Dr Jyotsna Dikshit and Dr Moumita Das, who had worked behind the scenes, Dr S.D Sharma, under whose guidance the programme was organised successfully and Dr Jayashree Kurup who had efficiently coordinated between the regional centres and IGNOU headquarters. She also thanked the Regional Directors at both Shillong and Gangtok to make the training programme a success.

### **Workshop Observations**

The participants had a hitch in facing the camera on the first day, but from the second day they became familiar and friendly to the technology and participated enthusiastically in the interaction.

### ***Technical***

- ❖ The technicians present at the SITs require training from time to time on new technologies used in EduSat based conferencing to avoid runtime technical glitches.
  
- ❖ Better quality cameras would definitely enhance the teaching-learning experience through EDUSAT. The camera at Gangtok was not of good quality and thus could not transmit quality video from the SIT side. A phased replacement of existing web cam camera with better equipment would go a long way in improving interactivity and clarity. Configuration may be decided in consultation with EMPC.

- ❖ The participants should be trained a day in advance for tele protocol. A multimedia kit on edu-etiquette should be developed for the participants. NCIDE proposes to undertake this exercise, if approved.
  
- ❖ Overall, the high levels of interactivity achieved during the training session, and the possibility of transacting all the training related dialogue throughout the workshop, as well as the exchange of all formats and real time discussion on each of them by the participant group provided enough support to the premise that EduSat can serve as a very effective tool for skill based training. The NCIDE proposes to reaffirm this through diverse employable skill based training initiatives planned for the next few months.

***Subject/Topic related***

- The topic of floriculture was well received by the participants of both Gangtok and Shillong.
- The participants demanded other flowers such as tuberose and orchids to be taken up in such type of training programme in the future.

## Summary of the Report

NCIDE, in collaboration with CEE and NEP, conducted a three-day *training programme in floriculture in the North east using EduSat* from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006 to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2006. The two-way interactive sessions had the resource persons at the EMPC, IGNOU end and participants at each of the regional centres at Gangtok (Sikkim) and Shillong (Meghalaya). The aim of the programme was to harness the potential of EduSat based network for content delivery and training for the people of North east India. The programme was conducted to develop skills of the participants for floriculture and to enable them to set up their own floriculture enterprise in the North east.

The resource person was Dr R.L. Mishra, *Gladiolus* Expert and Project Coordinator, Division of Floriculture and Landscaping, IARI, New Delhi. Prof Madhulika Kaushik, Director NCIDE, Dr S.D. Sharma, Director, CEE and Dr. Jayshree Kurup were the coordinators of the workshop at the EMPC end. As an innovative approach taken up by NCIDE during the one-to-one interaction, the participants sitting at the other end were shown in the background and the face of the resource person speaking was shown in a box on the same screen, which gave a 'look n feel' of virtual face to face (f2f) interaction. In this three day workshop, the importance crop for employment generation in the north east was highlighted. Cultivation, propagation, nutritional requirements, pests and diseases, and harvesting was discussed by Dr Mishra in detail. There was a lot of interactive activity during all the three sessions with the participants asking questions on the various aspects of *Gladiolus* cultivation. A talk on marketing of cut flowers by Dr Sindhu, IARI, on the second day generated a lot of enthusiasm in the participants where they wanted the details of marketing of the flowers.

An immediate positive feedback on the training programme was received in the form of media reports from the local paper in Gangtok that said "By conducting training programmes of such kind, IGNOU... is providing self-confidence to aspiring youths, who would like to take up floriculture for commercial purposes" (*Mail, 7-9 Nov, 2006, Gangtok*).

It has emerged from the workshop that a follow up of the training programme is very much in demand and is required for the North east. Similar programmes can be conducted for the other states of the North east, which would take up different kinds of flowers, such as tuberose, orchids and other flowers growing exclusively in the north east region. It may also be noted here that huge opportunities exist for such programmes in the field of medicinal and aromatic plants of the north east.