IGNOU Student Innovation Awards

On the occasion of its Foundation Day on November 19, 2018, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) awarded its student innovators. The University celebrated its 33rd Foundation day in which Prof. Ram Takwale, former Vice Chancellor of IGNOU was the Chief Guest. Mrs. Promila Reddy, wife of Prof. Ram Reddy, the first Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, also graced the occasion. The Student Innovation Awards for 2018 were given away by Prof. Nageshwar Rao, Vice Chancellor of IGNOU and Prof. Takwale.

Mr. Mukesh Chand Meena, a student of Post BSc. Nursing Programme was awarded the first prize for developing a bouquet of seven innovative apps on medical awareness. These apps are available on a variety of topics ranging from maternal and child health care to immunization to reproductive health to depression. His apps are currently being used by 80 thousand users. He was awarded a trophy, a certificate and a cheque of Rs. 10,000. On this occasion he offered "special thanks to IGNOU Study Center Jaipur Academic Counsellor Dr. Samta Soni for her guidance". He encouraged the IGNOU students to "keep innovating to lead India towards a brighter future."

The second prize was presented to Mr. Jaivardhan Singh Rathore, a PhD student of Foreign Language. He has developed an innovative French Song Book "Chantons en Francais" Learning French through Songs. His innovation is based on the Musical Intelligence Theory and teaches French to beginners to master the language competencies. He was awarded a trophy, a certificate and a cheque of Rs. 7,000. Expressing thanks to Dr. Deepanwita Srivastava, his PhD guide, he said that she had helped him in shaping his ideas and thought process during the creation of this special book. He urged the IGNOU students to "innovate on simple things that are concerned with the larger public, and help others to grow in the process of innovation."

The third prize was awarded to Mr. Ajay Kumar Sharma, a student of B.Sc. for his innovative Farmer-friendly Biogas Bottling Machine. This portable machine is very useful in rural areas. It is extremely cost effective and related to the national priorities such as energy conservation and protection of the environment. He was awarded a trophy, a certificate and a cheque of Rs. 3,000. He said "IGNOU has provided me with a platform for my innovation and has always supported me." He further said "I think every student can innovate; only they have to believe in themselves and in IGNOU."

A consolation prize was awarded to Mr. Deepak Sharma, a student of MCA Programme of IGNOU. Deepak has developed an innovative android app for facilitating the university information for IGNOU students. His app, named IGNOU Space App, is a one-stop platform for learner support services and provides vital information on Courses, Question Papers, Examination and various updates. It contains innovative features, such as a voice assistant, and is currently used by 33 thousand students. He said" IGNOU had always challenged our minds by giving us new tasks that are beyond normal thinking, and this exercise had always forced us to create new and innovative ideas. I am thankful to IGNOU that it gave me a platform to explore my ideas and creativity." He added "The budding innovator students of IGNOU should be creative thinkers and keep trying out their ideas".

Dr. Oum Prakash Sharma, Director, NCIDE congratulated the award winning students and asked them to continue with this type of innovation in the future too.

IGNOU has instituted the "Student Innovation Award 2018" to be given every year to first three innovator students across the country. The National Centre for Innovation in

Distance Education (NCIDE) at IGNOU is the nodal centre for promoting the culture of innovation in the university. NCIDE is making all efforts to identify, recognize and nurture the innovators in the open and distance learning (ODL) system. Considering the students to be the most important stakeholders of the ODL system, the university has formulated this scheme for identifying and recognizing the innovator students of IGNOU. This year entries were invited by the NCIDE from IGNOU students for the Student Innovation Award – 2018. After the evaluation by a Committee of experts, the four best entries were selected for the Award.

IGNOU has been recognizing the major contributors in the area of research and innovation among its faculty and staff for more than a decade. The call of President of India, in the capacity of Visitor of the University, in February 2015 given in the meeting of Vice Chancellors of Central Universities, gave further impetus to these activities. A step in this direction, the constitution and various activities of Innovation Clubs at the Headquarters and Regional Centre level, has been an important milestone in order to actively involve the innovator students for the incubation of their innovations.

Dr. Oum Prakash Sharma
Director, NCIDE