

Need for a National Creativity and Innovation Drive

Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit

The open and distance learning system in itself is an innovation. However, it is also facing challenges like never before. These included a rapidly expanding marketplace (globalization), and increasing competition, diversity among learners, and availability to new forms of technology tools for the learners, issues of quality, access and equity in present global scenario etc. With the increasing complexity, change and competition, generating new ideas and implementing them in the teaching and learning practices across the open and distance learning system is now essential.

Creativity in services and processes will facilitate the system to function more informatively to provide better and learner friendly services and solutions to the learners. Creativity isn't just for artists or lead scientists, or people working in Research and Development labs, but for anyone who can think differently, view challenges from new perspectives and indeed come up with new ideas to make the institution more profitable and leading edge. Creativity is multidisciplinary – it is in all professional fields from chemistry to engineering, from education to computer science, and from sociology to business. Successful organizations view creativity as vital and are the ones that instill creativity throughout the organization.

The existence and success of any educational institution mainly lies in the satisfaction of its learners. Using learners a source of continuous innovation is key to success in rapid change, and fast paced learning environments. Learners have become a critical innovation partner for institutions. It is believed that innovation is a proven driver of low cost, high quality, easy access and rapid technology deployment in teaching and learning thus improving the quality of educational experience of our learners. Needless to state that there is a strong need to initiate a National level Creativity and Innovation

Drive for the IGNOU learners, academic and non-academic staff, as a platform for taking their ideas to innovations. Such a drive should be aimed at generating a movement for celebrating creativity among the functionaries and the learners of the open and distance learning system. The stress should be on enabling them to think creatively and provide innovative ideas/solutions to their own problems for the overall development of the system. This can be promoted by organizing various competitions, training programmes and giving awards to the best three creative ideas/innovations suggested or accomplished by the learners for the overall system development. Some of the activities which can be taken up for encouraging innovation among the distance educators and learners are :

- Organizing quick surveys, competitions for creativity and innovations in education, generation of ideas from learners for the learners, conducting workshops for learners, academics and non-academics at the various RCs and SCs on creativity and innovation.
- Facilitating a few selective innovative ideas in workable prototypes.
- Showcasing the products/ideas through print and non-print medium.

The ability to think creatively and drive innovations is important for teachers and employees of any organization today. Organization that have plans to continually upgrade its service to learners, offer interesting new ways of teaching and learning and become sustainable and growth oriented in the future, needs to train employees towards unleashing their creativity and give them the tools to drive innovations.