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Report
of
The Review Committee
(1989-1999)



INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068

FOREWORD

Every organisation requires a review of its performance from time to time. Indira Gandhi National Open University is not just an ordinary simple organisation. It is large in size and complex in structure with its multifarious functions and a widespread network of Regional Centres and Study Centres embracing not only a country of continental size like India but even beyond. Indeed, it is a unique organisation. Naturally periodic reviews of its performance is a must.

Such considerations might have been before it, when the Planning Board of the University took the decision to constitute a Review Committee during September 1998. The decision of the Planning Board was subsequently endorsed by the Board of Management of the University.

This is the Second Review Committee. The first Review Committee was constituted in 1989 and it evaluated the performance of the University during the first five years of its existence and made many recommendations. The present Committee was constituted a decade after the first Committee had completed its work with wide ranging terms of reference.

The Committee has endeavoured to make an objective evaluation of the strengths and achievements of the University during the past decade and a half, its weaknesses and drawbacks, and its challenges and opportunities. For the Committee, it has been a labour of love. Our Report will bear witness to the phenomenal progress the University has already made. I am sure that this Report will be read widely and discussed extensively and I hope the University will implement our recommendations.

I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to all my colleagues on the Committee for their unstinted cooperation and support and particularly to Prof. Ram Pratap, Secretary, who is the Director of Planning of IGNOU.

R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao
Chairman

March 2, 2000
New Delhi

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REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE (1999)

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH TO THE REPORT

This Committee to review the performance of the University since its inception, was constituted by the Planning Board of the University at its 21st meeting held on September 17, 1998 with the following members:

1. Prof. R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao
Chairman, Review Committee
2. Prof. M.V. Pylee
Member - Review Committee
3. Dr. Vina Mazumdar
Member - Review Committee
4. Prof. Ashok Pradhan
Member - Review Committee
5. Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya
Member - Review Committee
6. Shri Kiran Karnik
Member - Review Committee
7. Dr. D. Gopal
Member - Review Committee
8. Mrs. Rima Nanavati
Member - Review Committee
9. Prof. Ram Pratap
Secretary - Review Committee

The terms of reference of the Review Committee (Annexure-I) are as under :

1. To make an assessment of the performance of the University since its inception, and of its achievements, and shortcomings, if any, in the fulfillment of its aims and objectives.
2. To examine whether the programmes and courses launched by the University so far have been able to contribute to the attainment of the aims and objectives of the University.
3. To make an overall assessment of the achievements of the University in providing a cost-effective and innovative system of education.
4. To make such recommendations as are necessary for the future development of the University in the fulfilment of its aims and objectives in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

The Board of Management of the University later endorsed the constitution of the committee.

In this context, reference may be made to the fact that a decade ago, in 1989, the then Vice-chancellor, the late Prof. G. Ram Reddy, took the initiative in appointing a review committee to assess the performance of IGNOU which was by then into the fifth year of its existence. The terms of reference of this committee were:

- i) To make an assessment of the progress made by the University since its inception, and of, its achievements, and shortcomings, if any, in the fulfilment of its aims and objectives;

- ii) To examine whether the targets in the initial stages were consistent with its objectives and to make an assessment of the achievements and the shortfalls, if any, in achieving these targets;
- iii) To make an assessment of the progress made in the provision of physical infrastructure for the University, and the policies and practices following in developing the physical infrastructure including staff recruitment and development; and
- iv) To recommend the general directions of development including the thrust areas in which the University should organise its programmes and activities in the next few years.

The Committee consisted of the following members:

- (1) Prof. M.V. Pylee
- (2) Dr. (Mrs.) Jyothi H. Trivedi
- (3) Prof. E.V. Chitnis

Committee's function was in the nature of a preliminary review of the process of establishment of the University, how it got started, the structure which it has established, the operations it launched and the promises the new University held out to the community in discharging its unique and novel mandate in higher education. The committee after a careful analysis of the structures and functions made many recommendations in this regard. Though, no Action Taken Report relating to this committee is available, still presumably, some of the recommendations had been implemented in course of time. In fact, we find them reflected in the structures and processes that are in existence now.

The task of our committee, constituted as it is 10 years after the first committee, and 14 years after establishment of the University, is more wide-

ranging. During the last 10 years the University has made phenomenal progress in all fields. Substantial growth in terms of student enrolment, spread of academic programmes, expansion of faculty and administrative personnel, and in acquiring national and international visibility. Particular mention should be made of the high praise the course material produced by the University is receiving from all concerned though in some areas it needs to be updated. Above all, the seminal achievement of the University consists in inculcating awareness of the philosophy and methodology of Distance Education and Open Learning and in generating acceptance of the system among the public at large. Yet, the very process of the university's expansion now warrants a close scrutiny of its nature, scope and direction, a review of the adequacy of the structures and processes and of an assessment of the extent to which the University fulfilled the mandate given to it.

As we enter the new millennium, the prospect of the University reaching its high level of excellence, and making its presence globally felt itself in education through open learning mode are exceptionally bright. It is in this context that - this committee's task becomes challenging.

There is, therefore, a welcome continuity in the tasks of the two committees. While the first assessed the take-off of the University, the second is to assess the performance in the past and the future prospects. We are also gratified to note the presence of Prof. M.V. Pylee in both the committees as it accrues this committee the benefit of reflections and insights of a person who sat on the earlier committee too.

APPROACH TO THE REPORT

Prima facie, the terms of reference of the committee might seem to indicate too broad a mandate. The words "to make an assessment of the performance of the University since its inception", as occurring in the first term of

reference, might imply a comprehensive evaluation of all facets of the Universities structures and functions. But the committee is of the opinion that a micro-level performance evaluation is not what is envisaged, as that is neither feasible within the nature of our task nor necessary for the overall assessment of the University's performance. It is the macro level evaluation of the University's aims and objects, as are mentioned in the fourth term of reference, that should primarily concern the committee:

The committee's approach would be to look at the University's performance from the point of view of the extent to which its structures, functions, programmes and operations are able to cope with the challenging task of achieving the fundamental objects of the University. Hence it is appropriate to quote in full the primary objects as are mentioned in the IGNOU Act of 1985:-

"The objects of the University shall be to advance and disseminate learning and knowledge by a diversity of means, including the use of any communication technology, to provide opportunities for higher education to a larger segment of the population and to promote the educational well being of the community generally, to encourage the Open university and distance education systems in the educational pattern of the country and to coordinate and determine the standards in such systems, and the University shall, in organising its activities, have due regard to the objects specified in the First Schedule". (This is appended to our report (Annexure-II).

Given this, the committee feels that in formulating its report it is not necessary to address specifically to each of the terms of reference in seriatim. Instead, our efforts will be to highlight the philosophy of Open Learning and Distance Education and in that context refer to the Mission and Mandate of the University as reflected in the objects of the University and then to proceed to

describe and analyse the functions now being undertaken in the context of the diverse structures and processes that are put in place for the performance of the said functions. To gain insight into the activities and functioning of the IGNOU's Regional Centres all over the country, the committee members, divided in groups, visited many of these Centres and had meetings and discussion with the staff there, and students from the Study Centres (Please see Annexure-X).

At the same time, the task given to the University as the Apex Agency of promoting distance education in the country and maintaining standards of the distance education system will receive special attention in our report. This will be followed by the recommendations we propose to make with regard to the diverse areas mentioned. Here again, our main aim would be to focus on how best the University could discharge its mandate and mission. Further, the committee will make such relevant suggestions where it is felt necessary to redefine the University's mandate and mission in view of contemporary developments in the changing scope and extent of open learning, the needs of the society and the challenges and opportunities offered by new technologies.

CHAPTER – II

PHILOSOPHY OF OPEN UNIVERSITY AND DISTANCE EDUCATION.

Distance Education and Open Learning are developments arising out of significant conceptual or philosophical changes that are manifested prominently during this century. It is not possible to discuss in detail the philosophical underpinnings of open learning in the context of this report. Suffice it to say that as changes in social philosophy and also in educational philosophy count for the salience that open learning has come to attain in contemporary society. These two, changes in social and educational philosophies, have been mutually reinforcing radical social philosophy and hence has put a premium on democratization of education, as now conceptualised under the terms like "Education for All." This trend itself is a component of the general and overarching process of the democratisation idea. As is well known, this idea has now become the legacy for both developed and developing societies. Access to education information, awareness and participation has become the true test for social development and for the realisation of the values of equality and human dignity.

The Right to Education as an aspect of the democratization process becomes a challenge to states and societies through out the world. To the developing societies, emerging from foreign rule, it was not only a challenge but an opportunity to vindicate their claims to become real democratic societies. But this is only one aspect of the impact of modern social philosophy on education. Apart from being the foundation for participatory democracy, the inauguration of the era of Universal Human Rights (UHR) demands even a more enduring

foundation for educational access. The projection into prominence of the various segments of the neglected parts of society.

Educational philosophy:

Significant changes in educational philosophy also took place which afforded the necessary ideological credibility to open learning as a viable and sustainable pedagogical system. Changes in pedagogical thinking could be regarded as both the cause and consequence of the acceptability of open learning. Conventional pedagogies associated with face-to-face education are no longer felt to be necessary to cater to the contemporary educational needs. Further, the shift of emphasis from teacher-based education to learner-based education proved to be both a cause and consequence of the new requirements of educational access. Thus came about a new paradigm of education, under which conventional criteria like possession of prior formal educational qualifications, of what is to be regarded as 'educable', and of how educational instructions could be delivered, are under challenge. The new paradigm asserts that with proper motivation an individual can acquire qualifications without having gone through a formalised instruction pattern, that self learning methodologies with catalytic support from appropriate instructional system could be ensured and that, in general, education from a distance is viable and feasible. Technological innovations have buttressed this new optimistic pedagogical revolution. In short, the new concept of learning could be summarized as bringing about new ideas and processes in the Mode of Learning, Mode of Teaching, the subject matter of Learning and the Nature and Extent of Learning Community.

Orientation of education towards the socio-economic development of the society as well as towards conferring functional and employable capabilities of individuals - has come to be the reigning paradigm. Given this trend, old orthodoxies of educational philosophy gave way to new thinking. Especially in

the context of developing countries, the sheer inadequacy of education infrastructure, as conventionally understood, to cater to the ever-increasing claimants to education is posing the challenge. And into this policy dialogue entered the technological dimension by which the problem of instructional access could be met. This technological aid soon turned out to be veritable cornucopia for instructor-learner interaction and indeed even for their virtual interface. We have evidence of this education – technology integration in the open learning system in the shape of universities of the Air, T.V. based learning computer-T.V. integrated network systems and so on.

Growth of Open Learning

By now, Open Learning and Distance Education (Though certain differences between the two concepts exist; for the purpose of this report, we would like to regard the two as synonymous) have registered exponential growth both in terms of generational growth and pedagogical credibility. Beginning as the poor-cousin of the conventional face-to-face education system, it gained increasing acceptance in the later decades of this century. The system of extra-mural courses offered during out side working hours, but still within the portals of educational institutions, were soon superseded by the correspondence course system. Here we witnessed, for the first time, the innovation of educational opportunity made available out-side the physical boundaries of a school or college. Then came the even more radical innovation, marking what has come to be styled as the new paradigm in educational endeavour, namely, the Open Learning System. And within this paradigm emerged further advances giving full scope for the word, 'Open'.

Open access implied open eligibility for all those seeking opportunity. This in turn, got broadened to mean non-insistence on prior qualifications. This is also regarded as the 'challenge' system, under which the aspirant is given the opportunity to 'challenge' the requirements of the qualifications of a course of

study by venturing to stand up to the challenge with his or her own acquired academic resources. The word 'Open' has another implication too: that of throwing open of the spatial dimension. Not merely have been the boundary walls of institutions dismantled, even the wider geographical distances between the teacher and the learner are now sought to be bridged by airwave, and even by cyber-waves. This, of course, is made possible by the revolution in communication technologies affording an ever growing package of educational technology, Creating an interface for instructor – learner interaction. As earlier stated, the University of the Air, TV-based learning, computer – TV integrated network systems and similar educational devices are now realities illustrating the progress of Open Learning.

While recognising the new horizons opened up by the advance of technology, we must not lose sight of the ground realities of a developing country like India, in which frontline technology often provides opportunities for the affluent to acquire economic and social clout, thus further widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Technology which helps the open learning system to reach the unreached, like radio broadcasting and telecasting, should form the base of the system, while efforts are made to socialize the access to newer technologies in the educational domain.

Not that the sophisticated models which mobilised the newest versions of educational technology are in place every where. These are trends that not only indicate what is merely possible but what is also within the reach of technologically less advanced social systems. Given the context of the developing world, the progress of distance education has now reached the stage of the Open University stage. Its steady evolution from the generation of correspondence courses model to the generation of a full-fledged Open University model is in itself a phenomenal development occurring within a time span of just over quarter of a century. Moreover, these generations of models

co-exist, as can be seen in almost all the developing countries and, in particular, India. The correspondence system prevails in a large number of Universities along with the conventional face-to-face models. This, constitutes the dual-mode variety. The full fledged open-university model which incorporates a wider criteria of open learning system, is present in the shape of eight open universities, with IGNOU forming the apex of the system. Others of this type are being established in different states in the country.

Establishment of IGNOU:

The Open Universities, as already mentioned, are established with the Objective of initiating a more comprehensive system of open learning than that was provided by the earlier generation of correspondence system. The first Open University in India was started in Andhra Pradesh with the establishment of the AP Open University in 1983. At the national level, the proposal to start an open university on the lines of the British Open University was initiated even as early as seventies. But it was not till 1985 that the proposal was revived by the Central Government. Prof. G. Ram Reddy, the founder of the APOU was asked to submit the feasibility report for the National Open University. After the submission of his report, Parliament enacted the IGNOU Act in September 1985. IGNOU not only emerged as the national level open university but also is conceived as the reigning model incorporating many more elements of the open learning system than was done so far. Its national level status and its resources and aspirations offered the new University a pre-eminent challenge and opportunity to lead the distance education and open learning system in India.

MISSION & MANDATE:

It may be noted that in the Act there is no specific mention as such of a mission or a mandate to the University. Presumably, the norms of legal phraseology did not necessitate the use of a terminology normally associated

with business corporations. Still, it may be advisable to articulate a comprehensive mission statement in tune with our times. The committee will endeavour to suggest one while making its recommendations.

The manner in which the objectives provision reflect its status as an Open University would enable us to infer the Mission & Mandate. While the objectives provision is already mentioned, it bears some repetition in this context also.

Section (1) of the Act read together with 'the objectives of the University', as further elaborated in the First Schedule of the Act, highlight the following aims and objects:-

"To advance learning by diversity of means, to mobilize communication technology, to encourage the Open University and distance education systems in the educational pattern of the country and to co-ordinate and determine the standards in such systems. Elaboration of the above aims and objects in the First Schedule provides further the following: (a) standardizing and diversifying degree, certificate and diploma course related to the means of employment and necessary for growth of the economy of the country., (b) providing access to higher education for larger segments of the population, and in particular, the disadvantaged groups such as those living in remote and rural areas including working people, housewives and other adults who wish to upgrade or require knowledge to study in various fields which offer opportunities for educational upgradation of knowledge, training and skills; (c) providing an innovative system of University level education, flexible and open methods and pace of learning, combination of courses, eligibility for enrolment, age of entry, kind of its joins, (d) Improvement of the educational system by providing a non-formal - channel, complementary to the formal system and encouraging transfer of technology. (e) providing educational training in the various parts and segments of the country, including training of

teachers required for such activities as to provide counselling and guidance to the students; (f) fulfilling the above objects by diversity of means of distance and continuing education interaction with existing universities and institutions of higher learning making full use of the latest scientific models and new educational technologies." -

The above statement very clearly reflects the special and distinguishing features of distance education that we referred to earlier, as also the radical social philosophy considerations that further provided the impetus to open learning. In short, the aims and objects give the university a very wide mandate and mission. They envisage a full-fledged system needed for the open learning mode, going far beyond the correspondence system. The Act provides for the structures, and functions of the University along with other routine requirements that an educational organisation is not normally provided with. It is not necessary to detail those provisions in the course of this report. The aims and objects of the institution are the criteria to assess its performance. Therefore, it is felt necessary to reproduce the objects, though in paraphrase, in the report. In the course of evaluation and performance, we will have occasion to refer to the structures, functions, processes and other instructional arrangements to evaluate the extent to which these could cope with in the university's quest to achieve its objects. It is well to paraphrase in general terms the objects in the following manner to bring its special features:-

1. The University's mission is to function as an open learning institution for higher education; and provide the various components of students support services; integration of educational technology in the structure of pattern of course development; academic programmes and courses catering not only to the conventional spread of courses but also to the promotion of continuous education, functional programmes and other such

innovations conducive to the needs of different sections of society and for economic and social development of the country as a whole.

2. Pay special attention to the educational needs of the disadvantaged groups such as those living in tribal and rural areas, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, OBC sections, women & girls, the disabled and the large section of adult illiterate population spread throughout the country in general.
3. Develop innovative educational and training programmes in particular for the up-gradation of skills of various sections of the workforce in the society as a whole.
4. To promote distance education system of the country and to function as its apex body to maintain high academic standards within that system.

The mandate thus provides some clear priorities :-

It is relevant here to discuss the relative significance of the objects as laid down in the Act because that has a bearing on the priorities that the university have accorded in its programmes and operations. The object of providing wider access to higher education to the people at large and to the disadvantaged segments in particular, would mean that the university should give priority to its role as an alternative to conventional type of education. In other words, it should serve as provider of 'second chance' to those who missed out their education at their early stages. Such a priority in object would also help the state in providing quantitatively greater access without having to resort to expansion of the conventional infrastructure for higher education. Thus understood, the Open University would be essentially a cost-effective device for state and society. But then, an Open University cannot altogether escape the function of offering conventional programmes through the 'unconventional' distance mode.

On the other hand, if the objective of an open university is not primarily to replicate the conventional programmes but cater to far wider sections of the catchment area of education, then the emphasis would be on gradual withdrawal from offering conventional courses, with focus on programmes relating to non formal, continuous and functional education. The thinking in open learning circles is that the entire range of human resource development, not necessarily connected with conventional pedagogical concerns, should be the primary concern of an open university. The phenomenon of the so-called globalisation through privatisation calls for open learning systems addressing the sectors like employment generation, diversification of skills and capabilities and human resources development – all traditionally neglected priorities.

Thus, there seems to be a certain amount of conflict in priorities that has to be resolved in the programmes of the Open University.

A similar conflict in priorities could also be discerned between the emphasis on mobilisation and adoption of sophisticated educational technology on the one hand and the emphasis on catering to the disadvantaged regions and segments of population on the other. The former puts a premium on elite-oriented programmes the latter puts priority to providing access to the less endowed regions and less-privileged peoples. This aspect of the problem, in its turn, has a bearing on investment priorities also.

Apparently there would seem to be a structural contradiction within the open learning philosophy. At one level, the 'democratisation' urge puts a premium on committing the open learning initiatives to serve formal educational goals like catering to undergraduate and postgraduate degree opportunities. At another level, open learning is conceived in terms of serving non-formal and unconventional areas of education. State policies on distance education are

normally predicated on the former rationale and funding is apportioned more towards formal courses and not much of attention is bestowed on serving the vast HRD needs both of the public and private sectors.

It will be seen from the subsequent chapters that the Committee is keen on emphasising on deliberate though discreet shift in what distance education institutions should concentrate on in their endeavours. One way or another, it is to be hoped that some withdrawal from degree-oriented programmes and entry into those of continuing education, non-formal vocational training, especially conducive to the economic and social upliftment of disadvantaged habitats and peoples would occur.

Gratifyingly enough, we do see positive developments here. For even within the span of three decades of the open university experience, new thrusts and priorities are getting recognised. Governments are now ready to exploit the tremendous scope distance education affords to reach the millions of people and, more importantly, their varied needs for education. This readiness on the part of the state and the parallel development of the non-governmental sector's recognition of the training needs of its functionaries (thanks to the compulsions of contemporary technologies pace of obsolescence), necessitate distance education to gear itself up to new challenges and opportunities.

Another contradiction in the forms of open learning lies in the challenge of its choices. Should it accord priority to mostly urban-based and elite-preferred programmes or give preference to programmes that are relevant to the needs of the disadvantaged peoples and areas. The latter type of programmes, by nature are not cost effective in strictly budgetary terms. The problem posed by the dichotomy can be best illustrated by the phenomenon of programmes like Management and Computer Application that are money-spinners even as they acquire the prestige of mobilising new technologies. In sharp contrast are the

educational and training programmes targetted to rural localities which are both less flashy and less profit-yielding. Obviously, any worthwhile open learning agenda will have to find a balance between the two polarities in priorities. The Committee has occasion to focus on this point in discussing the scope and nature of the academic programme that university has taken up and its future agenda. In this context, frequent criticism from Media that disadvantaged Sections are neglected, are voiced. While these criticism are well taken and be seriously responded to, the solution does not lie in merely jettisoning the elite courses, for they would as much be needed for the empowerment of disadvantaged groups if properly accessed to these programmes.

Yet another area of interest for theoretical analysis of the open learning paradigm is the nature and scope of the role of the faculty. Open learning institutions tend to reinforce the rigid distance between the faculty and other levels like administration and teaching. For example, the functions of the student support services which belong to the overlapping space between purely academic and non-academic staff, are to be regarded as belonging as much to the so called academic as to the non-academic category. In other words, the open learning system dismantles the walls that enclose narrow functional categories in conventional universities. Thus the category 'faculty' will have to be conceived in the rather inclusivist connotation in an open university.

Before we close this chapter we would, like to reflect on the ultimate nature of even an Open University's instructional endeavour. The normal reaction to an Open University is to conceive it in terms of expanding the scope for education of an instrumental nature, especially concentrating on functional, vocational, continuous and further education needs. In view of the development needs of the country such an understanding is, of course, very appropriate. But it is possible that, in a broader context, such a conception is both limiting and limited. There is the famous aphorism that 'education' is for life and not to earn a

living. Such an extreme conception of the 'wisdom' aspects of education may now be out of place where 'information' has gained priority over 'wisdom'. Conferment of competencies, 'skills' are but one side of 'empowerment' and similarly meeting the 'market' demands is but one segment of endeavour. Nurturing character and nourishing 'fine' urges and instincts of the human being cannot be entirely left out. Therefore we strongly feel that the Open university could take up some programmes aimed at the ennobling and the intellectually and aesthetically uplifting aspects of the human condition. The opening of 'Gyan Bharati' and 'Gyan Vani' facilities create a welcome opportunity for mounting such programmes of instruction.

CHAPTER – 3 (FUNCTIONAL AREAS)

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Before focussing on the important functional areas of IGNOU's operation so as to assess the performance of the institution with reference to its goals and objects as laid down in its Statutes, its organisational structure (Fig. 3.1) is given below only to be acquainted with the overall institutional frame work. It is not our intention to go into the details of the institutional arrangements but only to understand better the operations and the extent to which structures afford the ballast and support for optimal performance of the functions. Such of the changes in structures as are needed for better performance will figure in the recommendations chapter.

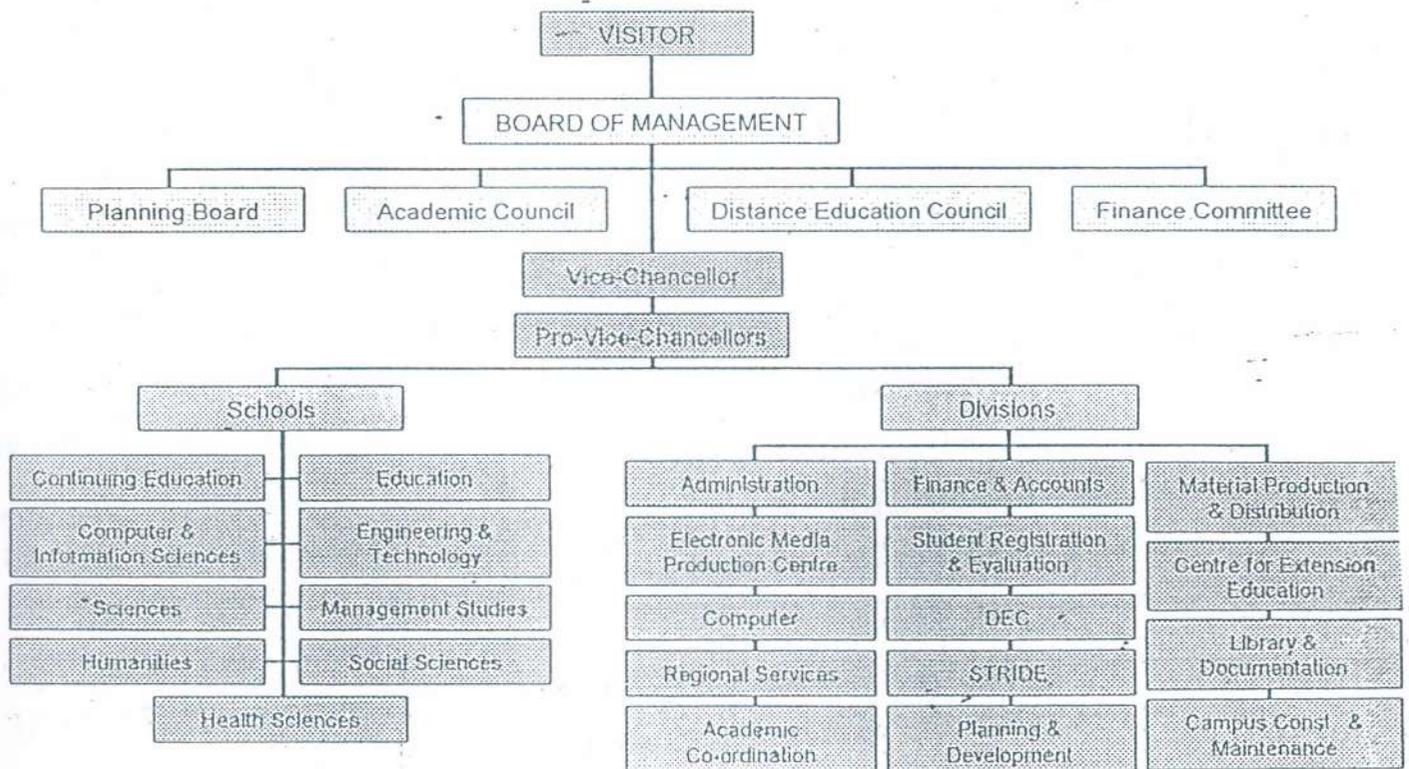


Figure-3.1: Organisational Structure* of IGNOU

*Source IGNOU – A Profile - 1999

We will now examine the functions that the University undertakes, relating them to the appropriate structures that are in place. For the purpose of the Report, we classify the functions under the following heads:

1. Academic Programme Development
2. Student Support Services (RSD, SR&E & MPDD)
3. Training, with Special Reference to 'STRIDE'
4. Communication Technologies (EMPC)
5. Library
6. Administration
7. Planning & Academic Coordination
8. Finance

1. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

While Academic Programme Development ordinarily is the primary domain of the university's full time faculty (with varied involvement of the externally inducted part-time academics), the administration of the academic programmes is the preserve of the student support services located mostly away from the headquarters. Yet this binary distinction between the faculty located at the headquarters and the so-called other academic staff located in the field, ought not to be rigidly differentiated. For there are circumstances when the crossing of the turf vis-à-vis the two categories will be necessary. On the one hand, the staff designated as ARDs and as other academic staff, need to be involved in academic development which is the defacto preserve of the faculty at the headquarters. The former's claim to be involved in academic programme development is legitimate.

Similarly, the faculty needs to be involved in the implementation and administration of the academic programme instruction. The feedback from the

RCs and SCs on the quality of academic programmes is crucial for the mandated revision of course materials. Further, sustained interface between the programme developers and the programme administrators, including the counsellors at the SC is equally desirable to ensure that the faculty is in constant know of the instruction delivery at the study centres. At the present, this interface is practically absent and the Committee is of the opinion that the involvement of the faculty in monitoring the counselling sub-system should be ensured by the university.

A related aspect of the issue is that under certain circumstances the faculty is directly involved even in the process of administering of the programme at the study centres. As distinct from course material development, some of the concerned faculty come to perform the admission function and that of supervising the counselling function. This seems a convenient device in the case of specialised programmes with modest student enrolment.

The spotting of the counsellors with the specialised expertise in such case would need the initiation of the faculty rather than those at the Regional Centres. This pattern, no doubt, is at variance with the normal pattern of a decentralised system under which programme development and programme administering are kept distinct. Still, it may become necessary in some categories of programmes, particularly in the case of academic programmes of an area specific or community-specific nature, the development of which would involve intense interaction between the demanding beneficiaries in the field and the responding faculty; the role of the latter would become necessary even in the process of administering the programme. Thus while the theme of decentralisation would continue to be basic creative departure, it would become inevitable under certain conditions.

However, whatever be the relative involvement of the RCs and the faculty personnel, the constant interaction between the ARD and counsellors on the one side, and the faculty on the other should be ensured. Presently, there is a feeling on both sides that not enough opportunities are provided to facilitate such interaction. We have occasion to mention this elsewhere also in the report. We recommend a structured pattern of periodic exchanges between the RCs and faculty personnel. The former could give feed back on how the students are responding to the programme contents and the counsellors could share their experience with the faculty. The latter would be in a position to assess the receptivity of the programmes, the capabilities of counsellors available and the problems RCs face in administering the programmes. In terms of feedback for course revision, new programme initiatives, and sustained communications between the Centres and the headquarters, such constant communications between the Centres and the headquarters, such exchanges are indeed very essential.

Another point relevant in this connection relates to the possibility that, in some types of academic programmes, the course material development work may even get marginalised. For example, in programmes like Computer Applications and related areas, actual writing of materials, unit by unit, block by block, may not be the pattern. Sometimes, even large scale adoption of materials available elsewhere may become the standard pattern of Academic Development programme. The faculty's role may then again relate to part-development, part-adoption, and part-counselling in the 'field'.

Academic Programme Development constitutes one of the major functions which in itself encompasses a host of sub-functions. Indeed, the Open University's academic functions can be said to be the brain of the University responsible for activating the other functions. As a matter of fact, the other functions can be regarded as the feeders to this major activity.

Though the heading 'Academic Programme Development' may be construed as relating only to the process of programme development, in our context, it stands for much more. While the process of programme development and its various stages are crucial for our purpose, the nature of the academic programmes that are developed, as well as how they are conceived and adopted, would also be a significant aspect of our concern. This, in its turn, will include the community called the Faculty that is responsible for the development process. Before proceeding to examine the two aspects, it may be appropriate here to identify the main structures that are associated with this function. They are the academic staff in the various departments, schools and centres; the academic staff functioning in the Regional Study Centres, the staff in the EMPC and last but not the least important, the part-time faculty employed as Course Writers and Editors, the large body of Counsellors drawn from the other institutions of higher education and such other categories. Some of these may not actually belong formally to the category of the 'Academic Staff' or 'Other Academic Staff' as technically designated. In our view, all those that are associated with course development from conception to development to delivery of the courses (delivery in the sense of Counselling and Guidance can be regarded as a part of the process in this context), are to be included under this category.

By its very nature an Open University cannot be expected to replicate the type of faculty structure that exists in the conventional Universities. Both the economics of Open Learning and the requirement of Open Learning call for a departure from the pattern of faculty prevailing in conventional Universities. This is the reason why Open University Faculties are more or less skeletal in nature. Of course, there can be no standardization in terms of Faculty strength in Schools and Centres, and one can debate the required number and strength.

But the overall point is that the faculty pattern will be different in an Open University context.

It should be remembered that the Open University Faculty is drawn from a wide catchment area against which the full-time faculty may seem minuscule. Integral to this is the part-time faculty drawn for course development and instructional interaction in the varied contexts of the multiple media instruction given to the students by the University. In other words, the faculty of the Open University would rightly be regarded as an open ended faculty structure.

It would also be worthwhile for the Open learning System to promote new inter-disciplinary programmes like that in Bio-Physics, Biotechnology, Genetic engineering, Medical-instrumentation etc.

We will now return to two major aspects relating to Academic Programme Development we listed above. Under that:

- i) **The Process of Programme Development:** The process of programme development is an over-arching process including the conception of a programme/course, formal decision-making regarding the adoption, the process of developing the course, i.e. constitution of course streams, apportioning of unit/block, editing of the material, and so on. Integral to this process is the multiple-media package that the programme is visualized to be. The process of programme development thus involves constant interaction between the schools/faculty and those connected with the audio-video development teams.

In IGNOU, this process is well established and is functioning well, the interaction between the Academic Faculty (strictly so called) and the allied team being constant and purposeful. We have had long discussions with

the people concerned with the continuum of course-development and are satisfied that the needed team spirit cooperation does exist between the Academic Staff and the other course input sections of the University. However, we are of the opinion that there is considerable scope for further improvement in the process.

- (a) As long as most of the programmes relate to the conventional pattern of courses, the primary input in course development will have to come from the Academic Faculty. If the main contribution is in the shape of print material, the role of audio/video inputs is bound to be secondary. Yet communication technology and its increasing role in education should caution us against relegating the role of the audio/video programmes to that of a secondary partner. Certain types of programmes would require that the audio-video programme development occupy the driver's seat and the print material development follow that lead. This would be the case in programmes designed for social awareness, skill development programmes, non-conventional education and the like. While it may not be possible for us to give precise and specific illustration in this regard, suffice it to state that the equation between development of print material and audio-video packages cannot always be a static one. This should be noted in the process of Academic Programme Development. On this issue, we will have more to say in our section relating to Communication Technology.

- (b) From the discussions with the Faculty –those who are located in the Schools/Centres/Departments and those who are now working in Regional Centres – we found that in Academic Programme Development very little scope is given to the latter category. In principle it was acknowledged by the University Faculty that those

in the Regional Centres should be associated with course development (i.e. as team members and writers), but the practice, again acknowledgedly so, is at variance. In our view, the practice should accord with the principle and more than a token association of the Faculty in the Regional Centre should be ensured in the future.

As it is, the Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) in the Regional Centres, and Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) and Deputy Regional Directors (DRDs) in the Regional Services Division (RSD), that their work has become almost entirely administrative in nature. Of course this complaint cannot be accepted in toto. Given the very nature of Regional Services function, the use of the ARDs and DRDs, even though recruited on the criteria of Faculty qualifications, could not but be multi-faceted. On this ground a strict differentiation between Academic and Administrative is neither feasible nor desirable. At the same time, the Academic interests of this section of the Faculty ought not to be neglected. The Committee strongly feels that they should also be given opportunities to participate in Academic Programme Development.

Another unique feature of programme development relates to the instructional style in distance education. It is by now well known that the 'self-instructional style' is the style associated with open learning. As an instructional paradigm identified with learner - based instruction, the importance of this needs no elaboration. IGNOU course materials have from the start been taking care of this aspect of Academic Programme Development. We also note that constant training inputs are being made available to course-writers in this regard. This is yet another reason for IGNOU's

course material being regarded as fine quality material. Lest the incorporation of the self-instructional design be confined to print material only, the Committee wants to lay stress on the point that audio-video development also can pay attention to the adaptation of this mode. The tendency to merely present audio-video material in the conventional narrative style should be avoided. In audio video programmes, an appropriate pattern for arising the curiosity levels of the listeners and viewers should be adopted. We are confident that the communication technology personnel are cognisant of this problem and would respond adequately.

One more point needs to be stressed in this connection. Much of the self-instructional material in Open Education is based on the print medium, and it is going to be so in the near future in most segments of the system. The audio-visual element is often an add-on, at most a stimulating pointer to the more substantial print material. But we have to envisage courses which integrally use multiple media, even courses which are primarily based on audio-visual material, with the print medium playing a subsidiary role. This also opens up the possibility of academic personnel and technical experts interchanging roles, a Course Coordinator working as a Producer, and a Producer trying his/her hand at designing academic courses.

- (c) Frequent evaluation and upgradation of the course material is another vital task of the academic community. In fact, it is commonly thought that, in the Open University much of the time of the full-time faculty is spent on either developing new courses or revising old courses. Here again the tendency to trifle with the latter task needs to be guarded against.

The usual interval for revision of courses is set at five years. Our enquiries revealed that in many cases course revision lags behind this accepted model. The plea advanced by the Faculty is that their involvement with new programme development leaves no time to bestow on timely revision of old material. The Committee can only recommend that a suitable machinery for evaluation, review and revision of academic programmes needs to be put in place. Probably, full-time and part-time faculty members could be entrusted with the revision work in alternate periods, so that equal participatory opportunities are given for new course development and old course revision. In this context, we would also like to refer to the problem of termination of some programmes wherever it is quite necessary. Some of the existing programmes may have outlived their time, partly because they are no longer relevant, and partly because the student-intake for these programmes has fallen to unviable levels (see Annexure-III). We agree with the view that the latter factor need not always be the sole criterion for off-loading such programmes. What we want to suggest is that attention be paid to this aspect of Academic Programme Management.

- B. **Team work in Academic Programme Development :** Course material development in Distance education is distinctly different from the normal pattern of developing text book material or any study material for the conventional stream. It is a well-recognised fact that given the span of programme/course coverage, the expertise required and the time-constraint, collaborative work is essential. In addition to this factor, the imperatives of multiple media instruction demand a premium on team work among the course – writers and the technology personnel/educational communication.

IGNOU, to its credit, has systematized the team work mechanism. In print material development, it involves a very large number of outside academics and this is as it should be. The full-time Faculty, while encouraged to undertake some course-writing tasks, attends in the major part to facilitating and monitoring functions. The Committee wonders whether full-time Faculty should not play a more direct role in course material writing.

Situations also arise when the development of a programme has to be entrusted or commissioned to a team entirely outside the University's own Faculty. Such situations will become frequent if specialized academic packages are to be developed, especially in new areas where the University's own expertise is lacking. We visualize instances of that type becoming frequent in the near future. Programmes designed for underdeveloped segments of the population and specific functional programmes developed in collaboration with NGOs or any other institution who cater to such segments of the people will fall into this category. Various programmes such as (i) B. Sc. (Nursing) (ii) P.G. Diploma in Rural Development (iii) Diploma in Nutrition and health Education (iv) Certificate in Nutrition and Child Care (v) Certificate of Competency for Workers in Construction Industry (vi) Certificate in Participatory Forest Management (vii) Certificate in Disaster Management (viii) Geriatric Medicine (ix) Human Rights etc. – some of which are already developed and launched or are being developed – may have required or would require out-sourcing for programme development.

In programme development the committee came across instances of programmes initiated by project-funding coming from outside. If such project-funding is meant as research funding awarded to an individual Faculty member - the output being a research project report - we see no difficulty in the concerned Faculty member going ahead with the work, subject, of-course, to the procedures laid down by the University. But where the project involves preparing an academic programme to be offered by the University, then the programme should go through the University bodies like the departmental committee, the school board and other concerned bodies before finalization. Programme development and material development in such cases should involve, in the normal run of things, course teams properly accredited to do the job.

Coming to the time factor of programme development from conception to launching phase, the committee is aware of inordinate delays. We realise that this is a common feature in all Open Universities. Yet we cannot but lay stress on the point that, as far as possible, these be eliminated. Outsourcing is, no doubt, one of the causes for these delays. Mechanisms should be devised to obviate this hurdle. Stricter monitoring of the deadlines for the writers, providing for alternative writer options from the start, are some solutions. Stricter monitoring would require Faculty members accepting individual responsibility for ensuring that outside course-writers do oblige in keeping to the time limits. Resorting to the workshop method where outlines of units and blocks are allotted to outsiders and, if necessary, getting them down to the Faculty premises to complete the assignment is also possible. The Committee is aware that some of these methods are already being adopted, but a more frequent use of this seems inevitable.

It is essential that the course teams, including those developing the corresponding audio-video packages, regard themselves as members of the Faculty to bring in the necessary spirit of a community or a committee of resource-persons to the development of programmes.

Nature of the Academic Programmes

The growth in number of courses in IGNOU is shown in Fig.3.2 and Qualitatively the progress seems to be satisfactory.

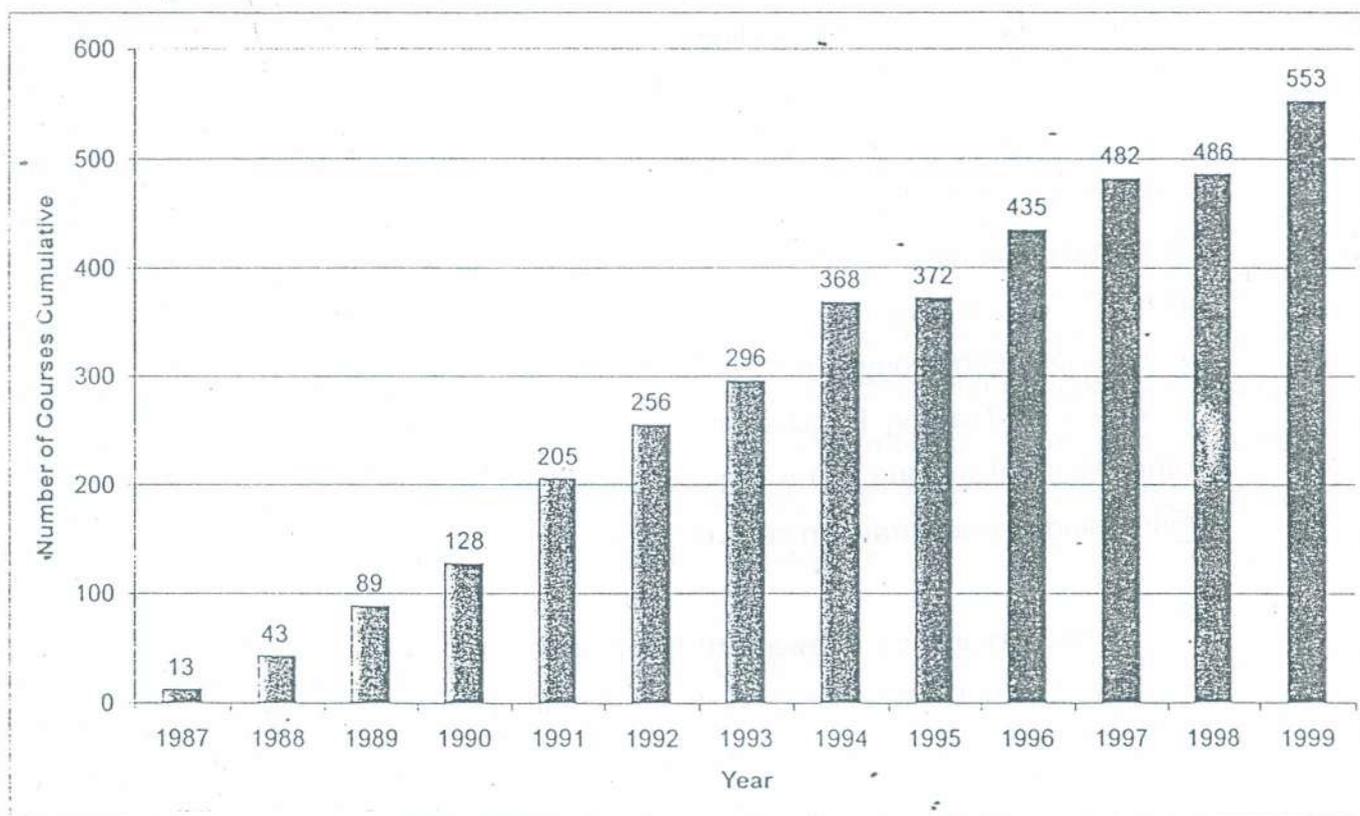


Figure 3.2 Growth in the number of courses

—What should be the nature of academic programmes that an Open University should offer is a moot question. *Prima facie*, that an Open University replicates conventional academic programmes is a largely accepted feature. But apart from such programmes, and indeed in contrast to such programmes, the *raison d'être* of an Open University in the contemporary context is to offer specialised programmes, even unconventional ones, targeted to special segments of the people and not necessarily meant for the award of diplomas or degrees. Indeed, the entire range of human resource development ought to be the catchment area for an Open University system. We have earlier referred to the point that the new educational philosophy of Open Learning has introduced new areas of educable knowledge which conventional educational institutions were not accustomed to providing.

It is here that IGNOU needs to deliberate and take a conscious decision. We are aware that IGNOU has chosen to tread the latter path while not departing from providing for the conventional educational menu like offering programmes in B.A., B.Com., B.Sc., and other post graduate degrees, etc. But its programmes in Leather Technology, Construction Industry, Water Resources Engg. and the Modules on Training Panchayati Raj Functionaries are good examples of the other kinds of training. The Committee would strongly urge that the University increasingly concentrate on such programmes in the future.

The Committee is aware of the hiatus between governmental policies in creating Open Universities and the rationale that distance education theory suggests. State policies repeatedly refer to Open Universities as economically viable alternatives to conventional educational programmes. The enormous cost involved in establishing new brick-and-mortar institutions is a well-known factor. Given this, state policy gets couched in the type of terminology we mentioned and the demands of democratization in educational opportunity also buttress this argument. But, on the other hand, distance education should be regarded not

merely as an inexpensive device to supplement conventional education but also as an opportunity to go beyond the boundaries of the traditional educational agenda.

As already mentioned, the new areas would be the expansion & upgradation of skills and competencies in rural economy & Agriculture, Commercial and Management (Public & Private Sectors), addressing the real concerns of job-oriented education and offering awareness programmes to the various sections of society which are not educable in a formal way. Even more important than this is the challenge of catering to the development needs of socially and geographically less endowed regions and under-privileged people.

The Committee is not suggesting a strict parting of ways between the conventional programmes and the new sets of programmes relevant to the concerns of an Open University. It only seeks to draw attention to the new demands on education in our report.

IGNOU as a national educational asset can consciously opt to accord major priority to the so called unconventional educational programmes referred to rather repeatedly in our Report. The need to replicate conventional courses could be attended to by the state universities, while IGNOU can take the role, not exclusively, of the facilitator for the new programmes.

The nature of academic programmes to cater to the segments of communities and regions we have been referring to, could not at this juncture be precisely defined, though we propose to do so in our Recommendations. It will be sufficient in the present context to mention an important criterion to locate the sources for such programmes. The demands for educational programmes coming from diverse groups are the best possible source for the design of programmes. In other words, programmes of that type are distinct from

programmes designed and delivered at present, and which are primarily supply-driven. Perhaps this division is concerned with the distinction between conventional modes of delivery which are teacher-oriented and the open learning which is learner-oriented. The division tallies with the dichotomy we make between teacher-oriented learning and learner-oriented learning. Thus correspondingly, conventional courses are more in the nature of being supply-oriented.

The designing and development of such programmes would obviously require an intensely inter-disciplinary frame-work of mind and methodology. Of course, we are aware that this is not a matter of individuals with talent and skill, but group-work that facilitates such inter-disciplinary outlook. We also need specialized expertise not necessarily academic in training. This may come from field workers, NGOs and community-leaders emerging from the communities and regions. Here there may be a need for an inter-disciplinary unit in the academic structures of IGNOU with provision of co-opting members of the categories mentioned as and when specific courses are designed and developed after getting the feedback from the would be beneficiaries. At present our reading of the situation is that the Centre for Extension Studies is incharge of such programmes, though not exclusively so. One way would be to develop the Extension Centre as a nodal unit to identify, design and develop such programmes. A more radical way is to create a more comprehensive unit for this purpose.

Another point that needs to be made in this context relates to the designing of even conventional courses. It would be advisable to take the modular approach, providing for options to combine modules from different disciplinary areas. This Committee is aware that for conventional programmes offering a certain minimum programme requirements is needed for the purpose of the accreditation for jobs. But these constraints, it should be remembered,

pertain to formal university requirements rather than to the job markets or professions. Indeed, choice of courses may help students in the job market. Take for example our Engineering and Medical academic programmes. Here, a common complaint is about the obvious lag between the university training and the requirements of the field or the hospital premises. In many cases an intensely specialized module with practical options may benefit the candidate in his/her search for a job. The modular system at the lower level would help the students to familiarize themselves with aspects of knowledge at higher levels; thus enabling them to acquire specialisation in a job-oriented field.

Further, the areas of Cultural Studies, Information Technology, Communications, and new entrants into the University curricula are sustainable only when they provide for wide flexibility in course-offering and wide familiarity with inter disciplinary problems. Already the concept of open education leading to Independent Studies (not to be confused with Open Learning leading to independent study by students) is gaining recognition the world over. This is based on the modular concept of the academic programmes offering.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMES :

Education in Legal Rights :

One of the identifiable though still rather largely uncovered sector of the university's academic programmatic intervention is 'legal education'. And such intervention is necessary not for its academic interest or for the edification of the community. Legal education, especially education in legal rights, supplies the pillars to the development process of the disadvantaged groups. From women to all the other deprived groups, awareness of their rights and the remedies to right the wrongs, is locally lacking. The larger Civil Society which helps to articulate the demands of these groups needs the inputs from academic and professional agencies both in terms of materials and instruction outlets. Unless parallel efforts

are made in educating and training the disadvantaged groups and communities in programmes aimed at development and also in educating them in their rights, the efforts would remain half performed. If education and training of these sections are the functions that help the process as direct nourishment of development, legal rights education would tantamount to the process of nurturing these groups' capability to become 'demanding' and 'vigilant' beneficiaries of the nourishing process.

Panchayati Raj Programmes

The committee likes to emphasise IGNOU's mandate to direct its special attention to the needs of disadvantaged sections of the people and those in disendowed areas. The rural sector would thus emerge as the most visible claimant for such attention. As it is, IGNOU's foray into this has been very considerable. Its projected programmes on Panchyati Raj's needs, are well beyond the drawing board stage of developing excellent course material which received international awards including that of COL; very soon it will get transformed into more extensive form for training inputs to Panchayati Raj functionaries. Some State Governments are basing their training work in IGNOU's expertise not only in the programme material but also on patterns of communication techniques evolved by the university. This is most gratifying. IGNOU should be able to stand forth as the academic and training programme component provider of the rural development agenda of the Government sector in the country. The factoring in of the NGOs involved in rural development into this network is already assuming importance and IGNOU should more purposefully pursue this policy. The implication for the revenue of the University can easily be appreciated. The funds governments invest in rural development would then be available to IGNOU as the nodal agency, as it were, for the rural development training programmes.

Women's Rights Development

Programmes on women should also be given high priority attention. Here again it would not be possible to enumerate the types of programmes, their duration etc. Women empowerment is recognised to be the gateway to their emancipation and development. Any number of programmes, many of them tying up with the rural development sector, can easily be identified. As we mentioned elsewhere a cooperation and collaboration of apex level women's organisations like the National Commission on Women and Centre for Women's Development can be sought in this regard. The University has already mounted programmes in this sector. For example, the Project on Women Empowerment through distance education initiated by School of Continuing Education is now operating in important Eastern and Northern States. The instructional delivery is also to be dovetailed to Gyan Darshan Channel through which officially a substantial number of terminals are to be served. In view of a change in operation and future expansion which we envisage, it is advisable that a separate institutional identity be accorded to the initiators of such projects.

The highlighting of areas of legal rights and Panchayati Raj as specific items of IGNOU's concern is done only to stress their importance for the University's attention. Many other matters relevant to academic programmes will obviously be competing for attention. A detail listing of such programmes is neither feasible nor necessary in this report. We do, however, mention at different places generic areas for programmatic intervention by the University. Suffice it to say that our reiteration of IGNOU's mandate should also serve as the sign post for determining the University's destination.

CHAPTER-IV (FUNCTIONAL AREAS : CONTINUED)

STUDENTS SUPPORT SERVICES

REGIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (RSD)

Regional Service Division has been providing student support services through a network of Regional Centres and Study Centres. From the Table 4.1, we observe that all major states have at least one Regional Centre, however the North-East States and Sikkim have only two Regional Centres to meet the requirement of the students enrolled there.

As far as the performance of the Division is concerned, it has done well in organising a brainstorming meet for SWOT analysis last year. We endorse the findings of the meeting. We also make the following recommendations many of which reiterate the recommendations emerging out of the brain storming meet.

1. Location of Study Centres in relatively inaccessible regions in the country should be given priority. While some do exist in these regions now, perhaps considerations of financial viability in opening new centres are inhibiting the setting up more. We are of the view that a bolder strategy to widen IGNOU's infrastructures is essential. Tie-ups with some well recognised NGOs would give in its process more mileage to this expansion. In this context, we welcome the flexible policy of IGNOU in fostering partnership alliances. This is presently more visible with regard to management and computer course network. In rural and tribal areas, networking with NGOs would be a visible strategy.
2. With regard to the functioning of the Regional Centres and Study Centres, a host of problems are brought to the Committee's notice. We admit that

Table 4.1 REGIONAL -WISE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY CENTRES (As on 31.01.2000)

SL No	REGIONAL CENTRES	TOTAL REGULAR CENTRES	TOTAL RECOG. CENTRES	TOTAL SUB STUDY CENTRES	TOTAL PROG.CENTRES	TOTAL D.GR.SCs	TOTAL SC IN RCs
1	AHMEDABAD	17	3	1	6	2	29
2	BANGALORE	16	0	0	10	0	26
3	BHOPAL	17	2	0	9	0	28
4	BHUBANESHWAR	16	0	0	3	0	19
5	CALCUTTA	15	0	0	2	3	20
6	CHENNAI	16	2	1	19	10	48
7	COCHIN	14	1	0	16	0	31
8	DEHRADUN	10	0	0	1	0	11
9	DELHI-1	15	2	0	6	0	23
10	DELHI-2	15	1	0	4	1	21
11	GUWAHATI	11	0	2	2	0	15
12	HYDERABAD	11	0	0	13	0	24
13	JAIPUR	12	0	0	5	3	20
14	JAMMU	4	0	0	11	1	16
15	KARNAL	19	0	0	4	0	23
16	LUCKNOW	18	6	0	7	4	35
17	PATNA	16	3	0	7	1	27
18	PUNE	14	1	0	7	0	22
19	SHILLONG	16	0	0	3	18	37
20	SHIMLA	12	0	0	3	0	15
21	SRINAGAR	5	0	0	5	1	11
	TOTAL	289	21	4	143	44	501

3. micro level problems exist which the concerned ground level authorities— could solve. However, some of the major issues, we came across, need to be addressed.

Regional Centres : There is a need to augment communication channels in the Regional Service Division (RSD) at the headquarters and the Regional Centres. Inadequacy in this regard has been the constant refrain of the personnel in the Regional Study Centres; more effective electronic communication would be the solution. Especially, with regard to Student Registration, evaluation particulars, the examination schedules, despatch of course material and other administrative matters, the communication gap seems to be a problem. The immediate use of relevant software and effective strengthening of the wide area network linking the headquarters with the regions should be immediately promoted.

Every Regional Centre has a computer functionary, and in tune with the above recommendation, capacity development of these functionaries should also be ensured.

4. Everywhere we hear of the inadequacy of staff. We have no recommendation to offer in this regard as the mere addition of administrative staff can really be no solution to the problem. Proper rationalisation in terms of time and work allocation and prompt communication facilities should alleviate such problems.
5. We strongly recommend that the Regional Centres be given flexible operational powers in financial matters. The present level of imprest money left with the Regional Directors needs to be increased. Prompt payment to the part time counsellors is necessary for their effective involvement with counselling duties and this is now being hampered due

to lack of adequate funds on hand at the Regional Centres. There should be no difficulty in ensuring adequate financial accountability even with increased imprest funds.

6. At the Regional Centres, private computer operators are pressed into service because of the lack of full time computer capabilities within the Regional Centres; Engaging private computer operators adversely affect the efficient handling of the work, and consequently the students suffer. Therefore, where Regional Centres cater to a very large number of students, the computing capabilities should be properly strengthened. However, as at present the student strength registered with the Regional Centres vary rather widely, a hard and fast rule cannot be prescribed in terms of the staff component of Regional Centres. We only suggest a review of the staff strength of these Centres to be done by the University and appropriate steps taken in this matter.

7. In order to make Laboratory Programmes more effective, the distance learners need to be facilitated and provided some incentives. One way could be to offer them concessional ticket on railways, so as to motivate them to attend the laboratory programmes. The learners would also feel at ease and develop confidence in performing the experiment if experiment-specific instruments/equipments are fabricated and/or experiment kits are made available to them and the concerned Institution maintains the laboratory properly.

The Director of the School and the Coordinator of the Programmes may also suggest a small Committee to make periodic visits to these Centres/ Laboratories to assess, on the spot, the quality of Laboratory Programmes and the condition of the Laboratories. Such visits should create an

amiable and amicable environment to improve work conditions. They should not be misrepresented as Inspection Committees.

7. We recommend that better co-ordination be introduced in the selection of counsellors. Presently, this is done jointly by the faculty personnel and the RSD, the Regional Centres only forwarding the applications. The involvement of the faculty is, of course, imperative. It would be desirable to associate the Regional Directors, not only as the forwarding agencies, but also in the selection of the counsellors at the Study Centres. Their knowledge in assessing the capabilities of counsellors would obviate the prospect of a properly qualified person being rejected as unfit. Further, provision for alternate candidates would be helping the appointment of substitutes, in case local counsellors either decline the offer or is no longer available due to transfers from local colleges or such other reasons. The Committee is of opinion that a large number of issues arising out of the management of the student services function can be resolved by periodic meetings of the Director of the Regional Service Division (RSD) with the Directors of Regional Centres. In addition to the Regional Directors being called to the headquarters, we recommend strongly that the Director, RSD, should hold at least one conference at each of the Regional Centres providing adequate time for discussions with the personnel at these centres, and co-ordinators from the Study Centres under the Regional Centres' jurisdiction. As the Committee already mentioned many of the micro-level problems that are presented to the Committee during its visits to be sorted out at such annual conferences. Given the fact that the RSD's operational field is the network of RCs and SCs, the Director spending time in the 'field' could be an inevitable proposition. We would also suggest that the PVC in charge of Student Support

Services (SSS) be also involved in such conferences. Periodic involvement of VC may also be desirable in such conferences.

8. The problem of late despatch of material has become ubiquitous. We note that last year, thanks to the appointment of a Task Force to address this problem, significant improvement in this area could be effected. But such adhoc solutions are not sustainable, because the problems ranging from the publishing of the material, packing and despatching to the correct labeling of the addresses etc are confronting the University. We recommend that a review of the bureaucratic hurdles in the print order for materials, more mechanisation in the packing and despatching process should be introduced. Where outsourcing is needed in these matters, it should be adopted.
9. Proper advice to the student at the time of registration, in filling up the correct information about the courses, their addresses and other such particulars would to a great extent clear their confusion and would also correct the misinformations and misinterpretations at their end. The preparation and distribution of information guides, properly updated, to student registered freshly, should be resorted to.
10. Students at the Regional Centres and some of the Study Centres are asking for a 'single window facility' when they interact with the centres. While operationally, this is being done even now, we recommend that a senior member of the staff at the centres be entrusted the responsibility of attending to students. Perhaps the Assistant Director is better suited to handle this rather than any other functionary. We realise that this is an additional responsibility on that category of staff but we would still hold on to this recommendation.

STUDENTS REGISTRATION & EVALUATION DIVISION (SR & E)

Students registration, maintenance and monitoring of internal assessments, conduct of term-end examinations of all programmes/courses twice a year, and arranging Convocation every year are the main activities of the SR&E Division. Its role, thus, both at the entry and exit stages is very critical for the success of the University. Indeed the credibility of the University systems, at least in the administration sense of the credibility would depend upon the success of the Division's performance. The total students enrolment, and their percentage distribution in terms of rural-urban, employed – unemployed, male-female, General-SC/ST categories and also for different age groups have been given in Annexures-IV(a) to IV(e). Similarly, the data related to the assignments evaluated, students appeared in the Term-end examination, answer sheets evaluated and Certificates/Diploma Degrees awarded - are given in Annexure-V (a, b, c, d). It is commendable that the Division has been handling admission and examination work on a massive scale, however, we would like to express our concerns over the following.

1. Some of the common errors of data entry, are related to (i) course code, (ii) code for medium of instruction, and (iii) Regional Centres/Study Centres Codes. The above mistakes are committed by the Data-Entry-Operator and/or by the students themselves. -
2. It is also observed that enrolment data of students, especially of SC/ST categories, physically challenged and female are lacking consistency, or are seen as steady for many programmes over years, and sometime too high to be relied upon. These statistics can well be corrected if SR&E Division strengthens its co-ordination with the Regional Centres and Schools and appropriate software programmes are used to accommodate entries of all relevant data. Instructions in detail may be issued to the

Regional Directors/School Directors to intervene at all the developmental stages of processing of data pertaining to students statistics. Such informations at times play very crucial role in decision making at the government level and also at the university level, hence need to be reliable.

3. The details with regard to the students' age, gender, income, social status etc., are not uniformly available for all the courses, resulting therefore in inconclusive interpretation of trends. Committee feels that such informations are vital for better planning.
4. The application forms of some of the eligible candidates are rejected due to such minor errors or for the want of other information, and communication to this effect is sent to the candidate quite late; in most of the cases, they receive information after the expiry of the last date of submission of forms.

The Committee is appreciative of Division's efforts to conduct examinations on time even when they are being held twice a year. In terms of number of students appearing at examinations yearly, there has been a tremendous increase. While in 87 barely 600 students appeared at the examination out of 1500 registered in the university, by 1999 nearly 3,20,000 appeared at the examination. As regards the ratio between those registered on the roles and appearing at the examinations, here also there has been a gradual increase in the ratio. For example, in 1997 while 2,21,000 is the number registered, 1,31,000 appeared at the examination. This is a very positive development. The trend of increased members appearing at the examinations is even more significant in terms of the answer books evaluated by the University, while in December, 1998, the number stands at about 2,61,000 and by June 1999 it rose to 3,77,000. Equally staggering and welcome so, is the number of

assignments processed for Evaluation by the Division; a figure of 236000 in '90 rose to 9,27,000 in 1997 and to a meteoric rise to 20,74,000 by 1998 upto which figures are available with us. The assignments aspects in particular shows that the University has been able to cope reasonably well with the internal evaluation component of the examination system. Many conventional Universities tried and gave it up while open Universities are anxious to increase this elements yet the difficulties of running it often make them compromise with the obligatory nature of assignments and reduce them more or less to a nominal requirement. In this sense IGNOU's performance we hope, will become a trend-setter. We do hear complaints about both inordinate delays in assignment submission by students and about assignment evaluation by the number of factors need to be attended to retain the assignment system and we hope the University will look into this. But we are glad that the system is being continued at all. There are, however, still some grey areas that need attention.

1. Study Centres do not have full time staff to monitor the receipt and evaluation of assignments. At the time of submission, no acknowledgement is given to the student and when some assignments are misplaced, no one in the system is held responsible.
2. The remuneration paid to part time staff is small and does not give proper incentive to work with commitments.
3. The evaluation work done by Evaluator is monitored neither by the Regional Centres nor by the School concerned as the Study Centres do not send samples of evaluated assignments for moderation as per guidelines of the university, with the result that some assignments are evaluated liberally while others strictly. Further, since the comments on the assignments are often not offered by the Evaluators, the purpose of guiding the students through their assignments is not served though the guidelines in this regard

are repeatedly issued to the Evaluators/Study Centres. There is, therefore, much less uniformity and rationality in evaluation of assignments.

We realize that there is still an appreciable lag between the number of students registered and the number appearing at the examination. Roughly, this could be indicative of a big drop out trend. However, we hasten to add that difficulties to arrive at a precise drop out rate in the case of an open university system where under the philosophy of open learning a student is given long periods of time to finish the programme at his own pace. For example, where an eight year period is allowed from registration to completion, strictly speaking drop out rates cannot be calculated precisely till that period is over. Further, with a good number of chances for a student to appear/reappear in a course on a programme makes it even more difficult for such calculation. It would, of course, be better if a systematic formula could be evolved for calculation of a near-precise drop-out ratio.

One should not be surprised if the drop out rate, however, calculated in an open University with such staggering numbers is more than what it is the case in conventional university systems. Given the nature of students enrolled, in the open university system, it is difficult to sustain the enthusiasm prevailing at the entry stage to last up to the exit stage. In fact, this is in conformity with the general theory that entry and exit indicators are normally inversely related. Where entry is relatively easy, exit rates will be relatively low. This has also been the case in the history of conventional universities. The more demanding the entry requirement (and hence the more limited the number of students admitted) the better is the graduation rate. Mass access effect graduation rates with corresponding high drop out rates. In the context of this generally recognized phenomenon, drop-out rates being manifestly large in open learning need not be a cause of despair. This is a factor that open learning should reckon with.

This is not to reconcile with existing reality. Serious attempts to sustain the interest of the students in open university are imperative if the open university is to prove worthy of its existence. If the initial enthusiasm of the student is not sustained, the university failed the philosophical justification for its existence. Usually the first year is the crucial year during which the student has to face the fear and prospect of examinations. There are many reasons why he/she is likely to opt out of the first year examinations and then some how he/she tends to do so because the compulsions to finish the course are not likely to be as pressing as in the case of conventional university situation. It is here that the seed for drop-out is sown and it is here that initial efforts should be made to contain this drop-out possibility. Before and after the examinations, particularly in the initial years of a student enrolment, special efforts should be made to boost the morale of students by monitoring their examination records. The Universities should do every thing in reviving their interest in the study. We strongly recommend that a special team be set, as part of the Division, to do this monitoring and 'go after' these students in a purposeful manner, so that at least a part of that numbers could be retained in the system. Here again, since students in the disadvantaged groups and areas are more likely to fall under this category, such efforts with these groups should be more intensive.

As regards specific reforms in the examination system, the problem of incorporating assignment marks into the mark sheets is a source of complaint at the Study Centres where students normally seek/demand explanations for mark sheet "mistakes". We gather that the problem partly is structural too. This is due to the differential in categories of assignments and the Evaluation Division having difficulties in recording the evaluated assignment marks. This needs a closer look and a quicker solution though we can't suggest a precise solution. Here again, perhaps, upgradation of the computer programme capability and the communication network between the SRE and RCs may be solution.

If it is possible to extend the maximum period of enrolment for a student to stay on, probably the drop outs among women and those from the disadvantaged groups and areas could be reduced. A more challenging and daring suggestion would be to encourage very backward communities of people to join and stay on, by reducing the minimum passing mark. Such a suggestion may fly in the face of orthodox theory. Yet if open learning is conceived as a social mobility device, the suggestion need not be regarded as very radical. We urge the University to consider this very seriously.

Then there is the hi-tech facility in the shape of on-demand examination which the computers afford through the availability of question banks, for the University to experiment with. This would, of course, need proper authentication procedures to certify that an examination was taken and marks obtained.

MATERIAL PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION DIVISION (MPDD)

Material Production and Distribution Division is primarily responsible for the delivery of the self-instructional learning materials to students. It undertakes the activities, such as (a) co-ordination for production of study material/assignments, (b) printing of the required number of sets of these material, (c) inventory control and (d) dispatching the material to individual students through the postal system. The growth in the activity of printing and increase in the volume of dispatch handled by MPDD is shown in Annexure-VI.

The Material Production and Distribution Division is heavily dependent on other Schools and Divisions for performing its tasks. The co-ordination between different divisions is essential to make the delivery mechanism more effective. Some of the activities such as printing and distribution may be decentralised to some extent and entrusted to the Regional Centres while other activities related to packaging etc. may be outsourced.

The Committee was happy to know that the University has been able to manage the delivery of the material in time from January 1999 onward through the unstinted efforts of the Task-force constituted by the Vice-chancellor. However, the main problems in the distribution of materials are due to : (a) delay in printing of study material, (b) delay in receiving data on students profile, (c) absence of standardized process for generating address labels within Material Production and Distribution Division and, (d) delay in timely updating of records of students' addresses, courses etc. and also due to (e) return of undelivered material.

The activity-wise observations of the Committee are as follows:

1. **Printing:** At present, the printing is decentralised. But the committee feels that the task of printing should be completely centralised in a phased manner. The publication unit may be strengthened appropriately and the work should be done professionally within the printing unit; the work may be distributed to the different publication officers/assistants in the Schools or Divisions and communication channel with the printers should be improved so that the system is able to develop Just-in-time (JIT) concept. The university should evolve and standardize a mechanism for working out the print requirement for each block/course/programme.
2. **Stores & Inventory Management:** The stock position of the blocks should be computerised. The university may invite some experts in Inventory Management and deliberate the issues related to store-keeping, classification, and inventory control. One should also identify the activities that should be mechanised.
3. **Dispatch of material:** The committee records its appreciation for the timely distribution of materials to the students in the last two academic sessions. The committee felt that the system should be developed for dispatch of material and various options like bulk mail service through the post office, use of speed post, and hiring private agencies/courier agencies should be tested on pilot basis.
4. **Marketing Cell:** The Committee felt that marketing activities through a network of dealers and institutions should be institutionalised. Good quality study material of IGNOU's various programmes could be published on a large scale and sold out to the students of conventional universities and general public. The university can earn lot of revenue through this activity. IGNOU has earned over years a sizable revenue through the sale of print material as can be seen from Annexure-VII.

5. **Policy Issues:** The University may have to deliberate upon two issues for improving the delivering mechanism of self instructional learning materials to students:

- (a) delegation of powers to the Regional Centres for undertaking a few activities of MPDD at regional level.
- (b) outsourcing of the activities to external agencies for undertaking a few activities of MPDD.

As the work of MPDD is akin to an industrial process, quality control is must. It would be worth while to seek ISO 9000 certification for MPDD.

TRAINING (STRIDE)

Training in distance education is such a crucial factor that the very credibility of this unique mode of learning depends on the training inputs. As it cannot be a one time input, a continuous and sustained training programme in any Open University, or for that matter in any distance education enterprise, is a condition precedent to run the system. In an apex Open University like Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) catering to the needs of the country-wide open learning system, the training function becomes all the more crucial.

The University has in place a viable Training and Research wing in the shape of Staff Training and Research in Distance Education (STRIDE). The origin of STRIDE and its dimension are due to IGNOU's concerted effort to accord deserved priority to training and research function beginning with the School for Distance Education looking after training, the training facility attaining to a more fuller status. At the stage when it was a mobile high level Training Team, it was facilitated by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver, Canada, in 1991, when senior faculty members were chosen from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Indira Gandhi Nation Open University (IGNOU), Kota Open University (KOU) and Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) (one from each University) to receive training in an Australian University for four weeks. The purpose of facilitation was to provide the Open Universities with a group of trained faculty in the methodology of the distance education in India. However, soon IGNOU established its own permanent institution called the Staff Training and Research in Distance Education (STRIDE) in 1993. Its functions are :

- (i) To identify training needs of different target groups already involved in and those expected to get involved in Open/Distance Education,

- (ii) To build up a resource base of up-to-date information, training materials, courses and expertise, and make such resources available whenever needed.
- (iii) To develop training strategies and training materials to meet the various needs of different types of individuals and distance teaching/training institutions.
- (iv) To organise and conduct training and staff development activities for the identified target groups and institutions through various strategies leading to completion of certificates, diplomas and degrees and,
- (v) To get involved in and promote research in Open/Distance Education at the fundamental, experimental and application levels in order to constantly enrich the training programmes and management processes and meet the challenges of the expanding educational environment.

In actual, operational terms STRIDE has so far attended to the following types of training programmes.

- (i) Induction programmes.
- (ii) Orientation programmes.
- (iii) Advanced level training programmes.
- (iv) Training of trainers programmes.
- (v) Need-based training programmes.
- (vi) Attachment programmes.

The focus of these programmes is on functional areas such as:

- Instructional design.
- Curriculum design and development.

- Development of self-instructional materials.
- Management of distance and open education institutions
- Assessment and evaluation techniques.
- Academic counselling
- Learner support
- Media in distance education.
- Information technology in distance education
- Effective writing and communication skills.
- R&D in distance education.

While the above speaks of a commendable effort on the part of STRIDE, we also draw the attention to the fact that most sections of the Universities staff feel that more training inputs are required. The administrative staff, in particular, asks for intensive initial orientation into a theory and practice of open learning. While, no doubt, batches of new entrants do undergo a training module, the batches covered as well as the intensity of coverage may be falling behind the needed optimum. The Committee realises the constraints in the way of STRIDE in this regard; first, the sheer numbers pose problems and secondly, there is the priority dimension. The traditional staff on positions undervalue any specialised training to administrative staff, and it is hard to overcome this concept. The staff itself is not unlikely to regard these specialised trainings in a casual manner. Further, the 'Training the Trainer' mode might appear to be not quite viable for the administrative staff given their relative low potential to instill training to themselves.

We suggest that a method be evolved to identify competent persons from this segment to serve as Trainers so that with appropriate support with one or two members of STRIDE, training for the administrative staff could also be anchored on the "Training the Trainer" mode.

It is also necessary to mention here that training to this segment will have to include not merely training in the functional areas – computer literacy, book keeping, secretarial practice and the like, but also in the generic area of distance education mode and methodology. This aspect of training is also to be extended to technical staff.

The training programmes for the faculty ought to be much more comprehensive. Here again training at the early stage is not the normal pattern. STRIDE, in fact, has generated the expertise in a variety of areas, ranging from self-instructional style of course writing, to course designing and to course team dynamics.

The process of academic socialisation in the open learning pedagogy, especially when the faculty is mostly drawn from the traditional universities but be long. Still, even before the expiry of the first decade of IGNOU's existence, the course material that the University produced attained the required standards not only in production quality but also the design, exposition and content earning praise from different quarters. The role of training inputs in facilitating this cannot be underestimated. STRIDE has been able to consolidate its role in this significant area of training. The inputs into the in-campus faculty in cooperation with faculty members themselves have been amply rewarded. IGNOU now has faculty well oriented in distance education methodology. One can always ask for more and a sort of continuing education in this can be attended to by refresher training modules incorporating latest innovations in the field of course development and other areas of distance education.

Yet what needs sustained attention is the inculcation of this methodology among the part-time faculty, drawn from outside the course material. To an extent, both STRIDE and the full time faculty in the disciplinary spheres attend to

this need. It will still be a good thing to ensure the training of an existing faculty in a sustainable manner.

STRIDE also implements training programmes to the other sectors, prominently the Student Support sub-system. Training of the counsellors at the Regional Centres and Study Centres is as important a part as it is stupendous in magnitude. In fact, here the part-time faculty component is overwhelmingly large even as its role is overwhelmingly crucial. The part-time counsellors' inputs into the instructional function are much more continuous and interactive vis-à-vis student community than that of the part-time course writers. The latter has at least the benefits of cooperation with the full-time faculty of the IGNOU in producing the course material and are also smaller in number than the counsellors who actually provide the face-to-face counselling—a component of distance education on a prolonged basis. In fact, the counsellors along with the staff of Regional Centres and Study Centres are the actual points of contact between the university and its students. Even more important is the point that student counselling in distance education is characterized by pedagogy, and is distinct from the mere lecture type of instructional inputs which are normally patterned in a classroom situation. It is however common that counselling as long has been suffering from the hazard of the stereotype lecturing, which, after all, is the accustomed instructional style of conventional university teachers. And these teachers still constitute the main catchment area of counsellors; for these reasons we cannot overstate the need for training of the counsellors.

STRIDE has the obligation also to attend to significant training to the State Open Universities and correspondence course centres, (at various levels of development) covering the entire country. This, an obligation of STRIDE, needs to be taken very seriously.

Because this aspect of STRIDE's function relates to IGNOU's role as the Apex body to oversee and monitor the distance education system as a whole, we will have occasion to refer to this aspect of the matter elsewhere in the Report. But, suffice it to say in this context that a system of networking of training facilities which STRIDE, taking the needed initiatives, is very crucial. We are constrained to mention here that the training facilities in the State Open Universities, and more particularly so in the distance education centres of the conventional universities, leave much to be desired. Where it exists, they are marginal to the other functions of these institutions. It is necessary that these sister distance education institutions are endowed with stronger structural base, which still needs constant input from IGNOU's STRIDE.

It is also important to mention that STRIDE has undertaken to function as a training facility for some of the Asian Distance Education Institutions, especially those in the Commonwealth. Obligation particularly arose from the COL awarding a substantial grant to STRIDE to develop its academic infrastructure. STRIDE has by now conducted quite a few programmes at its headquarters in IGNOU or in developing countries abroad. Further, teams of teachers and the technical personnel from countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh, South Pacific had been sent here to receive training in STRIDE during the last six years.

Operations enabled IGNOU to gain international visibility. It is a matter of just pride for both STRIDE and IGNOU that it was designated by COL as a Centre of Excellence in 1994.

Yet another achievement of STRIDE is its involvement in the Rajiv Gandhi Fellowships Scheme under which the Postgraduate Programme in distance education offered by IGNOU was made available to students selected from 20 countries in the developing parts of the Commonwealth – Africa, South Asia, the

South Pacific and the West Indies. This programme was serviced entirely by STRIDE from Delhi. It also trained the counsellors from those countries to undertake periodic counselling when the programmes were conducted. The programmes functioned till 1997 and have been reviewed by COL's Evaluation Committee which has recommended its continuity in the future, also with certain modifications. Meanwhile, STRIDE is revising the course material to suit the international context, and COL's own decision on the resumption of the programme is awaited.

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (EMPC)

The Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC) is the hub of production, design, distribution and the tele-delivery functions of IGNOU. As an electronic media production facility, it has tremendous potential for expansion both quantitatively and qualitatively. In fact, some of its potential is soon to be realised with the launch of Educational Channel (Gyan Darshan & Gyan Vani) in collaboration with MHRD and Prasar Bharati.

To start with, IGNOU established the Communication Division with the responsibility of designing & producing audio/video cassettes and distributing them to its large network of study centres all of which are provided with audio-video equipments. Since then, Audio-video cassettes began to be produced to suit the nature and contents and augment the quality aspect of the printed course material. With the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) extending munificent aid early in the 90s, the Communication Division acquired the state-of-the-art communication technology. It is gratifying that now the facility is going to be fully utilised with IGNOU becoming a partner with MHRD and Prasar Bharti for running the educational T.V. Channel.

With the phenomenal expansion of the communication technology, IGNOU re-structured the -Communication Division calling it Electronic Media Production Centre envisaging a decentralised administrative structure. Though, in the beginning the Centre was visualised essentially as a production centre to cater to the University's instruction system, it has now multipurpose functional attributes:

1. Designing and Production of Audio-video material.
2. Offering training to Academic Staff of Open Universities.

3. Conducting teleconferencing in two-way audio and one way video or two-way audio mode.
 4. Training educational communication personnel belonging to SOUs and those of Universities abroad.
 5. Conducting academic courses leading to Certificate and Diplomas in audio and video production.
 6. Functions associated with IGNOU's linkage with Prasar Bharti in Education Channel.
1. **Designing and Production of Audio Video Material**

Designing and production of Audio-video material still constitutes the major function of EMPC. A distance education worth its name incorporates multimedia instructions and print media accompanied by audio video components. The rationale behind is that the principle of autonomous learning is more comprehensively conveyed if print material instruction is supplemented with well articulated audio and video instructions coherent with the print material contents. Of course, considerations of both cost and appropriateness necessitated that audio video inputs are limited to only important topics covered by print media. -And within the audio-video range, the generally accepted principle in distance education is that while audio instruction is a little more extensive, the video coverage will be more limited. While this is a general principle, it is difficult to lay down any precise ratio between the print media and audio video media instructional coverage.

So far (upto the year ending 1999), the EMPC has produced 795 audio and 819 video (see Figs. 4.1 & 4.2) as against about 8000 units of print material spanning various academic programmes. Given that the distance education

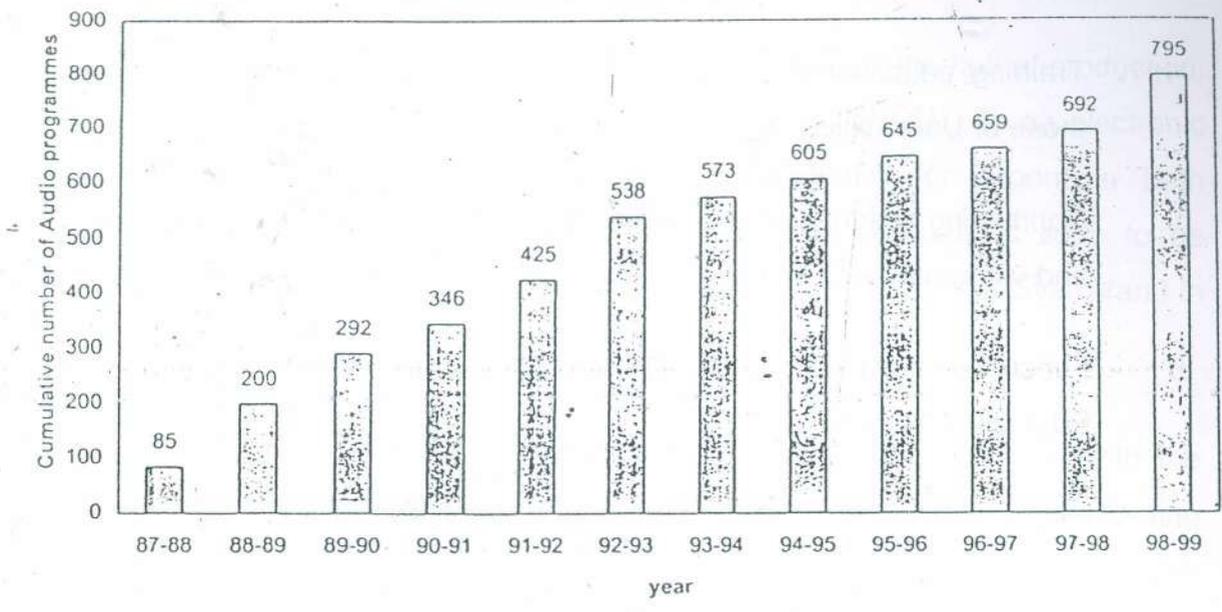


Fig 4.1

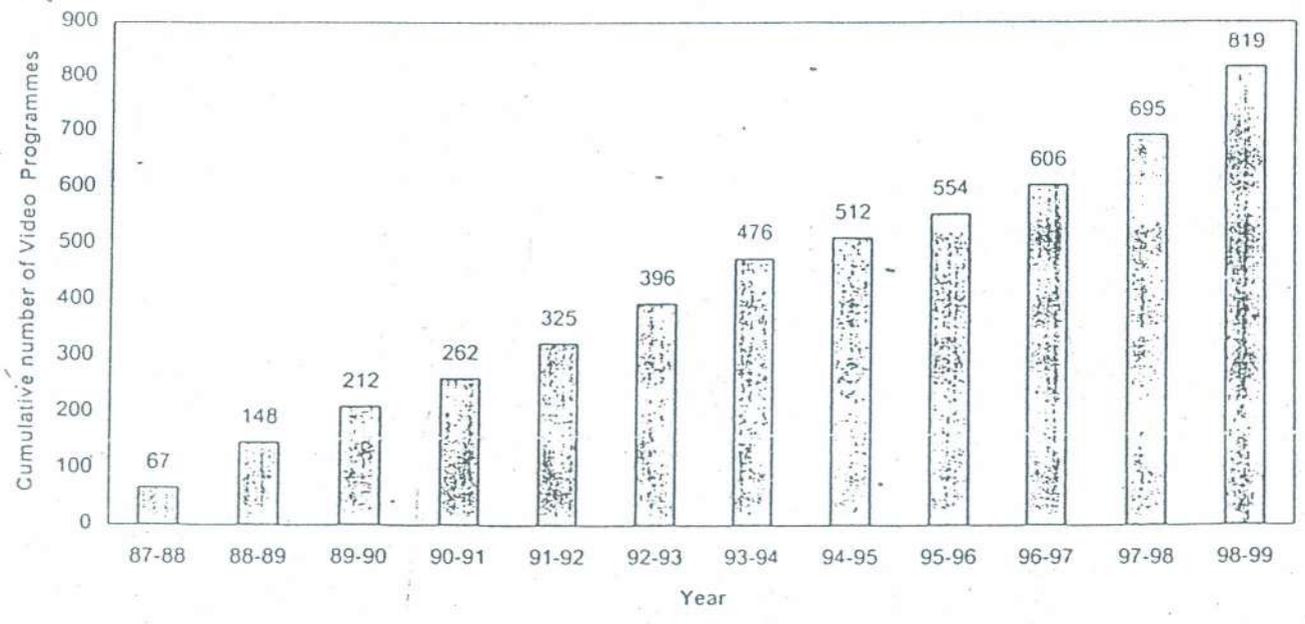


Fig 4.2

experiment of the Open University is a little less than two decades old, this indeed is a creditable record.

Qualitatively however, the level of compatibility or congruence between the print material and audio/video (A/V) material is always a problem. While the audio material produced by EMPC is very largely faithful to the needs of the print material, it is in the context of video material that the problem becomes acute. We fully appreciate the difficulty involved in this context. For, especially in humanities and social sciences, it is very difficult to relate precisely the matter covered by the print media and the video component that accompanies it. Here, a degree of academic liberty is permissible in producing videos covering the study material that on the whole it would be illustrative of the matter covered in the printed course material. We cannot comment more than to say that the procedures of video material should ensure that video illustrations and video expositions should remain as far as possible related to the issues and topics covered by print and audio instructions inputs. Probably, in science subjects, this is reliable with less difficulty than in those relating to humanities and social sciences. In fact, in the case of science and technology subjects, video could, to an extent, be a substitute for the orthodox 'practicals', some of which are traditionally regarded as providing hands on experience to the students. For example, elementary level 'practical' experience could be conveyed through video tapes.

2. Training

The training function is as important as the design and production function. The important involvement at least to some extent of the academic faculty in producing A/V media material has already been mentioned. It would be to the advantage of the entire course teams if the academic faculty not only advise the educational technology people as to what they want to convey to the students through the A/V media but are also introduced to some of the technical

aspects of A/V production. This would improve the quality of the instructional material, and, additionally, would inculcate true team spirit resulting in value-addition to the academic faculty. There is a need to ensure that videos are as entertaining as educative; we do not have any data in the form of feed back from student community.

IGNOU has rightly chosen to go international in its reach. Not only does its potential warrant but its role as a nodal agency to promote the capabilities of distance education in the country and the region of the globe would justify this. The Committee is impressed with a number of training programmes it extends to the personnel from SOUs in India and also with its training programmes made available to A/V producers from countries in the South Asian region. For example, EMPC has been chosen by the COL as a training centre for people with fellowship awards in video production from the Commonwealth countries. In this manner, EMPC is able to utilise its capabilities in a credible manner.

3. The Telecasting Function

The true delivery function of EMPC lies in bringing audio visual instruction to the students directly. In the Indian context, this cannot be exactly brought to the doorstep of the individual student. Yet it is gratifying that EMPC conducts counselling classes through the teleconferencing mode in at least some of the major academic programmes on a periodical basis. It is the EMPC's facility that may, to some extent, be used for administrative functions by its linkage of the IGNOU's headquarters to the Regional Centres; What is more important is the teleconferencing use for academic instruction. So far 790 hours of teleconferencing have been conducted in the year ending 1998. Though this is as yet confined to select academic programmes, we hope that more extensive coverage including other programmes is also initiated. And in order to promote interactive communication, technical systems at learner and teachers' ends are required to be upgraded. We are aware of the cost and time factor involved in

any extensive use of this facility. But as more time is made available through dedicated satellite communication channel(s), this should be feasible.

4) IGNOU already telecast video programmes on the National Network of Doordarshan every day of the week from 6.30 a.m. to 7.00 a.m.. With the commissioning of the Gyan Darshan Education Channel with Prasar Bharati, this facility would extend substantially. In fact, the EMPC will be incharge of a comprehensive programme telecasting for general education programmes. This would afford a much more extended opportunity for telecasting IGNOU's specific academic programmes also.

Thus, EMPC is on the threshold of mobilising its full potential for use. It will have opportunity of combining general awareness programmes in tandem with the UGC's present country-wide class room telecasting and much more will be accomplished for beaming academic programmes in an intensive manner than has been possible so far.

While EMPC's distribution of A/V material is reasonably optimal, the problem arises with regard to the use made of this material in the regional and study centres. An impressionistic survey indicates that the actual use of the A/V cassettes at the regional study centres is rather less than optimal. Indeed, this is the experience of most of the open universities in the region. The remedy, of course, is not to cut down on this facility but to find ways and means of making the students make use of this genere of material. The problem here is that Study Centres make available this facility along with the face-to-face counselling classes; and counselling classes are optional. This results in 'exposure to A/V material made available at the study centres' optional in practice. Thus, a student has, in practical terms, only the print material to serve as his instructional input. In technologically well endowed countries, this predicament is avoided because students have A/V equipments even domestically available. It should

be quite sometime before this prospect can be duplicated in developing regions like South Asia. Till then what can be done for the optimal use of the A/V media? Marginally, improvements could be made effective by keeping open the study centres for longer periods of time and for a few more days than what is now being done. We only suggest that this be made possible by IGNOU as part of its effort to strengthen its students support services.

The interactive Radio Broadcasting programmes of IGNOU through various Radio Stations of AIR in different Cities are gaining popularity what is now more important is to test the pedagogical success and the impact of such interactive sessions on the students community for extending the scope of such programmes country-wide.

With the implementation of the new Gyan Darshan Education Channel of which IGNOU is a significant partner, more time is available for telecast of a range of IGNOU programmes. Since the availability of T.V. sets in most of the households is now a reality, this may enable video material exposure available at the doorstep of the learner. Since IGNOU has now adequate hours of Television broadcasting time, the Schools, EMPC and RSD should be able to use it efficiently for academic interaction with the learners and the society at large. Further as we know the IGNOU has already started using internet for some of its computer programmes. We feel that on-line registration, on-line examination and on-line study material delivery would soon be realized. It is also necessary that, for a centre attracting large group of learners, LCD/SVGA projector facility be provided where a teacher-counsellor can also act as a facilitator for the learning sessions.

EMPC is also handling academic programmes related to the area of communication technology. A Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication has been developed and is offered through the School of

Continuing Education. The Centre is also planning to start specialised Certificate courses in Videography, Editing Audio Programme Production and Audio & Video Technology. In view of this, EMPC aspires for a School Status, like other Schools in the University, in its own right. The University has appointed a Committee to look into this aspect of the matter. This proposal emanating from the Centre is not without some problems. Firstly, they knew that the EMPC is mainly designed to be a service agency catering to designing and production of A/V materials and providing training to a variety of IGNOU's personnel. Given this, an inhibition is expressed among some circles that EMPC's newly proposed role of an academic programme giver may lead to dilution of its primary role. Further, since the EMPC is now being entrusted with the onerous task of the projected National Education Channel, the doubts relating to the feasibility of its undertaking academic programmes in Communication Technology at this juncture are also being voiced. Then there is the technical legal issue about EMPC coming up with School Status as that measure would involve radical changes in the structure of the University. We are of the opinion that the infrastructure of the EMPC can with proper innovations be utilised for imparting hands on experience for people desirous of acquiring academic qualifications in Communications/Educational Technology. As regards the man power at the top echelons, EMPC has qualified staff which could also serve as 'faculty'. However, there would still be need for additional staff to provide faculty inputs as already some academic programmes are being offered by the EMPC through the accreditation agency of the School of the Continuing Education. No doubt, there are some hurdles; much of the technical staff possess technical qualifications - whether these are adequate to meet the normal requirements of academic faculty is one important consideration, then there is the School Status question.

Since a University's Committee is looking into this issue, lest we go in dispute to its recommendations by suggesting our own. Suffice it to say that a facility like Communication School, on the analogy of such schools in some of the

Universities in India, would be appropriate for an open university wherein Communication Technologies are integral to the open university system. We leave the question open whether EMPC could be re-designed into such a School or a separate entity be created:

LIBRARY

A University and a Library go hand in hand. Library services to students, teachers and others should be made available in a user friendly manner. It would therefore be necessary, that IGNOU's library be equipped with adequate human power and with computers facilities. We find that IGNOU's library is well stocked and the services are well spread. There is no doubt always scope to augment the flow of books and periodicals.

Presently, the main problem we noticed is a space. The accommodation is very cramped where piles of books, sets of newspapers and periodicals and the users seem to be competing for space. Soon we hope the library may be shifted to better premises. There is also a demand made for extra staff and we hope that the university will look into this aspect.

While the function of the library has been increasingly optimised in terms of information services, but as information technology is revolutionised, the need to widen the range of library services through computer is imperative, especially when the federal form of IGNOU's structure goes into far away locations; library information will also have to be put on line for accessibility to the "field". This would entail a greater responsibility towards the security against pilferers and computer security against hackers.

The libraries and the Regional Centres need to be commensurate with the services they render in the regions. Students and the public frequently visit the Regional Centres for various purposes. Such occasions should be used to introduce the visitors to the Open Learning System. The library as an educational and information facility and the RCs the critical link between the students and the university, confers on the libraries at the RCs both a challenged

opportunity to attract and retain the interest of the students and the public in the university, in particular, and the Open Learning System in general.

The Regional/Study Centres libraries have also the important function of involvement in teleconferencing. The maintenance of the equipments is becoming a problem at RCs and SCs. During visits to the Regional/Study Centres, the Committee's members had complained of equipment malfunctioning and great difficulties in getting it repair in proper time. We suggest that a viable arrangements be made for the proper maintenance of such sensitive equipments.

It is essential that the library should contain the full range of the reading material of the university preferably multiplied copies of materials relating to programmes with large enrolment to help those students who may have lost their copies. We heard some students at the RCs make a request to this affect. In some study centres, we found well-bound copies of previous years' question papers kept there, and we recommend that all Regional Centres libraries to provide these facilities to students.

Coming to the library facility at the Study Centre, given the nature of the student community and the counselling faculty, it is not necessary to operate a comprehensive library even on a modest scale. The tendency to possess different sets of encyclopedias, dictionaries and other such reference volumes should be restrained. Instead, copies of reading and AV materials or material of more immediate significance to the students should be retained. Along with these, a few select test books in subjects covered by the universities programmes need also to be kept in the library. Here too, making available sets of old questions papers is necessary.

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Division provides administrative support to the University for fulfilment of the objectives. The Division is divided into 10 sections/units/cells and these are Governance Section, Establishment Section, General Administration, Central Purchase Unit, Security Unit, Publication Unit, Hindi Cell, Legal Cell, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Employees Cell and Co-ordinated Section. The responsibility of establishment and personal matters of all teachers and other academic staff is vested with the academic co-ordination division. The Committee is reflecting on administrative system and practices rather than on the functions of each unit/division or cell. The functions and activities of an open university are entirely different from a conventional university and the administrative structure and processes are equally important in the performance of the university. The administrative issues have been dealt under the following three heads:-

- (a) Development of systems
- (b) Infrastructure and physical resources
- (c) Human resources
- (d) Control and Co-ordination

Development of Systems: The university has given credibility to the Open Learning System. However, it was observed that the university has not built up the systems even for some of its major activities i.e. delivery of materials, production of printed materials, etc. The special operational plans and task forces should eventually develop the systems for achieving the objectives. The committee recommends that the university should formalise the strategic plans and action plan for the University and for the Open Learning System. The administration should ensure that the action plans are put into practice timely and effectively.

Infrastructure : The University does not have permanent building although it was established in 1985. The Schools and Divisions are housed in temporary structures. The development of a permanent structure for schools/divisions and other building requirements in terms of conference rooms, guesthouse, etc. should be given priority. Regional Centres should also have their own building and campus.

Proper utilisation of physical resources and facilities: Though the committee did not undertake the works study or audit report but interactions with academic and non-academic staff members indicate that there is a need for proper utilisation of resources and facilities. This is corroborated by the observations made by some of the staff members for inadequate facilities. At the same time many utility items (almirahs and typewriters, etc) can be seen lying in the corridors of the university. The two contrasts indicate that there is a need for proper management of resources. The optimal utilisation of communication and information resources has to be planned and effective utilisation should be ensured.

Human Resources: The importance of human resource is well known. The members observed: (a) the administrative staff requires orientation to the open learning system, (b) for many jobs, staff is not professional and requires training, (c) by and large employees' attitude is not students friendly, (d) work culture and team spirit in the functioning of the University are missing, and (e) human resources are not being fully exploited by the university system. The committee recommends that the effectiveness and efficiency of the University and Open Learning System can be increased significantly if the well-planned training programmes for academic and administrative staff are executed periodically. The administrative staff is clear about their multiple roles and suggested need for various training programmes for self development. The administrative staff

requires training in (a) philosophy and principles of open learning, (b) uses and application of new communication techniques and information technology, and (c) group dynamics aspects. The academic staff have not internalised the philosophy of open learning system and are not able to detach themselves from the conventional system. The multiplicity of their roles in the OLS needs to be well defined by the management. STRIDE should design different type of training programmes for different levels of academic and administrative staff.

The committee recommends lateral mobility among the teachers, academics and administrative staff. The barriers between academic and administrative staff should be broken, and interaction among the academic staff themselves, and with the administrative staff should be enhanced for synergistic relationships. It is essential to develop managerial capabilities among the employees of Open Learning System. A point of caution in regard to the Human Resource Management is required to be mentioned here.

For a big organisation to be effective, it should be simple. And for an organisation to be simple, its people should have intellectual competence, self-confidence, re-assurance and high morale. If the Management follows "Glasnost Policy" in taking important decisions, people would develop faith in the system, could have opportunity to assess themselves against the expected standards, and consequently would lend support to the organisation.

There is an urgent need to create IGNOU human resource database – periodically updated – which could be classified into A, B and C categories. Persons with high qualification/multi-disciplinary qualifications and long/strategic experience or multiplicity of experience should constitute A Group; persons with adequate qualifications and necessary experience should constitute B Group, and persons with essential qualifications but inadequate experience should be included in C Group. Search committees to nominate persons to high positions

should scan the database for selecting a suitable person for the position. It does not, however, mean that outsiders should not be inducted into the system or mere inbreeding is to be promoted. Terminus ad quem of this extended note is that any decision of the management, as far as possible, should not lower the morale of the human resource which is so vital for the growth and progress of any organisation.

Control and Co-ordination : The committee feels that IGNOU should do away with the concept of : (i) concentration of power, concentration of functions and concentration of services at the HQrs and (ii) bureaucratisation in the University. The three Ds – (a) Division, (b) Delegation and (c) Decentralisation are lacking in the IGNOU system. As the objectives and the operational areas of the Open Learning System are wider than the conventional education system because of its knowledge delivery to home based approach, heterogeneous student groups and varied support services, it needs stronger control and coordination. The new technologies being adopted by the university should be utilised for integration of tasks and activities. University should develop information system network and network structure for the IGNOU and for the Open Learning System (involving SOUs and CCIs) for sharing the resources and synchronising the inputs for achieving the objectives.

The committee understands that an Administrative Reforms Committee has reviewed the administrative aspects of the University. The recommendations of the committee may be put into the practice.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Organisations engaged in varied activities – knowledge-intensive, and capital-intensive – ranging into short term and long term Plans/programmes, and working in a competitive environment has to have a Planning & Development Division. IGNOU thus very appropriately decided to have full-fledged Planning & Development Division as a planning and monitoring organ of the University.

The Division involves itself in the preparation of annual plans and five-year plans; cost analysis; programme evaluation and feedback; Management Information System (MIS) and database; need assessment studies; quality assurance and general planning. Given the scope and diverse nature of the activities handled by the Division, it is not unlikely that some activities take at a point of time precedence over the others depending upon the exigency.

Committee has noted that the Planning & Development Division has formalised since 1998, the process of sharing IGNOU's study material – much sought after for its quality – with the State Open Universities (SOUs), Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs) and also other institutions through legal 'Agreements' between the IGNOU and the user Institutions/Universities, and maintains the records of such beneficiaries. Though MOU of this kind were also signed between IGNOU and other user Institutions/Universities earlier, adherence to such 'Agreements' was not enforced through legal paraphrasing.

The Committee is happy to know that processing of proposals for launching of academic programmes has become expeditious after the formation of the Academic Programme Committee (APC).

The future projections of IGNOU made by the Planning & Development Division would depend on the various kinds of inputs supplied to it from all other Schools/Divisions/Units/Cells of the University. The Committee is of the opinion

that bi-lateral information flow between Planning Division and Schools and other Divisions should be frequent and uninterrupted so as to enable the Division to develop proposals/plans for financial support from MHRD and, other Ministries. This will also help in augmentation of the Management Information System and strengthening of Decision Support System of the University.

ACADEMIC CO-ORDINATION

Teachers Affairs (TA) Division. was rechristened as Academic Co-ordination Division in December, 1995. TA Division itself came into being in 1989. Prior to that, the academic affairs of Teachers, and other Academic Staff were looked after by the Registrar, Administration, with the assistance of a Dy. Registrar.

The Academic Co-ordination Division deals with process and procedure for selection of academic staff, their promotion and transfer, salary fixation, leave record, and their request for travel grants for attending the Workshop/Symposia/Conferences. The division also maintains the record of the Research Projects undertaken by the individual/schools.

While a part of the functions of AC Division appears to be connected and overlapping with the academic functions of the Planning Division, the other could be seen in proximity of those being already dealt with by the Registrar office/Administration. In view of this, we feel that the structure and functions of the Academic Co-ordination Division should be reviewed.

FINANCE

Rather than to go into the minute details about the finances of the University, this committee, as befits its broad focus on the University resources and functions to assess its performance in fulfilling the mandate, will analyse the funding and expenditure patterns.

As a national university, IGNOU derives its funding from two primary sources.

1. Central Government Grants
2. Revenue generated from internal resources.

Central Government Grants

The year-wise grants received from the Government are given in Annexure-VIII. The fluctuations in the amounts granted, especially of the plan grants, relate to an extent to the changing nature of investments on heavy capital-intensive items of expenditure, like buildings and equipments, especially of communications technology. Allowing for the periodical upward curve in central grants, it should be pointed out that compared to other conventional universities, central grants are not at all large. Particularly in terms of the number of students that most of the conventional central universities serve, IGNOU's receipts proportionate to its student numbers are indeed modest.

However, IGNOU's self-generated resources are much more than what conventional universities generate. As is well known, this is but the ubiquitous phenomenon of conventional universities' invariably anchored in the old tradition of subsidising higher education. No doubt, they do endeavour to break out of this tradition especially in technical and managerial education sectors. But the base pattern still remains largely intact. The expenditure pattern is given in

Annexure-VIII. It can be seen that a marginal surplus accrues to the university. Applying the contemporary logic that educational institutions too should be judged on the corporate criterion of profit, this is gratifying. But there is no warrant for any one to cast covetous eyes on the surplus. For the demands on the university are going to be very pressing with the take off stage in its journey having arrived. Neither its surplus nor its internally generated funds can be a consideration for the government to adopt a tight-fisted policy towards IGNOU. We very strongly urge that the government should be cognizant of the two considerations (1) the large annual student intake and (2) heavy investment that innovative, and technology-based and locally-specific programmes require.

As we will have occasion to analyse later, during the nearly decade and half of its existence, IGNOU had time enough to launch vocational, non-formal and high profile non-conventional programmes only to a limited extent. We are of the very firm opinion that requirements will increase exponentially as innovative programmes are designed, developed and delivered using the available range of Educational Technology. It bears repetition to state that the mandate of IGNOU directs the university not only to extend formal higher educational menus but even more importantly to open up new educational sectors of learning to new segments of learners, through even more new educational methodologies of learning. While under these mandated concerns, IGNOU will have enrolled and facilitated the learning processes to lakhs of persons, it would also have informally inducted millions of people into the process. Indeed it will have achieved much more. Not merely the vision of a Learning Society has been witnessed by large sections of society, the twin-sister of Learning, Development, will have been achieved. Whereas in conventional wisdom, education is only a preparation for young men and women to seek avenues of employment, distance education coalesces means and ends in a constant penetration of cause and effect – wherein learning and its application to vocational concerns become instant. We make this theoretical exegesis only to

underscore the returns that investment in distance-education yield to state and society.

Another aspect of the finances relates to unit cost calculations. A rough indicator is to divide the annual expenditure by the number of students on rolls for the concerned year. The unit cost figures out, for example for the years 93-94, as Rs.2,320/-. But this could not be regarded as very reliable as the students on rolls for any year is not identical with students enrolled for that year. Still, the unit cost figures do afford broadly relevant comparisons with the economic side of open learning in general and IGNOU, in particular. Judged by statistics alone, open learning may not appear to be inexpensive to the individual students compared to their counter parts in a regular college or university. But two significant considerations need to be recognised to appreciate the real economics of open learning. First, the student of the conventional university has living costs met by his/her parents or guardians which do not usually get factored-in the unit cost calculations. In the case of the distance education student, on the other hand - he or she, is either an employed person or even otherwise one whose maintenance costs are not directly related to his status as a student. Secondly, the initial heavy investment phase of an open university, while costing the society rather substantially, has deferred dividends to offer, not prima facie in the shape of reduced costs to students per se but to the societal system as a whole. Finally, the cheapness of the open university lies not only in its extensive accessibility to people but in its accessibility to diverse 'educable' objects of learning. The latter, in fact, is the fundamental difference between what conventional university can access and what an open university can.

While on the theme of economics and units costs, another important implication of the expenditure pattern needs mention. The evidence of income pattern during the year 1995-97 and a fall in the intake of students from the disadvantaged sections, while income still rose, could be attributed to the fact

that enrolment in programmes in Management and Computer Science rose appreciably. There could be no definite correlation established between the relative fall in enrolment of the SC and ST categories and the rise in high-fees urban-oriented programmes, still it has a bearing on our recommendation. We like to stress that sharply focussed efforts be made to ensure that the revenue got from money-spinning programmes be devoted to sustain rural-based ones which by the very nature of the catchment area are financially less profitable.

Unit cost analysis is an area of very crucial importance to the university. Trends in annual income and expenditure variations, intake fluctuations, discontinuities in annual registrations – all these are variables that complicate unit cost calculations in distance learning. Yet, IGNOU should carry out systematic study of this from the vast array of data it possesses in its financial management and related divisions. The cost efficiency in the future would depend largely upon the university's ability to put in place a system of activity costing which includes regular monitoring and review of cost as they incurred.

The university has decentralised its financial operations to a large extent. The positive aspect of decentralisation is visible with regard to delegation of financial powers to Regional Directors which has helped them to provide better services to the Study Centres and ultimately to the students. In order to effectuate more efficiency at the Regional Centres, the committee recommends that they must be allowed to retain a part of the students' fees collected by them as an advance for meeting the expenditure. The Finance Division may set the modalities in consultation with the RSD.

The decentralisation should also be built up with the periodic internal audit mechanism and norms for controlling the contingencies and administrative expenditures at macro and micro-level. For example, the Finance Division may reflect the administrative expenditure incurred by each division/ faculty against

the total/ academic budget of the Division or output. In the market oriented economy, the Committee recommends for implementing financial performance of each division/ unit.

The-committee recommends that the finance division should make a proposal to the Finance Ministry in consultation with MHRD for giving tax rebate to students of the open education system.

Staff Development Policy

After our observations and recommendations in connection with the Function areas, we consider it worthwhile to recommend the formulation and adoption of a Staff Development Policy by the university. While IGNOU, as a national facility has to attend to the HRD concerns of the country, its own HRD concerns are important to be served. Sustaining the morale of the staff of diverse categories which are in constant interaction where category distinctions may at times get blurred in functional contexts is much more of a requirement in an open learning institution. At one level, the changing nature of the faculty functions in distance education in comparison with conventional higher educational stereotypes, will entail an identity crisis, as it will be quite sometime before a distinct genre of open university academic community can emerge. The frequent boundary crossings in academic functions between the conventional university territory and the open university territory adds to this crisis. At another level, as mentioned at other places in the report, the demarcation between the academic, other academic, technical and administrative also becomes untenable frequently. For these reasons, morale maintenance, inculcating pride in the organisation's mission and nurturing an unwavering fidelity to the university's vision become much more than a matter of lip service. It is for this reason, the committee attaches great importance to Staff Development Policy.

Staff Development Policy as a concept is much more than promotion policies in an organisation, especially in academic organisation – where the broad differentiation between academic staff and administrative staff requires different types of career development inputs. Yet in an open university environment, the symbiotic relationship between the two branches needs to be recognised also. For example, administrative personnel do not only need opportunities to pursue further academic pursuits as an aspect of individual career advancement, the institutional purposes will also be widely served by the

interpenetration of the capabilities of academic, administrative and technical personnel at least to some extent.

The contents of a Staff Development Policy document can only be broadly indicated by this committee. What earlier were 'establishment' related concerns and later styled as 'Personnel Policy Items, – would obviously figure. And many of these get mentioned at different places in university policies even now. Stress on wider career development opportunities in general, and a commitment to open learning goals in particular should be reflected in such a document. Research facilities, scope for participation in conferences and seminars, adequate scope for mobility, periodic upgradation of skills and competencies, particularly in open learning where the diverse components of open learning inputs are subject to rapidly changing methodologies and techniques. In the sector of Electronic Educational media-this aspect of H.R development is even more important. Part-time faculty's capability development and career development should also not be lost sight of. For on the loyalty and morale of this segment of the faculty also depend the credentials of the open university operations. For a detailed and systematically formulated Staff Development Policy document, we recommend the IGNOU to engage the services of a recognized HRD agency to formulate the plan. We presume that such an exercise includes a comprehensive need assessment of the various categories of IGNOU staff including the broad nature of work that pertains to these categories. Care should be taken that Staff Development needs are identified by intensive interaction with the diverse categories of the staff.

CHAPTER-5

DISTANCE EDUCATION COUNCIL AND IT'S ROLE

The Distance Education Council (DEC) was established in 1993, as a constituent part of Indira Gandhi National Open University. The IGNOU Act envisages the establishment of an agency to address the task of monitoring Distance and Open Education in the country. In other words, DEC discharges this aspect of IGNOU's mandate and thus could be regarded as the agency that is operationally in charge of promoting and maintaining standards and, as the funding agency for distance learning institutions in India. In this respect its functions vis-à-vis the Open Universities and Correspondence Course Institutes (CCIs) are comparable to that of the University Grants Commission's (UGC) vis-à-vis the conventional universities.

The slight delay in the establishment of DEC after the creation of IGNOU is accountable to the initial hesitancy in IGNOU's standing forth as the guardian of the already existing correspondence course facilities attached to the conventional universities. For one thing, those universities were reluctant to part with their control over their distance education affiliates, and for another IGNOU was yet to formulate a firm policy regarding bringing those affiliates under its wings. This has had implications to the funding-function of IGNOU. For, till such time as IGNOU could exercise its monitoring function over the overall architecture of open learning, it left the correspondence course centres to continue under the purview of the UGC's funding function. However, since the early 90's IGNOU assumed the funding function with respect to the State Open Universities (SOUs) adopting the norms the UGC stipulated under its 12 (B) Regulation, which specified the conditionalities to be fulfilled by universities to be admitted to central grants. We will return to this aspect of the matter later.

The progress in the functioning of DEC has been very gratifying for distance education in India. Remaining as an organ of IGNOU, DEC's in its structural pattern still remains modest. With the Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU as its Chairman and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor overseeing its activities, DEC's executive Head is a Director assisted by a Dy. Director. The Council itself is designed to give representation to State Open Universities, Board of Management of IGNOU and other national level educational institutions like the NCTE and NAAC. As an organ of IGNOU, DEC decisions are subject to the approval of the IGNOU's Board of Management. This brings us back to the question of DEC's statutory position as an organ of IGNOU and at the same time as the agency to establish, maintain, promote, and fund distance education in the country. Perhaps, it would better suit the demands of DEC's wide-ranging function, if it were to be conferred a full autonomous status comparable to that of the UGC.

DEC has so far proceeded with its activities in a systematic manner. In attending to the advocacy function, to the task of promoting distance education and to the other activities like maintaining standards in instruction, delivery and promoting the adoption of multi-media modalities, it has taken some initiatives.

It is best to evaluate DEC's performance on the basis of its over-arching role of gradually integrating the two distinct generalities of open learning institutions, the correspondence course Institutions and Open Universities. It is well recognised that there is a big gap between the two systems in terms of functions, infrastructure and capabilities. Thus, DEC undertaking consists in re-engineering the distance education system.

In its pursuit of re-engineering the distinct generations of distant learning institutions existing in India, DEC has concentrated on nurturing the correspondence schools to the level of open learning institutions. Towards this it

has adopted a viable programme of action: advice in improving the content of print material, incorporating the self-instructional style; guidelines for curriculum and course design and guidelines for starting new academic programmes that are in vogue currently and comparative guidelines on funding CCIs & SOUs form part of this programme. Advocacy, exhortation and promotion of training opportunities are also some of the items in the action programme. There are also proposals to convene periodical conferences of Vice-Chancellors of Conventional Universities with distance education centres, Education Secretaries of the States and of course the Heads of Distance Education Centres to familiarising them with the opportunities and needs of these centres. The goal is that they emerge as fullfledged open learning agencies incorporating the full range of concepts, methodologies and interventions associated with open learning. However, as already mentioned, the interface of DEC with correspondence course system/D.E. Centres has so far not been as intense as it is with State Open Universities. With respect of the SOU's, DEC's interaction has been more intensive from the beginning as the SOUs are envisaged as full-fledged open learning systems.

It should be mentioned that even in the case of SOUs, not all of them have attained identical levels of progress. Of the IO SOUs only three have so far has been admitted to development grants that DEC disburses under the ubiquitous 12 (B) Regulation of the UGC that DEC has so far chosen to adopt. Apart from this development grant variable, the SOUs differ rather widely in attaining to the level of open university paradigm. In fact, some of them are yet to find their feet in this regard. Therefore, even here DEC has to bestow nurturing care to ensure new SOUs to rise up to the required standards to be full-fledged open universities in operational terms.

DEC developed very clear guidelines for funding SOUs and CCIs keeping in view the differences in their growth level. The conditionalities for entitlement of

grants have been specified in detail in these guidelines. In fact, these guidelines have been recommended by Committees consisting of representative from SOUs and CCIs and experts associated with open learning and also have been subject of revision to suit changing times. The details of funds released are given in **Annexure-IX**.

The characteristic feature of these conditionalities is that they are closely related to acquisition of capabilities and infrastructure (both physical and otherwise) that are germane to distance education and open learning and not to infrastructures normally associated with conventional universities. For example, DEC lays stress on capacity-building in information technology infrastructure. Its grants could as well be in the shape of making available an electronic media network in which SOUs would become active partners rather than being mere passive recipients of conventional hand outs from IGNOU as grants are normally understood. Thus, partnership building in electronic media networking along with firming the foundations of open learning infrastructure like course development, course sharing a range of training inputs constitute the priorities for "funding". We endorse these initiatives. The position with regard to funding the CCIs is different; as they are not universities in themselves they are to be treated on a different footing. Here again the norms so far adopted by the UGC in funding CCIs (as part of their parent conventional universities), are being adopted by DEC with appropriate modifications.

The issue of admitting SOUs to full entitlement of development grants has already been referred to. The point is that the I2 B Regulation pertaining to the UGC's norms for development grant is rather rigid, and even dysfunctional. They are the more so in their application to SOUs because the norms of space, building infrastructure, playing fields and the like, are rather unrelated to the type of infrastructure that open universities need. In this epoch where the concepts like a virtual university are in vogue, an open University requires far more flexible

norms for entitlement to grants. So far IGNOU has been constrained to follow I2 B and this has proved rather an obstruction to the growth of many of the SOUs in securing development grants. The situation with regard to the CCIs is equally constraining.

To obviate the difficulty, DEC has ventured to extend grants to SOUs without strictly adhering to the I2 B norms. This seems to us to be eminently desirable from the academic point of view though it may seem to fall foul of the bureaucrats' interpretation of the rules and regulations. IGNOU and DEC are now keen on relaxing the I2 B format. However, there is the Catch 22 Situation of not keeping in line with the UGC's norms. The UGC itself, is apparently, seeking the adoption of less rigid conditionalities. But, should the IGNOU system wait till the UGC goes through its procedures of amending its out-dated norms? However, a dialogue is going on between the UGC and DEC in this regard and it is expected that a solution will be found in the very near future. Meanwhile, IGNOU should continue exploring ways and means of extending grants to SOUs and the CCIs, at-least on a limited scale even by resorting to suitable terminological devices.

We do realise that mere grant of money is itself not adequate to nurture SOUs and other distance education units to their expected stature. Equally important are the academic and training inputs, intense socialisation of the powers that be in the educational sector to respond positively to the open learning paradigm. This task, DEC has initiated through not optimally.

DEC has an important part to play in giving direction towards adopting programmes of a non conventional variety. Conventional academic programmes leading to the awarding of degrees at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels need to be contained, even contracted, and open learning/distance education should move towards other directions. Through its advocacy function

and its incentive-giving role DEC would encourage the expansion of programmes directed towards continuous and non-conventional education. Upgradation of programmes to upgrade skills and competence in major industrial and agricultural fields should gradually take precedence over the conventional course menu.

Another important role of DEC is to maintain high standards of education through open and distance mode. In this respect, we have discussed some of the steps taken by DEC for Quality Assurance in respect of study material of the CCIs and the funds provided by DEC to the CCIs for converting its existing print material to the self-instructional material format. It is necessary for DEC to evolve a mechanism for deciding quality assurance for different types of programmes started by the CCIs and the open universities. The DEC has already started bringing out booklets in respect of the norms for management programmes like MBA, computer programmes like MCA, teacher education programmes etc. It is necessary that these norms and standards are formulated in collaboration with the national level bodies. It is necessary for DEC to evolve a mechanism to ensure that these norms are observed and the DEC should have the final authority in this respect. It can also be seen that the DEC can take assistance of National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC), a body of the UGC or whether DEC can evolve its own methodology for assessment and accreditation of the CCIs and open universities and it should be also decided whether funding should be related on the performance report and accreditation.

In this respect, it is also necessary to lay down norms for the assessment of the work of the academic and administrative staff in the open and distance learning system. Further, the present career advancement norms for the placement of the teachers in higher grades are prepared by the UGC. These norms have been designed mainly for the teachers in the conventional system and do not take much note of the specialized kind of working required of the staff

in the open and distance learning system. Thus, the standard formats for the assessment of work of the teachers and the staff of the open universities are requested to be developed and it is necessary to see that these norms and standards are accredited by the HRD Ministry and the respective State Governments for placement of the teachers in higher grades. IGNOU is also concerned with the staff training and research in distance education and has a separate division involved in this work known as STRIDE. Beside this work of STRIDE, it is necessary to start a programme on the lines of the Faculty Improvement Programmes (FIP) of the UGC for teachers in the conventional system.

Several teachers in the conventional system have availed of the study leave and research grant facility for completing the M.Phil and Ph.D. degrees under FIP. Unfortunately at present, the teachers in the open universities have suffered considerably due to lack of these facilities in the distance education system. It is suggested that the DEC may consider introducing faculty improvement programmes for the staff.

Yet another important role of the DEC is to provide liaisoning role with other educational bodies, particularly the national level agencies, like the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), to facilitate distance education agencies to mount programmes in technological and teacher education sectors. In this regard also hurdles exist. The national level professional bodies, in their zealous regard to maintain standards of academic courses tend to insist on rather strict norms to be observed by open learning institutions in admission criteria and instructional methodologies in delivery of professional programmes. Distance Education efforts need built-in flexibility in approach in matters relating to practicals, hands on experience criteria, numbers to be admitted and the like. This problem has cropped up prominently with regard to the B.Ed programme. For one thing, the

span of open learning instruction becomes under-utilised if the ceiling on admissions is too low, for another a very conventional approach to practicals may prove to be too constraining to the very form of open learning. While the weeding out of sub-standard B.Ed programmes started by some distance education agencies with no regard for professional proficiency is necessary, the attitude of regarding all distance education efforts as sub-standard is uncalled for. It seems that professional educational bodies are yet to perceive with the necessary imaginative and innovative out-look such efforts in educational expansion. Here again, it is gratifying that a multi-lateral approach to resolve different view points and arriving at solutions is being recognised by all concerned. Yet quicker action is the need of the hour.

A related aspect of DEC's role is to explore the relative roles of SOUs and IGNOU and, for that matter, all the other distance education agencies. The problems essentially relates to the duplication of Academic Programmes, jurisdiction of open universities and, what some people regard as competition within the open university system.

At one level of thinking there is a view that SOUs would do well in adopting IGNOU programmes and materials, piggy-back on their student support infrastructure (like the Study Centres) and thus economise and rationalise their activities and resources. But this seems to be an extreme view. SOUs cannot be relegated to the mere status of regional translating universities. Further, India's higher education catchment area is too vast to be adequately served by one single open university's academic capabilities.

Another view is, that SOUs can be left free to pursue their missions in a competitive environment leaving it to the market mechanism to operate. Here, there is the ready analogy of the conventional Universities whose existence is determined partly by the felt-educational needs of different regions but mostly by

the populist rhetoric driven by political considerations. Should this be the criterion behind the creation of SOUs in India? Broadly viewed, this would appear to be an inevitable outcome. But, then, some sort of a rationale distribution of the programme offerings *inter-se* the open universities would still be required to avoid wastage of scarce resources.

A via-media strategy would be for DEC to evolve a policy of mutuality among the open universities and other distance education agencies in sharing and shaping of programme to be delivered. While the national level IGNOU remains the leader and other DE institutions can still initiate programmes without much of duplication that is happening now.

It would be remembered the DEC has also assumed responsibility of being the "broker" of making available academic programmes and related course material developed by one university to other open universities. If, as an aspect of this function it could strive to persuade distance education institutions not to re-invent the wheel in the developing indigenously their own programmes in every suitable discipline, the problem mentioned could be contained to the advantage of all.

However, a degree of deliberate advisory control over open learning agencies is needed lest enthusiasm overtakes real needs and capabilities of the institutions. What should be the guiding criteria in this regard. We venture to suggest the following :-

1. In formal education programmes like under-graduate degree programmes, wide duplication would be inevitable. In this sector, IGNOU qua its University's role will do better to stage a discreet withdrawal where SOUs exist. This would afford the SOUs a wide field regionally to function, of course in competition with the conventional Universities. Even here,

eventually the sites of the open learning system should be set on parallel concerns with non-formal educational agenda than on offering strategy for Conventional Works.

2. In the post-graduate segment, however, restraint is advisable. Not all SOUs need offer identical courses. DEC's persuasive role would become most crucial in this context. As it is, DEC has advisory role; if only it could acquire the 'consenting role' also, that would be an ideal outcome. We do appreciate the point that SOUs and other distance education agencies are keen to operate post-graduate programmes also and the regional language factor would be an argument in their favour. However, given the levels of intake into PG programmes within the distance mode, one needs to be sceptical about the viability of duplicating PG courses by different SOUs. Should scarce resources be spread out thinly over such programmes? Further, even from the purely academic point of view, there is need to put a ceiling on PG programmes even if distance education opportunities in terms of seats for admission need to be more extensive than those available with conventional Universities. The solution of translating good materials available elsewhere into the different regional languages would be a viable alternative.
3. It is in the area of non-formal courses, that the regional distance education institutions should take wide ranging initiatives. Such initiatives, in addition to being in consonance with the wider rationale of open learning catering to as much of HRD capabilities as possible, would also be serving regionally and locally relevant educational and training needs. We can cite examples of programmes relating to the agricultural and food processing sector, and localised industrial needs, which are effectively delivered to farmers, agricultural functionaries and other related target groups.

One cannot over state the importance of DEC's role in ensuring the reception, consolidation and sustained growth of open learning in India. The progress of correspondence courses into full-fledged distance education facilities – that is, bridging the generation gap among the country's Distance Education Systems – should be DEC's top priority concern. This would entail more pro-active role for DEC. The mobilisation of the stakeholders in the system will fall almost singly on DEC, for some of the stakeholders have not yet come to identify themselves as such in the system. That, indeed is still the state of perception of distance education in significant quarters. The State Governments in particular have been ready enough to establish open universities and conventional universities are also ready enough to establish corresponding course centres. But neither of them is inclined to take follow up initiatives with their respective creations. There is a dis-junction between their policy motivations in starting these institutions on the one hand and their awareness or commitment to the full range of open learning functions.

Therefore, it becomes the task of DEC to perform the nurturing role in the system. Continuous interaction with State Government functionaries is yet to be taken seriously by DEC. This indeed has been a major gap in its activity so far. Similarly, a more purposeful interventionist role towards the conventional Universities with CCI is yet to be manifest on the part of DEC. No doubt its funding function is gradually jointed CCI into its orbits. However, this in itself does not constitute an adequate intercourse. Unless an intense interface between DEC and the distance education institutions is maintained, the former's mission as the guardian of distance education is likely to lapse by default with only the funding function remaining prominent and that too getting routinised. One can adduce examples from other bodies visualised as monitors of

educational concerns, becoming mere symbols as standard setters and monitors. DEC should not fall into this common pattern.

We realise DEC's present limitations. Its administrative infrastructure is extremely inadequate. Both in terms of top level and middle level personnel, DEC is too lean to be expected to perform robustly. IGNOU should attend to this problem immediately. Not merely in appointing a full time Director but also in endowing DEC with adequate staff to organise itself appropriately to cater to the multiple functions to perform. This situation should be remedied forthwith. Indeed, IGNOU which has both the responsibility by virtue of its mandate, and the power in view of its vast resources should have done better with DEC. Ideally, an autonomous or even an independent existence to DEC could be envisaged. An inbuilt ambivalence or ambiguity in IGNOU's twin roles has been recognised. However, a radical alteration in DEC's structure may not be a viable solution, at least for the present. Instead, a strong autarkic identity could be conferred on DEC even within the present structural arrangement under IGNOU. Such an arrangement would lend credibility to both IGNOU and to DEC. We can only suggest a broad pattern for the autarkic arrangements. DEC should be headed by a functionary of this nature of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, preferably with DEC as his or her sole concern. Appropriate delegation of authority from the Vice-Chancellor to this functionary is also necessary. The existing position of the Director could be retained alongwith other senior positions looking after specialised functions which DEC is to perform.

The point is that DEC's presence should be made to be felt by the stakeholders. This visibility can only be projected if DEC's activities to an extent decentralised. While we are not advocating zonalisation of DEC, perhaps accessing DEC's expertise more frequently to the SOUs and CCI's require appropriate units of DEC operating in the field. IGNOU should consider how best such accessibility be made possible in organising DEC's operational structures.

There are some sectors of IGNOU with which DEC will have to constantly collaborate. STRIDE is one such. To facilitate sustained and growth coordination, linkages between DEC and STRIDE should be ensured without bureaucratic problems cropping up. For example, one PVC could be entrusted with the headship of both DEC and STRIDE.

CHAPTER – 6

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing chapters contains an assessment by the Committee of the functional areas of the University. Our main focus, (as stated earlier and, at times, reiterated) is to assess areas of performance in terms of the University vindicating its role in achieving the requirements of its mission and mandate. In view of this, it would be unnecessary to list our specific responses to the individual terms of reference. Our assessment, as can be seen, has been, one way or the other, a commentary on various aspects referred to in the terms of reference.

We are asked to follow up the assessment with recommendations about how the University's performance could be improved. The text of the report itself contains recommendations and we are also highlighting most of those recommendations in the following pages. However, both the text and the recommendations chapters form an integral part of the report and it is understood that the former is to be consulted as much as the latter for a proper appreciation of the recommendations we make.

(I) ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AND FACULTY

- (1) The University should diversify its academic programmes to meet the needs of continuing education of hitherto neglected regions and communities in the country. However, such programmes need not necessarily lead to the award of Degrees or Diplomas in the conventional sense.

- (2) Programmes particularly catering to the industrial and also agricultural needs require to be developed. In a sense, such programmes even as they contribute to human resource development also yield revenues to the University.
- (3) There is the vast sector of administrative manpower serving both the governmental machinery as also the country's economy which needs constant up-gradation in its capabilities and skills. While it is impossible to cover the entire gamut of the sector, a concerted effort at least to target a sizeable part of this sector is essential. Computer literacy, and communication - related computer programmes are the obvious candidates as examples; computer and communication technologies have converged into information technology which has created through World Wide Web a new global society of 'NET' users.
- (4) This would require stress on inter-disciplinarity in the functioning of the faculty. It would also require a more integrated teamwork among the course teams and, if necessary, the establishment of new types of coordinating bodies to operationalise the spirit of inter-disciplinarity. We have already suggested in the Chapter dealing with the academic programmes some broad indicators to foster the spirit.
- (5) The according of proper priorities between the so called elite and urban oriented programmes like Management Studies and Computer Studies on the one hand and those relating to the needs of less endowed regions on the other, specially rural and tribal, is essential. The former would yield revenues whereas the latter may be seen as a poor cousin. It is not our intention to minimise the importance of hi-tech courses as they are indeed necessary for both educational development and employment and technological advances. Our pleading is that a concerted effort should be

made in developing and delivering courses designed to cater to the needs of less developed regions. We referred to the suggestions already made in Chapter-III. Such programmes are capable of developing local skills, promoting indigenous economic infrastructures and also contributing to the awareness and participation of local people in the development process.

- (6) In order to realise these goals, it would be necessary to innovate in the direction of devising new programmes as well as extending the present structure of the delivery system. Local needs must be met, particularly in the area of skill-development and consciousness – raising. In terms of reaching the unreached and helping the disadvantaged, it is feasible to take the system to the doorsteps of those who are most in need of it. The Mobile Study Centre, the Distance Learning Facilitator, the NGO working as Programme Study Centre, the Public Call Office or the Rural Library working as a Communication Centre, and the Night Shelter at Regional Centres for learners from remote regions – are some of the innovations which have to be seriously explored.
- (7) In realizing the above, more careful monitoring of course development, more deliberate speed in designing, developing and delivering of programmes are urgently needed, as the present practices have to stand up to 'good practices' level.
- (8) Towards the above, careful monitoring of course development process is essential. We also recommend that the University initiate an award scheme for those course team leaders, editors and writers who show excellence in this regard.

- (9) Projects funded by outside agencies, even by the initiatives of individual faculty members, need to go through the necessary approval channels, if the end goal is to develop them as university academic programmes to be offered to the students. Such projects funded from outside are different from research projects that individual faculty members may have secured. The latter belongs to the concerned individuals and need not go through the programmes approval process so long as it is not proposed to be launched as part of IGNOU's new academic programme.
- (10) Drawing on part-time faculty for the various stages of programme development is inevitable but the greater involvement of the full time faculty is absolutely desirable. While no generalisation is possible, we are of the opinion that in many cases the faculty is largely confining its role to facilitating programme development rather than being directly involved in the writing of units and courses. This in the long run may dilute the intellectual vigour and academic fervour of IGNOU's academic community. Management may look into this aspect too.
- (11) As far as programme development is concerned, the academically qualified personnel working in other Divisions at various positions other than what is called 'teaching positions' in the School should also be involved. It is true that they are designated as 'academic' staff and discharge administrative responsibilities in the Regional Services Division and its sub-organs, that is the Regional Centres, but they now feel largely left out of programme development work even though they possess academic disciplinary qualifications and are recruited on that basis. We recommend that the 'academic staff' working in other Divisions should be given adequate opportunities towards this end. A clear formula should be evolved by the University to facilitate their involvement in course development. Here, it is also stressed that the University should benefit

from the services of such academic/administrative staff who already have multidisciplinary qualifications and experience; this may mean job rotation and job enlargement with suitable perks admissible to them.

(12) IGNOU has a distinction of offering its programmes to countries outside; under Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship Scheme which, with the collaboration of the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, it offered the postgraduate level programme in Distance Education to nearly a score of developing Commonwealth countries. There is every prospect of the University diversifying its activity. However, what is needed, is development of course materials to reach international standards both in content and contextual and production quality. We recommend that STRIDE, the concerned Schools and the International Cell together gear up to the required responsibility. We make these recommendations not in a routine way but in the expectation that in the coming millennium IGNOU, commensurate with its standing, refer itself to this role.

(13) During the last decade already some of the Universities abroad have been aggressively marketing their academic wares through the distance mode. On both the counts of national pride and profit, it calls for IGNOU to catch up with the trend.

(II) STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

REGIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

At the Regional Centres (RCs), problems relating to staff inadequacy, demand for more financial powers to cope with emergency situations like payment to Counsellors and Coordinators, need for quicker communication between Study Centres (SCs), Regional Centres and Head quarters and other

problems heard by the Members of the Committee during their visits to the various RCs cannot adequately be addressed in the form of specific recommendations. Therefore we urge that high level meetings of the PVC Incharge, the Director RSD, the Regional Directors be convened, in which the Regional Directors could also convey the views of their respective colleagues at the RCs and SCs. These micro-level issues could be sorted out. However, we make the following recommendations that touch upon some policy matters.

- (1) In the appointment of Counsellors and Coordinators, we recommend the association of the Regional Directors, even in a consultative capacity, more than as forwarding agencies. Their participation along with the faculty people would help in selecting proper people as the Regional Directors are likely to know more about the fitness of candidates to these posts which may not be possible by mere perusal of their qualifications on paper.
- (2) We also recommend that alternate list of Counsellors and Coordinators be prepared at these meetings so that alternate arrangements could be made any time at short notice, if and when the selected people fail to accept or discharge their responsibilities midway through the counselling process. This contingency can arise especially because lecturers in government colleges, from time to time, are likely to be transferred by the governments of the respective States. Also they may opt out for their personal reasons.
- (3) We recommend greater monitoring of the Study Centres by the Regional Directors (RDs), and by the Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs). Presently, the ARDs have a lot of administrative responsibilities which prevent them from attending academic meetings. This problem needs to be addressed at meetings of the type we recommended above.

- (4) The maintenance of Audio/Video equipments and teleconferencing equipments at RCs and the SCs is now done in an adhoc manner. In some cases, maintenance contract is given to outside agencies. We notice this in particular at the two Delhi RCs and recommend that at least in Delhi and nearby RCs, Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC) could be asked to look after maintenance. In some academic programmes like that of Library Science, the computer marked assignments are required to be sent even before counselling classes start; it is better that the students be given the benefit of counselling classes before they do these assignments.
- (5) Counselling for low enrolment courses is seen reduced, possibly for reasons of viability, but we recommend that the full component be restored.
- (6) There is, of course, the problem of poor attendance in counselling sessions, which to an extent seems unavoidable by the very nature of distance education. We recommend the following measures to motivate students:
- a) Ensuring regular attendance of Counsellors at counselling sessions and periodical monitoring by the RCs may remedy the situation at least to some extent.
 - b) Increasing awareness of IGNOU telecast operations, say, through the use of cable T.V. networks in towns is yet another solution.
 - c) We are encouraged to note that the Vice-Chancellor has already initiated steps to involve cable T.V. networks to telecast IGNOU programmes.

- (7) Model assignments after marking by the examiners could be returned to the RCs to be made available to other students for their benefit. We recommend a review of honorarium amount being paid to the Coordinators at SCs – rupees one thousand is now being paid to the Coordinators at SCs. Similarly, TA and DA payment to Counsellors visiting RCs on official work should be considered favourably. We cannot lay down emphasis formally but suggest a review of such payments.
- (8) We would strongly recommend a careful review of the partnership arrangements with regard to Study Centres. No doubt, the idea of partnerships involving non-academic institutions is useful, particularly in academic computer programmes. However, it is precisely here that we heard complaints about Work Centre partners who are purely commercial - minded. Computer 'cafes' are not delivering proper service; their instructional inputs into the students at the Work Centres tend to be very poor. Indeed something should be done in this regard. On the other hand, some of the colleges with well endowed computer terminal capacity are doing good work. A review of these Centres especially in Delhi needs to be undertaken immediately. We gather that earlier Study Centres for computer courses were located in Engineering Colleges and for some reason private computer operators are taken in as partners with attending problems as mentioned above.
- (9) Course material in Hindi should be sent in reasonably large quantities at least to the metropolitan cities in non-Hindi speaking areas. There is likely to be a good concentration of Hindi knowing people registered with IGNOU in those areas, and particularly army personnel and ex-service men would be reading the Hindi material.

- (10) We find that Delhi Study Centres do not conduct examinations and this is more so with regard to BCA and MCA programmes. Possibly this may be due to the fact that many of these are Work Centres as mentioned above. It should be possible for IGNOU Headquarter's people to go there and conduct the examinations to avoid inconvenience to the students.

STUDENT REGISTRATION AND EVALUATION DIVISION (SR & E DIVISION)

1. Planning for disadvantaged groups requires programme-wise students Profile, especially for SC/ST, physically challenged and female categories. It should be readily available to help in decision making at the Government level and the University level. Therefore, better co-ordination is to be ensured between SR & E Division and Schools and Regional Centres, maintaining an uninterrupted flow of information.
2. Sanctity of examinations and security of assignment evaluation at all levels are necessary for establishing the credibility of the degrees/diplomas/certificates awarded by the University. The SR & E Division has also to ensure this, particularly in far-flung 'disturbed' areas and 'inhospitable' & 'hostile' areas.

MATERIAL PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION DIVISION

1. The University may have to deliberate upon two issues for improving the delivery mechanism of self-instructional study materials to students and performance of the MPDD:

- (a) Delegation of powers to the Regional Centres for undertaking a few activities of MPDD at regional level.
- (b) Outsourcing to external agencies a few activities of MPDD.
2. Marketing: The Committee felt that marketing activities through a network of dealers and institutions should be formalised. Good quality study material of IGNOU's various programmes could be published on a large scale and sold out to the students of conventional universities and public. The University can augment its resources considerably through this activity. To handle marketing function effectively, we recommend that a separate unit be created and the university may appoint a marketing expert as in-charge of this unit.

(III) ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTION CENTRE (EMPC)

- (1) Given the vast infrastructure of the EMPC and the phenomenal demand for AV material coming from various places, it should be possible for this Division to hire out its facilities during slack time to other AV agencies. This would be a good revenue source for the University. We are gratified to note that the University is asking the Division to become self supporting financially and take various other measures for using the material and manpower resource to go a long way in meeting this goal.

- (2) With the launching of the National Educational TV Channel, where IGNOU has to play a crucial role it, is necessary that appropriate divisional responsibility in the EMPC set up be assigned.
- (3) As the Centre is also planning to launch its own academic programmes, we recommend that it should be able to meet its own requirements without seeking help of outside Schools. This of course relates to the question of conferring School status to EMPC, which is now being examined by an Expert Committee.
- (4) Senior academic staff in the Centre, though handicapped in terms of formal academic qualifications, should be given opportunity to have involvement in EMPCs academic programmes. We venture to make this recommendation in view of the fact that EMPC may not be able to get people with requisite formal qualifications entitled to be called faculty/teacher. Flexible norms may be evolved to involve experienced technical personnel in the Centre with teaching responsibility.

(III) RESEARCH & TRAINING

Research

- (1) We recommend that research in Distance Education at IGNOU should acquire higher priority. As the formally designated body STRIDE should have already planned research agenda on a sustainable basis. What can be called systemic research should be the primary responsibility of STRIDE. This is not to say that individual members of the different academic disciplines cannot enter the area. STRIDE should avoid duplication of research projects and areas covered by such projects. We notice that while individual members of STRIDE have been producing

research papers, STRIDE as an entity is yet to project itself as a Research Agency.

- (2) IGNOU's Research Committee is seized with the matter of formalising research leading to M.Phil and Ph.D. Degrees. We are confident that well laid down guidelines about admission criteria, research guidance credentials, number of students to be admitted, avoidance of overlap of research subjects etc. will be addressed by the Research Committee before long.
- (3) We recommend that systemic research for Distance Education should include both the theoretical as well as practical aspects of Distance Education/Open Learning. Programmes, particularly of non-formally academic nature should receive priority. We would like to lay emphasis on this for the reason that such research would enable the system to search the trends in the requirements of people and communities for whom open learning under IGNOU leadership is the most user-friendly system.

Training

While training inputs into the programme development function have been very effective, other categories of staff feel relatively left out. In this category we list the following:

- (1) The vast array of part-time Counsellors at the Study Centres need more training inputs. We do realise the constraints in this regard as thousands are involved in this category. Yet, the imperatives of the student support system demand that at least twice a year, batches of Counsellors be given training. The Regional Centres may serve as the appropriate place for

such training inputs. STRIDE could identify small teams-of trainers to undertake this task. In this task, three or four teams could become peripatetic trainers. In this way, over a year about 30 to 40 training sessions could be conducted covering at least a significant section of the part time Counsellors. As already pointed out in the text of the Report, training for the administrative staff is also a necessity. There has been frequent references to this in our sessions with various categories of administrative staff. This has been a constant request. We note that some training was being given but the problem of periodic inputs to cater to new staff and to refresh the capabilities of those already trained still needs to be addressed. This would apply more to those working in Regional Service and Student Registration & Evaluation Divisions where computer operations involving data entry and data disbursement are a critical function. To achieve this, a sustainable interface between STRIDE and the Schools and Divisions is necessary, as STRIDE itself may not be able to identify the precise needs. A well planned training programme tailored to the needs of concerned functionaries could be delivered at regular intervals if such an arrangement is put in place.

- (2) The above recommendation is important because at present STRIDE's capability is rather largely confined to academic aspects of distance education (course design, course writing, course team building, student counselling and the like). To cater to the larger HRD needs of the University and its widespread network of student support services, the University should think of further strengthening STRIDE's capabilities in other directions also.
- (3) This would, in its turn, require expansion of the staff of STRIDE. Above all, STRIDE should be provided with more focussed leadership not only in terms of a full time Director but also providing for a leader of the rank of a

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, exclusively concerned with STRIDE. Such leadership could nurture the needed environment for the full use of the capabilities of STRIDE.

- (4) With IGNOU projecting itself on the international arena, STRIDE should acquire greater visibility. Already it has close linkages with institutions abroad and greater coordination between the International Cell of IGNOU, STRIDE and EMPC would go a long way in making IGNOU a global nodal agency in catering to the needs of distance education internationally. While we are not able to suggest a precise structure to achieve this coordination, we leave it to the University to bestow attention to this aspect of the matter.

(V) LIBRARY

1. For collection, collation and dissemination of information and dispersal of reference material, library plays a key role and can be seen as a nodal agency in the university system. It is, therefore, important that (a) Library is adequately equipped with the human resource and computer facility, (b) Material security is ensured against pilferers and computer security against hackers and (c) environment is made conducive for learners and researchers.

(VI) PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIVISION (P&DD)

1. The Planning & Development Division should develop projects and schemes in emerging areas and get financial support from Human Resource Development and other Ministries. For this, the Schools and other Divisions should share the information, well-in-time with the Planning & Development Division. Similarly, Planning & Development Division can

also seek collaboration with the corporate sectors, statutory bodies and apex institutions.

(VII) ADMINISTRATION

1. **Development of systems:** The Committee observed that the University has not been able to build up systems for some of its major activities such as production, inventory and delivery of materials. The Task Force should eventually develop the systems for achieving these objectives. The Committee recommends that the University should formalise the strategic plans and action plan for the University and for the Open Learning System. The Administration should ensure that the action plans are put into practice timely and effectively.
2. **Infrastructure:** The Schools and Divisions are housed in temporary structures. The development of a permanent structure for Schools/Divisions, and other building requirements in terms of Conference rooms, guest-house etc: should be given priority. Regional Centres should also have their own building and campus.
3. **Proper utilisation of physical resources and facilities:** Interactions with academic and non-academic staff members indicate that there is a need for optimum utilisation of resources and facilities. The optimal utilisation of communication and information resources has to be planned, and effective utilisation has to be ensured. The new technologies being adopted by the University should be utilised for integration of tasks and activities. University should develop information system network and network structure for the IGNOU and for the Open Learning System (involving SOUs and CCIs) for sharing the resources and synchronising the inputs for achieving the objectives.

4. **Human Resource:** The Committee recommends mobility among the teachers, academics and administrative staff. The barriers between academic and administrative staff should be broken and interaction among the academic staff themselves, and with the administrative staff should be enhanced for synergistic relationships. It is essential to develop managerial capabilities among the employees of Open Learning System.

There is an urgent need to create IGNOU's Human Resource Database – periodically updated – which could be classified into A, B and C categories. Persons with high qualification/multi-disciplinary qualifications and long/strategic experience or multiplicity of experience should constitute A Group; persons with adequate qualifications and necessary experience should constitute B Group, and persons with essential qualifications but inadequate experience and wanting more exposure should be included in C Group. Search committees to nominate persons to high positions should also scan IGNOU's Human Resource Database for selecting the suitable persons. It does not, however, mean that outsiders should not be inducted into the system or inbreeding alone is to be promoted. Terminus ad quem of this recommendation is that decision of the University Management, as far as possible should not adversely affect the morale in the system, which is so vital for the growth and progress of any organisation.

(VIII) ACADEMIC CO-ORDINATION

1. The structure and operations of the Academic Co-ordination Division may be reviewed in the light of the facts that a part of its functions are closely connected with the academic functions of Planning Division and a part with the personnel functions of the Administration.

(IX) FINANCE DIVISION

1. Neither its surplus nor its internally generated funds can be a consideration for the government to adopt a tight-fisted policy towards IGNOU. We very strongly recommend that the government should be cognisant of the two considerations (i) the large annual student intake and correspondingly the range and magnitude of student support services (ii) heavy investment that innovative technology-based and area-specific programmes require in the initial stage.
2. Unit cost analysis is an area of crucial importance to the University. But unaccounted delay in launching of academic programmes, fluctuation in students enrolment, wide variations in plan/non-plan expenditure, and time and cost over-runs in technology adoption and installations are all these variable that complicate unit cost analysis. IGNOU should however, carry out a study of this kind now as many of its activities and programmes have begun to take a steady shape hence could provide reliable trends from the data accumulated. For this, committee suggests that Planning and Development Division together with Finance Division should draw up a viable plan of action.
3. In order to effectuate more efficiency at the Regional Centres, the committee recommends that they must be allowed to retain a part of the students' fees collected by them as an advance for meeting the expenditure. The Finance Division may set the modalities in consultation with the RSD.
4. The committee recommends that the Finance Division should take a proposal to the Finance Ministry in consultation with MHRD for giving tax rebate to the students of the Open Learning System.

(X) DISTANCE EDUCATION COUNCIL (DEC)

- (1) It is now recognized that DEC should be a relatively autonomous body with enhanced functionality, both in relation to funding and monitoring of distance education throughout the country. This requires a major augmentation of staff and facilities.
- (2) DEC should be entrusted with task of Quality Assurance in distance education, and a comprehensive apparatus for the purpose is needed. The monitoring of training requires close collaboration with STRIDE, for which responsibility may be entrusted to a common PVC.
- (3) DEC should be responsible for developing and updating Performance Indicators for Teachers, Distance Education Institutions and the Career Advancement for all categories of staff.
- (4) We have to consider in long run to give an exclusive and independent status to DEC, and accordingly amendment in the IGNOU Act may become necessary.

(XI) REVISION OF IGNOU STATUTES

An amendment to IGNOU Act incorporating a more forthright mission statement would be appropriate. Such a statement would highlight IGNOU's apex role in the Distance Education System especially entrusted with the task of catering to the functional areas and continuous educational concerns ensuring sustained access to disadvantaged sections of the people and areas of the country.

ANNEXURE-I

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110 068

K.J.S.Prasada Rao
Registrar

Ref No. IG/Admn(G)/AD/1/1/1896
Oct. 8, 1998

NOTIFICATION

The Planning Board of the University at its 21st meeting held on September 17, 1998 has constituted a Review Committee consisting of following members:

1.	Prof. R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao	Chairman
2.	Prof. M.V. Plyee	Member
3.	Dr. Vina Mazumdar	Member
4.	Dr. Ashok Pradhan	Member
5.	Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya	Member
6.	Sh. Kiran Namik	Member
7.	Mrs. Rima Nanawati	Member
8.	Dr. G. Gopal	Member
9.	Dr. Ram Pratap	Secretary

The terms of reference of the Review Committee are as under:

1. To make an assessment of the performance of the University since its inception and of its achievements, and shortcomings, if any, in the fulfilment of its aims and objectives.
2. To examine whether the programmes and courses launched by the University so far have been to contribute to the attainment of the aims and objectives of the University.
3. To make an overall assessment of the achievements of the University in providing a cost-effective and innovative system of education.
4. To make such recommendations as are necessary for the future development of the University in the fulfilment of its aims and objectives in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

The Review Committee will submit its Report by March 15, 1999.

(K.J.S. Prasada Rao)
Registrar

To
Members concerned

Copy to:

1. AR to VC
2. SPA to PVC
3. All Directors/Heads of Schools/Divisions

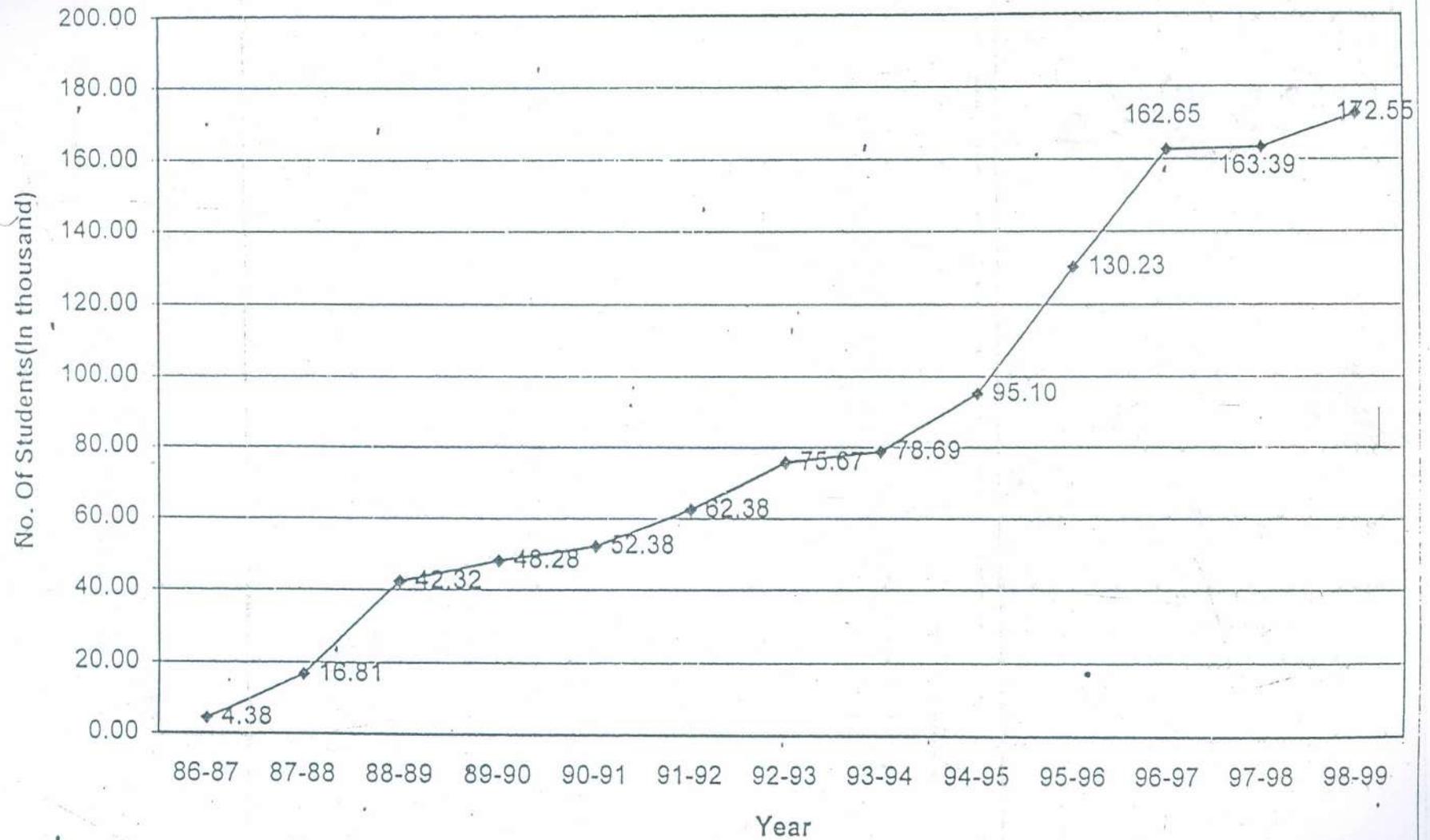
ANNEXURE- II

THE FIRST SCHEDULE (See Section 4)

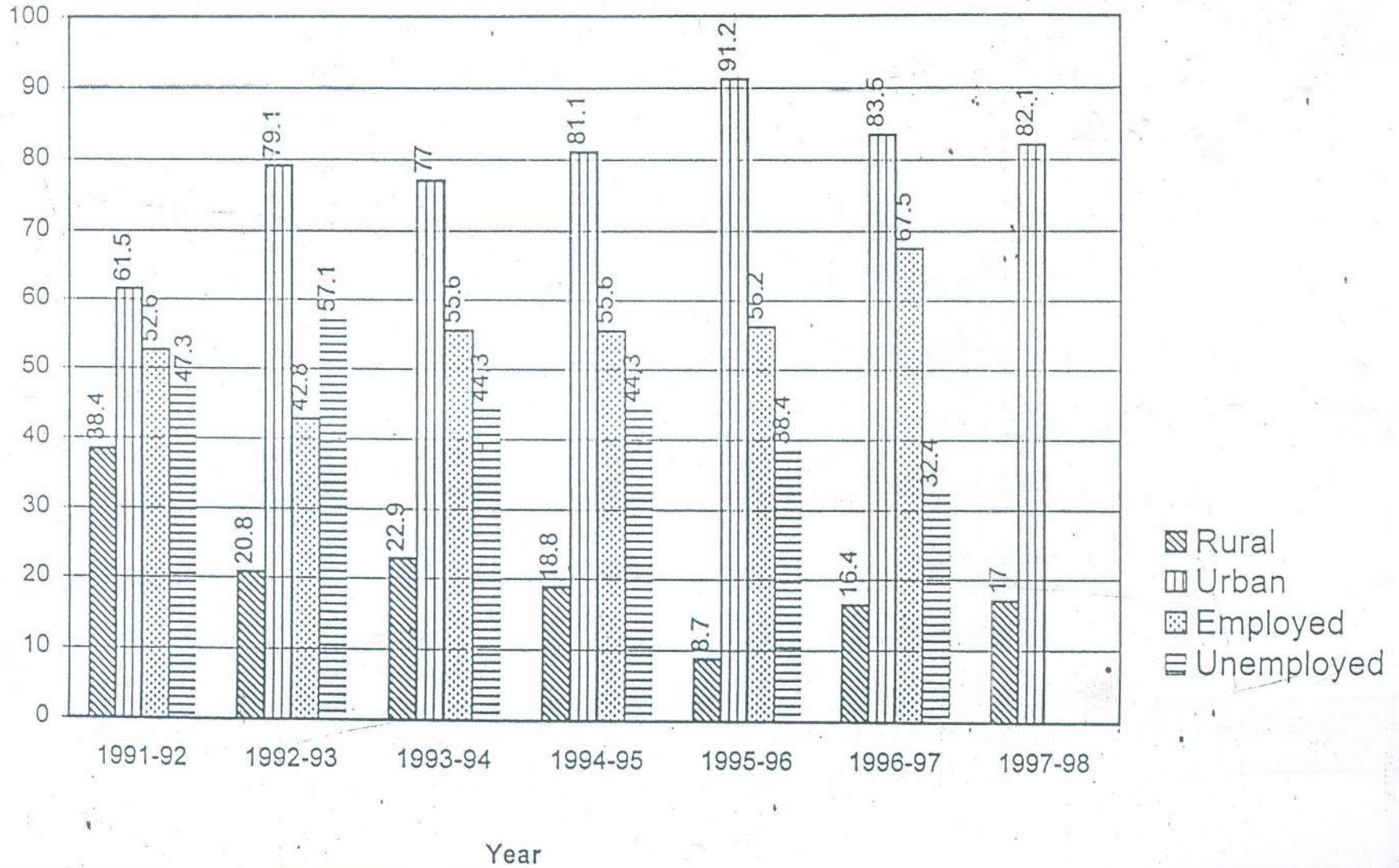
THE OBJECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY

1. The University shall endeavour through education, research, training and extension to play a positive role in development of the country, and, based on the rich heritage of the country, to promote and advance the culture of the people of India and its human resources. Towards this end, it shall:
 - (a) strengthen and diversify the degree, certificate and diploma courses related to the needs of employment and necessary for building the economy of the country on the basis of its natural and human resources;
 - (b) provide access to higher education for large segments of the population, and in particular, the disadvantaged groups such as those living in remote and rural areas including working people, housewives and other adults who wish to upgrade or acquire knowledge through studies in various fields;
 - (c) promote acquisition of knowledge in a rapidly developing and changing society and to continually offer opportunities for upgrading knowledge, training and skills in the context of innovations, research and discovery in all fields of human endeavours;
 - (d) provide an innovative system of university level education, flexible and open, in regard to methods and pace of learning, combination of courses, eligibility for enrolment, age of entry, conduct of examination and operation of the programmes with a view to promote learning and encourage excellence in new fields of knowledge;
 - (e) contribute to the improvement of the educational system in India by providing a non-formal channel complementary to the formal system and encouraging transfer of credits and exchange of teaching staff by making wide use of texts and other software developed by the University;
 - (f) provide education and training in the various arts, crafts and skills of the country, raising their quality and improving their availability to the people;
 - (g) provide or arrange training of teachers required for such activities or institutions;
 - (h) provide suitable post-graduate courses of study and promote research;
 - (i) provide the counselling and guidance to its students; and
 - (j) promote national integration and the integrated development of the human personality through its policies and programmes.
2. The University shall strive to fulfil the above objects by a diversity of means of distance and continuing education, and shall function in co-operation with the existing Universities and Institutions of higher learning and make full use of the latest scientific knowledge and new educational technology to offer a high quality of education which matches contemporary needs.

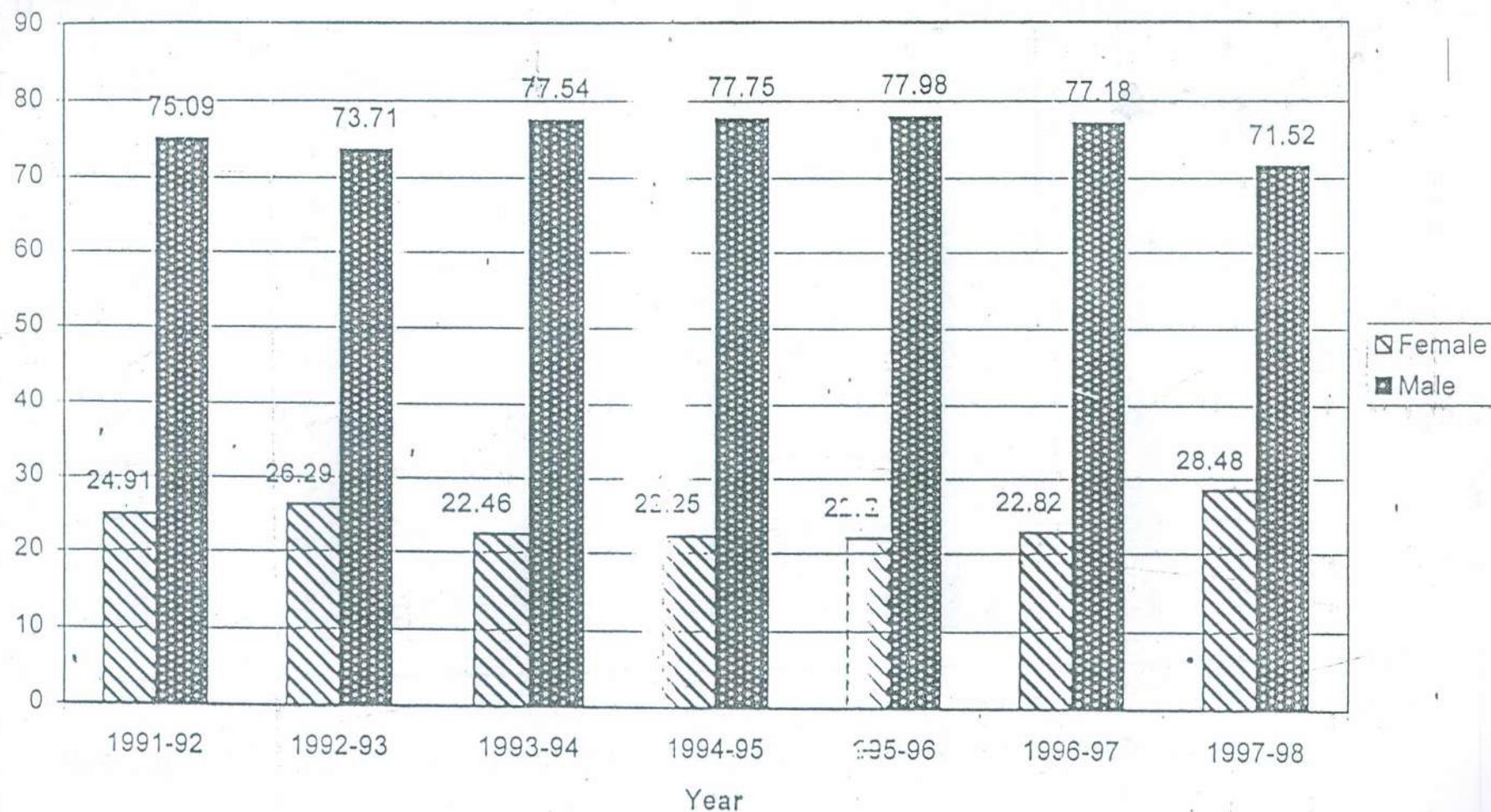
Programmewise and Yearwise Enrolment														
Sl No	Programme	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
1	DIM	3424	5228	6529	6654	7718	---	---	1208	860	491	391	---	---
2	ADIM	---	708	1544	2134	1740	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
3	MBA(FR)	---	---	---	---	---	7350	8368	10597	12812	17610	37899	16422	19574
4	MBA(RR)	---	---	---	---	731	5198	5839	7907	10874	14466	19163	28430	15777
5	PGDFM	---	---	---	---	4127	5053	2823	2980	4835	8990	269	---	---
6	PGDHRM	---	---	---	899	---	---	2137	2329	3156	5438	279	---	---
7	PGDMM	---	---	---	---	---	---	4950	5051	7283	11457	244	---	---
8	PGDOM	---	---	---	---	---	---	1978	2357	2481	4119	143	---	---
9	BPP	---	9472	17053	12366	11237	7664	11872	9772	8881	7461	12657	10392	10793
10	B A	---	---	12573	20900	20390	17344	15939	16591	17173	17698	19938	21829	23875
11	B Com	---	---	---	---	---	6007	5625	5931	6145	6933	6806	7422	7655
12	B Sc	---	---	---	---	---	1210	2003	2587	3519	4140	3924	5005	4753
	B Sc (N)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	407	830	1085	1103	1143
13	BLISc	---	---	---	1527	1872	1461	1473	1280	1246	1279	1222	1205	1578
14	PGDDE	957	1093	1144	1228	825	484	485	445	444	516	339	321	516
15	PGDHE	---	---	---	---	---	862	938	396	506	494	329	379	561
16	DCE	---	310	931	441	333	468	574	484	565	322	495	570	714
17	DCO	---	---	---	---	484	621	853	1099	1535	1507	7786	7721	4590
18	DRD	---	---	---	---	---	2998	2370	1733	1525	1777	1436	1427	2343
19	CFN	---	---	2550	2132	2919	5655	5957	3376	2865	2432	1391	757	722
20	CIG	---	---	---	---	---	---	1081	801	782	628	511	367	518
21	DCH	---	---	---	---	---	---	213	165	226	153	244	266	218
22	MADE	---	---	---	---	---	---	188	49	51	47	20	52	36
23	DNHE	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1227	998	977	963	984	1077
24	CIC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	7381	20684	23462	26405
25	CTS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2186	833	568	278	239
26	ANC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	60	91	53	3	---	---
27	ACC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	268	172	107	23	---	---
28	DTS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1969	1299	923	1001
29	PGDJMC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1257	1254	1040	1220
30	PGDECE	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	189	348	359	500	738
31	PGDCA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1476	2453	---	---	---
32	ADCA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	612	---	---	---
33	ADCM	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	808	643	1960	1098	499
34	ADWRE	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	49	120	260	104	60
35	BTS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1280	1882	2384	2086
36	BCA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2661	13577	21078	27940
37	MLISc	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	956	746	693	477	453
38	MCA	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2115	5436	11953
39	CTE	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	328	437	553
40	CNCC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	105	108	322
41	CES	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	826	397
42	ADTS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	32	9
43	DMCH	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	559	616
44	CWDM	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	169
45	PGDT	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	665
46	PGCRW	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	71
47	CDM	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	607
48	CNOC	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	30
49	CPFM	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	67
	Total	4381	16811	42324	48281	52376	62375	75666	71893	95096	130278	162645	163394	172548

Students Enrolment
Annual Growth

Percent Distribution of Students Rural, Urban, Employed and Unemployed

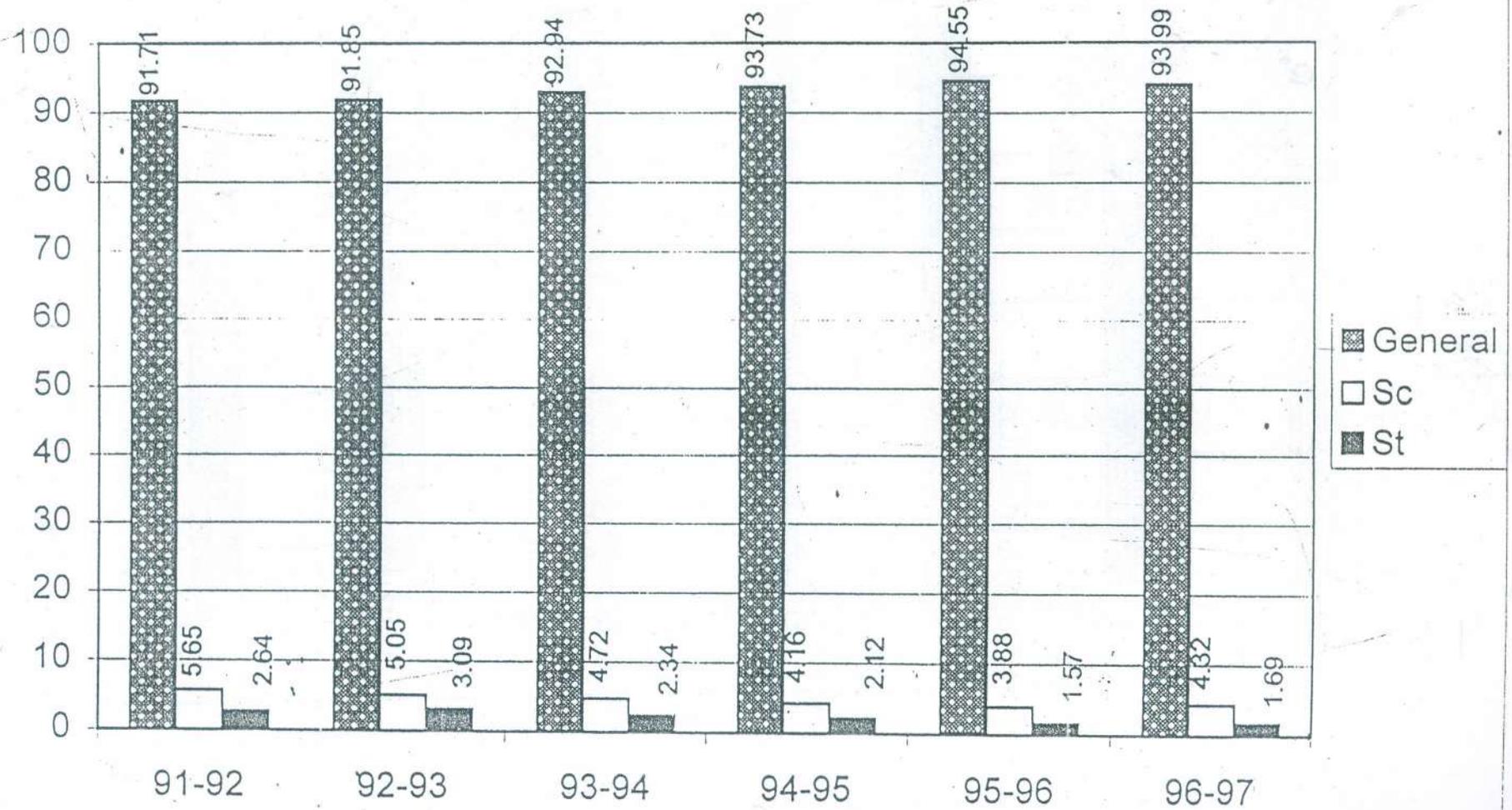


Distribution of Students Percentage of Male and female



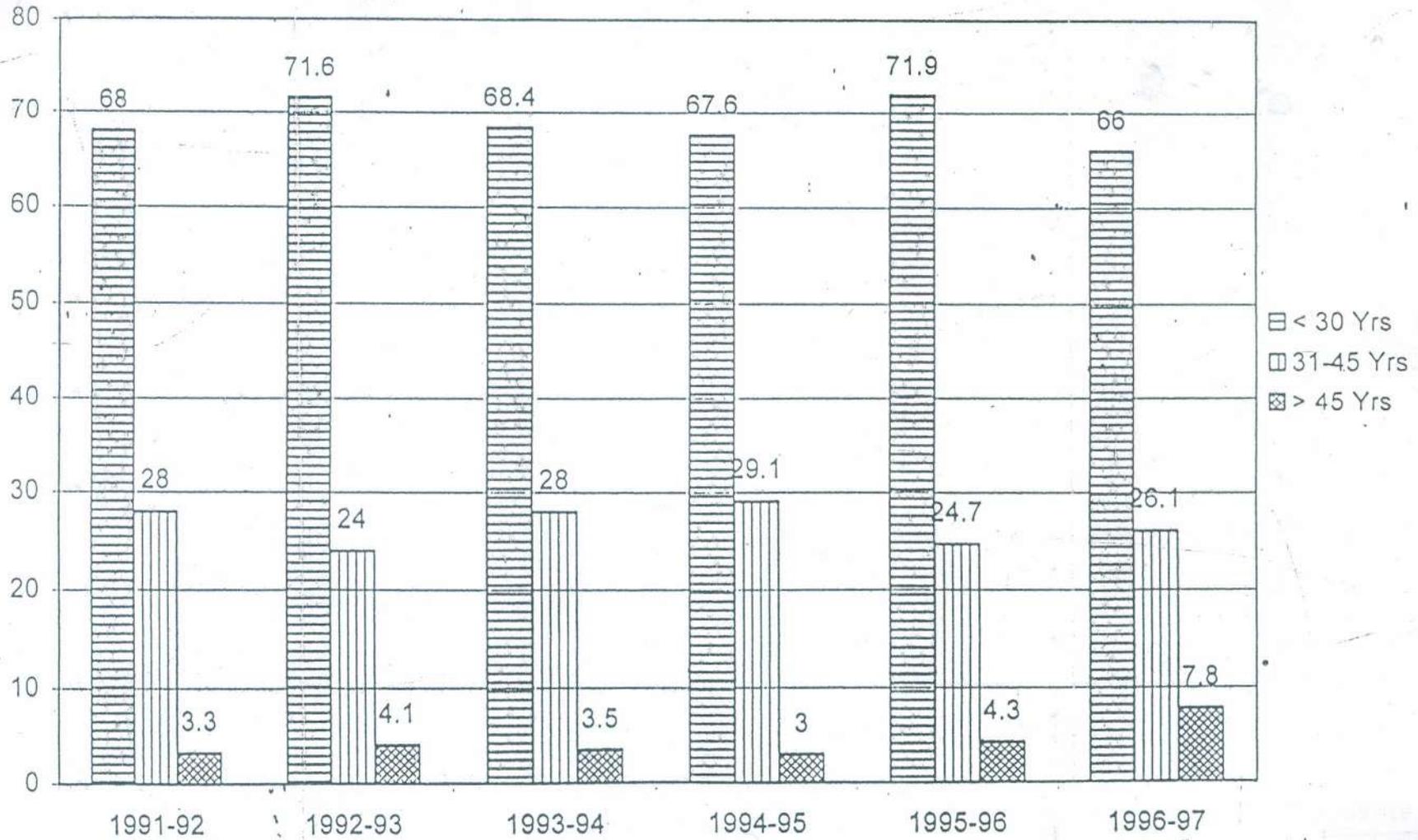
Annexure IV (d)

Percentage Distribution of Students of General, SC & ST Categories

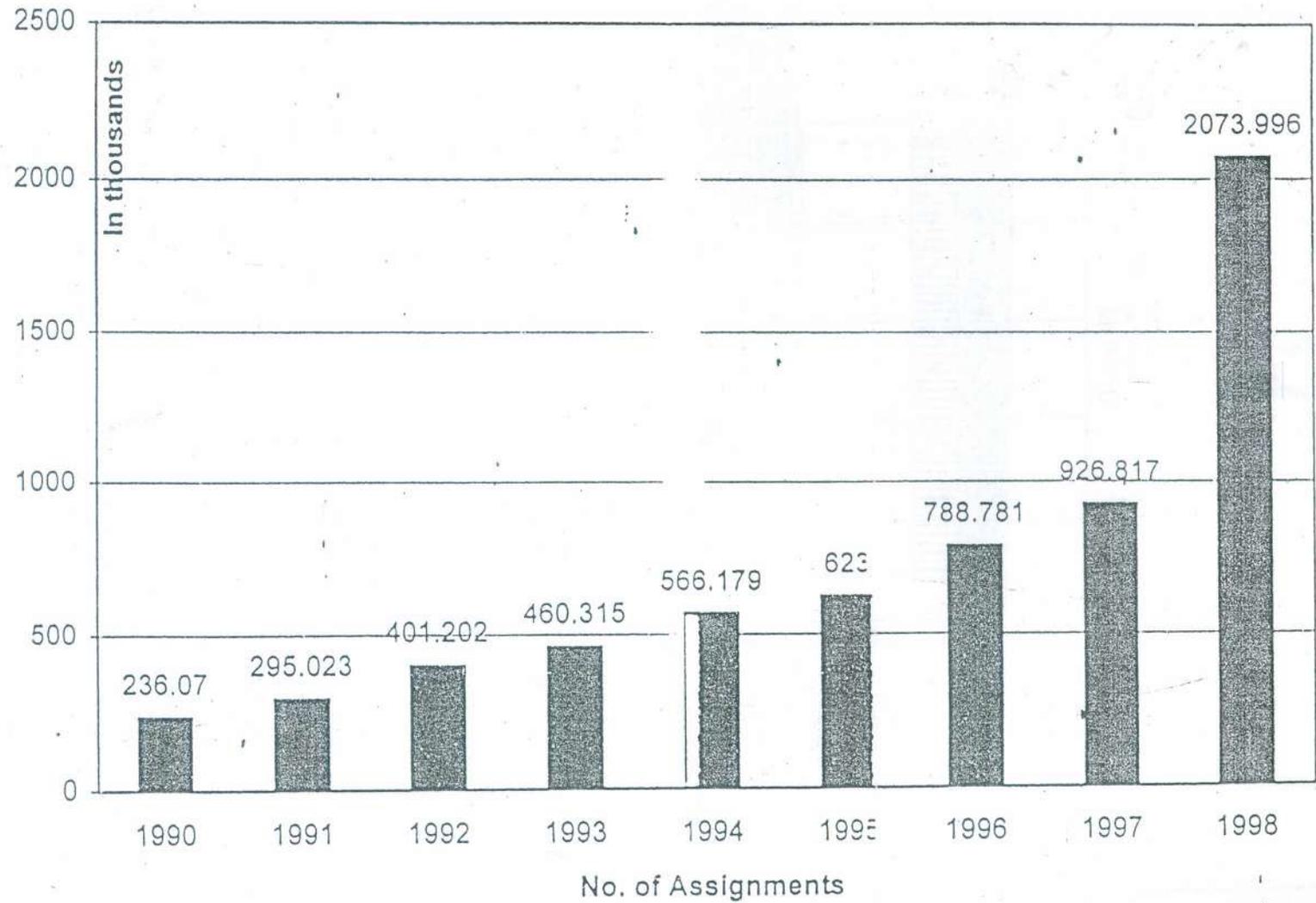


Distribution of Students Percent Age Composition

Annexure IV (e)

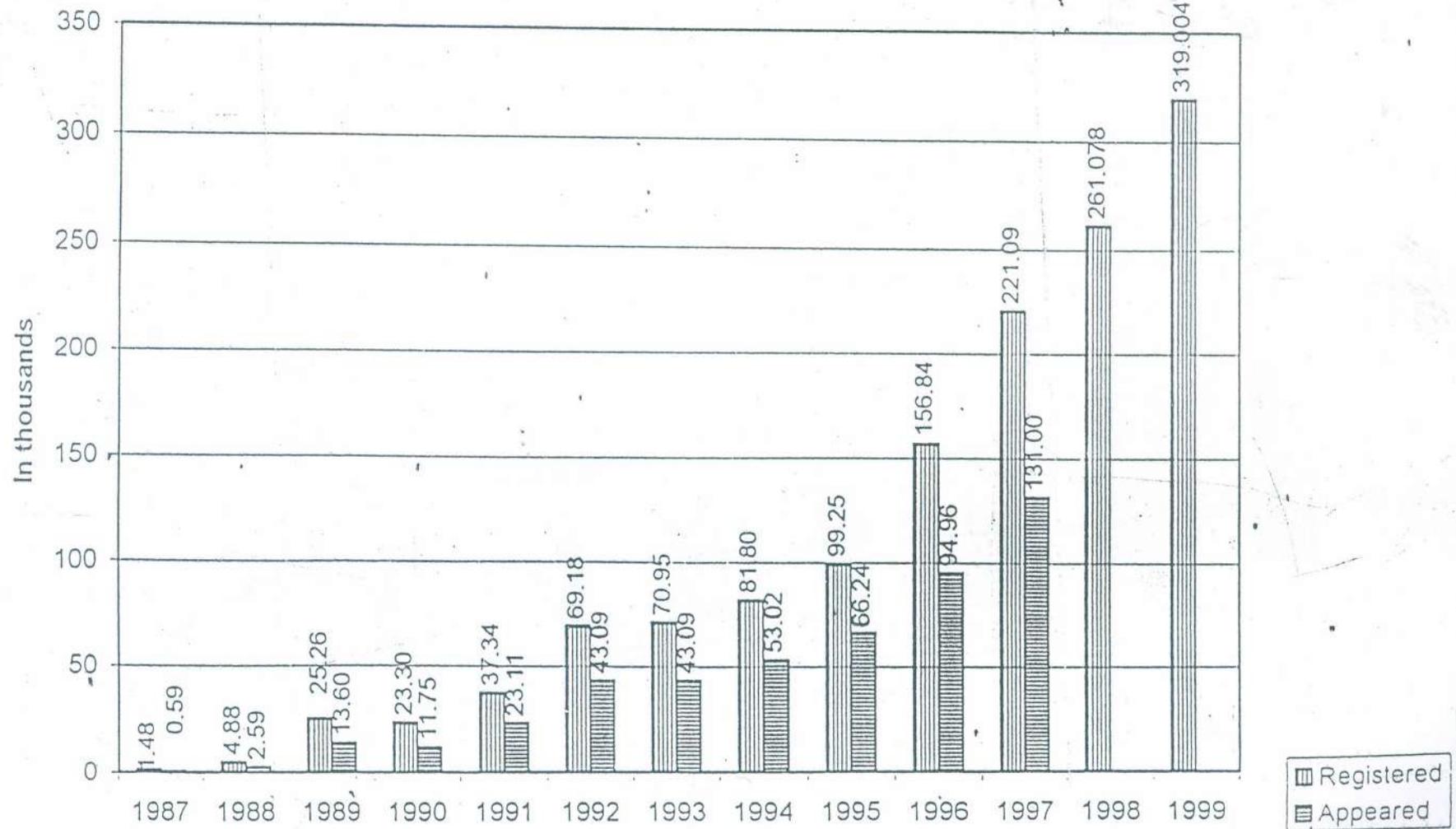


Assignments Evaluated



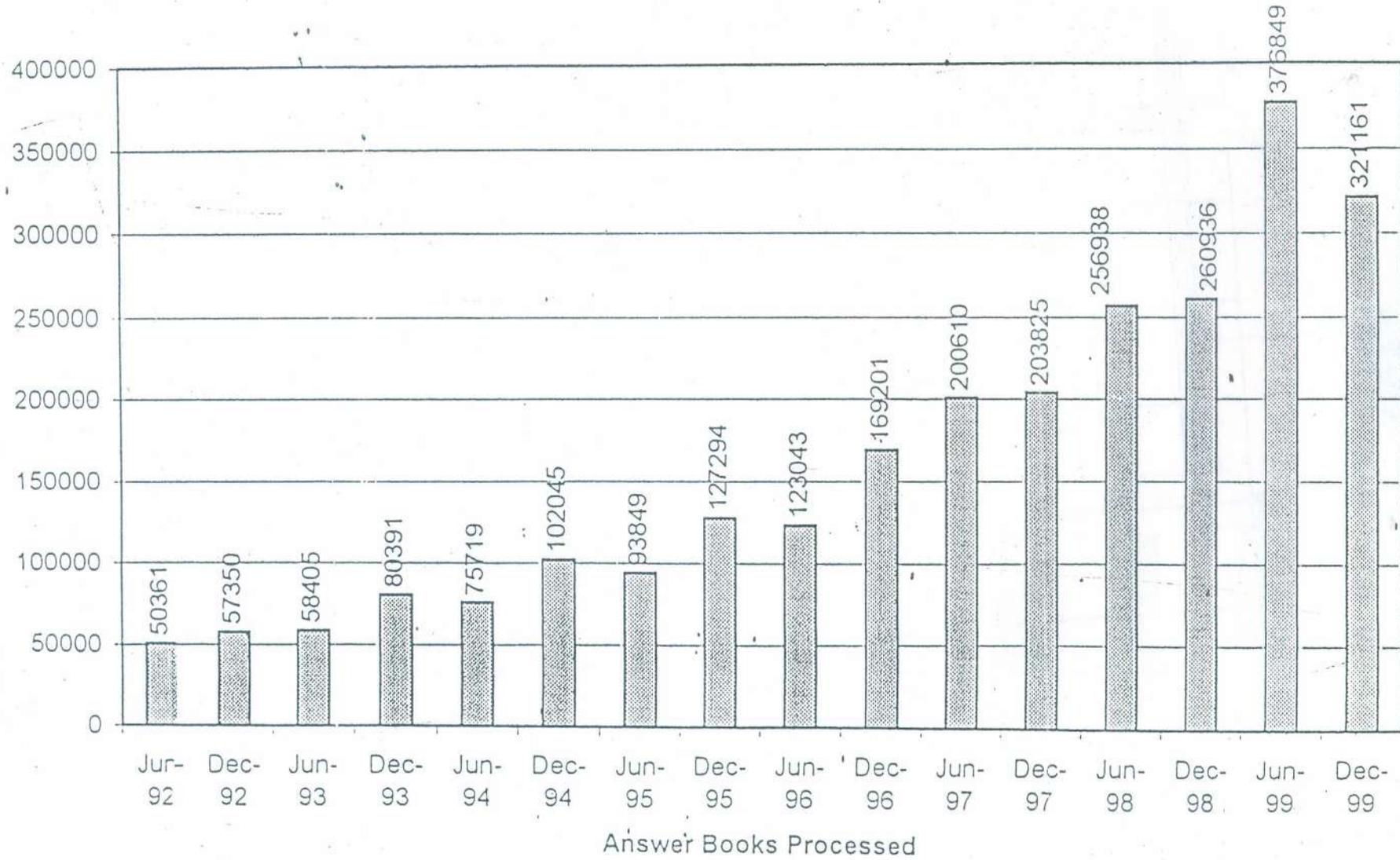
Term End Examinations

Annexure V(b)

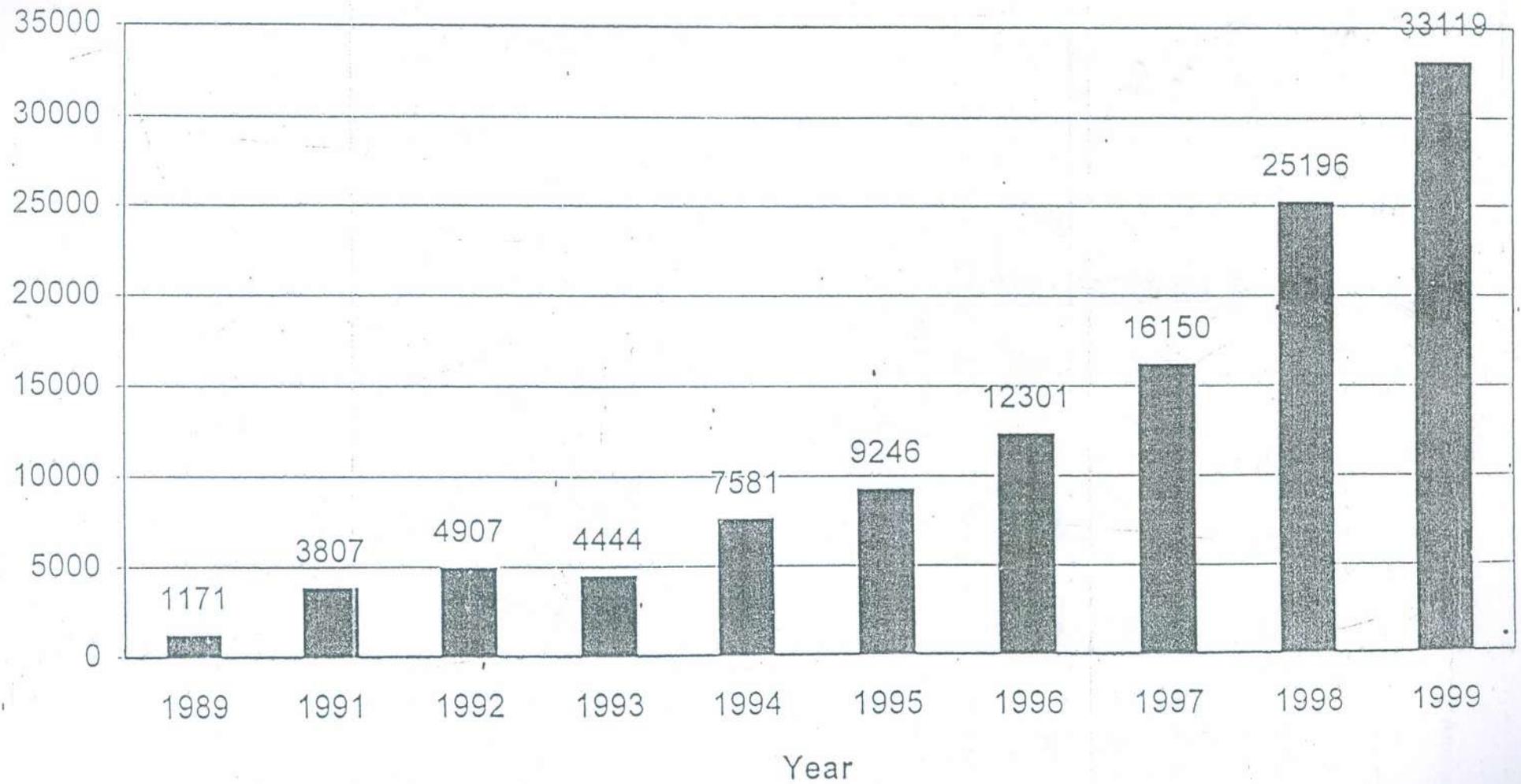


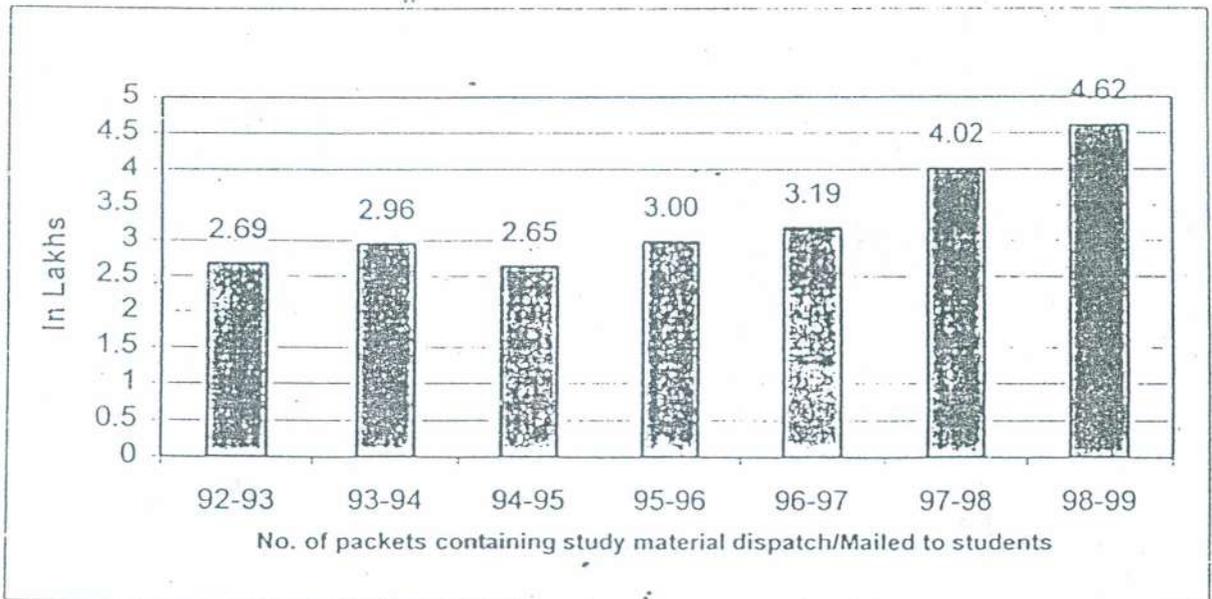
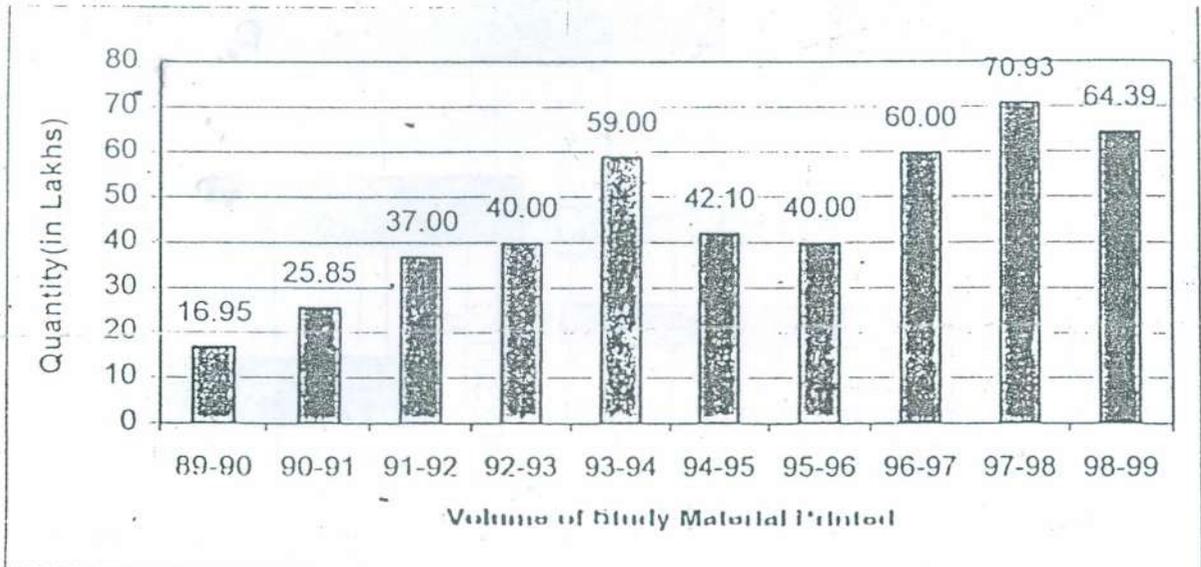
Term End Examinations

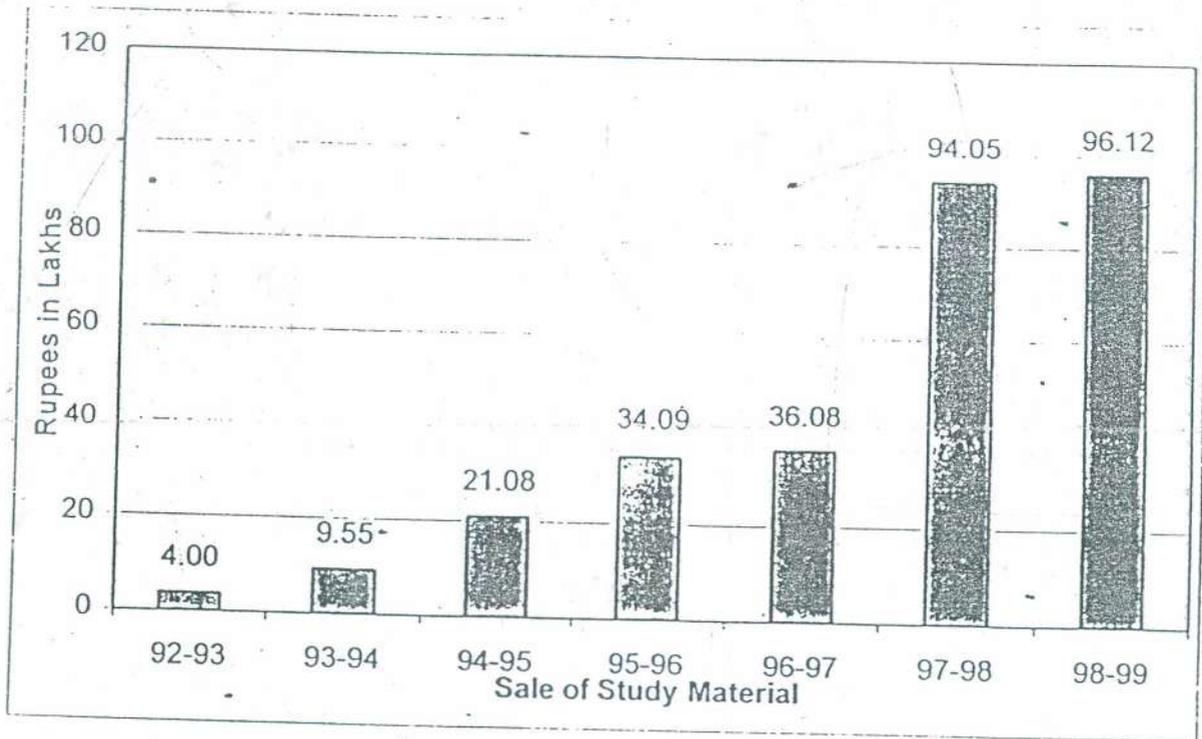
Annexure V(c)



Award of Certificates, Diploma & Degrees







ANNEXURE-VIII

(Rupees in Crores)

Year	Grants from GOI		Income		Expenditure	
	Plan	Non-Plan	Other receipts including fees	Total	Plan	Non-Plan
1990-91	5.01	9.00	3.25	17.26	7.60	10.34
1991-92	6.50	5.50	5.60	17.60	7.30	12.39
1992-93	9.5	7.53	6.68	23.71	9.70	12.45
1993-94	10.0	7.64	7.89	25.53	12.59	15.41
1994-95	9.95	7.79	9.51	27.25	12.60	16.14
1995-96	12.70	5.14	17.47	35.31	24.44	19.74
1996-97	15.36	6.67	30.32	52.35	33.68	28.89
1997-98	10.69	5.83	34.75	51.27	9.34	40.16
1998-99	20.00	7.89	49.81	77.70	13.51	54.21

Annexure-IX

Grants released to SOUs & CCIs

S.No.	Institute	VIII Plan	97-98	98-99	(Rupees in Crores)
					99-2000 (30.11.99)
I.	SOU				
1.	Three SOUs	5.00		2.78	5.00
2.	SOU (Not in 12B)			1.00	
II.	CCIs			1.00	2.00
	TOTAL	5.00 Crores		4.78	

ANNEXURE-X

Committee's Work Plan and Field visits of the Committee Members

1. The Committee held seven meetings, few of which had extending discussions and deliberations for two days. The Committee was very particular in having interaction with diverse sections and groups of the University staff and, hence, accordingly arranged meetings with the Directors of all Schools and Divisions, and many Regional Directors, Academic Staff Association Representatives, and Non-Academic Staff Association Representative as well. The committee also sought opportunity to have exclusive meetings with the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors.
2. Dr. Kiran Karnik, withdrew from the Committee after participation in the first meeting due to his busy schedule and pre-occupation, and his inability to attend subsequent meetings as stated in his letter of withdrawal.
3. Field Visits: With a view to have face to face interaction with the staff and students and to see as much as possible the true picture of the working at and functioning of Regional Centres (RCs) and Study Centres, the Committee took decision to divide itself into various groups who could visit Regional Centres and Study Centres in different regions keeping in view the convenience of the members and their familiarity with the region.

The Committee felt that covering all the Regional Centres and Study Centres would not be possible – both from the point of view of economic viability and time constraints with the members, hence, an attempt was made in the right earnest to reach as many RCs as possible in a reasonable period. The field visits had the approval of the Management. The members of the committee went to different Regional Centres as shown against their names in the following:

S.No.	Name of Regional Centre visited	Name of Member
1.	Ahmedabad	Dr. Rima Nanawati
2.	Bhopal	Dr. Ram Pratap Dr. D. Gopal
3.	Bangalore	Prof. M. V. Pylee
4.	Calcutta	Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya Dr. Vina Mazumdar
5.	Cochin	Prof. M. V. Pylee
6.	Delhi I & II	All committee Members
7.	Guwahati	Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya
8.	Hyderabad	Prof. R. V. R. Chandra Shekhara Rao
9.	Jaipur	Dr. Ram Pratap Dr. D. Gopal
10.	Lucknow	Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya
11.	Lakshadweep study centre	Prof. M. V. Pylee
12.	Patna	Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya
13.	Pune	Dr. Ashok Pradhan

4. Report Drafting Committee: Drafting Committee consisting of Prof. R.V.R.Chandra Shekhara Rao, Prof. M.V. Pylee, Prof. Mihir Bhattacharya and Prof. Ram Pratap held a few formal and informal meetings to finalise the draft report.

The draft report was sent to all the members in two installments, and was discussed in the last meeting of the committee.