

# MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONISTS THE IGNOU WAY

**Siran Mukerji**  
**Purnendu Tripathi**

**T**HE most valuable asset of any progressive organization is its human resource. It entirely depends on the organization how it manages this resource. It is the organization, which is responsible for developing quality human resource and retaining it. In the case of service organization, it becomes all the more important because the quality of service it imparts depends only on its human resources. This is most pertinent when it comes to education sector where the success of the organization is measured in terms of quality of education program it provides and standard of the students passing out from the institution. Quality of education imparted lies on the shoulder of its academicians or educationists. The daunting task before any educational institution is to continuously manage and upgrade the knowledge and expertise of its academicians. This is the case study of IGNOU presented in the form of a paper on management and development of its academicians. The paper will study presently utilized HR development strategies at IGNOU, and will make an analysis of adequacy of the strategies presently utilized. The analysis will form the basis for developing a framework for management and development of its academicians by incorporating latest advancements in the field of information technology and Human Resource Management and Development.

## Introduction

Progress of a nation at macro level and development of society therein depends on various factors, which compose the environment of the country. The interplay of these factors determines the level of advancements of a country. One of the most significant determinants of development in the country is education. Education has been and will be instrumental in taking the country towards the path of development. In fact it is that factor which has been so far responsible for helping the people break the shackles of backwardness and emerge out of the dark alleys of false beliefs, desperation, sufferings and poverty.

With the population in the rise with the decadal growth rate of 21.34% in 1991-2001 (Ministry of Finance, 2001-2002) and India being the second most populous nation with the population crossing the one billion mark on 1 March 2001 (Ministry of Finance, 2001-2002, p20), it is very much pertinent to focus on the overall growth and development of these people. Not only imparting basic education to all but also giving them equal opportunity for attaining higher education can ensure this. In fact, India apart from being rich in other resources has abundance of human resource, which if effectively utilized, can yield miraculous results. This could be ensured only when concerted effort is taken up by the government as well as non-governmental organizations in association with the people in general to bring education closer to the masses. Education is universally recognized as a central component of "human capital" and it contributes to economic growth and its impact on improving standards of health and living is well recognized.

Considering the importance of education, the Government of India in its National Policy of Education (NPE), 1986 (Department of Education, 1986) and its Programme of Action (POA), as reviewed in 1992 (Department of Education, 1992), envisaged improvement and expansion of education in all sectors, elimination of disparities in access, a stress on improvement in quality and relevance of education at all levels, along with technical and professional education. Realizing very well the requirement of reaching the people and enabling them to acquire higher education, the Government has initiated steps towards establishing national and state level

---

Open Universities and popularizing education through open and distance mode. This has been a step towards diversification of courses offered for focusing on the educational needs of women, the rural segment as also for professional training of in-service personnel.

### **IGNOU: An Insight**

Establishment of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) as a national university in India by the Government of India devoted to spreading education and disseminating knowledge is a concrete step in the direction of providing higher education to all. This open and distance learning institution has been pioneer in popularizing the open education system in India. With a wide network of 46 regional centers located in the states in India and a chain of study centers and program study centers, IGNOU has been able to take education to those parts or regions of the country, which have been so far deprived of these facilities.

The University with a total enrolment of 804271 students and 765 study centers (IGNOU Annual Report, 2001-2002) needs a well-managed, professionally competent and administratively proactive workforce to achieve the aim of having 40% of the total enrolment in higher education of the country through distance education mode (IGNOU, 2002). In this context, it can be stated here that the success of any organization largely rests on its human resources hence organization needs to frame such human resource policies, which would ensure continuous professional growth of its employees. This is true for educational institutions also and IGNOU being a University of international stature needs to formulate and execute human resource development plans and policies for long-term benefit of not only the organization but also its human capital.

### **Human Resource Base in IGNOU**

The human resources in the IGNOU can be classified into two broad categories, the academic and the non-academics (Administration). The personnel in academics category are both placed in the schools in the Headquarters and in various functional divisions in the Headquarters or in the Regional Centers located across the country. Presently, of the total staff strength of 1892, there are a total of 307 persons in this group, out of which about 87 officers man the regional centers and the rest are in the Headquarters (IGNOU Annual Report, 2001-2002). The administrative staff comprised of 1510 members in the year 2001 (IGNOU Annual Report, 2001-2002), has increased to 1585 members in 2002.

### **Human Resource Development Strategies: Present Scenario**

In the backdrop of what has been stated here in the earlier section, the strategies for the development of human resources of the University is also two-pronged, one for the academics of Headquarters and Regional Centers and the other for the non-academics. Since this paper deals with the management and development of educationists so the focus here is on HRD of academics only. As has been mentioned in the previous section, the academics in the IGNOU are either posted at the Headquarters in various schools and divisions or they are placed at the Regional Centers.

Before presenting a detailed insight of the HRD practices and their analysis thereupon, a brief account of the recruitment and selection of the personnel is presented here. The recruitment process for the academics for the Schools and other academics for the Regional Centers begins with the process of inviting applications from prospective candidates. Generally, suitable applicants are selected as Lecturers unless otherwise specified in the Schools and as Assistant Regional Directors (ARD) in the Regional Centers. The steps involved in the process of recruitment and selection are:

STEP I: Advertisement of vacancies in the leading national dailies for the posts of Lecturer or ARD.

STEP II: Conduct of Selection Test.

STEP III: Preparation of merit list of the candidates according to their performance in the test.

STEP IV: Conduct of interviews of the short listed applicants from the merit list.

---

STEP V: Preparation of final selection list based on academic background, individual performance in the written test and in the interview of the candidates.

Based on the final list, the selected candidates are intimated for joining the respective schools as Lecturer and Regional Centers as ARDs (IGNOU, 2001).

## **HRD Practices**

The most commonly applied dimensions of HRD are training and development, career planning, promotion, performance and potential appraisal, job satisfaction, employee motivation and morale and job rotation.

### **Training and Development**

Training can primarily be of two kinds, induction and in-service. The Staff Training Institute in Distance Education (STRIDE) provides induction training in IGNOU to the academics (IGNOU, 1994). STRIDE plays a vital role in research and training. This training is devoted to be creating awareness about distance education system amongst freshly inducted employees and acclimatizing them with the set up of the University.

The system of providing periodical in-service training to the academicians of the University is still at the nascent stage. So a well-defined training plan based on the needs of the Regional Centers and Schools is yet to be devised. But IGNOU supports its faculty members financially for conducting their own projects on various aspects of distance education and discipline based research. As a part of the endeavor to encourage the faculty to develop in their own fields as well as in the distance education system, the University provides travel grants to teachers to participate in professional conferences, seminars and workshops within the country and abroad.

### **Promotion and Career Planning**

An academic or other academics after having got selected in the IGNOU is placed in the headquarters or in the Regional Center as lecturers or assistant regional director respectively in the pay scale of Rs. 8000 - 275 - 13500. The promotion in the career chart from this point onwards is dependent on factors such as:

- ∞ Years of service;
- ∞ Academic qualification (Ph. D. or M. Phil. or non Ph. D.);
- ∞ Performance Appraisal Report;
- ∞ Refresher Courses;
- ∞ Contribution in the field of Distance Education;
- ∞ Research conducted / research papers and articles authored / seminars and conferences attended; and
- ∞ Any other significant contribution to education.

Based on the above factors, promotion is decided for various levels of academics and other academics depending on their position in the hierarchy. Table 1 gives a complete picture of the eligibility criteria required to be fulfilled for promotion from one level to another commencing from Lecturer or ARD to Professor or Regional Director.

### **Transfers and Postings**

Transfers and postings of the academics in the University is guided by a transfer policy. Generally, a Regional Director or ARD is not transferred before completing five years of his/her stay in a particular Regional Center (IGNOU, July 2002)). However, they may be shifted on administrative reasons whenever

---

**Table 1: Career Chart in IGNOU**

S. No.	Name of Post	Years of Service and Ph.D./M.Phil./Non Ph.D.	Refresher Course	Perf. App. Report	Contribution to Education
1.	Lecturer/ARD	-	-	-	-
2.	Lecturer/ARD (SS*)	4 years with Ph.D. 5 years with M.Phil. 6 years for non Ph.D.	1 for Ph.D. 2 for non Ph.D.	Satisfactory report	-
3.	Lecturer/ARD (SG**)	5 years in SS	2 courses	Good report	Significant contribution to Distance Education
4.	Reader/Deputy Director# (Selection by recommendation of Selection Committee)	5 years in SS or 9 years of combined service with Ph.D. 10 years with M.Phil. 11 years for non-Ph.D.	2 courses after placement in SS	Good report	Ph.D. or equivalent published work. Scholarship/ research on concerned subject/ in the field of distance education
5.	Professor/Regional Director (Selection by recommendation of Selection Committee)	8 years as Reader or 17 years of combined service with Ph.D. 18 years with M. Phil. 19 years for non Ph.D.	-	-	Books/articles/ research papers published/unit written Seminars/ Conferences attended Contribution to teaching / academic / institutional corporate life Extension and field outreach activities Enrolment in Regional Center

\*SS - Senior Scale

\*\*SG - Selection Grade

#A deputy director may be posted as Regional Director also in the Regional Center depending on his/her experience in the Regional Center and his/her seniority.

**Source: IGNOU, Personnel Management Manual, (Orders upto March 2000 incorporated), New Delhi.**

exigencies of the service so require. The continuation thereafter of the Regional Director or ARD is based on performance ascertained by growth of the study centers in the region during his/her tenure, additions in the enrolment of learners, and submissions of necessary documents to the Headquarters whenever required as per the schedule.

With reference to transfers, efforts are made to rotate staff working in the Regional Centers and at Headquarters. Requests for transfer from one Regional Center to another and from Regional Center to Headquarters is also considered. With the objective of providing multi-channel experience to the employees with skills and competencies so that they can compete favorably with others within and outside the University in matters of career prospects, transfers are decided from support divisions to operational divisions or vice versa or from schools and academic centers to divisions or vice versa. The employee in this case could return to his original division/school after gaining experience across the departments.

### **Performance and Potential Appraisal**

Performance of an employee in IGNOU is assessed with the help of performance appraisal forms or reports, which are sent to the concerned academics from Academic Coordination Division (IGNOU, March 2000). The performance appraisal form is to be filled by the employee and then submitted to the reporting officer who is generally the Regional Director in the Regional Centers or the Head of the Subject/Discipline in the Schools. The reporting officer then forwards this report to the reviewing officers who are generally the Director of the Regional Services Division in case of Regional Centers and Director of the Schools specific to the Subject/Discipline. The respective reviewing officers in turn send the form with their remarks to the Director, Academic Coordination Division. The appraisal forms are then put up in the Board of Management meeting for their approval. It has been observed that the meeting of Board of Management is normally held after every three months except under special circumstances when the Board may be required to meet for policy decision making or for certain exigencies.

Unlike other Government departments, the performance appraisal in IGNOU is not annual but is based on promotion in the hierarchy. The freshly inducted ARDs / Lecturers are required to submit the performance appraisal forms on completion of one year of their probation period. Performance of these officers is again assessed when they are due for their next promotion i.e. when they reach the senior scale.

## **Analysis of HRD Mechanism *en-vogue* in IGNOU and Suggestions**

### **Training**

As is evident from the previous section of this paper, training is an important tool for the development of educationists but adequate planning and structuring of the training policy needs to be undertaken. Since induction training plays a vital role in familiarizing the newly selected candidates with the profile of the job and organization, the role and responsibilities of the job, and functional requirements of the job, therefore become necessary to have such an induction training program which would be able to meet these demands.

It is therefore, suggested here that the training program could be devised in the pattern similar to the foundational training provided to the civil service entrants (Siran, 2000). The restructured program could be completed in the following phases:

### **Post-entry Induction Course**

(i) *Foundational Course*: This month long course would be common for all i.e. academics of Schools and divisions as well as other academics selected for the Regional Centers. This course would be imparted by STRIDE and could include modules such as:

- ∞ Education: Its History and Evolution in India
- ∞ Role of Education in the Development of a Nation
- ∞ Genesis of Distance Education
- ∞ Contribution of Distance Education in the Growth and Progress of the People in India
- ∞ Leading Distance Education Institutions of the World
- ∞ Methodology Adopted and Support Services for the Learners
- ∞ Distance Education Mode and Conventional Mode: A Comparison

(ii) *Distance Education Institutions in India*: A "Darshan": This could be a tour to leading distance education institutions in India and could be of 15 days' duration. The objective of this module should be to make the entrants acquainted with the distance education universities, their setup and overall functioning. This would also help the trainees to get a feel of the organization and its functioning therein.

---

*(iii) Common Functional / Departmental Training:* This fortnight long training module will be held at IGNOU Headquarters and would consist of:

- ✍ An insight into the various divisions and schools of the University;
- ✍ Functions of the Divisions;
- ✍ Regional Center: Its objectives, importance and role;
- ✍ A visit to all the Schools and Divisions (half a day in each of the schools and divisions)

This two-months common post-entry induction course would serve dual purpose, firstly, it would provide the trainees complete background of the distance education system and secondly, it will promote camaraderie and esprit de corps amongst the probationers. This would go a long way in developing a sense of belongingness of the trainees towards the organization.

### ***Departmental Attachment***

The two-month common module would be followed by two months of departmental attachment wherein the trainees would be attached for a week at each of the functional divisions and schools for an in-depth study of their importance and role in furthering the process of open and distance learning. During the attachment, the trainee officer concerned would be reporting to either an officer of the rank of reader in the school or an officer of the rank of deputy director in the divisions.

### ***Attachment to the School /Division /Regional Center of Posting***

This would be the final stage of the induction training, and it would culminate with the attachment of the trainees with the concerned school / division / regional center where he/she has been posted or placed. In this attachment of a month, the probationers would be required to make a detailed study of the objectives of the department. He would also understand its functions and his/her responsibilities in the hierarchy of the department.

After having completed the month long departmental attachment, the officer would be absorbed into that school / division / regional center and would assume his duties as assigned by the head of the division / school / regional center.

It is however stated here that very often the trainees might not take the induction training seriously and consider it to be a post-entry holiday. To curb this attitude and inculcate professionalism in them, the performance of the trainees during the induction training should be assessed and assessment result should form a part of the performance appraisal that is carried out after one year of service of the probationers. The performance evaluation during the induction training could be done in the following manner shown in Table 2:

Since provision of in-service training is still at a nascent stage so a well-defined and structured in-service training calendar should be developed for the various levels of the academics and other academics. The in-service training calendar could be linked with the promotion and career plans of the officers concerned. This would make the training programs much more meaningful for the organization as well as for the officers.

The in-service training modules could be devised in the wake of the latest advancements in the field of science, communication technology, information technology and concerned subjects of the Schools of the University. It could also be designed on the basis of courses to be revised, new academic or professional programs to be developed and launched and also on the innovations as regards the multi media for providing learner friendly support services.

---

**Table 2: Performance Evaluation during Induction Training**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Training Modules</b>	<b>Appraising Officer</b>
I	<b>Post entry Induction Course</b> Foundational Course Distance Institutions in India: A "Darshan" Functional / Departmental Training	Head of the Department, STRIDE  Officer deputed for the Tour  Head of the Department, STRIDE on the basis of report submitted by the Officer trainees.
II	<b>Departmental Attachment (All the Schools and Divisions and any one of the Regional Center)</b>	Head of the Schools and Divisions and of the Regional Center.
III	<b>Attachment to the School/Division/ Regional Center of Posting</b>	Head of the School / Division / Regional Center where the officer is posted.

**Promotion and Career Planning**

On analyzing the career chart, it is observed that the promotion of the academics is dependent on factors such as seniority, performance appraisal report, research conducted in the concerned discipline and in the field of distance education. In this regard, it is stated here that seniority should be one of the deciding factors for the promotion of the officers at the lower rungs of the career ladder but at the higher levels of the echelon, merit should be primary in deciding the promotion. It should be in fact merit cum seniority and not seniority cum merit as prevalent now.

The contribution of the officer concerned to the field of distance education in the form of articles, research papers, conferences / seminars papers / paper presentation, books authored should be given equal weight-age while deciding the promotion of the officers, besides assigning due importance to academic qualifications acquired / upgraded after joining the service. In fact, a quantitative measure / scale could be developed and points / weight-age / ratings could be assigned to various factors and then final decision could be made regarding the promotion.

This would help in eliminating subjectivity in the promotion process and also aid in devising a career chart, which would promote job satisfaction, motivation and morale of the officers of the IGNOU.

**Performance and Potential Appraisal**

It is seen that performance of academics and other academics is appraised with the help of performance appraisal form, which does not reflect much about the potential of the officers to be appraised. Hence it is suggested here that the appraisal form should include a full section devoted exclusively to the potential of the officers. The potential assessment could include an appraisal of the attributes by the appraising / reporting officer. So the appraisal form could consist of a list of attributes and ratings assigned to each of the attribute. This appraisal could be instrumental in deciding the future career path of the officer concerned as it would reflect on the officer's interests and attributes possessed and highlight on the skills required. It could also be useful in designing in-service training programs, as these appraisals would provide much needed information and feedback for the training programs.

**Transfers and Postings**

The well-known and commonly applied human resource development technique of job rotation could be adopted for deciding the transfers and postings of the officers. There should be a judicious mix of hard and soft postings from Regional Centers to Headquarters and vice versa. This would help the academics

and other academics to get acquainted with the ground realities and difficulties faced by them at the Headquarters and Regional Centers respectively. It would also present a complete portrait of the region-based programs to be developed, and provide a feedback on the success of the programs in the various regions of the country.

### **Motivation and Job Satisfaction**

The present organizational setup and the ways of functioning need to be further restructured and ameliorated for improving the level of motivation and job satisfaction amongst the officers of the University. Timely implementation of adequate measures to boost the motivation of the officers is very much required, which in turn would also help in retaining the talent within the University. Measures such as periodical job analysis, job redesign, job enrichment methods and job rotation should be inculcated in the human resource policies of IGNOU.

The success of the suggestions put forth in this paper rests on the commitment shown by the senior members of the University. If required, services of external HRD Consultants or change agents could be sought for improving the HR base and for initiating the implementation of need based HRD strategies. These consultants could work in collaboration and coordination with the senior academicians of the School of Management Studies of the IGNOU.

### **Conclusion**

The fast transforming socio-political and economic environment has had significant effect on the organizations taking them from a state of stagnancy to dynamism and has prompted them to adopt such strategies that would make them open to remodeling and recasting their structures and policies. The educational institutions have also not remained unaffected by this phenomenon. They have to make continuous improvements not only in their curriculum but also in the method of delivery and support services for the students in order to be successful. The fast growing enrolment of distance learners in IGNOU is indeed a challenge for the institution and its employees. So to effectively manage this burgeoning number of students, IGNOU needs to continuously review and revise its human resource management and development policies because the success of the University largely depends amongst other factors on the human resources of this institution.

### **References**

- Ministry of Finance (Economic Division), Government of India, Economic Survey 2001- 2002, New Delhi.*
- Ministry of Finance (Economic Division), Government of India, Economic Survey 2001- 2002, p. 20, New Delhi.*
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Education), Government of India (1986) National Policy on Education-1986, New Delhi.*
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Education), Government of India (1992) Plan of Action-1992, New Delhi.*
- IGNOU, Annual Report 2001-2002, New Delhi.*
- IGNOU, Annual Report 2001-2002, New Delhi.*
- IGNOU, Annual Report 2000-2001, New Delhi.*
- IGNOU (2001), Personnel Management Manual (Orders upto March 2000 incorporated), New Delhi.*
- IGNOU, Personnel Management Manual, (Orders upto March 2000 incorporated), New Delhi.*
- Mukerji, Siran (2000), Indian Foreign Service: Structure, Role and Performance, Aalekh Publishers, Jaipur.*

### **Bibliography**

- IGNOU (2002), Vice Chancellor's Report to the 13th Convocation 2002, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.*
  - IGNOU (1994), Vice Chancellor's Report to the Fifth Convocation 1994, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi.*
  - IGNOU, Notification No.1-15 (ST)NA/ESTT/201/4840, dated 12 July 2002.*
-