Use of Multi-media Resources by the Library and Information Science Distance Learners of IGNOU: A Case Study of Delhi Region

Abstract of the Ph. D. Thesis

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Abstract

Introduction

Ever since man started to record information and store it for future use, the forms of recording, storing, transmitting and preserving information underwent drastic changes. The invention of paper and printing multiplied the diffusion of information. Developments in Information Communication Technology (ICT) have made a great impact on the information life cycle. Availability of information in various media is one of the outcomes of this impact. Multi-media play an important role in distance education keeping in view the distance between the learner and the teacher. Universities in distance education, and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in particular, has been active in providing various such resources to make education more interactive.

In this era of ICT, education is passing through a phase of multidimensional change in delivering instruction to the learners. In distance education, media has revolutionized the process of teaching and learning when the learner and teacher are at a distance. Educational content passed on to learners through multi-media e.g. print, radio, TV, etc. and the interactive instructional system enables two way communication
between the learner and the educator. Introduction of ICT in distance education has made possible to receive and retrieve the curriculum based instructions from a distance easily and fast. It has helped in increasing the involvement and participation of learners in their studies and enhancing their knowledge and capabilities. It has resulted into more opportunities of independent and self study for students.

**IGNOU**

IGNOU was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985 with a mission to open the doors of higher education to all and make learning innovative, flexible, job oriented and cost effective. The university offers academic programmes to the requirements of different categories of people. These programmes are intended for self enrichment as well as for professional upgrading. These include both short term and long term programmes, leading to certificates, diplomas, bachelor degrees, master degrees and doctoral degrees in various subjects covering conventional as well as innovative and professional programmes. IGNOU develops and produces courses of delivery through open learning, distance education and face to face system. To reach the benefits of its activities to the largest number of students, IGNOU has established and developed a nation wide network of 59 regional centers and over 2300 learner support centers through out the world. The study centers are hosted by different institutions, universities, colleges, industrial houses, medical institutions and even prisons.
The LIS Faculty is a part of the School of Social Sciences, one of the 21 Schools in the University. It launched its first programme in 1989 which was BLIS. It was followed by MLIS that was launched in 1994 and since then it has not only revised these programmes but also introduced other programmes i.e., Post – Graduate Diploma in Library Automation and Networking (PGDLAN) and the Doctoral Programme in LIS. It also launched the specialized programme, Certificate in ICT Applications for Libraries (CICTAL) which was shelved later.

**The Study**

The topic under study “Use of Multi-media Resources by the Library and Information Science Distance Learners of IGNOU: A Case Study of Delhi Region” encompasses the study of the use of various forms of multimedia resources of IGNOU available in the library and information science programmes. The term ‘multi-media’ is used in two different contexts, viz. many media and the other, integration of media. In this study it is used in the former sense i.e. multiple media. It includes Self Learning Instructional Material (SLIM), audio cassettes, video cassettes, face to face counseling for theory and practical Work, Gyan Vani (FM Radio Channel), Gyan Darshan, Interactive Radio Counselling and Teleconferencing, provided by IGNOU to its LIS learners.

**Objectives**

The main objectives of the study are to:
1. know the usage of multi-media resources provided by IGNOU to its LIS learners under study;

2. make a comparative study of the usage of multi-media resources of IGNOU by the BLIS and MLIS learners under study;

3. find out the multi-media resources popular among LIS learners under study;

4. know the opinion of LIS learners regarding helpfulness and usefulness of multi-media resources in preparing for university examinations, as well as for interviews etc;

5. know the suggestions of LIS learners regarding development, improvement of multi-media resources of IGNOU and

6. know the opinion and rating of the LIS learners under study regarding Self Learning Institutional Material give a feeling that the teacher is communicating with the learners.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were proposed for the study and tested:

1. There is no significant difference in the usage of various multi-media resources between the BLIS and MLIS learners.

2. There is no significant difference in the usage of multi-media resources between the male and female LIS learners.
3. There is no significant difference in the usage of multi-media resources between the rural and urban LIS learners.

4. There is no significant difference in the usage between SLIM and other multi-media resources by the LIS learners.

5. There is no significant difference in the usage of various multi-media resources between the employed and unemployed learners.

6. There is no significant difference in the usage of teleconferencing and IRC by the LIS learners.

7. There is no significant difference in the usage between audio/video cassettes and telecasted educational programmes of IGNOU by the LIS learners.

**Data Collection**

Questionnaire method was adopted for data collection. Two sets of questionnaires were designed to get information about the use of multi-media resources by the BLIS and MLIS learners of IGNOU respectively. The questionnaires were designed in such a manner that one could find out the reactions of the learners on the given aspects, and also the problems faced by them in use of multi-media resources.

The tentative questionnaires were subjected to face validity by asking subject experts to evaluate them. Changes were made in consultation with subject experts. The questionnaires were subjected to
pre-testing by carrying out pilot surveys on samples having characteristics, similar to those intended to be taken in the study. The questionnaire for BLIS learners was administered to a population of 10 learners whereas the questionnaire for MLIS learners was administered to a population of 15 learners.

Reliability and validity of the questionnaires were tested. Some minor modifications in the language and wording of the statements was carried out in consultation with these respondents of the pilot survey. The responses received in the pilot survey were not included in the final survey results.

The study centres of IGNOU located in Delhi were consulted for obtaining the addresses of learners for data collection purpose. In first phase fifty questionnaires each to BLIS and MLIS learners were dispatched through post on their given addresses along with the self addressed stamped envelops for getting the response back without putting the financial burden on the learners. It was supposed that learners will respond positively but to the researcher’s surprise no response was received back for a long period of two months. Later it was decided that the data will be collected personally from the learners at the study programme centres while the counselling is in progress.

All the study/programmes centres of IGNOU of Delhi region were visited personally by the researcher several times. The questionnaires
were distributed among the learners and they were requested to fill in the same then and there. Some learners did so but others showed their inability to fill there due to having other engagements. They were requested to return the filled in questionnaires at an early date. The filled in questionnaires were analysed and interpreted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the findings derived from the data analysis, some of the conclusions drawn are:

- Maximum learners enrolled in IGNOU LIS course are unmarried, female, upto the age of 25 years and from urban areas.
- English as a language is the most adopted medium of study among the learners.
- Majority of the MLIS and BLIS learners are having either B.A. or M.A. as the basic qualification.
- SLIM is the highest used multi-media resource with frequency of maximum use being ‘daily’. Among others teleconferencing is the least used multi-media resource by the learners under study.
- Gyan Vani, IRC, Gyan Darshan and teleconferencing are least popular among the BLIS learners.
- The SLIM course booklets have excellent or very good rating among the learners.

The SLIM may be categorized as ‘partially self
instructional’ multi-media resource, which can sometimes replace the teachers also.

- Almost on an average of 75% learners are aware about the availability of audio-video cassettes at the study centres.

- The learners have mixed response of rating regarding Gyan Darshan, Gyan Vani, IRC and tele conferencing. Maximum number of learners are either not aware of these resources or they have never used these resources.

**Suggestions**

The detailed below suggestions are on the basis of observations during the data collection and discussions with counsellors.

- IGNOU should adopt other regional languages as a medium of instructions also.

- The course content of various audio and video cassettes, CDs should be updated from time to time.

- Regional/study centres must be provided more latest computers and other equipments with Internet facility to be used by the maximum number of learners, if possible all the days of the week.

- As the mobile phones are available with the maximum number of learners thus, the SMS alert service for notices, circulars, important dates and e-mail addresses with telephone numbers may be regularly done by IGNOU for the learners.
- The attendance in counseling sessions may be made mandatory with minimum fixed percentage for making the learners eligible to appear in the term end examinations.

- The feedback system from learners on a fix periodicity of one month or a quarter may be introduced to get closer to the learners.

- IGNOU should develop and maintain course wise dedicated web-sites for more precise, quick and relevant information for the learners.

- The orientation programme of learners should be conducted course wise not combined with other courses.

- E-mail alert service on the model of SMS alert service should be introduced by IGNOU.

- IGNOU library should allow the access of their digital collection to the LIS learners through web.

**Organisation of the Thesis**

The complete study has been designed and presented in eight chapters namely: Introduction; Review of the Related Literature; Distance Education : A Conceptual Framework; Research Design; Distance Education and the Role of IGNOU; Library and Information Science Education through Distance Mode in India; Data Collection and its Analysis; Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions; Bibliography and Appendices.