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TO THE READER

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CONTENTS

		Pages
Editorial Mahmudur Rahman	Women Education: The Crying Need of the Day	vi
Javed Iqbal Syed	Story of the Commonwealth of Learning from Conception to Birth	1
Kim Shinil	Curriculum Development in Distance Higher Education	26
Niaz Hussain	Library Science Education through Allama Iqbal Open University	37
Derek Rowntree	Organizing for Course Development	54
Masooda Chaudhry	Research & Evaluation Centre: A Helping Hand in Designing Systems and Materials of AIOU	71
Shafqat Sultana	A Profile of Pakistani Women	89
Special Features		
Mahmudur Rahman	Book Review	100
Mahmudur Rahman	Book Review	102
Iqbal Hussain	News & Views	105
Abdus Sattar Khan	Data Bank	117

EDITORIAL

Women Education: The Crying Need of the Day

It is an old saying that the first school to which a child goes is the mother's lap. It is this invisible institution which moulds the mind and mentality of a babe. It is this sacred school which imparts the initial lesson of life to the lad. It is indeed the ingenious environ which embodies the youngster with all qualities of head and heart. As such, the unbounded importance and far reaching impact of this learning - lacteals cannot be ignored.

It is an unalloyed decree set forth by the prestigious philosophers that childhood is the plastic period of a person's life spent under the mother's fostering care and influence. The tendencies and habits of the tiny tots, whether good or bad, are formed in those impressionable years and last throughout the life. If the babe has spent his early years in a healthy home, where his body and mind got proper nourishment and training, he would grow up into a properly developed citizen ready to share his responsibilities in the battle of life.

Evidently, the sound education of the future mother is absolutely essential for proper upbringing of future generation. It is undoubtedly an educated woman which guides and controls the destinies of nation. It is none but she who makes the man _____ a perfect man. It is indeed the inspiration and encouragement of woman _____ in the shape of mother _____ which enables the babies to learn, and to read and write. History is full of such instances indicating the valuable works of literate women.

Despite this reality that an educated woman plays a prominent part in making the nation, in Pakistan the picture looks rather paltry. Not less than seventy five percent of female gender couldn't read and write. It also

seems to be a sign of sorrowing that the number of girls who carry on their study beyond 8th standard is merely 5%. Ironically, such lot of illiterate womenfolk appears to be a bottleneck in the process of national progress and prosperity.

It cannot be denied that female education is indeed the crying need of the day. It deserves our utmost attention since the most neglected portion of populace is none but women. In our society, discrimination against female gender has become a routine _____ much to be deplored and discarded. This gloomy and disheartening trend could only be erased and obliterated if the women of Pakistan are properly educated and enlightened. Through this way, they may become beckon of light and impart education to deprived ones. They would surely instil the spirit of self-control, co-operation and mutual help in their young ones. They would also be able to change the unhamanized environment and to help to check premature deaths from common ailments among their near and dear ones.

Keeping in view the significance of female education and also realising the hurdles in the way of imparting knowledge to the womenfolk, Allama Iqbal Open University has come forward to lit a lamp in the lamentable lurch of illiteracy. AIOU has been able indeed to solve such grave problems by offering education to the women of Pakistan through *Distance Learning*. This University has set up a number of education programmes with only aim to enrich the female gender with golden rays of education pertaining to various venues of discipline. The courses so far launched by AIOU are vast, varied, and venerable.

They range from grass-root to post-graduate level, covering Literacy, Primary and Matric to Graduation, Post-graduation and above all the Teachers Training Programmes. So much so that some courses in F.A and B.A and the whole programmes like Matric Female Education and M.Sc Women's Studies have been exclusively designed for women. (For further detail, statistical glimpses given on the end of the Journal may be seen.)

It may be pointed out that what started on a little scale has now developed into a comprehensive courses covering the whole country. Enrollment has been steadily increasing as more and more women hear about possibility offered by AIOU to enhance their education.

The women of the country have taken much interest in enlightening themselves with the ornaments of learning and knowledge. Within two decades, the figure of female students has risen to such an extent that their participation rate (1994-95) is 52 against 48 of the male students. It is indeed an encouraging sign the nation deserves to be proud of.

I alone started the journey at dawn,
Lo! People have come to create caravan.

Dr. Mahmudur Rahman
Editor

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STORY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING FROM CONCEPTION TO BIRTH

by

Professor Javed Iqbal Syed*

1. THE NEED

In the Context of Distance Education

For the open learning system to act as a panacea for many ills and difficulties in education has perhaps been the most fascinating revelation of recent years. This realisation came with a steady experimentation of the method and during the early seventies, in some developing countries of the Commonwealth, it owed much to the gravity of the problem of educating a large number of people. While in others, in the beginning, it was perhaps prompted by the political expediency to deal with violent agitations of students at university campuses (why not let them stay and study at their own homes!). Still in others, as one may think, it was probably more of the thrill of the use of borrowed technology in education that gave birth to these institutions. But as the truth is, barring a country like India which had a long tradition in correspondence teaching, to many who themselves happened to be the educated products of

*The writer is a Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning and the Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. He is also the Patron-in-Chief of this Journal. He had an opportunity to work with the COL in 1991 as a Consultant where he looked after the desk of the COL Vice-President that mainly dealt with this international organisation's various programmes in Asia. It was during this period that Prof. Javed wrote a comprehensive story of COL. For the information of our revered readers, we are producing herewith the first chapter of the book.

conventional colleges and universities reconciling with this new concept was somewhat discomforting. Obviously they considered it to be a serious departure from the normal rule. It was only when the idea was put into practice that system's inherent remedial virtues started revealing themselves. Sensitive educational planners of the countries where a few of these institutions were established, could now see in an open learning system a built-in mechanism by which some of the widening gaps of the past could possibly be bridged. Just to name a few: the gap between few with education and many without, between educating people within few years and on the other hand taking several decades, between the elitists' view of education for the people and people's own perceptions of education for themselves, between theory and practice, between obsolete and the new, between generations of learners and above all between costs and benefits. Explanation is very simple: (going by the above order and whatever was the scale of these experiments) on radio and television during the same hour of the day, now a single good teacher could reach thousands of students in their own homes, self-study modes started discouraging delivery of particular dogmatic answers and encouraged learners to ask their own questions and find their own solutions, multi-directional sharing of experiences enriched the very process of education; learning at students' residences, and own places of work, compelled curriculum to be more pragmatic; people of all ages could now take up the courses and lastly where on the one hand, the fixed costs got thinly distributed over a large number of students, and reduced the per student cost for each learning package, on the other, now there was also an opportunity to earn while being a student. Significance of this philosophical concept of *OPENNESS* was that while students came to study at conventional universities, now these open universities themselves went to the students. This distinction of reaching learners at their own homes and places of work, through present day use of technology in education (mutual reinforcement of correspondence text with appropriate mass media mixes) symbolically expressed these institutions' openness so that these were, in this sense, *universities without walls*. This was in fact a new breed of institutions.

Compared to their conventional counterparts which remained fixed at their geographical locales, these institutions seemed to have grown their wings as if these were new birds of the 20th century.[1]

But by and large, no matter how outreaching these few open schools by nature were, their activities remained confined within their own national boundaries. These walls were obviously much thicker and taller than the provincial, regional and the campus limits on the homeland. There were some sporadic ventures of international collaboration but the amount of learning activity generated by these did not stir much of the ocean. It was mostly a one way traffic and in some cases marked with a complete lack of reciprocity so essential an element for any collaborative sharing. So what was needed a mother organisation designed on somewhat similar lines but at an international level with functions almost similar to those of the distance teaching institutions. But these were not the immediate reasons that led to the establishment of The Commonwealth of Learning (COL). This is only what many scholars, distant learners and distance teaching educators, in the developing countreis, had the notion of this organisation and it as per their wishes luckily, turned out to be that way. There was a need to integrate the educational programmes of these institutions with those of the other countries. Avoidance of duplication of efforts, of waste of scare resources and skills together with the administrative burden of multiple programming, pointed to the need for coordinating the sharing of these activities and for which an organisation like COL could logically provide a very effective neutral base. The historic, social, geographical and literary aspects of the Commonwealth culture provided enough of commonalities, in the field of education, on which such relationships could comfortably be cultivated. Under its auspices one could foresee the emergence of joint course teams, comprising of experts

[1]But this does not mean that there were no problems. There were problems, but these were of different sort. We shall discuss about them in the course of our writing while discussing the functions of COL.

from different countries, working together on the production and adaptation of common learning packages. There was a Commonwealth wide need to support the development and use of the entire spectrum of communication technologies, from print materials to satellite transmission, in order to expand learning opportunities. For example, each institution had some better quality self-study teaching and learning materials which the others did not. This could be exchanged on reciprocal bases or at least those instituions which were not capable of producing such good materials could be supported to do so. There were students who needed such materials but did not have an access to them. This "tyranny of distance" or inability to access education needed to be eliminated. And then when else could it be better to take this initiative? International community was never so close, as perhaps today. Human knowledge recognised no more boundaries and was now ready to spread, like music and the smell of flowers, but only, if we could let it go!

II. CONCEPTION

But what is still intriguing are the events that led to this vital decision. Interesting as it may seem to our readers, it was the acute nature of an international problem in education, somewhat akin in nature to those faced by member countries and which led to the establishment of their national open universities, but in this case different in terms of wider area of Commonwealth, that caught attention of the Commonwealth leaders. Student mobility over last ten or twelve years had been strained and weakened by economic and political forces. It was difficult for them to seek admissions in overseas institutions of their own choice.[2] It was felt that any curtailment in the movement of young people to

[2]Basically a problem of supply and demand (as is noted), demand for education in this world far outstrips what hard pressed governments can afford to supply - Richard Maltby and Peter Quartermaine, The Commonwealth, A Common Culture, University of Exeter, Exeter, January 1989, P.106.

take up study opportunities within the Commonwealth would have profound implications for the Commonwealth relationship as a whole. This led to the setting, in 1982, of a Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility chaired by Sir Roy Marshall, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull until 1985, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Chairman of the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee, and Secretary General of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.[3]

Members of the Committee firmly grappled with this problem, and because of the Committee's standing nature, still continue to do so. In their Fourth Report which they presented to the Secretary General on 4 July 1985, they showed their deep concern and the major point of their initial emphasis by recalling the ten points of the Statement which the Commonwealth Ministers of Education had issued in their Ninth Conference in July 1984 in Nicosia and had become the bases for the Committee's discussions while providing them a framework within which they were to formulate their recommendations. These points stressed upon the responsibility of their Governments, in both receiving and sending countries, to formulate policies-with regard to student fees, awards, places, stability in access and other measures - on study abroad within the Commonwealth and showed Commonwealth Ministers' intention to use their best endeavours to ensure that Commonwealth collectively raised the level on intra-Commonwealth student exchanges above that of previous years. In their Fourth Report, in light of Commonwealth Ministers' Statement, the members of the Commonwealth Standing Committee further outlined an eleven sub-point strategy for achieving a proposed target of 3% increase in student mobility by 1986/87. Many of the elements of this strategy they had incorporated in

[3]Other members of the Committee were: Dr. A. Christodoulou, Sir Monty Finniston, Mr. F.S. Hambly, Alhaji Yahaya Hamza, Professor W.J. Kamba, Tan Sri Dato Haji Murad bin Mohammed Noor, Dr. (Mrs.) Madhuri Shah, Mr. Esekia Solofa, Sir Hugh Springer and Professor T.H.B. Symons.

their previous three reports also and this time again believing in the validity of their earlier proposals stressed upon the strengthening of the centres of higher education and research in the third world so that these centres were also able to attract students from abroad as well as better prepare their own to compete for admissions and awards outside. In their Fourth Report they again set out the case for charging students from abroad at less than full cost the fees and referred to the Ministers' Statement which urged those of their members who charged higher fees to Commonwealth than non-Commonwealth students not to introduce any discrimination against Commonwealth countries. In the end they hoped that the Commonwealth Higher Education Unit in the Commonwealth Secretariat would have the necessary resources to support their cause.

A year after the presentation of the Standing Committee's Fourth Report and at the start of their Fifth Meeting at Marlborough House, the Secretary General Shridath S. Ramphal in his opening address lauded the real achievements of the Committee on some fronts and said:

> "... When I addressed Commonwealth Ministers in Nicosia, I described the student mobility issue as a sort of Stalingrad, beyond which one could not afford to retreat fruther. If I were to pursue that metaphor I would say we are still in a Stalingrad-type situation of siege and attrition. The broad advance of restrictionist policies towards overseas students has perhaps been temporarily halted. But only a few successful counter-attacking sorties have been launched - a few victories here on fees and a new award scheme somewhere else. There is not as yet any general advance to regain the territory lost through erosions of freedom of access for overseas students to others Commonwealth countries...It is this line of thinking that leads one to consider the alternatives which your Fourth Report developed so cogently. Even when I wrote to

you at the time of your first meeting, Sir Roy, I urged you to see your task in terms of something wider than Commonwealth student mobility alone. I suggested that the promotion of Commonwealth educational interchange was what we were about; and that, I suppose, was prophetic of the way in which your own thinking has steadily evolved. For in your last report you have stressed that the physical movement of students is not the 'be-all' and 'end-all' of educational interchange. It is possible to link Commonwealth education systems through exchanges, research cooperation and the like. And even international student contact need not in the modern world involve prolonged periods of expensive absence from home. Institutional collaboration in the use of the new technologies may allow students to travel abroad for shorter periods of overseas study, and it is even possible using new technologies for students to enrol for a course or part of a course offered from another Commonwealth country without leaving their home country at all. This opens up new possibilities that international study can become a means of strengthening local capabilities in higher education and research rather than weakening them... There is a whole spectrum of possibilities for Commonwealth collaboration to be explored, ranging from rather modest form of specific collaboration and exchange to more ambitious ventures like the establishment of a Commonwealth open university. When you come to articulate your own thinking at your session later in the week you will be playing part in what I required as one of the most potentially exciting developments in the

modern Commonwealth."[4]

It was this synthesis of their brilliant discourse on the primary issue of student mobility that led the Committee, this time in their Fifth Report, devote a complete chapter on 'Collaboration in Distance Education Learning'.[5] Now it contained the most valuable recommendations of Commonwealth cooperation in eight prime areas[6] and which continue to provide the basis framework of the Commonwealth of Learning's functioning till today. In its Fifth Report the Committee also reviewed its earlier recommendation regarding the development of 'new avenues to interchange' while this time paying particular attention to an integrated split-site programme under which for the first one or two years students are made to study in their home countries and the final one or two years are taken abroad. The Committee also recommended that at least two thirds of their proposed funds could

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[4] Extract taken from COMMONWEALTH STUDENT MOBILITY: Commitment and Resources, Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility, FIFTH REPORT, August 1980, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, London.

[5] Although in July 1984 Commonwealth Ministers of Education met in Cyprus and endorsed a recommendation of Commenwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility that Secretariat should expand its work in distance teaching due to a decline in Commonwealth student mobility, Standing Committee's recommendation did not form a major part of their report. Even in their Fourth Report of July 1985 this emphasis was missing.

[6] These included the acquisition of course materials for use by cooperating institutions throughout the Commonwealth, provision of training in distance teaching techniques, development of courses in some key areas, support of communication links between Commonwealth universities, provision of information, promoting and commissioning of teaching materials and evaluation of and applied research in distance education.

be devoted to distance teaching collaboration.

[At this point perhaps it would be too naive to think that the whole spectrum of earlier identified problems by the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility, with regard to overseas student fees, quotas and awards could now be dissolved into a single solution of a distance teaching mixture. The truth is that in spite of a major contribution to the international debate on student mobility by the Committee and the sustained advocacy of progressive and outward looking policies of its members, these problems continue to exist at international level, as with varying intensity, within each of the individual country itself with regard its own student admissions in conventional schools, colleges and universities. The difference which open learning systems have been able to make is that now a whole range of alternate opportunities for learning have been made available to many time more number of students than what the existing formal systems in these countries are able to cope with.]

A little further analyses of events that steadily, on time scale led to this change in perception of the members of the Standing Committee may unfold to our readers not only the inevitabilities of economic and political forces working within the frontiers of some Commonwealth countries, but also the way the invading technology of communication is filled with surprises and, for many, bears the hope of one day neutralising the negative effects of these forces quietly over the whole globe. As such one may not be wrong in presuming that much of the global environment must have changed between the First and the Fifth Meetings of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility that there occurred a change in members' viewpoint. However, it was long before this Standing Committee met for the first time in 1982, that in 1969 the first open university had already been established in the United Kingdom followed by another in 1974 in a developing country i.e. The People's Open University of Pakistan (in 1977 this name was changed to Allama Iqbal Open University). Both of these institutions had already established some kind of

relationship under the overseas developing programme and were together developing useful models for distance learners. In Thailand the educational broadcasting began with the establishment of the School Broadcasting Division in the Ministry of Education in 1963. Canada had a 100-year long tradition of distance education for native school teachers who were scattered throughout the high arctic. Deakin University in Australia started her off-campus programmes sometimes in 1978. Of the six Malaysian universities, the University of Sains Malaysia (USM) delivered a distance education programme to home based adult students in 1969. An Air Correspondence High School in South Korea attracted over 25,000 students with a completion rate of 46% during the first year of its establishment. There are many more examples, but one can imagine that as compared to the formal school activity, these incidents were too sporadic to be noted on earth. Facilitating a well informed decision, and that too, at the Commonwealth level, obviously necessitated proper documentation of these activities. It may be noted on May 3, 1984 when the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility presented their Third Report titled "Commonwealth Student Mobility: A Time for Action", there was hardly any mention of distance teaching methodology nor of any related documents that were made available to the members. It was only six months before the Committee met again for presentation of their Fourth Report that a group of Commonwealth specialists on distance teaching in higher education met in Cambridge in January 1985 and prepared their final report with the name "Distance Teaching in Higher Education: Final Report of Commonwealth Meeting of Specialists, Cambridge, England 1985". So, while presenting their Fourth Report on July 4, 1985, the Committee acknowledges to had consulted this document along with a paper written by Professor Lewis Elton on "Staff Development in Higher Education in and/or through Distance Education". As a result, some very important observations, relevant to our interest, one can note in their Fourth Report. They observed that "in cases where students still go to wealthier countries and to more expensive courses it would involve finding [alternate] means of reducing the time they need to spend abroad in order to complete a course". In later part of

the Report they further suggested that "one another approach to reducing costs, enhancing relevance and fostering student mobility, is the split-site programme of studies at undergraduate or post graduate level. Students registering for a home based qualifications or for an overseas qualifications could take part of their course in their home country and the remainder abroad". However, while making these observations they very truly feared "erosion of quality and stressed upon necessary academic support by the involved institutions. They further hoped that the split-site programme "would lead to distance teaching possibilities for more fully for entire courses". They also noted that offering of courses by distance teaching from a base in an overseas country was still at a pilot stage as "one or two institutions in Australia were experimenting in South East Asia". These were the observations to which Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shirdath S. Ramphal in his inaugural address, later at the start of the Committee's Fifth Meeting at Marlborough House, (and a part of which we reproduced earlier), had referred by saying that "it is this line of thinking that leads one to consider the alternatives which your Fourth Report developed so cogently". But, as we stated earlier, this line of thinking was still not the committee's main point of attack. A major part of their recommendations of the Fourth Report dealt with "student fees, awards, places, stability in access and ohter measures" and perhaps rightly so in the light of the Committee's mandate for covering issues on student mobility within the Commonwealth countries as the word "mobility" had its obvious semantic connotations in terms of physical movement of students from one country to another. It was in their Fifth Report which they presented to the Secretary-General on August 30, 1986 that distance education, as we mentioned earlier, seems to have become one of their main themes. Again, what led to this change are some very important developments which took place between July 1985 to August 1986.

In October 1985 Commonwealth Heads of Government had met in The Bahamas and issued a communique asking the Secretary-General to explore scope for new Commonwealth initiatives in the field of open learning. As a result,

a study was commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat to the Council to Educational Technology and the International Extension College in Britain. It was funded by the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom. In the words of the final report "the study reviews experience of distance and open education within Commonwealth countries, looks at existing examples of international cooperation and leads to suggestions or proposals for new Commonwealth initiatives, the study concerns itself with the whole range of distance teaching for further, higher or continuing education. While it examines the use of distance teaching for undergraduate degrees, it pays particular attention to programmes for human resource development in the widest sense, including continuing education". The study consisted of sixteen background papers which for the sake of convenience, the editors of the report divided into three groups, namely Regions, Themes and Sectors. It was probably the most comprehensive report of distance teaching activities that was ever presented to the Commonwealth Secretariat and was prepared by persons like Janet Jenkins (then from the International Extension College and now Director of the Open Polytechnic in England) and Geoffrey Hubbard of Council for Educational Technology in Britain as principal consultants.[7] The study employed a methodology

[7] The others who contributed to this report were: Jo Bradley, Tony Dodds, Solomon Inquai and David Warr from the International Extension College; John Coffey and Chris Humphries from the Council for Educational Technology; Tony Bates, Keith Harry, Adrian Kirkwood, Greville Rumble and Allan Woodley from the British Open University; Ian Gillespie of City of London Polytechnic; Chris Garforth of University of Reading; Lara Eular Ajay of Ministry of Education, Nigeria; Raj Dhanarajan from Universiti Sains Malaysia; Marian Croft of Laurentian University, Canada; Gerard Lalor from the University of the West Indies; Don Bewley of Massey University in New Zealand; P. Satyanaryana of Indira Gandhi National Open University in India and Patrick Guiton from the Murdoch University of Australia. Those who served on the Advisory Group from the Murdoch University of Australia. Those who

continued on next page

which consisted of a survey involving over 400 institutions, 16 commissioned overview papers from 8 regions of the Commonwealth, visits to 10 Commonwealth countries and a number of sectoral short studies that were also commissioned in order to look more closely at different subject areas. Report of their findings covers broad areas like the nature and use of open learning courses in the Commonwealth, effectiveness of distance education and existing forms of cooperation and collaboration. From the point of view of the decision-taker, the most pertinent questions that were asked were:

> "Are there groups of people who need education and training which they cannot at present get?
>
> Could their needs be met by expanding the present system?
>
> Can sufficient teachers and trainers, and particularly sufficient specialists in the subject area, be made available?
>
> Are the conditions such as to allow for the necessary level of tutor-learner and learner-learner interaction and support?
>
> Is the subject one which is appropriate to open learning - does it require any provision which it is difficult to provide in an open

[7] served on the Advisory Group for this study were: Lord Young of Dartington (Chair), Tony Dodds, David Anderson of International Extension College; A. Christodoulou of Association of Commonwealth Universities; Hilary Perraton of the Commonwealth Secretariat; Sandy Edington of British Council; Nigel Paine of Scottish Council for Educational Technology; Chris Humphries of Council for Educational Technology; John Daniel of Laurentian University, Canada (now the Vice Chancellor of Open University in United Kingdom); Nicholas Kuhanga of University of Dar-es-Salaam and Patrick Guiton of Murdoch University, Australia.

learning system?

What material exists which could be used either as it stands or after modification? Are the owners of such material willing to grant permission to use on reasonable terms?

What will it cost, and at what level of utilisation will it compare favourably with an orthodox solution?

How long will it take to establish? Can it meet the need in time?"

The main conclusion which the study drew in their own words was:

"...the evidence we have gathered is that there are many educational needs within the Commonwealth that could be addressed by an extension of open learning. The prime requirement is for an overall expansion of open learning. We have therefore looked at the possibilities for collaboration from the point of assisting that expansion. In general there is a widespread and developing network of open learning institutions and education and training organisations which could apply open learning, and it is wise to use them wherever possible. Local systems and local knowledge are likely to respond best to the needs and conditions of the student, although one of the longer term outcomes of collaboration should be an increase in the opportunity for international student mobility."

Findings of this study were presented to the members of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility. In their Fifth Report they also acknowledged having one another related document titled "Discussions of Possible Commonwealth Initiatives in Distance Education/Open Learning held at the Meeting of Executive Heads of the Association of Commonwealth Universities,

Penang, Malaysia, 18-22 August 1986 by John Daniel, Laurentian University, Canada". This meeting of Association of Commonwealth Universities was well in time and took place only a week before the Standing Committee on August 30 presented its Fifth Report titled "Commonwealth Student Mobility: Commitment and Resources" which as we discussed earlier, in reality, set the path towards the establishment of some organisations at international level charged with the responsibility of collaborating the distance teaching activities throughout the Commonwealth. They especially noted in their, this time an exclusive, chapter on collaboration in distance education and open learning that:

> "There is a wealth of distance education experience within the Commonwealth, and bilateral lins are already developing between Commonwealth institutions. But, valuable though all this is, it is not commensurate with the needs to be addressed in expanding opportunities for degrees and diplomas, for vocational training, and for continuing eduation. A programme of Commonwealth cooperation could bring collective resources to bear on these tasks, using the strengths of distance education to overcome barriors of distance and limits of resources, and could do so in a way that would enhance national programmes of distance and open learning and even strengthen the local institutions involved collaborative arrangements. Many tertiary institutions in a number of countries have considerably increased the quality of their own teaching in this way"

III. THE EMBRYO AND THE PRE-NATAL ARRANGEMENTS

It was in October 1986 that the Secretary-General invited Professor Asa Briggs, Lord Briggs of Lewes, Provost of Worcester College, Oxford and Chancellor of the British Open University to chair an independent expert group to consider Commonwealth cooperation in

distance education and open learning.[8] About this Hilary Perraton in an afterword which he wrote for one of the recently published anthology of Commonwealth cultural explorations said: "It was at Exeter that the enquiry into Commonwealth cooperation in distance education and open learning which was to result in The Commonwealth of Learning was first revealed. That revelation had not been entirely foreseen. However, Professor Ramphal decided to build upon the happy coincidence of the occasion of his public lecture at the university and the impending announcement of his appointment of a Commonwealth Expert Group on Distance Education chaired by Professor Asa Briggs, Lord Briggs of Lewes to inform members of the university and the local media what was afoot. In a real sense, therefore, the Centre for American and Commonwealth Arts and Studies of Exeter University had a part in the launching of the plans for The Commonwealth of Learning".[9] The group also began by surveying existing experience in distance education and had an appraisal of the needs and opportunities in different parts of the Commonwealth. In their own words, they were "spurred on by new breakthroughs in communication technologies" that were taking place. They were specially impressed by the "range of needs and the as yet unrealised potential of distance education to meet them". They also noted that there was a sound foundation on which a new institution multilateral in character, with the purpose to promote collaborative links between various institutions of all the Commonwealth countries, could be built. They also suggested that the most appropriate name of this insti-

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[8] Other members of the group were: Professor Akin Adesola, Dr. Anastasios Chirstodoulou, Mrs. Marjorie Crocombe, Professor The Hon. Rex Nettleford, Dr. Gaddam Ram Reddy, Dr. Raymond Rickett, Professor Ronald L. Watts and Professor Sir Bruce Williams.

[9] The Commonwealth: A Common Culture? Essays by Shridath S. Ramphal and Others. Edited by Richard Maltby and Peter Quartermainc, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, Great Britain, 1989, P.105.

tution would be the University of the Commonwealth for Cooperation in Distance Education (about which we shall discuss later) and emphasised that the proposed institution should address a wide spectrum of different levels of learning needs throughout the Commonwealth while working through educational bodies of different countries. It was on May 22, 1987 that they presented their report to the Secretary-General with the title "Towards a common wealth of learning", a proposal to create the University of Common Wealth for Cooperation in Distance Education. It contained a comprehensive list of recommendations outlining the objectives of the proposed university, their long term aim, the areas of its broad concern, and methodology of its functioning. It also suggested the way this new institution was to comprehend and support Commonwealth students mobility by helping to create a framework for the interchangeability of credits between associated educational institutions, by assisting students to obtain acceptable entry qualifications for courses they wished to study abroad and by making possible split-site programmes of study divided between a home and overseas location, thus reducing the time and cost requirements of study in another Commonwealth country. As also indicated earlier, while making their proposal they fully respected the recommendations of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility as contained in their Fifth Report particularly those relating to the arrangements for cooperation in different areas and, besides others, also benefited from the Report that had been prepared by the Council for Educational Technology and the International Extension College of Britain. They stated in their proposal that "their long term aim was that any learner in the Commonwealth shall be able to study any distance teaching programme available from any bonafide college or university in the Commonwealth". Regarding this proposed university's broad concern, they identified various needs of Commonwealth countries and suggested three main areas of support as a matter of priority, namely the development and sharing of teaching materials, support to individual learners and the institutional development. Lord Briggs' Report was

widely hailed and the Secretary-General Shridath Ramphal welcomed it with the words: "It is not often that ideas emerge which stir the imagination and beckon people to work for their fulfilment. This report contains such an idea."

It was in July 1987 that the Commonwealth Ministers of Education met in Nairobi, Kenya and endorsed the Briggs' Report. At the same time, that is in July 1987, the Province of British Columbia developed a "Proposal for Canadian Leadership of a Commonwealth Open Learning Initiative" for the establishment of the University of the Commonwealth for Cooperation in Distance Eduation[10] asking the Government of Canada for approaching the Commonwealth with the recommendation to establish a system based centre for Commonwealth open learning, headquarters in British Columbia and that an initial 10-year management contract be entered into with British Columbia incorporating an agency for the development management and operation of the Commonwealth open learning initiative". This recommendation was made on the premises that British Columbia had already adopted a systems' model for development and delivery of courseware at all levels including education from kindergarten to post graduate university. The systems included three universities, fifteen colleges, three institutes, the Open Learning Institute and the Knowledge Network. It was hoped that with the expansion of distance teaching programmes the Knowledge Network and the Open Learning Institute would be merged in a new organisation called the Open Learning Agency. In August/September 1987, the Government of Canada further improved upon this British Columbia's initiative and prepared a detailed proposal entitled "Commonwealth Cooperation in Distance Education". It was in response to the Secretary-General's invitation to Commonwealth Governments for considering the nature and scale of contributions which could be expected from their countries. While refering to the Nairobi Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers of Education, he had written:"... (Ministers of Education) unanimously

[10] Unpublished document, Province of British Columbia, July 1987.

endorsed the concept of establishing arrangements for multilateral Commonwealth cooperation in distance education and supported the establishment of an institution devoted to this purpose. They asked me to convey to you their enthusiastic support for the ideas set out in the Briggs' Report, which they saw as timely, practical and likely to be effective." In his circulated briefing paper, Secretary-General had also noted that in the Nairobi Meeting of the Commonwealth Ministers of Education there were some modifications for the proposed title of the institution that were made known and a phased-in approach was thought to be appropriate. Canadian Government's response shared this anxiety and while suggesting a new name for the institution i.e. The Commonwealth of University and College Network for Distance Education proposed that principal activities of the network may initially be: "to facilitate access to and development of distance education materials in areas of proven need; to assist in the development of tutorial and back up services; to support institutional development through staff training, inter-institutional links and exchanges of information; a programme of evaluation and research; and a marketing and perfect fundraising facility." Canadian proposal also outlined the governing mechanism of the proposed institution and suggested three main elements, namely (a) a Board of Governors selected by the Commonwealth and consisting of representatives from governments and other donor institutions with the purpose to provide policy guidance and required monitoring of donor funds; (b) an Expert Advisory Group composed of eminent distance education experts of international level for advising the Board of Governors and (c) a Management Committee to ensure that works proper functioning. Canadian initiative also showed its willingness to provide a start up capital finance of $1 million along with a recurrent accommodation costs of 1 more million for housing the coordinating unit in Canada for at least the first five years and also $4 million for units operational expenses during this period. The Government of Canada further believed that as the Commonwealth-wide scope of this proposed institution and its direct value to Commonwealth distance education institutions warranted a multilateral support, contri-

butions, regardless of their size, from as many Commonwealth partners as possible, would help them to realise their initiative.

This Canadian proposal was endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of the Government who met in October 1987 at Vancouver and announced this place as the site for the coordinating unit. In December 1987 the Commonwealth Secretariat nominated a small working party which consisted of representatives of Canada, United Kingdom and one developing country to rework and improve upon the Canadian proposal. In January 1988 First Interim Planning Committee of the Commonwealth met and examined in detail the management question of mandate and management framework and under the chairmanship of Dr. John Daniel, former President of Laurentian University of Canada, established a technical working group of experts from Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, India and Nigeria[11] with the purpose to draft the full outline of the network and for suggesting its required institutional arrangements. It was in April - May 1988 that the members of the working group visited main regions of the Commonwealth and gathered views of at least twelve principal member states. They recommended change in the name and suggested *The Commonwealth of Learning* to be the most appropriate. They proposed an international Board of Governors for this institution. Since it was an established convention for Commonwealth institutions to be established by means of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between governments they prepared its draft which set out the functions of the agency and, once agreed, was to give the institution a legal personality and a legal framework for its activities. Almost all the eight functions that had been earlier proposed by the Briggs' Report and had their origin in the Commonwealth Standing

[11] Other members of the group were: Professor Malcolm Skilbeck, Dr. Roger O. Iredale, Hajah Misli binti Haji Awang, Mr. Noble Power, Dr. Jack Newberry, Mr. Abhimanyu Singh, Prof. P. Serracino Inglott, Mr. W.L. Renwick, Professor Akin Adesola, Dr. A. Christodoulou, Mrs. Marjorie Crocombe, Dr. J.H. Horlock, Professor G.C. Lalor, Professor G. Ram Reddy and Mr. Kenneth Tsekoa.

Committee's Fifth Report on Student Mobility were adopted. The MOU laid down that the agency will operate through a headquarter in Vancouver and such units in other regions of the Commonwealth as may be set up, and networks of teaching information and research institutions. It was in June 1988 that the Working Group presented its report titled: "The Commonwealth of Learning: Institutional Arrangements for Commonwealth Cooperation in Distance Education.

IV. BIRTH, NAME, PLACE AND CELEBRITIES

On September 1, 1988 in London, all 48 Commonwealth member governments signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and this legally established the birth of this new organisation with the name "The Commonwealth of Learning". On November 14, 1988 an agreement between the Agency now known as The Commonwealth of Learning and the Government of Canada regarding the Headquarter of the Agency was signed by the Secretary-General of Commonwealth and a representative of the Government of Canada. The First Meeting of the Board of Governors of The Commonwealth of Learning was held on the same day at Robson Square headquarters in Vancouver and Dr. James A. Maraj, was appointed the first President of the Commonwealth of Learning. On the occasion of the inauguration, Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II sent the following congratulatory message:

> "I am delighted to hear that the formal inauguration of the Commonwealth of Learning, which was decided upon at the last meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Vancouver is to take place in that same city only twelve months later. The institution of these arrangements for Commonwealth cooperation in distance education a most important practical step in cementing relationships between the members. I look forward confidently to the healthy growth and development of this new institution under the Chairmanship of Lord Briggs, and offer a most hearty welcome to this new and significant element in the fabric

of the Commonwealth."

In January 1989 Dr. James A. assumed his official duties in Vancouver.

V. THE FIRST FEW MONTHS

In the First Board of Governors Meeting that was held on November 12-14, 1988 in Vancouver, the Commonwealth Secretary-General welcomed Governors and expressed his appreciation of their willingness to serve on the Board. Lord Briggs of Lewes became the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Besides him and the Secretary General, the others who were present in the meeting were Sir Roy Marshall, Ms. J. Barrow, Dr. A. Christodoulou, Dato Haji Abdul Razak bin Haji Muhammad, Dr. J.S. Daniel, Professor P. Serracino Inglott, Dr. G. Ram Reddy, Mr. W.L. Renwick, Mr. D. Hamilton, Professor W.J. Kamba, Dr. R.O. Iredale, Alhaji Hafiz Wali and Professor J.A. Maraj. Dr. G. Farrell, President, Open Learning Agency of British Columbia, was invited to attend the meeting. Commonwealth Secretariat was represented also by the Commonwealth Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. M. Malhoutra, Mr. R.C. Williams, Mr. J.R. Swartland, Dr. H.D. Perraton and Mr. J.Reed. Sir Quo-Wei Lee could not attend the meeting. Among other things, the Board received and noted the MOU agreed by the Commonwealth Governments on September 1, 1988. It was noted that the Memorandum provided for the Board to invite Governments contributing to or significantly assisting its activities to participate in its meeting and it was agreed to invite the Government of British Columbia to be represented at this meeting. The board also received the draft Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Canada and The Commonwealth of Learning. The Agreement was to be signed on November 14, 1988. It was noted that further discussions on its interpretation were needed on points of detail. Regarding the appointment of the President, the Board noted that a selection panel, consisting of Lord Briggs, Dr. Daniel, Professor Kamba, Mr. Ramphal, Dr. Reddy and Professor Skilbeck, had met candidates for the post of the President in London in October 1988 and had unanimously recommended Dr. James A. Maraj for this

appointment. Earlier the Report of the Working Group on The Commonwealth of Learning, Institutional Arrangements for Commonwealth Cooperation in Distance Education had advised that "the President as Chief Executive of the Agency will be appointed by the Board of Governors and will be responsible to the Board for the administration and management of the Agency and its activities. The appointee would need to be in a position to negotiate at the highest level with Governments and to command immediate respect in any college or university in the Commonwealth. The appointee might thus be someone who is already a university vice chancellor or holding a comparable educational post but this is not necessarily the only appropriate background for the post. Our recommendation is that the successful candidate is likely to be an educational leader of international stature who combines international experience with knowledge and understanding of the application of distance education in development, excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrated ability in Government relations, management and fund raising. The successful candidate will require the energy, initiative and innovative ability to launch the new organisation".[12]

The Board also received papers on programme activities and on communications and considered the development of a strategy for the first phase of COL's activities. In doing so, it took account of the work previously done by, and on behalf of, the Briggs and the Daniel groups. The Board's overriding concerns were with widening access to education, extending its range, and so contributing to the development of human resources. The Board also noted that under the MOU the Board must meet once a year but it was likely that, at least in the first year, more than one meeting would be necessary. There could be advantages in holding some meetings away from Vancouver, particularly where COL was establishing strong links and activities. Furthermore the Board had the power

[12]The Commonwealth of Learning, Institutional Arrangements for Commonwealth Cooperation in Distance Education, Report of the Working Group, page 13-14, para 37.

to appoint committees including an executive committee and might wish to appoint one or more vice chairmen. As a result in the Second Meeting of the Board that was held in New Delhi (March 20-21, 1989), Professor Walter Kamba was appointed Vice Chairman of the Board[13] and the Third Meeting that was held in Vancouver (November 20-21, 1989) Mr. Don Hamilton was appointed as second Vice Chairman of COL.[14]

As regard the provision in the MOU for an Executive Committee, the Chairman noted that the Board could delegate some of its functions to this Committee. However, he also expressed the view that the Executive Committee would only take decisions on matters of our urgent nature and these decisions would be reported to the Board. It was agreed to establish an Executive Committee consisting of Lord Briggs, Professor Walter Kamba, Mr. Don Hamilton, Sir Quo-Wei Lee, Sir Roy Marshall, Dato Haji Abdul Razak bin, Haji Muhammad and Dr. James A. Maraj.

Till April 1989, a number of administrative arrangements had been made to support COL's operations. Policies had been developed concerning the terms and conditions of appointment for overseas and local staff, the appointment of short-term consultants, travel policy, and so on. Clarification of the terms and conditions of the Headquarters Agreement had been obtained from the federal authorities. Financial Regulations had been approved by the Board and a Board Committee, chaired by Sir Roy Marshall, was preparing a revised set of Staff Regulations for the Board's approval in November 1989. Staff Rules were being prepared and a full system of office routines was in place.

Private firms had also been engaged to provide a variety of necessary services. The firm of Prince

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[13] Commonwealth Board Meeting 2, March 20-21, 1989, Minutes, page 4, sub para 13.1.

[14] Board of Governors Meeting 3, November 20-21, 1989, Vancouver, Canada, Minutes, page 27, sub para 68.4.

Waterhouse was engaged to assist in the development of financial management systems and to serve as external auditors. (The Executive Committee of the Board served as the internal audit committee). The Royal Bank of Canada provided a full range of banking services and had been engaged, with the Board's approval, to provide apporpriate borrowing instruments for COL. Two Vancouver based law firms - Bull, Housser & Tupper and Ferguson Gifford - were engaged to provide legal services with the firm of Marsh McLennan providing basic insurance coverage for the members of the Board and COL staff.

A computer consultant had been engaged to provide a computer layout plan, ensuring the efficient use of the computer equipment already acquired and the hardware and software to meet emergent needs. Training had been provided to the staff in the use of all equipment, viz fax, telex, PCs, memory typewriters, and so on. In relation to COL's electronic mail requirements, COL had reached an agreement with the University of British Columbia to allow COL to use its network on a trial basis. A similar arrangement was under discussion with Simon Fraser University.

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Allama Iqbal Open University
Islamabad - Pakistan

Curriculum Development in Distance Higher Education

by

Kim Shinil*

1. Excellence in Higher Education

Openness and excellence are major issues of today's education. The popular notion that the former appears to be incompatible with the latter, comprise a theme over which debate is warming up. Many gravitate toward the notion that opening the educational system to masses of people would drag down the academic standard of the education. This implies that excellence is ensured when the educational system is accessible to only a limited number of people. Elitism, which is inherent in a closed system, is equated with excellence. Applying this reasoning to distance education, it holds true that excellence is not what distance higher education is concerned about, due to the inherent openness of this type of system. Simply put, notion that openness and excellence are incompatible with each other is mistaken.

Distance education is characterized by heavy dependence on broadcasting media and correspondence and is typical of the open education system. It may be characterized in more specific terms as follows:

1) Distance education is easily accessible to anyone who wishes to benefit from it.

2) It takes the form of a refresher programme for employed student workers.

3) It focusses on contents which may well be dealt with in the context of a total system comprising school, home and society. (Kim Jong

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Suh et al., 1987:7-8)

Given these characteristics, it may be concluded that distance education has no ground for excellence. This assumption may be refuted on two accounts.

First, an open system brings about a marked increase of enrollment which is considered the major cause for lower education quality. In closer analysis, these two are not always in a cause-effect relation, as evidenced in Torsten Husens study, which featured a comparative analysis of student achievement in Europe and the United States. His study was intended to vindicate the popular view that high school students in Europe perform better than their counterparts in the United States, whose system is well-known for openness. Contrary to the prevailing expectation, the latter registered a much higher level of achievement on the average than the former. Since the upper secondary education is open to greater proportions of the school-aged population in the United States, sampling method could be considered a crucial variable for test scores. Therefore, he limited the sampled population to the upper 30 percent of students in achievement ranking. The result was that the United States ranked in the upper middle among those countries involved in the comparative study. Popularizing education may drag down the average level of student achievement, but this does not obscure the fact that there are always some students whose achievement is comparable to those of top students in the countries which limit accessibility to upper secondary education. Another implication is that raising the average level of student achievement means that education is as much concerned about the under-achievers, but this issue though interesting goes beyond the purview of this debate on excellence versus openness.

Second, there is a problem associated with the uniformity of criteria used for measuring excellence. Higher education in the earlier stages of its development was distinguished by a purely academic orientation. Practical orientation to higher education is a rather recent phenomenon, which has led to the inclusion of

applied sciences into its curriculum. Practical concern is manifested in the diversification of advanced degrees beyond the bounds of Ph.D to include Ed.D. and M.D. Distinction between academic and practical orientation should not be construed as an attempt to rank them in hierarchical order of superiority versus inferiority. The programmes which focus on the latter can't always be considered inferior to those geared to the former. A similar analogy applied to the discriminatory treatment of physics and mechanical engineering. Each has a legitimate claim for excellence, though they vary in curriculum contents and approach to learning. Excellence defies judgement on a single set of criteria.

Today's higher education is a significant departure from its antecedent in that today masses of people are educated as is evidenced by distance education programmes. The main characteristic of distance education is accessibility to a sizeable majority of potential clientele. Distance education is significantly different from the traditional education in goal, content and instructional process. It has, therefore, good reason to seek excellence on its own behalf and this calls for a different set of criteria for measuring excellence. Given this fact, a popular malady is the tendency to view distance education as a totally different entity from the traditional education. As modern higher education has evolved from its antecedent with the gradual swinging of the pendulum from pure sciences to practical orientation, distance higher education should be viewed as the extreme end of the spectrum over which the pendulum of emphasis swings. Distance higher education should be the frontier of practical education and its excellence should be sought in this context.

Excellence finds it legitimate place in every form of education. Under no circumstance can higher education do without seeking excellence. What matters is how to conceptualize excellence and to develop criteria for measuring it, which should vary with the goal and the needs of the clientele. Socrates defined the highest form of value to be internalized by man as virtue. This is the status which is obtainable through one's best effort in

intelligence, morality and physical strength. Given this nature of excellence, it holds that this conceptualization of excellence requires a new set of criteria entirely different from those which applied to the traditional form of education. The criteria which measure the excellence of distance higher education should be the function of its unique nature distinctive from others. In this respect, distance education leads other forms of education in venturing into innovative programmes.

2. Characteristics of Distance Higher Education

That distance higher education is different from other forms of education as well taken for granted, what is important, though, is how to interprete and accept this fact. Dependence on broadcasting media and correspondence instead of classroom attendance, different levels of motivation on the part of clientele and diverse needs stemming from a wide range of ages seemingly represent the relative weakness of distance education. On the positive side, however, it should be recongised that its clientele others in working experience and motivation for learning and have more opportunities for individualized instruction. More important, the number of people served by distance higher education is stunning beyond the reach of a formal school. Distance higher education serves unique functions that other forms of education can hardly think of performing. The educational system faces new challenges and it is through distance education that they are addressed in a systematic fashion.

A negative view of distance education shapes its self-fulfilment expectations, resultantly widening its gap with formal education. It takes the edge off a drive for development. On the other hand, recognizing the relative strength of distance education will help to keep it in the frontiers of innovative programmes ahead of formal institutes of higher education. Among other, its role in opening a new vista looms larger and focusing on this role will sharpen the thrust of its development.

The profile of 1983's entrants reflects diverse backgrounds of working experiences (92 percent). Non-employed entrants account for only 8 percent. If it had not been for the institute of distance education, a sizeable majority of this population might have burned important bridges to the future. This fact attests to the unique role of Korea Air and Correspondence University.

Diversity is also seen in the distribution of ages. Those aged under 25 account for 28 percent, 26-30 for 33 percent and those above 31 for 49 percent. Half of the entrants are 30 years old or older than this. They have a wide variety of working experiences which await to be further stretched through their meshing with theoretical studies. Free trafficking between schooling and work holds a promise of making a deep dent in the problem associated with the vehement competition for college entrance, where no alternative path is available other than written examination. Its importance is also highlighted from the fact that working experience in every walk of social life produces new perspectives of education and greater motivations for accomplishment, thus helping to raise the effectiveness of education. Cognizant of the importance of working experience, socialist countries, including the Soviet Union and China, make it mandatory for high school graduates to have one or two year's working experience before they advance to higher education. Without such a buffer programme, higher education tends to become bookish and theoretical with little link to practical works. Higher education in Korea has been blamed for dissipating its energy in grappling with abstract theories. Distance education derives its significance from its potential for offering a viable alternative to the existing system.

Another common notion about distance education is that its clientele are disadvantaged in the amount of time devoted to learning and the ability to learn. This is because they are partime learners. But this does not always hold true.

Table-1 below shows the graduation ratio of student workers who entered Korean Air and Correspondence

University in 1983. Despite the double imperatives of work and study, 21.1 percent of them went through the courses leading to bachelor's degrees. This ratio is favourably compared with 5.5 percent registered by a group of full time students who entered Korea Air and Correspondence University in 1981.

Table-1 Graduation Ratios of Students at KACU

Jobs	Ratios of those taking graduate exam.	Graduation ratios	Success ratios in grad. exam.			Graduation ratios
			English	Major	All	
Workers	33.0	23.8	78.9	82.2	72.3	21.1
Non-Workers	11.9	7.2	74.7	67.4	60.7	5.5
Sub-total	30.7	12.0	78.7	81.6	71.8	19.4

Table-2 Graduation Ratios of Students by Age Group

Category	Age groups	Exam. taking ratios	Graduation ratios	Success ratios in grad.exam.			Graduation
				Engl.	Major	All	
New entrants in 1981	Below 25	3.7	3.2	89.6	88.8	86.1	2.7
	26-30	7.8	6.8	89.6	91.4	87.1	5.9
	31-35	11.2	9.5	89.6	88.4	84.5	8.1
	36-40	16.3	14.4	89.7	95.6	88.4	11.8
	41-50	24.4	19.9	83.3	93.0	81.5	16.2
	over 51	7.5	6.3	84.8	97.0	84.8	4.5
	Sub-total	8.9	7.6	87.9	91.5	85.2	6.4

Category	Age groups	Exam. taking ratios	Graduation ratios	Success ratios in grad.exam.			Graduation
				Engl.	Major	All	
Transferred entrants in 1983	Below 25	17.2	12.3	80.6	76.9	71.3	9.8
	26-30	22.2	15.3	79.2	75.0	69.0	13.5
	31-35	39.9	30.0	81.6	82.8	75.2	27.1
	36-40	58.6	44.5	80.4	87.9	75.8	40.4
	41-50	64.7	45.6	72.9	88.8	70.4	40.4
	over 51	45.2	24.3	58.9	76.8	53.7	19.5
	Sub-total	30.7	22.0	78.7	81.6	71.8	19.4

Table-2 relates graduation ratio to age. In both groups, the age bracket of 35-50 shows the highest graduation ratio, while the youngest group (below 25) is known for the lowest one. The survey results invalidate the popular assumptions of part time students.

The demonstrated enthusiasm and capability of part time workers for learning holds significant implications for the development of distance education. What matters is how to provide programmes which best fit the characteristics of distance education and how to provide necessary supports, administrative and financial. It also produces a compelling reason to search for ways to meet faculty and facility requirements.

3. Direction of Curriculum Development

The curriculum of Korea Air and Correspondence University has evolved from its patient attempt to respond to the changers social background, and the limited capability of the existing educational system. This process resembles Ralph Tyler's curriculum development model wherein Tyler asserted that educational objectives should be derived from social demands, emerging needs and individual concerns. A decade's

experience with distance education led to the inauguration of the five-year study programme at Korea Air and Correspondence University, the completion of which leads to a bachelor's degree. Subsequently, its curriculum underwent massive reform. The principles which underlines this reform at the transitional stage were important guidelines and remain applicable to curriculum development today.

First, the curriculum of distance education should reflect the ingredients of civic education. By contrast with scholastic inquiry which characterizes formal institutes of higher education, civic education emphasizes linkage to works and daily living experience. This concept holds the air and correspondence institute responsible for a wide variety of enlightening and cultural programmes.

Second, the air and correspondence institute should strengthen its retraining function, since it is largely targeted for workers who need to update their skills and knowledge. This means that its educational programmes are linked to specific job tasks.

Third, the curriculum of the distance education institute should remain flexible enough to allow for speedy adaption to social transformation, within the bounds of the specific academic demand of each discipline.

Fourth, considering its heavier reliance on the broadcasting media, subjects whose learning is largely contingent on experiment and practice should be kept at the most basic level.

Fifth, study load should be maintained at a level that does not cause excessive burden to student workers. Further, care should be taken to ensure the academic standard of programmes, which will ensure the reliability of degrees conferred.

Sixth, programmes on the junior college level should be built into distance higher education for those who

wish to terminate schooling at this level to seek employment.

These principles reflect the characteristics of air and correspondence institutes and comprise useful guidelines for curriculum development. In reality, however, the present curriculum of Korea Air and Correspondence University fails short of meeting all of these requirements. This may be due to the failure to provide adequate supports, financial and institutional, and to meet the faculty and facility requirements. Korea Air and Correspondence University has not secured a separate broadcasting channel over which to air its programmes. Reliance on the existing channels sets limits to hours of broadcasting, with a resultant shrinkage of programmes.

The recently inaugurated civic programmes are receiving positive reactions across the board. Since this audience reflects diverse backgrounds, their needs also tend to be diversified. Programme development in this area has been spearheaded by formal institutes of higher education. By virtue of its unique function, related to civic education, an institute like Korea Air and Correspondence University should assume a leadership role in this undertaking. Similarly, a modular crediting system holds a promise for better serving the needs of student workers. It allows them to quit and resume schooling, depending on the demands of their working situation. For those who resume schooling to earn bachelor's degrees, the course taken and the number of hours completed should be credited towards the degree programme.

The proportional composition of junior college programmes and degree programmes should be examined against the aforegoing principles. If the pendulum has moved in favour of academic orientation, distance education amounts to nothing more than the immitation of programmes of the formal system, thereby losing its integrity and any reason to ensure excellence of its own programme. In no way can the institute of distance higher education compete with other universities in academically

oriented programmes. It is through the effort to distinctively characterize distance education programmes that the excellence of distance education is ensured.

The general study component of Korea Air and Correspondence University's curriculum consists of Korean language, national ethics, Korean history, physical and health education, world history, cultural anthropology, and foundations of literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology and natural sciences. As these names denote, the general study component smacks of academic orientation. In contents, they bear a considerable degree of similarity to those of formal higher eduation. Even within the formal system, courses comprising general studies have been object of frequent debate, triggering efforts to link them to daily life. Although innovation is brewing, it is balanced against a conservative outlook emphasizing the academic value of disciplines. Granting that the drive to introduce an integrted form of general study is gaining momentum, Korea Air and Correspondence University may well attempt to lead formal universities in developing an innovative approach. The United Kingdom and Japan moved ahead of other countries in this area of concern. The emergency of a new subject entitled *Daily Living in Science and Technology* is a typical case exemplifying an innovative movement in this direction. This subject deals with the impact of science and technology on home, communication, energy, resources, food and health. *Modern Humanistic View of the World, Life and Arts, Social Life and Law, and Japanese Economy, Industry and Enterprise* are a few examples showing a new trend in curriculum reform. By virtue of its unique link to daily life, these courses are comprehensible and stimulate the interest of layman.

It does not always hold true that the essential ingredients of each discipline strikes a relevant note to laymen. It requires a total restructuring of courses across the board, if they are to ensure relevance to their own daily living.

A parallel reform may be attempted for the area of specialization. The characteristics of distance education

are lost in courses which comprises an area of sepcialization at Korea Air and Correspondence University. In a nutshell, they should be diversified. There are many people engaged in social welfare works, for which they are not trained. Although the need has been sharpened for them to update their knowledge and skills, they simply can't have any exposure to a training programme. The same can be said of social education. It is in these areas that the demands for new courses are glaring and they wait to be addressed in distance higher education. This does not suggest the virtual exclusion of academic courses in distance higher education. Their inclusion is fully justified by the fact that distance education covers bachelor's degrees. The point of emphasis is that by focusing attention on the areas which defy adequate treatment in the formal system we can sharpen the development edge of distance education towards ensuring excellence in its behalf.

Specialization courses, as they are today, leave ample room for practical contents to be included. "Practical" suggests the desirability of ensuring link to tasks that student workers perform in connection with employment. The strength of distance education should consist in providing opportunities for student workers to engage in the learning which is built on their working expectations. Distance education makes for an ideal meshing of theoretical learning and experience.

Fulfilling educational needs, as suggested by the characteristics of distance education, enables the air and correspondence institute to surpass formal institutes. The sluggish progress of distance education is partially attributed to the lack of concern on the part of policy-makers. The fact that distance education is an alternative path to formal education breeds an assumption that it can be offered at lower costs or dispensed with in an extreme case where the budget is under a severe strain. If this mistaken assumption is allowed to prevail, the effort to seek excellence in distance education will simply be stymied.

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LIBRARY SCIENCE EDUCATION THROUGH ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

by

NIAZ HUSSAIN*

It cannot be denied that education is a fundamental right of all the citizens. It is considered to be the most powerful instrument for human development, may it be external, internal, social, political or economic.

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, there appeared only one higher seat of learning which was fully functioning i.e. Punjab University. It was established in 1882. The establishment of Sindh University was approved a few months before the inception of this new country. After independence, the first decade was purely a reconstruction period marked by our struggle for national survival.

In spite of huge financial constraints, due consideration was given to education. The Government of Pakistan from time to time, took interest for the development of education by organizing national conferences, forming Educational Advisory Councils, National Planning Commissions. Resultantly new schools, colleges and universities were established. Having only one university in 1947, now we have 22 universities all over the country, and the number of colleges, schools and other institutions has enhanced abunduntly. A number of National Education policies were introduced to improve quality and services of education.

Libraries play a vital role in the national

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development. Their importance in educational development, has been emphasized in all the national educational policies. Libraries are the store houses of the literacy heritage of a nation, and thus mantain them in a difinite order and disseminate the human knowledge to its clientele without any restriction. Their usefulness as a source of intellectual development is an established fact.

Alongwith the general education, education in library science was also introduced at university level. Following universities have been teaching library science education as a discipline:

	Name of University	Diploma Started	MLIS* Started
1.	University of Karachi, Karachi	1956	1962
2.	University of Punjab, Lahore	1959	1974
3.	University of Peshawar, Peshawar	1962	1983
4.	University of Sindh, Jamshoro	1965	1974
5.	University of Baluchistan, Quetta	1981	1984
6.	Islamia University, Bahawalpur	1983	1984

Undoubtedly, the libraries are the backbone of educational research and national development. Keeping in view their importance, trained professional manpower, organised infrastructure, adequate and appropriate equipment are necessary.

Our library schools have served this important profession through formal system by providing professio-

*Master of Library and Information Sciences.

nal training. Much has been done for the professional, para-professional education and training on various levels by various organizations. In spite of these efforts, unfortunately, it has been revealed from the various surveys, conducted by the different professional individuals and library related organizations, that the existing libraries are facing many problems, like inadequate stock which is lying un-arranged in the locked almirahs, lack of funds, poorly housed, ill equipped and in-sufficient services. Similarly, the librarians appointed are unqualified and possess outdated information due to lack of latest information sources. The librarians in schools and colleges at various levels are working single handed.

There is no provision of para-professional staff which can assist them in professional services.

Looking to the above real facts, it was deemed necessary to teach this discipline through distance education system. Librarianship as a profession has a scientific basic and it is not only an occupation, but is like any, academic discipline.

Establishment of Library and Information Sciences Department[1]

Introduction

The department was established at Allama Iqbal Open University in early 1985 to meet the tremendous public demands and requests. It was considered as an urgent need to start such a course through correspondence in Library Science. The department planned as a first step to start certificate level course at B.A. level and to introduce later on the Post-Graduate Diploma and M.Sc. programmes. The department has planned to offer in future Post-Graduate "Certificate of Study in Librarianship" for practising librarians as part of its continuing education programme/post-experience professional courses to update and acquaint the qualified librarians with national and international agencies in the field of library science.

Main Objectives

Following are the main objectives of establishing the department of Library and Information Sciences at Allama Iqbal Open University:

1) To create a teaching learning environment through distance teaching system which will foster and facilitate the attainment of skills, attitude and knowledge necessary for students to obtain optimal success in the library/information profession;

2) To assume a dynamic role in providing leadership to the library/information profession and to related professional institution/ organizations;

3) To promote an increasingly productive faculty/student commitment to research and publication.

Significance of LIS Department

Libraries, either directly or indirectly, are concerned with the problems of the society. Different groups of people need and will continue needing library services. There are several types of library works for which the students will prepare: one type of library work is reader services and activities associated with the circulation of materials to readers; another type is of technical services, which concerns the selecting, acquiring, organising, and arranging library materials so that they are easy to find and use. Among others, these broad types of services are offered in public libraries, school libraries, academic and research libraries and special libraries. Therefore, it was deemed fit to establish Library and Information Sciences at AIOU and introduce professional courses in this subject through distance education system to meet the needs of existing libraries and this profession.

Methodology

The LIS is an important department in the Allama Iqbal Open University that offers, through open distance education, the programmes and courses in Library and Information Sciences and has large enrolment annually. As part of the efforts to reform the conventional education in library science in the country, an innovative strategies have been developed to provide flexible self-instructional methods for students scattered all over the country. Different media technologies are utilised to deliver the distance education programme in the field of library sciences.

As are the general practice in the system of AIOU, this department adopts the same pattern for preparation and launching its courses. The courses are prepared, written, passed and launched according to the procedure prescribed in the University Act.

Curriculum

Distance education system as a matter of fact, aims to redress social or educational inequality and offers opportunities of learning to those who, for their personal, social or economic reasons cannot attend conventional colleges and universities.

The curriculum of library science courses through distance education consists of the established and recognised curriculum of the formal universities of Pakistan. Other formal library schools in Pakistan are teaching the post-graduate classes, whereas, at the moment LIS department, of AIOU has started two programmes at B.A. level i.e. "Certificate in Librarianship" and "Bachelor of Library and Information Sciences". For this purpose the basic topics of the courses are taken from the existing general curriculum of other universities in this subject. Since, no other formal university is imparting graduate level education in Library and Information Sciences, therefore, the question of equivalence in this case does not arise.

The post-graduate level programme in Library and Information Sciences is under active process and it will be launched in near future as soon as the resources are available.

The curriculum of our Library and Information Science Courses has been framed according to the needs of those who either want to adopt this profession as their life career, or they are already working in libraries and need professional training or want to improve their professional qualification. The approach is functional and goal-oriented in these programmes.

New amendments, recommended by the Curriculum Revision Committee formed by University Grants Commission,[2] have been incorporated in the curriculum of Master's Degree Programme.

Admission

Like other courses, the Library and Information Sciences courses are notified through national newspapers well in advance to enable the students to contact the Admission Office or their nearest Regional Offices to get admission. Candidates with intermediate certificates are eligible for admission.

Study Materials

The written materials (LIS text books) in each area consists of unit lessons, each a self-explanatory composition in which the theme has been developed in simple and informal language and in self learning style. Lessons have been set in a format that makes them distinct from the commonly used text books in formal education.

The printed study material forms the package of the distance teaching programme. A full credit course has an actual study period of 18 weeks. A correspondence unit for each week requires about 10 hours of study. Students are expected to work regularly throughout the semester. Each semester normally lasts for six months i.e. April to

September (Spring) and October to March (Autumn).

Assignments

Each LIS full credit course has four assignments (100 marks each). Which the students are required to complete and send them to their tutors for assessment.

These assignments have three-fold functions:

i) to enable a student to have his/ her performance and progress assessed regularly by expert of LIS courses;

ii) to enable a tutor to give instruction to his/her students through the comments and corrections made on the assignments;

iii) to act as a pacing device for the student during his/her period of study.

-Continuous assessment

Each assignment carries 100 marks. Thus to pass in the assignment component a student should obtain 160 marks.

Study Centres

Study centres are the places where students meet their tutors and fellow students to discuss the contents and problems pertaining to LIS courses with each other.

The study centres are open in the evening and on specified days and times.

Tutors

The tutors for LIS courses are appointed on a part-time basis from the local institutions by the Regional

Directors on the following criteria:

"Committee of Courses" on Library and Information Sciences proposed the appointment criteria of the tutors as under:[3]

i) MA/MLIS with 3 years experience;
or
MA in any subject alongwith Diploma in Library and Information Sciences and working Librarian in any library;
or
MA/MSc/MLIS in Library and Information Sciences and working as College or University Teacher.

ii) Regular member of Pakistan Library Association Federal/Provincial level.

Tutor and student contact is provided throughout the courses. Normally 30-35 students are alloted to a tutor.

The tutors are required to check assignments and return to the students with instructional notes. The marks obtained by students in these assignments are sent to the Controller of Examination through respective Regional Director for the purpose of record and for the preparation of result.

The work of tutor and services provided at study centres are supervised by the full time Regional Director of the area concerned.

Regional Services

The Allama Iqbal Open University has 36 Regional Offices comprising a country-wide regional network of study centres at district level. The Regional Directors are important channels for student and tutor feed back. They act as 'Liaison Officers' with local authorities and departments, agencies and other institutions. The

University is projected through them into the 'middlemen' between the Course Coordinators and the thousands of students spread over all parts of the country. They advise the students, provide them with relevant literature, application forms and other introductory information. They also organise and supervise the final examination of the students.

Examination

Final examination is held at the end of semester for each course:

-Final examination

Minimum pass marks in the final examination will be 33% and weightage of the continuous assessment component and the final examination would be 25:75 respectively. A student in order to be declared pass in each course, would be required to obtain at least 40% aggregate marks.

The final result is declared after 2-3 months and conveyed to every student individually.

The AIOU provides instructions mainly in Urdu, but English is also used as a medium of instruction in certain subjects.

Current activities and programmes of LIS department

This department offers the following programmes:[4]

1 "Certificate in Librarianship" B.A. Level

The programme has been developed in view of its importance, and recent bias towards professional and technical nature of courses to be offered by the university. The Government of Pakistan gives special attention towards Mass Literacy. Rural Development, and Agro-, and Techno-professional education. It has also necessitated for designing and training demand at the

national development level. In the library sector as well, public libraries are being established as regional and state system; academic and research libraries are being strengthened to coordinate their resources and services; and new national level programmes are being initiated to meet the needs of the rural disadvantages, minority groups, and those in prisons and hospitals.

This programme has been introduced at the post-intermediate level, and it will provide necessary insight and skills to the fresh entrants and to those workers who are employed at support level in different types of libraries, to become qualified hands for the sub level tasks and duties in order to improve the quality and quantity of library services. The "Certificate in Librarianship" programme consists of:

a) Organising Library Resources (18 units, B.A level) One Credit

b) Library Services (18 units, B.A. Level) One Credit

Objectives

Following are the objectives of the Programmes in Library & Information Sciences.

To enable the student to:

1) Comprehend and apply effectively the basic concepts and skills of acquiring, organizing, maintaining and utilising the library materials;

2) Acquire an understanding of the changing social, cultural and educational role of the library in contemporary Pakistani society;

3) Develop an understanding of the importance of communication process in the effective performance of para-professional roles;

4) Provide students with an intellectual and educational almosphere which stimulate a positive commitment to libraries and continued professional development.

Course-wise Contents-5

The course contents of these courses emphasize on the types of services library should provide. These courses are consisting of 18 units (one full credit) each and forms the part of the "Certificate in Librarianship" programme. These courses are also pre-requisite for BLIS Programme.

i) **Organizing Library Resources (Full Credit)**

Following topics have been covered in this course:

- User needs
- Book Selection Procedures
- Organization of Book and non-book material
- Classification and Cataloguing.

ii) **Library Services (Full Credit)**

Following topics have been covered in this course:

- Library House Keeping
- Circulation
- Reference enquiries and materials
- Readers Services
- Office Practices
- Furniture
- Building
- Stock Verification
- Binding and treatment of documents etc.

General Information

Students can take 2 courses in one semester as independent study programme for obtaining the "Certificate in Librarianship" or/and if they desire to continue further, they can claim two credits exemption for completing (general) B.A. degree or Bachelor in Library and Information Sciences (BLIS) under the cluster system of AIOU.

2. Bachelor in Library and Information Sciences (BLIS)

Following the re-structuring of the university's Intermediate and B.A. programmes on a "Cluster" basis, it was fully realised that potential for a full series of courses in the field of library science existed. Therefore, the following two more courses were introduced:

i) History of Libraries with reference to Pakistan (B.A. level) One Credit

ii) Classification and Cataloguing (B.A. level) One Credit

Objectives

It is intended for training of para-professional library staff and other interested in picking up librarianship as a career.

Course-wise contents

These courses consist of 18 units (one full credit) each and are part of BLIS cluster programme.

i) **History of Libraries with reference to Pakistan (Full Credit)**

In this course the ancient history of the libraries to modern age has been covered. The role of Pakistan Library Association and other library organizations has also been

highlighted.

ii) **Classification and Cataloguing (Full Credit)**

This course is based on Organizing Library Resources. It covers classification schemes, problems and expansion schemes, Cataloguing codes etc. It is quite practical and technical course.

General Information

By now, LIS department has offered four professional courses (see annexure-1). The Bachelor in Library & Information Sciences a cluster completed with 50% LIS courses plus two credit compulsory courses and two credits elective offered by other departments in the faculties of Social Sciences/Basic and Applied Sciences.

Enrolment

These librarianship courses have a bright future in the country. Being skill oriented courses the students of these courses particularly working in libraries have great interest. Therefore, the enrolment is encouraging.

From the Spring, 1988 to Autumn, 1994 semesters following is the course-wise enrolment figures of the course:

Course	Enrolment	From Semester	To Semester
422	5,182	Spring, 1988	Autumn, 1994
423	4,539	Spring, 1988	Autumn, 1994
466	1,914	Spring, 1990	Autumn, 1994
467	996	Spring, 1990	Autumn, 1994

3. Future Programmes (B.A. Level)

Following are the courses under consideration for development in future to strengthen the Bachelor of Library and Information Sciences (BLIS) Cluster and to provide more courses in this field:

1. Using Books and libraries (Full Credit)
2. Serial Librarianship (Full Credit)
3. Library Computer Literacy (Full Credit)
4. Building of Library Collections (Full Credit)

4. M.Sc. in Library & Information Sciences Programme

As a matter of fact, the department intends to contribute to the advancement of librarianship, strengthen and improve the Library & Information Services of the nation through offering of this Master's Degree programme. The programme will produce high level professional in LIS to provide organizational and managerial/administrative leadership to the different type of libraries in the country.

The programme also aims at providing opportunities of in-service techni-professional education and training to the persons already serving at middle-level positions (Diploma). As a result, the Library Services in Pakistan would be improved and brought upto the standard library services available else-where in the world.

This programme stands approved by the university statutery bodies, but unfortunately, it could not take off due to lack of resources. There is a great demand to start MLSc programme through AIOU from the Diploma holder professionals who joined their services and could not continue their further education (i.e. Master's Degree) for various reasons, i.e. they are not in position to get leave from their parent departments or to attend regular classes and bear such huge expenses.

As discussed earlier, the curriculum of this programmes has been updated according to the recommendations of Curriculum Revision Committee, formed by UGC.

Problems

There is only one Assistant Professor and one Lecturer working in the Library & Information Sciences department, Allama Iqbal Open University. The

writers/reviewers of the units of Library and Information Sciences text books and the tutors who are library experts and senior professionals are part-time workers engaged from outside the University. The following problems are being faced in this connection:

- Since part-time tutors are appointed from the local areas, therefore, it is quite difficult to trace-out the addresses of library professionals with the result that some times the students feel great difficulty when they don't have local tutors.

- Library visits are continuing compulsory component of our courses. The student is compelled to visit any nearest library and get required information through a questionnaire and get marks in their assignments. But, when our students visit some of their nearest libraries, the professional librarian or Incharge of the Libray does not bother to guide or help to the student, the reasons best known to them, with the result, the student becomes very discouraged.

- According to the pattern of distance education system the department has to develop and provide the educational package (print material supported by Audio/video programmes) to the students upto B.A. level. For this purpose, the material on Library and Information Sciences is not frequently available to the department.

- Recently, the Curriculum Revision Committee has recommended to introduce new discipline at M.A. level i.e. Automation. It is undoubtedly a very good attempt. But, it is not possible at this stage, because the facility for practical component is not available.

Recommendations

For the sake of library profession following humble suggestions is to be considered by all our senior professionals to share the efforts of Allama Iqbal Open University in its library science teaching through distance education system:

- The members of Pakistan Library Association should extend their cooperation and send their contact points to our Regional Directors to help them in the appointment as tutors in our courses. The Federal and Provincial PLA Branches may provide members directory to this department or our Regional Directors for easy appointment of tutors.

- Since there is no regular face to face facility of study/teaching, therefore, it should be the professional and moral duty of the senior librarians to guide our junior colleagues and library students properly.

- Whenever, our students visit any library, the library Incharge should give proper information and guide them upto the mark.

- The required parallel library literature may be produced and made available to our students at the easy access in the libraries.

- Since our professional technical tools are very costly, the Allama Iqbal Open University is not in position to provide all the tools at each study centre. Therefore, it is worth to mention here that the librarians should share their expertise and technical tools to the students for their guidance and use.

- The Donor Agencies like Netherlands Library Development Project, ODA, Asia Foundation and others may extend their helping hand to make available the P.Cs., technical tools and

Consultancies to this department for the improvement of library profession.

If such facilities are provided, this department will be in a position to meet the needs of those professionals who are still looking forward to improve their professional qualification.

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ORGANIZING FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT*

by

Derek Rowntree**

To avoid undue discussion here, let's say that a course is a planned sequence of "learning experiences", occupying several learning sessions, and involving some form of assessment of the learner's progress. Thus, a course may occupy the learner for a few hours only or for several months; and the assessment may be done by you (the course developer), by a tutor who may or may not be guided by you, by some external body, or simply by the learner. You may be responsible for producing all of such a course or just for part of it.

WHO IS TO PRODUCE THE COURSE?

Either you will be producing the course on your own or you will be working with one or more colleagues.

Individual Authorship

Working on your own may appear to have certain clear advantages, along with a number of disadvantages.

Advantages:

* You will have maximum freedom as to content, treatment, sequence, level, schedule, etc.

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*With Special permission of Prof. Derek, we are reproducing this article extracted from his book *Teaching Through Self-Instruction*. Also see our review on this book in this issue under the title *Special Features*.

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* The course is more likely to form a coherent whole, with no obvious gaps or undue repetitions.

* You will not need to use up time in discussions with other authors, or emotional energy in defending your chosen content and method.

* So, you may produce the course in less time than if several people were working together.

* Since you will know the course as a whole you should be better able to adapt and up-date parts of it in response to evaluation.

Disadvantages:

* You may feel exposed and isolated, especially if self-instruction is a new venture in your organization or department.

* You may feel that bias or limitations in your subject-matter knowledge or teaching experience may lead to the course being less effective than you would wish.

* You may feel you lack technical experience in such areas as typography, graphics, or audio-recording.

* You may feel you cannot carry out all the tasks connected with producing the whole course within the time period available.

Perhaps you could overcome some of the disadvantages by obtaining some informal help. That is, while retaining full responsibility for the course yourself, you could invite comments and advice--which you would be free to disregard--from other subject-, matter experts and educational specialists, or from editors and designers.

You could even commission other authors to produce materials for your course, working to a more-or-less

precise specification that you have negotiated with them. You may retain the right not to use their material or to edit it as you choose. For some readers of this text, I expect, the boot will be on the other foot. That is, you may have been engaged on just such basis to contribute to someone else's course.

Course Teams

When colleagues join together in a more democratic, equal-status group to produce a course, they form what is generally known as a course team. Course teams were pioneered by the Open University and have become popular elsewhere. A team may include one or more of the people listed below:

- ***Convenor/Chair***. Person responsible for overall quality of the course (both in subject-matter content and in educational effectiveness)--and for getting it produced within a budget. May also be a course author and may have no formal power over other team members.

- ***Course authors***. Subject specialists, may be from more than one department or organization who will be responsible for planning the course, writing texts, devising audio-visual materials or practical exercises, as well as producing assessment and examination materials and perhaps preparing to act as tutors once the course is being used by learners. Some may be seen as part of the "central" or "core" course team, some as "externals", with the latter perhaps having little influence on how the course develops.

- ***Media producer***. Professsional with special skills in the technical production of video material, audiotape, computer software, etc.

- ***Educational technologist/developer.*** Professional with a special interest in the improvement of teaching and learning who may be able to give authors disinterested help, as a "critical friend"--e.g. in clarifying their educational purposes, in choosing appropriate teaching strategies or media, and in improving the course as a result of evaluation.

- ***Transformer.*** A skilled communicator who can liaise with any subject specialists whose writing is obscure, winkling out their key ideas and re-expressing them in ways the learners will be able to understand.

- ***Editor.*** Professional who can help authors in polishing their texts, ensure consistency of usage among authors, and prepare final drafts for printing (including copyright clearance).

- ***Graphic designer.*** Professional who advises authors on layout, typestyle and the overall graphic design of their texts, as well as suggesting how to supplement or even replace text with illustrations and executing whatever illustrations are agreed on.

- ***Secretary/co-ordinator.*** Administrator who handles day-to-day routine--arranging meetings, keeping course team members informed between meetings, chasing authors who have missed deadlines, etc.--leaving the convenor freer to concentrate on the management and quality control of the course.

In deciding whether to set up a course team of the type mentioned above, we again have both potential advantages and potential disadvantages to consider:

Advantages:

- Sharing the work means the course can be produced more quickly.

- Individuals may work faster because they know their colleagues have expectations of them.

- Discussion and mutual criticism can be stimulating and improve the quality of the course.

- Course team members can specialize, to some extent, in those aspects of course production each is best at and/or enjoys most.

- The individual is saved from feeling isolated and alone in facing potential hostility or lack of support from people not concerned with the course.

Unfortunately, course team operation is sometimes ruled out or else spoiled by one or more of the following:

Disadvantages:

- Specialists of the kind listed earlier are not available or the project cannot afford them.

- Course team members may dislike having criticisms, or even suggestions, from colleagues.

- Individuals may waste too much time in personal or ideological dispute and in trying to insist on the course being just as they think it should be.

- Individuals can opt out of unpopular tasks--e.g. writing assessment materials--and shrug off responsibility for the course as a whole.

- Individual authors may dislike the pressure of having to negotiate their own roles, contribute to frequent meetings, and abide by majority decisons--especially those that impose deadlines by which work must be produced.

- It can be difficult to find a convenor with the right management skills to handle such a group, especially when his or her responsibility is unaccompanied by any formal authority.

CO-ORDINATING GROUP ACTIVITY

It is worth noticing that such disadvantages can begin to appear (as can the advantages) even when the "course team" consists of no more than two authors trying to work together as equal partners.

Despite the potential disadvantages of course team operation, many organizations have now found ways of minimizing them, while making the most of the advantages. It is possible to have many hands making light work rather than too many cooks spoiling the broth. Unless you are working entirely on your own, some means needs to be found by which members of the working group (whether democratic equal-status members or not) can co-ordinate their activities:

Decision-making

Numerous decisions have to be made during the development of a course--e.g. about whether particular content should be included or whether certain materials are of an acceptable standard. Who is to make such decisions? Here are three possibilities:

a) The convenor makes decisions on behalf of group.

b) Decisions are made by consensus among the group (or certain "core" members of it) after discussion.

c) Each member makes decisions about his/her "own" area of the course, taking account of group discussions.

Some types of decision may best be taken by one method, some by another. But the sooner the "ground-rules" are discussed, the less chance is there for bickering and resentment to spring up later.

Another issue: Will the author(s) of each individual section be separately named on the relevant materials? Or will the course team take collective responsibility for all sections, with the authorship of individual sections being left unstated?

Communications

How is the course team to communicate with itself? Even if the members of the team are acquainted with each other (and some may not be), they may never have worked together with the intimacy that successful course creation is likely to demand.

So what can be done to ensure that all are on much the same wavelength, sensitive to (if not always sharing) one another's assumptions, values, perspectives, terminology, intentions, and so on? How are they to get to trust and accept one another? How are they to profit from one another's insights and experience? How are they to judge what may realistically be expected from one another?

There are at least two ways of encouraging useful communication--meetings and documentation:

Meetings: How often can/should the team get together?

With what purpose? Some of your meetings may be strictly business occasions--e.g. brainstorming sessions or discussions of schedules of the first draft of a member's plans or course materials. Some may be professional in a wider sense--e.g. a seminar, perhaps with outsiders invited, on a topic related to the course, or a visit to a factory, farm or college. Some may be purely social--e.g. parties, lunches, visits to theatres, concerts or football matches. Some meetings may be a mixture. In fact, any meeting of two or more members of the course may be expected to contribute towards getting the course developed or the team members better acquainted.

Documentation: Groups and committees everywhere are regularly accused of producing too much paperwork. Nevertheless, if more than a couple of people are involved in producing a course, they'd be well advised not to stint on paper. Every important decision--e.g. about schedules, or intended content, or allocation of tasks--should be written down and circulated to all members.

Every member should also receive a copy of the "specification", outlining the content and treatment, etc., proposed for each section and, later, a copy of each draft of every member's materials. Even if it has been agreed that not everyone will produce detailed comments on each draft, all should see any materials that might influence them in how they'd want to plan their own. In fact, those members who are going to produce detailed comments on a draft might will receive two copies. They could then give their annotated copy back to the author, keeping one copy as a reminder.

Allocating Tasks

Try to reach early agreement as to what tasks will need to be performed and how they might be shared out fairly.

Who will do what? Try not to overlook tasks such as:

i) writing study guides and assignment questions;
ii) setting tests and examinations;
iii) commenting on one another's materials;
iv) briefing other teachers;
v) publicizing the course; and so on.

If early decisions are not made, someone is likely to end up doing more than a fair share--and vital tasks may be neglected until it is too late to do them properly. In particular: Who will be responsible for looking after the course once it is in operation--and making whatever adjustments and improvements may be necessary?

Constraints

Each member of the group needs to know the constraints within which he or she is to work. How much freedom does each one have to determine content and treatment? How much learner-time is each responsible for? Does each one have sufficient time available to spend on the course at all the relevant stages of production?

Does the group have enough resources, especially of author-hours, to produce a course of satisfactory quality? Every hour of learner-time may take 50-100 (or more) hours of course team time to develop.

What teaching media are available? What physical facilities for meetings, laboratory preparation of materials, workshop testing of prototype equipment, etc? Can specialist help be brought in? Is there money available for revising the course (and reprinting) after it has been in use for a while? And so on.

The Production Schedule

Agree on a schedule for production so that individuals know when their contributions are expected.

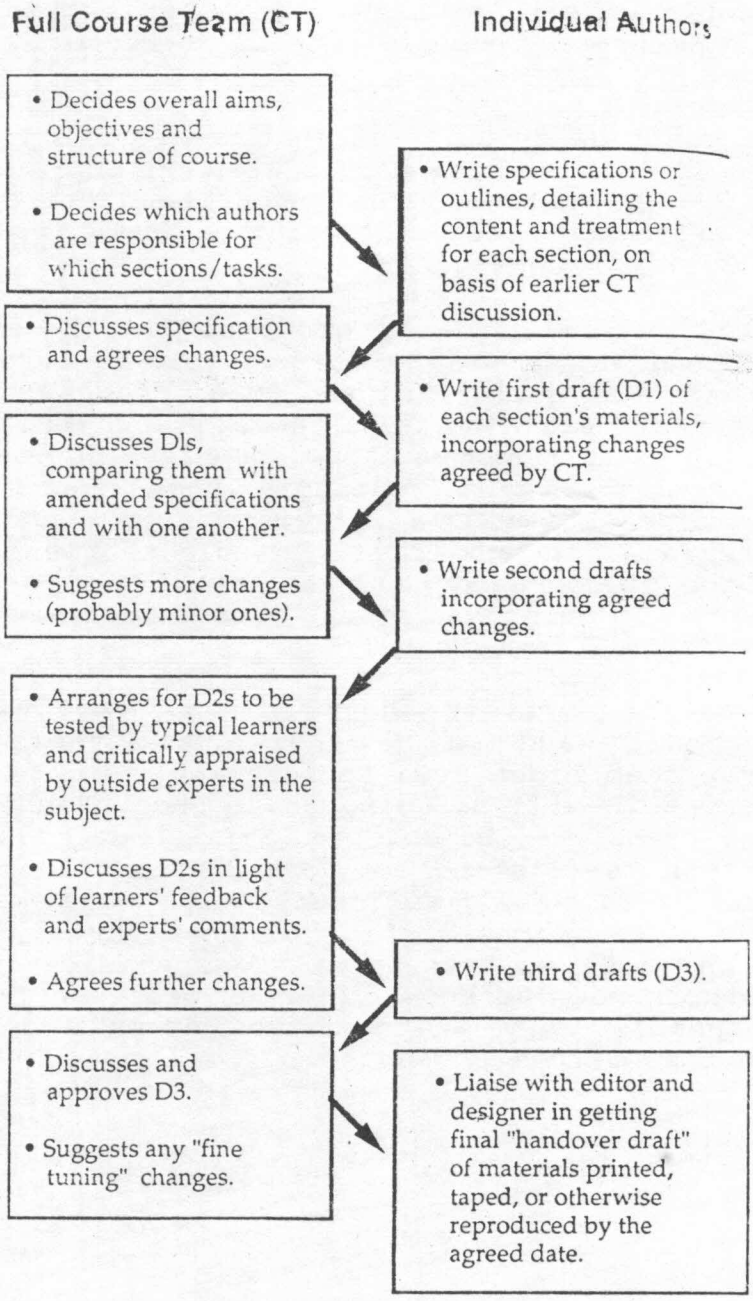
This is especially vital if some authors need to see drafts of another's work before they can proceed with their own. Ensure there is time for each author to have his or her plans and draft materials studied and critically commented upon by at least one other member of the group--and perhaps by experts outside it--before they are finalized.

Make contingency plans against the possibility that production might slip behind schedule. Are there parts of the course, for instance, that might be jettisoned? Or are there extra resources that might be drawn on, however reluctantly, in an emergency?

It may not be good for group morale, however, to dwell too long on discussing how possible failures might be retrieved. Far better for the group to assure itself that its forward planning is as thorough and realistic as possible, so as to minimize nasty surprises up ahead. For instance, course teams routinely under-estimate the amount of time individuals will need to produce acceptable materials. Though it is possible that some of us would be too discouraged to write anything at all if we ever admitted to ourselves at the outset just how long it was really likely to take us!

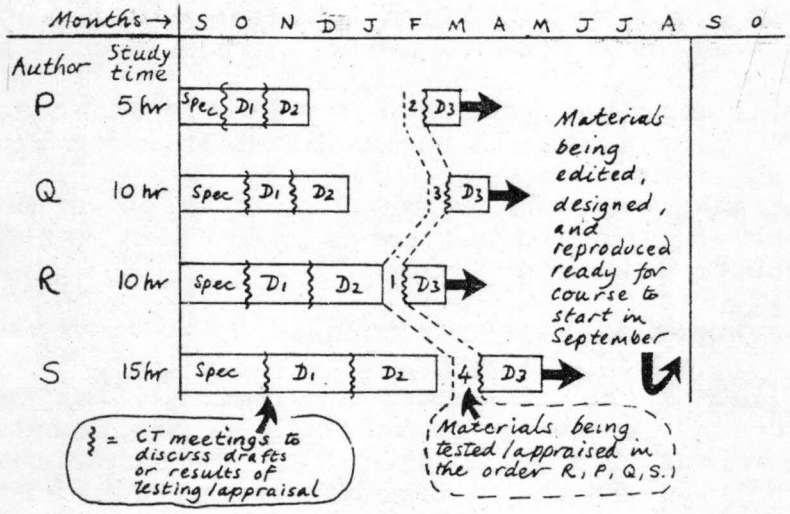
Figure-2.1 overleaf shows some key events for a typical schedule, and also how individual authors and the full course team might need to interact. Several of the activities shown will be going on at once. For example, few course teams will be able to wait to see and approve all first drafts (D1s) before work starts on any second drafts (D2s). Thus, a given course team meeting may be discussing a D3 of one section of the course, a D2 of another, and a D1 or even a revised specification of a third. Authors need to know, for each piece of work they are responsible for, where their personal deadlines appear on the overall schedule.

Figure-2.1: Key Events in a Production Schedule



Even the much-simplified example of a schedule in Figure-2.2 below shows that complications can arise when different authors are responsible for different amounts of material--especially when each may need different amounts of time to produce any given amount of material; and may be completing their drafts in some order different from that in which they will ultimately be studied by the learners.

Figure 2.2: Part of Simple Schedule for Course Production



The schedule above, for instance, shows a 40-hour course being produced by four authors, P,Q,R, and S, responsible for, respectively, 5,10,10, and 15 hours' worth of learning materials. If all four start together, we see that authors P and Q will, at one point, have a break of two months or more before they can start on their D3s. This is because learners must study Author R's D2 material before theirs, yet it will not be available for testing untill some time after theirs. If it were not essential for learners to read the D2s in a set sequence then, of course, P's and Q's material could be tested earlier; they could thus get their D3s completed earlier, so spreading the load on editor, designer and production facilities. As it is, P and Q might be asked to use some of their slack time in giving assistance to S who looks like the most hard-pressed member of the course team.

Needless to say, the sample schedule above does not pretend to illustrate all the problems that can emerge in attempting to draw up such a plan. It is simply meant to show that such scheduling can indeed throw up problems and issues about which decisions need to be taken early in our course planning.

COULD YOU ADAPT AN EXISTING COURSE?

In view of the many costs and complexities involved in developing a course from scratch, we are bound to ask this question: Can you take over a course that has already been produced by some other institution?

In the past, this has generally been discouraged by the "not-invented-here" response. (If we didn't produce it ourselves, then it can't be any use to our learners!) But financial cutbacks have led many organizations to take a more hospitable view. Someone else's course materials and/or system may be suitable for your learners. If so, consider using them. The staff-time you'll save by not producing your own version might better be invested in developing self-instructional courses in worthwhile topics that no-one has yet effectively dealt with.

Figure-2.3 suggests some questions to ask about any existing course you think might be worth adapting to suit your organization. Remember that, even if the course turns out not to be suitable as a whole, parts of it may be. (So indeed may existing books, videos, audiotapes, etc., that were not produced with self-instruction in mind at all. I'll say more about building such material into your own courses in Chapter 5.)

Figure-2.3 Questions to Ask About Adapting a Course

- *How suitable?* Are its objectives, methods and outcomes appropriate to our learners?
- *How effective?* Does it achieve satisfactory results?
- *How big?* How much time, staff and resources does it need? How many topics? What range of learners?
- *How complete?* Does it need extra supporting material?
- *How Complex?* Is it difficult for teachers and learners to work with?
- *How flexible?* Is there room for teachers and learners to adapt it to their special needs?
- *How different?* Is it sufficiently different from other available approaches--e.g. in results, methods, costs?
- *How replicable?* Are there any special features--e.g. unusual teachers or local facilities--that we could not match?
- *How compatible?* Would it fit in with or interfere with the rest of our existing system?
- *How ready?* Can it be started this month/year?

- *How "samplable"?* Could we give it a trial run and abandon it if unsatisfactory? Or would the decision have to be all-or-nothing--e.g. if it involved heavy investment in capital equipment?

- *How expensive?* What are the initial costs and the running costs--both in time and money, and for both the organization and the learners?

- *How comparable?* How does it compare, on all the above factors and any others we think important, with the course we might produce for ourselves?

Course Maintenance

Finally, whether you are adapting a course or producing one from scratch, we must come back to a questionI mentioned earlier: How will the course be maintained in use? In particular, who is to be responsible for its week-by-week operation, once learners have begun studying it? May be the full, original course team will still be involved, may be only one or two of its members--with or without some new helpers. At all events, the maintenance of the course should be planned quite early.

There are plenty of tasks that the "maintenance team" may need to undertake during the life of the course. Here are some of them; you may be able to think of more:

* Supervising the storage and delivery to learners of the course materials.

* Arranging for the production of new copies of the course materials as stocks run low.

* Tutoring, both by correspondence and face-to-face.

* Selecting, training, and backing up the work

of other people who are supporting the learners.

* Producing new assessment materials and/or examination papers (together with notes of guidance for assessors) for each run of the course.

* Liaising with people who have an interest in the competences developed by our learners--e.g. their employers and accrediting bodies.

* Publicizing the course and recruiting learners for it.

* Liaising with other organizations who wish to adopt or adapt the course for their own learners.

* Dealing with problems and queries raised by learners (and perhaps by tutors or mentors) concerning difficulties they are having with the course.

* Providing learners with a statement that they have worked through the course--e.g. a "letter of course completion"; or with an indication of their level of achievement--e.g. an examination grade or a list of the competences they have demonstrated.

* Evaluating the effects and effectiveness of the course, both by continuous monitoring and by occasional special studies--e.g. of learning habits or of drop-out.

* Making minor improvements to the course, in the light of evaluation and changing circumstances, for the benefit of current learners--e.g. by giving them details of current events or issues relevant to the course, and by correcting errors in the materials.

* Identifying areas of the course where more substantial improvements might be made for the benefit of future learners.

* Maintaining records concerning the operation of the course.

PAKISTAN JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Volume - XII 1995 Issue - I

Allama Iqbal Open University
Islamabad - Pakistan

Research and Evaluation Centre*
A Helping Hand in Designing Systems and Materials of AIOU

by

Masooda Chaudhry**

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) began operations at a time when there were no patterns or norms for a new distance education institution to follow. The British Open University was barely out of its infancy, and no other one existed to share experience with AIOU. Anyhow, it started foundation courses patterned after those of the Open University in UK. These courses, offered on a pilot basis proved to be a terrible flop because the level and value of the courses was not recognized by the potential clientele. These were immediately discontinued. At the same time, the University incorporated a language teaching institute, and found itself teaching post graduate programme in such foreign languages as English, Spanish, Persian, German and French. These courses were being delivered through face to face instructions though that gained popularity but went against the basic philosophy of distance learning. This experiment did not last long either, and the language institute shortly after affiliated with a conventional university.

These and a number of other examples of popular and unpopular attempts at offering courses, led to a felt need to establish a research centre in the University.

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*This paper was presented in an intensive course entitled, "Distance Learning Designing Systems and Materials" offered by the Institute of Educational Technology at the Open University, United Kingdom.

**The writer is Associate Editor of PJDE, and currently working as Incharge, Research and Evaluation Centre, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

Among other things, it was felt that a research centre could help in devising and directing the development of the systems and academic courses of the new open learning institution. Thus, the Research and Evaluation Centre (REC) was founded.*

After having a look at the brief resume of REC, the reader will have gotten an idea of the objectives and the activities of the Centre, but even so, there is much more to the story.

Since its inception, the REC has been involved in institutional research. This has included needs assessments, marketing, feasibility and economic viability of courses. Course development activities have included pre-testing and post testing of course materials, mid and end of course evaluations, and formative and summative programme evaluation. REC is also responsible for compilation and dissemination of all statistical and quantitative achievements as well as the personal profiles of the learners of AIOU.

The products and publications of REC might be good, bad or indifferent, but, nobody can doubt the Centre's sincere efforts to work for improvement for both the students and the organization as well. Following are some of the contributions of this Centre.

At an early stage, during the conduct of a field-survey, the research team observed that a large number of students felt themselves stranded or isolated. Some of them also indicated a big question mark regarding how and to whom they could register a volley of complaints which must be redressed, otherwise they intended to drop their studies with the Open University. In its report, the REC strongly recommended that there be a students' advisory and counselling cell on the main campus and in the

*For further detail, brief resume on the Centre could be seen in last pages which was also distributed among the participants prior to its presentation just to have an acquaintance with the Centre and its activities and achievements.

Regional Offices as well. It was envisioned that this cell could arrange frequent extra-curriculum activities and functions like quiz programmes, competition, musical concerts, etc., in addition to attending to students' complaints.

The subsequent establishment of a unit based on that idea has proven to be a great help in minimizing the drop out rate and lessening the ambiguity the student feels about the programmes, courses, and the distance education system. It appears that once the student becomes thoroughly acquainted with the system, and clearly understands it, they find that the system suits them very well, and will not discontinue their studies.

The year the University should have been enjoying her "sweet sixteen" was actually the year of her largest deficit. REC was instrumental in identifying courses with low enrolment or otherwise not cost effective through a study on the costing of 350 courses. (See REC Brief Resume:Sr.No.20 under completed Research Publications) This was done in consultation with course managers, heads of departments, and the deans of the faculties. The result was a plan to temporarily withdraw courses for one or two semesters until demand would build up again. At the same time, writing on some of the core courses of B.Ed programme had been stopped due to deficit. REC strongly recommended that those courses have to be offered because of students' interest and demand.

Another plan proposed by the Treasurer and the Planners was to increase tuition fees to balance the deficit. Because of the evidence REC had from the students' profiles of the low financial status of the majority of the students, it was able to present a strong justification against such a move and the suggestion for a large increase in tuition fees was not acted upon.

In the early periods of the University, the admission forms were provided to the students free of cost. Concerns about the costs of printing, and other abuses such as local persons "grabbing" all of the avail-

able forms in a locality and selling them for personal profit, led to a recommendation of pricing the forms. However, the course planners and coordinators were afraid that the price might cause a decrease in enrollment. The then Vice Chancellor directed REC to prepare a snap study. (See Brief Resume: Sr.No.3) Based on the findings of the study, REC recommended nominal charges in the beginning with a gradual increase in subsequent years. The action was taken with no negative impact on the enrollment; rather, it has been increasing in each and every semester.

It is interesting to note that sometimes something which seems unimportant can have significant impact in the long run. This decision to charge a small fee for the admission forms appeared to be insignificant in its nature at the time of its inception. But, with the large increase enrollment since that decision was taken, special help for extra bankshifts is now needed at the beginning of each semester to maintain the accounts of selling the admission forms.

In another survey, respondents had a favourable opinion about the television programmes supporting their studies. Although television has been proven as an expensive media component for the courses, REC recommended more television programmes. The Finance and Planning Committee provided their support for an increase in the television components on the condition that the programmes must help the students in enhancing their comprehension of the contents given in the textbooks and activity books for certain courses.

I do not claim that the report (See REC Brief Resume: under completed Research Publications Sr.Nos. 1 & 2) we have produced is a good one. But some important changes in policy of the mailing system were brought which were based on the feedback we have received from the students. Before, conducting this study, every writing assignment used to be sent to the students follo-

wing each other month. Majority of the students desired to get all the assignments together as one package. So, an immediate action was taken hence, and this saved a lot of labour and expenses on the benefit of the University, and on the other hand the recipients felt a relief from anxiety and the long wait for the next one.

During another field survey regarding dropouts of AIOU courses, the research team discovered that for many students, the transmission distance from the radio broadcasting transmitters led to muffled voices which were not audible. The radio programmes were thus of no use for them. This finding of REC led to the use of local radio stations for broadcast instead of FM Islamabad.

There are those who might view REC as having little or no relationship in designing course materials. Honestly speaking, it is a fact that REC doesn't write or design for the learners. But, it is doing much more as a supporter of the course designers and system planners. From the beginning to date, the Centre has been providing feedback on everything from the petty issues to the most crucial ones. The REC not only aids the course designers, but also looks into other activities or services relating to course delivery and success. For example, the best text-book, if it does not reach to the students in time, is of no use. Similarly, it is again of no use if it does reach to the students well in time, but is full of rubbish, unclear concepts and poor presentation. So the scope of REC's vision includes the whole of the procedures of the University throughout each semester through intensive and extensive monitoring and evaluation. (Pl. see REC Brief Resume: under On Going Research Studies; S.No.12).

1995 is marked as AIOU's 20th anniversary year. Frankly speaking, twenty years are more than enough to devise a system and expand programmes. The University which started with 904 course enrolments, has now reached three hundred and fifty thousand course enrollment. But the University should not be contented merely with quan-

titative growth alone. The aim of AIOU is to offer educational programmes of quality to even a larger number of people. To achieve this objective, it is necessary that courses are constantly evaluated including the media inputs and, where necessary, revised in the light of REC findings. It is with this purpose in view that recently the REC has undertaken another project (Pl. see REC Brief Resume Sr.No.13) to analyse 100 selected courses of the Intermediate and B.A. levels. REC has investigated statistics of these sampled courses covering course enrollment, course pass rates, dropout rates, overall completers and certificate holders from the first presentation to date. The second part of this study will determine the extent to which the system of AIOU is effective, and student satisfaction with the quality of textbooks, writing assignments, media and tutorial support, the conduct of examinations, and the timely declaration of results. REC has already administered 12000 questionnaires to sample students and 750 to the tutors for their feedback and has completed also face to face interviews with sub-sample throughout the country.

So far as the subject matter or contents given in the majority of the text books are concerned, students, tutors and also other users have high opinion about them. They say that the subject matter in those textbooks is informative and also meets the contemporary needs in all respects. However, the way it is being presented/printed, they do not find it attractive.

REC has serious concerns about the poor quality of printing generally done on course books, and the even worse quality of designing and printing of illustrations, graphs, charts and pictures. Another concern is the poor quality of writing assignments and non-availability of feeback from the tutors on these assignments.

The last one can be improved by restarting the monitoring of the tutor-marked assignments which was done for several years but was discontinued for a variety of

reasons.[1] However, the other three areas of inadequacy could be improved only by the course team, designers and the printer. These improvements cannot be ensured without the wholehearted support of the academicians.

While discussing improvement of AIOU, it is worth mentioning that among the academicians at AIOU there appear to be two extremes. First are those who believe in perfectionism. They request evaluations by REC in each and every semester even though they have already improved substantially as a result of REC feedback. The second group consists of those who need improvement, but take the attitude that REC should not poke it's nose in their academic affairs! REC is continually in the middle trying to balance both groups...but one can't please everyone all of the time.

Course content and overall academic quality has been another issue under discussion in recent years. In previous years there were hundreds of courses in the pipeline, and frequently the work was rushed and done "willy nilly" in order to get them through the various formalities and hurdles, and delivered to the students by the promised semester. This was necessary at the time perhaps, but has resulted in very uneven quality across

[1] The system of monitoring was initially expected to serve purposes. Evaluate tutors, give them further training in how to teach through distance correspondence, and provide feedback to the course teams. It seems to have withered on the vine, so to speak, for a complexity of reasons. The major one is that the course team leaders did not have time to monitor 100s perhaps 1000s of assignments for multiple courses each semester as the enrollment exploded, as well as to supervise the heavy load of course production during those years. In addition, there was a lack of interest all around. The regions were burdened trying to gather the assignments from the tutors, and then returning them to the students, etc., and felt frustration when no response from campus came on those which were sent.

the courses. Weaknesses in the course materials and in their presentation might have acceptably or expedietaly been ignored due to limitations at that stage. Now, however, with the target number of courses produced, it is appropriate that AIOU takes wise decisions and timely actions to revise and improve the courses because it has the time, resources and expertise to do so.

While the importance of multi-media to distance learning cannot be ignored, not all of AIOU's target learners enjoy the facilities needed for that support. In this context, the only instructional aid which is *text or printed material*. Therefore, it must be improved in all respects. Course-quality-improvement represents a responsibility and challenge for REC as well as the academic staff of the University.

A substantial proportion of AIOU students are living in remote areas where they do not have any possibility to attend the conventional institutions. They don't have any other choice except AIOU. As such, this institution of much significance seems to be their solitary hope, thus it should not disappoint them at all.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION CENTRE
(A Brief Resume)

Introduction

The Research and Evaluation Centre (previously known as Research and Statistical Services) was established at the end of 1983. Before this independent entity, however it had been functioning as a "Research Cell" located in the Institute of Education.

The idea of a Research Centre, orginally enunciated by the President of Pakistan, is explained in his presidential address at the renaming ceremony of this University in December 1977. The President placed certain objectives to be considered for establishing such a centre:

The Objectives are to:

1- train good statisticians who could promote the programme of the Planning and Economic Affairs Division;

2- find out the realities of life in rural and low income slum areas of Pakistan for remodelling re-orientating the education system.

3- create a system of feedback for the effectiveness of educational inputs.

4- study and analyse public opinion regarding educational matters and the issues inherent in it; and

5- find out the educational needs of rural Pakistan.

These objectives put a special responsibility on the newly created Research Centre for developing it into an institution which pragmatically fulfils the objectives

placed before it. A relative balance, however, has to be maintained between the objectives laid down by the President of Pakistan on the one hand, and the needs of the open learning system on the other.

The main objectives of the Centre are as under:

a) to conduct institutional research on all aspects of the distance learning system of Allama Iqbal Open University;

b) to collect statistical data and prepare a statistical profile of AIOU;

c) to conduct academic research in collaboration with academic departments; and

d) to work as clearing house for the dissemination of research findings and statistical data.

Accordingly, the Research Centre had to reformulate its activities to provide a comprehensive action plan, first by concentrating on the distance learning system and secondly the extent to which it could contribute to the advancement of the educational field as a whole.

Initially the major role of the Research Centre was decided to be:

1) to determine the needs of open learning systems with a particular reference to Pakistan;

2) to make assessments and evaluations of the effectiveness of the on-going programmes of the AIOU;

3) to develop courses based on the level of perception and needs of the people and also for disadvantaged people;

4) to find out the viewing and listening habits of

people making use of radio and television programmes of the AIOU.

5) to determine the practical educational needs of the educational Government Departments and collaborate in researching national issues.

Long Term Plans

The Centre devises ways and means to study and research on the working of the open learning system of the AIOU, keeping itself abreast with the knowledge and researches done or being done in similar institutions around the world. The major emphasis is to keep the open learning system fully alive national and international demands.

Short Term Plans

The areas of activity on a short term basis are:

1. **Institutional Research**

   1.1. Primary focus: evaluation of all aspects of the AIOU System.

   1.2. Secondary focus: need determination, evaluation and advice to other institutions.

2. **Statistics and Surveys**

3. **Academic Research Advice**

4. **Institutional Problems and Coordination**

Areas for Research

1- **Institutional Research:**

   1.1 Courses and their effectiveness

1.2 Tutorial support system
1.3 Assessment system
1.4 Student problems
1.5 Methods of course production
1.6 Cost effectiveness of courses
1.7 Out-come of courses and programmes
1.8 Servicing/Operational Departments
1.9 Administration

2- **Statistical Data Compilation and Survey:**

2.1 Gathering and publication (inter/external) of statistics on the AIOU system (e.g. admissions, drop-out, pass rate, student characteristics).

2.2 Pre-course surveys; post-course surveys.

2.3 Statistical surveys for other institutions.

2.4 Statistical advice and technical assistance (internal/external).

3- **Academic Research Advice:**

Collaboration, advice and technical assistance to academic departments or individuals on specific research projects.

Advisory Board:

The REC has an Advisory Board and a Steering Committee to advise in its operational activities, approve its proposals and account for its working.

Major Research Studies/Reports Completed

1) Effectiveness of media, Radio and T.V. in AIOU Published November, 1984.

2) Evaluation of 42 courses which were launched in 1982-83. Published November, 1984.

3) Pricing of Admission Form and its affect on enrolment in Allama Iqbal Open University, 1984.

4) A case study of "Pakistan Studies" course, B.A. level, 1986.

5) Report on enrolment and examination results, 1980-81. Published December, 1984.

6) AIOU Prospectus, 1984. Completed December, 1984.

7) Yearly Reports 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85. Published June, 1985.

8) Statistical Handbook of AIOU, 1975-84. Published 1985.

9) Statistical Profile of AIOU 1982-84. Published 1985.

10) New Statistical Handbook of AIOU 1975-85.

11) A Feasibility Study on photography a new functional course in distance education. (1986)

12) Statistical Digest 1985-86 of AIOU. (1987)

13) Pre-Qualification/aptitude for M.Sc Programme "Pakistan Studies". (1988)

14) Pilot Study on Drop-outs in AIOU. (1988)

15) Report on enrolment and examination results 1981-82. (1988)

16) Report on enrolment and examination results in 1982-83. (1988)

17) Evaluation on the Basic Functional Education Programme, AIOU. (1988)

18) Dropouts in AIOU courses, December, 1989.

19) Pre-testing of the course material for New PTOC programmes. (1989)

20) Financial Study of AIOU. (1990)

21) Aided Projects of AIOU. (1990)

22) Vital Statistics. (1975-76 to 1989-90)

23) Improvement of assignments for distance learning students. (Unpublished)

24) A case study of Electrical Wiring, (Functional Course).

25) Effectiveness of TV Programmes in AIOU. (Unpublished)

26) Pre-Qualification/Aptitude of the students seeking admission for MBA Programme.

27) A study on ratio of graduates in distance learning and graduates in the formal system. (Unpublished)

28) Attitude of University teachers towards distance learning system. (Unpublished)

29) Effectiveness of Library Science Courses 422 and 423. (Unpublished)

30) A short term study on "Conduct & Control of

Examinations in AIOU", August, 1990.

31) Allama Iqbal Open University: An Introduction. (1991)

32) Allama Iqbal Open University Digest. (1991)

33) Evaluation of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Women's Matric Project through distance learning. (June, 1992)

34) Budget Evaluation of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Women's Matric Project through distance learning. (August, 1992)

35) Allama Iqbal Open University: an Introduction. (1992)

36) Compilation of an annotated bibliography on Research Publications: Published by IER & REC, AIOU.

37) Compilation of an annotated bibliography on Statistical Publications: Published by Research Cell & REC, AIOU.

38) Compilation of Four Year Report on AIOU: 1988-1992.

On Going Research Studies/Reports

Currently the REC Staff is engaged in conducting the following research studies:

(1) Increasing/Decreasing Trends in Enrolment of AIOU Courses/Programmes.

(2) Better job opportunities/other benefits after obtaining AIOU's degrees.

(3) Students achievements in terms of grading in study programmes of the AIOU.

(4) A comparative study on the teacher training programme offered through distance learning system visa vis conventional system.

(5) Study, analysis and evaluation of the teaching-learning methodology adopted by AIOU.

(6) Examination of the quality of instructional materials and evaluation of students' responses.

(7) Evaluation of the quality of audio-visual support, personal contact programmes, study centres, library services, etc.

(8) Study of the economic viability of AIOU courses.

(9) Determining a reliable average unit cost of educating students by AIOU.

(10) Studying the possibilities of collaboration and networking with other open universities in order to cut down costs of production of instructional materials.

(11) Study of problems faced by women in distance learning.

(12) Evaluation of three courses offered by AIOU through monitoring schedule.

(13) Effectiveness of Distance Learning System of AIOU.

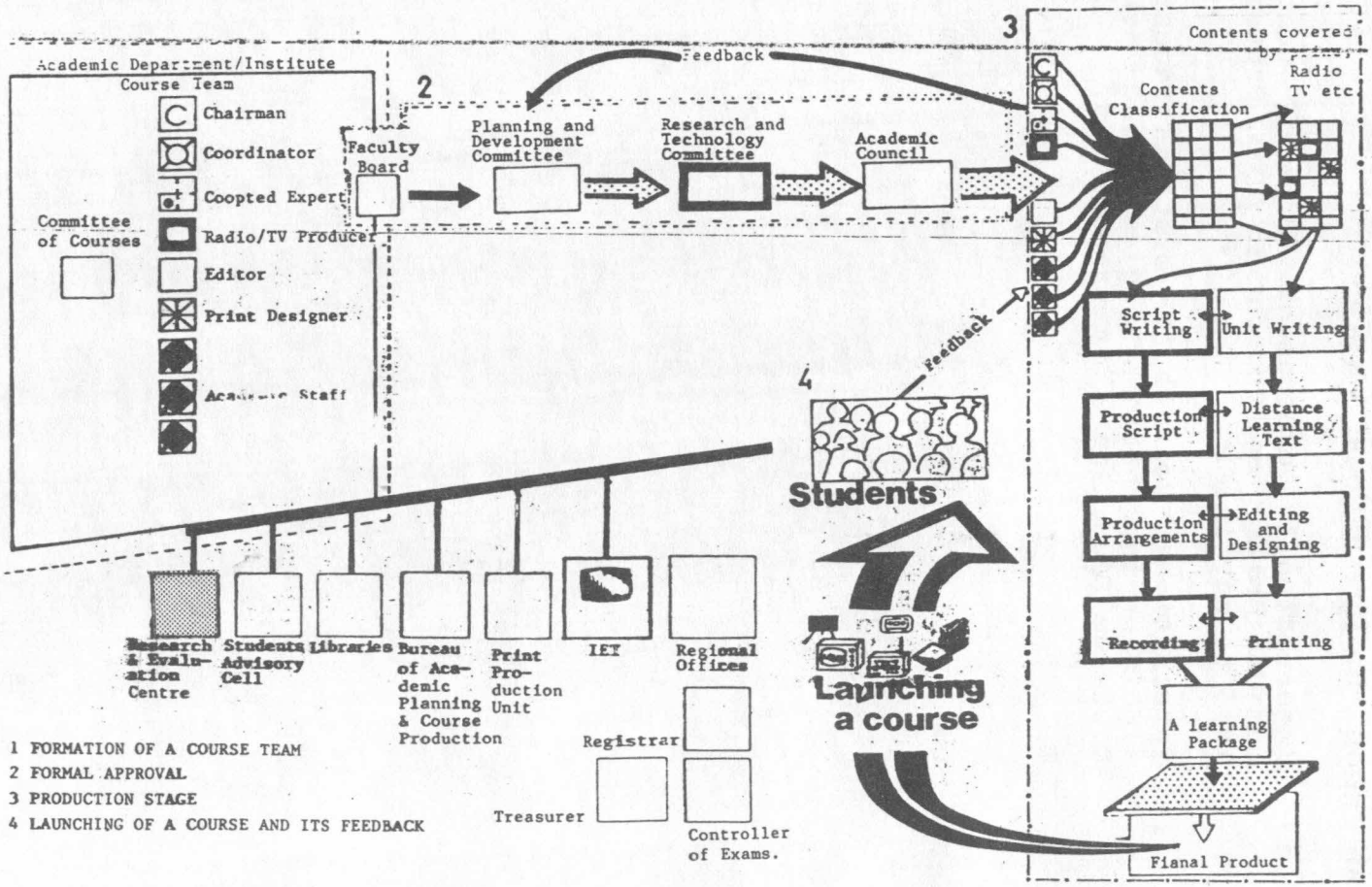
PJDE

Pakistan Journal of Distance Education (Bi-annual). The Centre co-ordinates publication of the Pakistan Journal of Distance Education, a forum for institutions of distance learning in Asia and the world as a whole. The PJDE has published so far ten volumes and fourteen issues up to 1994.

Collaboration with International Agencies

i- International Development Research Centre, Canada: Project on Drop-out in AIOU. September 1986 to May 1988.

ii- International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) an international project: Feed-back in Distance Education - A meta-analysis.


Academic Department/Institute
Course Team
Chairman
Coordinator
Coopted Expert
Radio/TV Producer
Editor
Print Designer
Academic Staff
Committee of Courses
2
Faculty Board
Planning and Development Committee
Research and Technology Committee
Academic Council
Feedback
3
Contents covered by Radio TV etc.
Contents Classification
Script Writing
Unit Writing
Production Script
Distance Learning Text
Production Arrangements
Editing and Designing
Recording
Printing
A learning Package
Fianal Product
4
Feedback
Students
Launching a course
Research & Evaluation Centre
Students Advisory Cell
Libraries
Bureau of Academic Planning & Course Production
Print Production Unit
IET
Regional Offices
Registrar
Treasurer
Controller of Exams.
1 FORMATION OF A COURSE TEAM
2 FORMAL APPROVAL
3 PRODUCTION STAGE
4 LAUNCHING OF A COURSE AND ITS FEEDBACK

PAKISTAN JOURNAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Volume - XII 1995 Issue - I

Allama Iqbal Open University
Islamabad - Pakistan

A PROFILE OF PAKISTANI WOMEN[1]

by

Shafqat Sultana*

*For the first time, we have switched over to a subject different from our main theme. This step has been taken intentionally just for the promotion of a noble cause most essential and highly valued. The role of woman cannot be ignored since she is the main source of all educational set-up ___ from upbringing of youngsters to the tedious task of banking. Keeping this very significance of womenfolk in view that we are publishing this article alongwith our editorial on the same subject. Also see a detailed chart of performance accomplished by AIOU in this sector.

Editor

The Religious and Social Dimension

The present status of women in Pakistan is the result of a long history of social, cultural and economic factors, and it is these factors which make issues relating to women development complex ones. Islam and the Constitution of Pakistan not only guarantees equal rights for women and prohibits discrimination against them on the basis of sex, but also provides for fuller participation of women in all spheres of national life. An Arabic quotation states that if you educate women, you educate the whole nation. Indeed, Islam has raised the

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[1]A presentation by Mrs. Shafqat Sultana, Vice-President and Regional Development Chief, First Women Bank Limited, The Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

status of a mother to the extent that a Hadith of our Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) states that "paradiselies under the feet of the mother". The Constitution of the country also states that the issue of women's development is an integral part of the overall development planning.

If Pakistani women lag behind men, is not due to constitutional dictates or religious dictates. It is because of exploitation of cultural taboos and raditions, and a complex tangle of malnutrition, poor health conditions and consequently low life expectancy, low education and school enrolment, high birth rates and the non-recognition of their economic work within the family.

On each of these issues, the message of Islam is a clear-cut one. Throughout the Holy Quran, there are injunctions to safeguard women rights which range from her right to her earnings. It means her right to work, her right to her inheritance, her right to religious practices allowing her the same access to a life of righteousness as to men, the practice of prayers, the performance of the Haj, the pilgrimage, fasting in the holy month of *Ramadan*, payment of *Zakat,* are the same for Muslim women and Muslim men. Marriage cannot be legalised without her consent. Acquiring education has been made a religious obligation on men and women alike. Modesty and morals are equally incumbent on men and women. If these realities are not reflected in our social practice, the reason lies elsewhere and not in the enlightened religion of Islam, which remains an on-going revolution against exploitation of human beings, one against the other. A fact too often bypassed is that when the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) received the divine revelation, the first person to become a Muslim, that is *a beliver* was Hazrat Bibi Khadija, the wife of the Holy Prophet. She was also a businesswoman of the highest order, whose sense of business was legendary in her own times, as was her sense of justice and fairplay towards all those who were in her employment.

The perpetuation of women's low status is also due to the greater illiteracy amongst women. Thus the

majority remain ignorant even of their rights which are religiously ordained, and constitutionally expressed.

The Constitutional Safeguards

Under the 1973 Constitution, the provisions relating specifically to women's rights and prerogatives are the following:

Article 25 Equality of Citizens

1) All citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of law.

2) There shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex alone.

3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the protection of women and children.

Article 32 Promotion of Local Government Institutions

"The state shall encourage local Government institutions composed of elected representatives of the areas concerned and in such institutions special representation will be given to peasants workers and women".

Article 34 Full Participation in National Life

"Steps shall be taken to ensure full participation of women in all spheres of national life".

Article 35 Protection of Family

"The State shall protect the marriage, the family, mother and children".

Article 38 **Promotion of Social and Economic Well-being of the People**

(a) *secure the well-being of the people irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, by raising the standard of living, by preventing the concentration of wealth and means of production and distribution in the hands of a few to the detriment of the general interest and by ensuring equitable adjustment of rights between employers and employees and landlords and tenants.*

(b) *provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race as are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment.*

Special Committees on Women-Related Issues

A number of special reports investigated the situation of women. On 31st January 1976, a Pakistan's Women's Rights Committee was set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, comprising prominent women politicians, women social welfare workers and professional women from various walks of life. The committee looked into the question of law reforms and to make recommendations for improving the social, legal and economic conditions of women. The Committee found serious lacunae in the prevailing laws and recommended ammendments. It advocated looking at the women's population as a national resource and stressed on the need for a clear policy for women's employment in every federal and provincial ministry. It called upon the Government of Pakistan to appoint capable women as Governors, Ministers, Judges of the Superior Courts, Ambassadors and Secretaries. Most of this has come to pass and very recently women judges were also appointed to the High Courts.

The Women's Division was established in 1979 and subsequently was upgraded to a Ministry in 1989.

In response to women's demands and pressures and because of the general awareness regarding the undeserving conditions surrounding the generality of women, the Planning Commission established an Expert Working Group on Women's Development Programmes - the first of its kind - to make specific recommendations for the Sixth Five Year Plan (1983-88), to evaluate and suggest measures to enhance women's participation in various national activities. This group served to highlight the enormous discrepancies which existed in the statistical data pertaining to women. It recommended a national policy be formulated for women's employment and to look at the question of providing safeguards through legislative measures. It suggested the establishment of a "network of relationships" in the various sectoral ministries and their line departments. It felt that the NGOs had a *life line* role to play and further stressed on the need for an ongoing integrative research into women-related issues.

Following the demand for the establishment of an independent Women's Commission to identify major problems facing women and suggest remedies, the Pakistan Commission on the Status of Women was set up on 8th March, 1983. The major task of the Women's Commission was to investigate into the prevailing situation and elicit views. The Commission members undertook extensive tours within the country and also to some friendly countries. It met a large cross section of the society, and drew upon a number of studies. It became a landmark document as it was able to make a nation-wide survey of attitudes and behavior patterns, norms and prevalent traditional practices. The Report noted the situation of women in Muslim countries as *deplorable* and noted the mass illiteracy amongst women as the major factor of the denial of fundamental rights as their due. It noted the prevalent discriminatory practices contrary to the Quranic injunctions. It noted the de-humanized status of women and the need for enlightened men and women to continue to fight the bitter battle against local

customs. It drew upon the statements of the founding fathers of Pakistan who solidly supported women's causes. The Women's Commission gave a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the social, cultural, legal and economic status of Pakistani women. So startling were its findings that for a good few years it remained a restricted document.

The National Plans

The successive Governments of Pakistan have introduced various plans and programmes to give Pakistani women their due rights, and provide for their fuller participation in all spheres of national life.

The Sixth and the Seventh Plans both provided special facilities for women like training of women in income generating skill development, construction of women's hostels and community centres, health care facilities, day care centres for working mothers, legal aid centres, grants-in-aid for women wishing to undertake development activities on their own initiatives. In 1989, the first Women Bank was established, which is dealt with as a specific case study in this presentation. A special minimum quota was fixed for women in jobs in the public sector. The first women commercial pilots made their appearance in the aviation scene. Women's Police station with women police personnel were opened in a number of cities. Polytechnics were equipped with computer facilities to help women train for the technological advancements of the modern day world.

Pakistan's Seventh Plan (1988-93) declared women's development as *a national imperative* and its priorities included the initiation of a development process which would help women realise their potential and enable them to obtain, through economic development, their religious, constitutional and legal rights. In the words of the Seventh Plan: *"Data on women is outdated and incomplete. However, available research confirms their low status on most counts. Gender disparities exist in the availability of food, education and employment. Women suffer additional constraints because their mobility is*

restricted. They have little control over resources, limited decision-making power, a low level of awareness of their civil rights, a poor self-concept, and limited aspirations". It is this willingness at the national level, to look at our shortcomings and our problems frontally and not evasively, which is the reason why we in Pakistan remain ever-hopeful that the sub-surface changes which are underway, will lead to better times ahead. The First Women's Bank is one manifestation of this change from within, and since I am a part of this organisation, allow me to state that its main thrust is to serve as one of the catalysts of this desirable change, by providing such financial services which can empower women through the realisation of their talents and skills, and thus help them change their own situation. It would also be the more durable, sustainable and irreversible change.

The current Eighth Plan (1993-98) remains the working document. I shall attempt to present the strategic concerns of the Plan as these relate to the question of women's development and women-related issues. The Eighth Plan focuses on improving the educational status of women, expand health facilities for them and provide them with more openings and opportunities for their income generation in their own settings - by reaching them with schemes wherever they are.

Curently, the national economy is undergoing a massive transition and related structural changes, basically geared to deregulation, market-orientation and divestment of public sector enterprises to the private sector, within the framework of establishing total self-reliance and within also a National Conservation Strategy for environmental preservation. All this has a direct impact on the situation of women.

The government's main thrust is to reduce imbalances of regions, gender, groups and classes through extensive poverty alleviation programmes. The Social Action Programme (SAP) is the main operative concept, specifically focussing on the long-term sustainable development through employment generation plans for

women, through the equitable distribution of opportunities, access to education, better health care, sanitation, and with much emphasis on self-employment schemes through financial resources raised from within the country. Hence the First Women Bank Limited, with which I deal later, as a specific case study.

The 8th Plan envisages decentralisation down to district levels, to enable a participatory decision-making cum management activity of the masses. By increasing economic activity at micro levels through supportive fiscal policies, it aims at broadening the tax base of the country. Its objectives include strengthening the capital market within the country to make its economic development activities become competitive first within the country and then more effectively on the global arena. It aims at self-reliance in its food production and supply through a diversified agricultural base and investible resources.

The sectoral targets highlight the plan of action to bring such aims and objectives into operation, both at the macro and the micro levels. I mention those which would have a direct bearing on the women's situation.

The Government has undertaken a major effort:

- to extend health cover the village level through the initial training of 33,000 village health workers and full immunization of mother and child so that the infant mortality declines from 8.6% to 6.5%;

- particular emphasis is being laid on proper nutrition education in rural areas through health workers and through the media, as well as to universalise access to iodized salt;

- population planning cover is aimed to cover 80% of the population in the overall scene, and 100% in the urban and 70% in the rural areas

within the plan period. The aim is to bring the population growth rate down to 2.7%.

- to increase the primary school participation for girls from 54% to 82% over the Plan-period and to increase the national literacy rate from 35% to 48%. What this target means can be judged by the fact in 1987-88 the rural literacy in Pakistan was 21.4% and female literacy was only 9.6%.

- extensive coverage of rural water supply and rural sanitation has received special attention to make it a reality for the vast rural population. The constraints of limited water-supply are self-evident. Its availability or non-availability affects household chores such as washing, cleaning, cooking and bathing. The more difficult the access to water, the more negative their attitudes become towards health, hygene and sanitation. It remains a major hurdle to be overcome.

- policies envisage for the agricultural sector are important for the lives of the majority of Pakistani women who live mostly in the rural areas. More agricultural productivity means more food and income for rural households and relatively less burdens in the lives of the rural women who have to manage the rural households. The 8th Plan's emphasis on opening Kisan Banks, and other means of extending rural credit facilities, aims at bringing the agricultural sector into the tax-paying bracket as well. The policies envisage, better irrigation and drainage and the full-scale development of the non-crop sector, of small scale agro-based industries, and cottage industries - all of which would directly benefit rural women.

My bank, the First Women Bank Limited is one of these credit sources, and at the same time is working on

the details of cottage industries schemes so as to reach the rural women in their own home settings - with advisory services, with credit facilities, with schemes and proposals for home-based income generation activities and with training facilities.

Today, despite the problems we face, the national determination remains strong to weed out the adverse impacts of underdevelopment, unemployment and illiteracy and replace these with the benefits of healthy development process, in a joint partnership of national development plans with people's participatory activities. There is a national awareness that only a full-scale development of the country's human and material resources will ensure that the exploiters in our society, of all kinds and hues, can no longer play with our destinies. This needs the development of both manpower and woman power. The women's situation in Pakistan remains paradoxical, especially for those who see it from outside the country, in terms of what seems to be a rise in sectarianism and conservatism, which is totally alien to the spirit of Islam and the Constitution of the country or the raison d'etre for which this country was established. I draw your attention to its other facet. It is this same society which elected Pakistan's first woman prime minister in 1988 and returned her to the same office in 1993. The November 1988 also saw the largest number of women come into the assemblies on the basis of direct elections, and most of these were elected from backward and rural areas where conservatism is to be expected. The reactionary forces of exploiters within our society have seen the writing on the wall, which spells their exit and hence their last ditch effort to throw the society into turmoil. They even disregard all the religious dictates directing respect of womenfolk and the Hadith which states that "paradise lies under the feet of the mother". But for us the silent majority of men and women who want to contribute our efforts to make our society and our country prosper according to the enlightened principles of our beliefs, in harmony with our fellow citizens of other faiths, our conviction is that the emergence of the actual tolerant, forward-looking, development-oriented, educated Pakistani society

is just a matter of time. There is a saying which is often quoted amongst us and I do so here: *Der Ayad Durust Ayad (The longed for object is welcome indeed when eventually it comes.)*

SPECIAL FEATURES

Book Review

Teaching Through Self-Instruction

How to Develop Open Learning Materials (Revised Edition)

by

Derek Rowntree;
Pages 389; Price: Not mentioned; 1994,
Kogan Page, 120 Pentonville Road,
London NI 9 JN

Professor Derek Rowntree is a prominent person in the purview of distance learning system. Associated with Britain's Open University since 1970, he has authored a number of books on the said subject. All his works highlight his teaching experience covering a period not less than 25 years. Thus, he has become a beckon of light for those teachers and educationists surmounting to overcome the hurdles in the way of open learning method.

The book under review is a solid proof of Professor Derek's vast knowledge, research regularity, comprehensive capability, profound penmanship and sincere sentiment showing a light-tower to all concerned coterie. It is because of author's untiring nature that this authentic and systematic work has come to light to enlighten the readers. Its popularity can be revealed by this very fact that its first edition appeared in 1986, and within the span of eight years the book was reprinted four times. I think it deserves to be produced continuously, since it is a marvellous contribution.

The overall aims and objectives of the book under reveiw solely seem to extend helping hand to the teachers so as to gain sufficient confidence to start producing self-instructional materials and to improve ability to teach with them. Based on 15 chapters, Derek's book could also be used as the basis for a series of workshops.

At the end I would like to repeat here the comments published in *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* since these are representing my own views:

> "It is certainly a book whih can be highly recommended and both the novice and the experienced writer should find it a frequently consulted edition, to his or her bookshelf."

On writing this thoughtful and inspiring book, I wholeheartedly congratulate Prof. Derek Rowntree on my behalf and even on behalf of Ms Masooda Chaudhry, Associate Editor to whom he delivered a complimentary copy during her recent visit to UK.

Dr Mahmudur Rahman
Editor

BOOK REVIEW

Autobiography of an educationist

Dastan Meri (My Story)

by

Dr Tasadduq Hussain Raja,
Pages: 328, Price 130/=; February 1995,
Publisher: Maktabai Daniyal, 114-A,
Street 55; G-10/3, Islamabad.

Great men whose works and achievements go to make history, are barely born and seldom made. Such luminaries seem to have a keen insight into things, strong moral convictions and a burning desire to set right what their conscience points out to be wrong. Always clear sighted in their aims and confident of the strength of their adherents, they enter the field of action, and conquer all the corners.

These great men, possessed as they are of pluck, courage and enterprise, lead their fellows and even the coming generation with high hopes and ideals, guide them in times of trial and tribulation, and eventually take them on to the goal of victory. For this novel and noteworthy act, autobiography seems to be an appropriate way.

As we know, autobiography is a form of literature being applied mainly to the manoeuvre of a man. Its inception and popularity as an independent genre is a rather recent thing. It possesses all the salient features of one's faithful, honest and black and white portraiture.

As defined by the critic, autobiography is the life-history of an individual written without speaking ambiguously. He depicts true aspects of his life explaining the thoughts and actions in order to bring out his achievements and failings, even his strength and weakness. This form of literature is not only the whole-range accounts of the particular person, but even looks as a mirror of the age in which he lives. Thus, the autobiography throws light on the contemporary period as well.

Keeping the concept of this genre in mind, I minutely went through Dr Tasadduq's autobiography entitled *Dastan Meri* (My Story). Like a true historian, the author seems to be honest, unbiased and unprejudiced. He doesn't allow himself at any stage to deform truth or ignore or falsify the facts. He clothes the subject neither with virtues to make an ideal of himself nor paints his portraiture with all the conceivable vices. Skilfully he enjoins the scattered pieces together, both unconsidered incidents of victories and accidental records of failure in order to make a correct estimate of his personality. As such, his writing has become a living presentation of facts and true picture of performance.

After having perused the book, we come to know that during teenage, Tasadduq Raja was forced to become apprentice in a textile mill. Hardly he had worked with iron-tools and in malasia uniform for few days that his indepth inclination prompted him to revolt. He left the job and started such a career which offered him ample time to carry on his education. Being in service, he did his B.A in 1960 and became a school teacher. Thus, he started his career as an educationist. He didn't content with Bachelor Degree, rather continued his further study. As a result, he reached to such a point that he was honoured with Ph.D degree from a foreign University. The teaching job which he started in the early sixties, continued till June 1985, when he switched over to National Language Authority as Chief of Translation Bureau. The 25-year-association with the educational institution has made him a man of manifold qualities. Being an M.A. in English, Tasadduq Raja had been a

Professor in various colleges of the country, and taught English language and literature at post-graduate level. This very act has broadened the canvas of his knowledge to a great extent.

While he was abroad in connection with teaching profession, he didn't loose time and wrote a commendable treatise on the life and work of Nasim Hijazi_____ a noted novelist of the country.

The book under review gives full accounts of hazards, the author came across throughout his life. Having ample courage, extensive stamina and longing to attain a lofty goal. Dr Tasadduq Raja overcame all the hindrances and crossed the pitfalls to pave his way for success and sanctity.

Since his main object is to provide interest, lesson and inspiration to his readers, the style adopted for narration is neither philosophical nor didactic. The language he uses as the vehicle of expression, is terse, simple and vigorous.

This autobiography of Dr Tassaduq Hussain Raja is undoubtedly a guide to life for the young and inexperienced persons who are about to enter the wide sea of life. It is a source of much inspiration for them, indeed.

Dr. Mahmudur Rahman
Editor

NEWS AND VIEWS

by

IQBAL HUSSAIN*

The year 1995 is the 20th year of the establishment of Allama Iqbal Open University. The University has made tremendous progress towards the achievement of its goal, and is continuing struggle for the betterment/improvement of its existing programmes and to increase opportunities of *education for all*.

The success of our experiences attracted the scholars, students/trainees both within the field of distance education in Pakistan and abroad.

The University Staff members attended conferences and seminars. Some were nominated for training and their professional development from overseas institutions.

A brief account of salient features/activities during the first six months of calander year 1995 will present more clear picture of the institutional activities.

DELEGATIONS/VISITORS TO AIOU

Research on Development of AIOU

Mrs. B. Aysha Mustafa, an American Ph.D student, was second time here in the University during the February/ March 1995.

Her visit aimed at collecting data about the development of this University from 1974 onward which she has choosen for her research dissertation.

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Besides gathering different related materials and documents, she had interviews of the senior officials, experts/heads of departments of the University.

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) team visited AIOU

Delegation of 10 officers from Bangladesh Open University (BOU) visited the AIOU and had meetings with the heads of various Administrative, Servicing and Academic Departments and exchanged experiences about the Distance Learning System of their respective universities. The delegation arrived Islamabad on April 13 and left on April 18, 1995.

The aim of visit to AIOU was to aquaint the officials of BOU with the techniques of informal way of education.

The Director of BOU, KGM Farooqi, was the head of the delegation. The team also visited the scenic spots of Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan.

Visit of Delegation from U.K.

A 15-member-delegation of London Borough of Waltham Forest led by Mrs. Meher Khan, Lady Mayoress, made a short visit to the AIOU on 15th April, 1995.

Rotarians from South America

A five-member-group from South America visited some of high spots like Library, Radio/T.V Studios of the University, saw documentary film and had a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor on 23rd April, 1995.

Students from Swedish Pakistani Institute of Technology

As part of their study, 30 students of the Swedish Pakistani Institute of Technology, Gujrat, enjoyed their visit to AIOU on January 26, 1995.

They were briefed about the University activities, programmes and other salient features. They also visited the studios and observed programmes production procedures.

Visit of 15 participants/trainees (Women)

A group of 15 women trainee officers and two instructors from Pak. Academy for Rural Development Peshawar, visited AIOU on January 26, 1995.

The guests showed great interest in introductory film documentary and asked many questions from the authorities about AIOU.

They also went around Radio and T.V studios and watched the recording process of University education programmes.

Instructional Tour of 75 Students

A group of 75 students and 3 faculty members from Government Poly-Technic Institute of Printing and Graphic Arts, Lahore visited the University on 29th January, 1995.

The visit of the said group was to see and study the process of the printing press of AIOU. Such activities are an integral part of their studies.

NEW SCHEMES/PROGRAMMES OF AIOU TO PROMOTE EDUCATION

Open Tech. Scheme

There are many children and young men working in auto workshops factories etc. as apprentices and earn their living, but they are without a certificate in spite of the fact that they have got profeciency in their trade, through sheer hard work.

Keeping in view the requirement of such technical hands, AIOU has started a Certificate Course under the

PM's Social Action Programme.

A professional certificate under the Open Tech. Programme of AIOU could enable these young men to seek better jobs for better income. Such technical hands though skillfull, lack education, essential to cope efficiently with the problem. Obviously the University shall fill this gap as well.

This *Open Tech. Programme* will be offered in three phases. In the first phase of this scheme, the auto workshop factories and hotels would be selected and affiliated with University regional centres for students practical training and testing.

The certificates would be devided in three degrees of technical efficiency. In the second phase, a six-month-course in auto mechanic trade along with literacy course will be offered for those children and young men who could not read and write or even learn the trade as apprentices. C-grade would be awarded to participants on having achieved technical skill and education up to primary level. B and A grade certificate would be awarded to those students who would qualify after training in higher grades as technician.

Also under active consideration of AIOU are auto mechanic, carpet making, printing, photography, computer training, etc. etc.

Package of 10 Computer Courses

The AIOU has planned to launch a package of 10 computer courses through its distance learning system. The equipment will be hired/arranged from private and government computer training institutions on which AIOU students will receive practical training. Simultaneously the students will be getting theoritical education through instructors, video cassetes, etc.

Post Graduate Professional Certificate in "Hospital DIETETICS"

Department of Women's Education of the University has launched a post-graduate professional (certificate) course in Hospital Dietetecs initially on pilot basis in three regions of Pakistan i.e. Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

The course is meant to provide training, guidence to in-service field staff engaged in community health programme and dietetions and other para-medical staff working in hospitals. Other medical professionals could also participate in course for uplifting their knowledge in Dietetics.

Master Degree in Economics

The University has offered a new post-graduate level programmes i.e., M.Sc (Economics) to meet the pressing demand of people having interest in the field to study and are unable to get their higher education through the formal system for one or the other reason.

This M.Sc programme is to expose students to the literature on various aspects of economic theories and their application to the actual problems of the economy. It also aims to create awareness about working of Economic System and to produce such cadre of economists who could meet the growing need of the country.

The programme further stands for improving the ability and self confidence among the students of Economics to critically analyse and seek scientific solution of Economic problems.

The applications were invited from the candidates. A large number have applied for admission which are under process of finalization on merit basis.

The M.Sc (Economics) requires 10 credit course/ research work within a minimum of semesters (two and a half years) for its successful completion for a regular

student.

Post Graduate Diploma/Certificates in Business Administration

After a successful experience in enthusiastic response of students/candidates from public as well as private sector towards MBA programme (first time launched in 1986), the university has now offered post-graduate certificate and diploma programmes in the field of Marketing Management, Finance Management, Financial Accounting, General Management, Banks Management and Hospital Management.

These programmes in the six functional areas are to provide essential basic and advance knowledge and expertise for a career in these fields togather with a wide range of skills keenly sought by the employers.

Particularly these programmes are useful for those existing and aspiring executives and managers who intend to sharpen their skill in specific functional areas.

AIOU to set up Journalism Institute

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved the establishment of the Institute of Mass Communication in Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

The Institute will offer Master Degree courses in Journalism at the beginning, and later it will also offer Ph.D courses in the same subject. Besides, the institute will organise research activities and training workshops for working journalists.

Post Graduate/Graduate Programme in Mining and Energy

The Government of Pakistan with the help of AIOU is planning to develop and launch such mining and energy courses for the improvement of economy and increase education in the field of Science and Technology.

The department of Technical and Vocational Education of the University is being working on this scheme of M.Sc/B.Sc level Education to be launched through distance learning system of AIOU.

Intermediate Science (F.Sc) Programme

Keeping in view the vital role of science and technology in the country's development, the University has also taken up the launching of F.Sc programme in the first phase through its distance learning system. Later on, much professional and skill oriented courses could be developed in the second phase.

The programme is spread over a period of two years which consists of core courses of three credits. The elective courses comprise Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics with a significant weightage of one and a half credits each in three parts including practical work and a half credit course on Computer Science.

The courses are under progress and hoped to be launched by September, 1996.

AIOU JOINS HANDS WITH UN TO SAVE ENVIRONMENT

The United Nations Environment programme unites the inhabitants of our planet with a commitment, irrespective of caste, creed and colour, for Preservation of Environment of this Earth. AIOU has joined in this international commitment with great enthusiasm. The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is perhaps the only educational institution in the country that has decided to join in a big-way campaign to make Pakistan greener and environmentally secure.

The campaign is a part of a plan prepared by Pakistan Environment Protection Council in collaboration with UN environment programme. The council is headed by Chairman Asif Ali Zardari, a member of National Assembly.

Details of the AIOU compaign were given by Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Javed Iqbal Syed in an exclusive interview with Pakistan Observer, on June 22, 1995. Some ten thousand trees are to be planted by the University students in almost all parts of the country.

Prof Syed said that people across the globe are now becoming increasingly aware of various environmental problems i.e. elimination of forests by unplanned cutting of trees which are essential for earth soil and climate, elimination of edible fish in the oceans, destruction of marine life in ponds, lakes, rivers, and coast line of seas with dangerous chemicals, and pesticides. He further said, "to cope with the problem and further speed up already ongoing projects in the country with the cooperation of Federal Governmnt, AIOU has launched a project which will definitely be of great importance and advantage, to solve the problem". He said, "about 10,000 trees are to be planted in different areas of the country".

The enrolled students of AIOU will join in the campaign. Doubtful and confusing questions arose in the mind of interviewer and these were laid before him. He provided him with a satisfactory answer about feasibility of this project. "Solid measures have been taken to check on the possibility of expected unfair means that might be used".

Whoever claims to the University of having planted trees shall have to provide the university with a solid and authentic evidence. It may be in the form of a photograph, a video, or press cutting that has been released, along with attestation of elected representative member of the Constituency. It is only then that the claim would be accepted and additional marks may be given to the student (claimant). The plantation compaign may be collectively conducted by a group or team of AIOU students under supervision of a tutor or an instructor, yet the claims shall have to be authenticated.

Obviousely, the tree plantation will be a positive and valuable contribution by AIOU in conservation of our environment.

CURRICULUM CHANGES IN AIOU

The administraton has introduced some drastic changes in the curriculum in order to further improve the performance. The changes have started yielding positive results and time will come soon when the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) would regain its significance. these views were expressed by Prof. Javed Iqbal Syed, the Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, while talking to Pakistan Observer in February, 1995.

Prof. Iqbal Syed, who is also an eminent educationist, further observed that the Open Tech Scheme, recently introduced by the University, catered importance and young chaps of 15 years age would be able to seek admission under the scheme which, he termed as revolutionary one. Prof. Iqbal Syed disclosd that there will not be any fee of the courses, provided to such kids.

Prof. Iqbal Syed, who is also the author of several books, further said that the University offers comprehensive courses and even in competetive examinations and civil service academies, such subjects were being taught. He said in reply to a question that the University had fixed 25 marks for excercise and 75 for final examination in order to avoid cheating and cramming. "The most of the students tend to mug up courses which serve neither to the students nor the University", he added.

The Vice-Chancellor further told that each exercise will be carrying 100 objective type questions. To equip the students with other vernacular dialects, the University has also chalked out programme and the arrangements in this connection were being given final shape.

The University has also planned 20 years celebrations in March, 1995 and the scholars and educationists would be asked to tender their prepositions. Prof. Iqbal Syed determined to impart knowledge to all and sundry and he asked the laymen to assist the administration.

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS

SAARC Open University Proposed

In March, 1995, Workshop on Distance Education was organized jointly by SAARC Secretariate and Allama Iqbal Open University, considered the need for greater integration of "Educational and Human Resource Development" activities in the countries in SAARC fold.

The concluding session was presided over by Dr. M.H. Kazi, Vice-Chancellor of Humdard University.

The workshop released a list of recommendations with an emphasis that there should be a pool of resources for technical assistance to develop and produce the "Distance Education" programmes in member countries.

Keeping in view the significance of network of "Distance Education", the groups in the workshop, recommended identification of distance education expertise and SAARC secretariate should facilitate their exchange.

To make the accessibility possible to the rural women, it was suggested that low cost self instrumental material should be made available including Audio and Video.

Call for Orientation in Education

"The people in education and culture have to work with new vision and new orientation "We have to rid overselves of dogma and cliches", observed Mr. Fakhar Zaman, Chairman, National Commission on History and Culture, Chairman of Pakistan Academy of Letters, during

his address as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the three-day SAARC-AIOU workshop on distance education being held at the University campus. "In Pakistan education has to be geared to social awakening, liberation of mind realism and enlistment", he added.

Mr. Fakhar Zaman said, "our history has been so badly distored that it needs to be entirely re-written. Rather the entire educational curricula has to be changed".

Welcoming the guests from the seven SAARC countries, he observed, "we are bound by many common values rooted in our social, ethnic, cultural and historical traditions". He remarked, "our countries which had made important contributions to the enrichment of human civilisation, had great future prospects as a huge common market, substantial human and natural resources and the complimented of economies".

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Javed Iqbal Syed remarked that "after 20 years this university now crossed its teenage and has stepped into the age of maturity. So, this is the right time that we should assess our own teenage mistakes and see what future course the AIOU should now pursue".

Professor Dr. S.A. Siddiqui, Chief Coordinator of the workshop explained the objectives of the workshop.

Women and Children in the NEWS

A two-day consultation workshop on the training manual "women and children in the News" held at the Allama Iqbal Open University on May 27-28, 1995.

The consultation was organized by the department of Mass Communication, AIOU in collaboration with UNICEF. Chairman and Senior Professor of departments of Journalism and Mass Communication of various universities participated in the consultation. It was inaugurated by Prof. Javed Iqbal Syed, Vice-Chancellor, AIOU.

The workshop was organized to look into the training manual prepared jointly by the Thomson Foundation and the UNICEF for the third world print media journalists. In order to make the manual Pakistani oriented, the consultation suggested possible changes in its curricula, duration and add Pakistan's case studies related to the coverage of children and Women's issues in the Pakistani media.

The out put of the consultation will help all the mass communication departments to launch training programmes for working journalists to orient them about the issues of women and children.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/FOREIGN TRAINING

1. Mr. Zafar Iqbal Asif, Asstt. Producer, IET, attended the Television Course on Social Education from JICA, Japan w.e.f. 17/1/1995 to 12/3/1995.

2. Dr. Mussarat Anwar Sheikh, Associate Professor, participated in EFL Workshop on English for young learners, w.e.f. 25/2/1995 to 11/3/1995.

3. Prof. Mrs. Razia Abbas, Director BUESP, attended international consultation meeting on Women and Girls Education in the least developed countries and countries with high illiteracy rate among women in UNESCO from 18th to 21st April, 1995.

4 Mrs. Riffat Haq, Project Manager, Women Matric Project, participated in a four-month course on "Distance Education" in Institute of Education, University of London from 3/4/1995 to 9/7/95.

DATA BANK
STATISTICAL GLIMPSES OF
ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

by

ABDUS SATTAR KHAN*

PROGRAMME/LEVEL-WISE AND GENDER-WISE COURSE ENROLMENT WITH RESPECTIVE NUMBER OF COURSES DURING THE SEMESTER SPRING, 1995.

Sr. No.	Programme/Level	No.of Courses	Semester Spring 1995		
			M	F	T
1.	Functional (Non-Credit) Courses	8	213	109	322
2.	Women's Education(Matric)	18	72	10121	10193
3.	Intermediate	47	19449	14070	33519
4.	B.A/B.B.A/B.Com	64	26364	8013	34377
5.	MA (EPM)	8	318	146	464
6.	M.Sc Pakistan Studies	13	189	81	270
7.	M.B.A	29	5316	309	5625
8.	Diploma in Teaching of English as Foreign Language (TEFL)	2	265	142	407
9.	Diploma in Computer Application	8	2308	174	2482
10.	Diploma in Computer Maintenance	8	173	4	177
11.	Post Graduate Diploma/ Certificate of Management	2	219	10	229
12.	M.Ed (Diploma in (Special Education)	14	859	271	1130
13.	B.Ed	4	19826	10150	29976
14.	CT	4	22020	38588	60608
15.	PTC	4	47368	95144	142512
16.	New PTOC	1	4502	2533	7035
17.	ATTC	1	831	461	1292
18.	M.Phil Iqbaliat	2	47	15	62
19.	M.Phil Islamiyat	2	87	10	97
20.	M.Phil Urdu	4	108	38	146
21.	M.Phil Education	10	215	88	303
	Total	253	150749	180477	331226

*Research & Evaluation Centre, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

PROGRAMME/LEVEL-WISE AND SEMESTER-WISE NUMBER OF BOOKS PRINTED DURING SPRING, 1995 SEMESTER

Sr. No.	Programme/Level	Semester Spring 1995
1	Functional (Non-Credit) Courses	2500
2	Women's Education (Matric)	57784
3	Intermediate	71285
4	B.A/B.B.A/B.Com	113903
5	M.A. (EPM)	3077
6	B.Ed	156000
7	CT	43091
8	PTC	175000
9	New Primary Teacher Orientation Course (PTOC)	40000
	Total	662640

PROVINCE-WISE STATISTICS OF TUTORS AND STUDY CENTRES FOR SPRING 1995 SEMESTER

PROVINCE	SEMESTER SPRING 1995	
	TUTORS	STUDY CENTRES
N.W.F.P.	888	205
BALUCHISTAN	60	39
SINDH	947	291
PUNJAB	3244	429
FEDERAL AREA (ISLAMABAD)	244	14
AZAD JAMMU & KASHMIR	206	57
NORTHERN AREA	56	16
TOTAL	5645	1051

RADIO/T.V PROGRAMMES PRESENTED IN SPRING, 1995 SEMESTER.

Programmes	Spring 1995
RADIO	257
T.V	92

RADIO/TV PRODUCTION AND AUDIO/VIDEO CASSETTES SALE DURING JANUARY TO JUNE 1995.

TITLES	QUANTITY
Total T.V Programme Production	16
Total Radio Broadcast Programme	26
Total Non-Broadcast T.V Programme	13
Total Non-Broadcast Radio Programme	06
Total Sale Audio Cassettes	473
Total Sale Video Cassettes	37

STAFFING POSITION AS ON 3/06/95

	Academic Staff	Administrative & other staff	Region	Total
17 and above	98	160	33	291
16 and below	-	892	210	1102
Total	98	1052	243	1393