



#### PROGRAMME EVALUATION OF MASTERS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: IGNOU

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#### Abstract:

*The success of any open and distance-learning programme depends on how well it is designed, executed and evaluated. Evaluation of a programme not only demonstrates its strengths but also points out the inherent shortcomings of the programme. The aim of evaluating a programme is to develop an appropriate and effective methodology for assessing the learning outcomes at different levels, examining distance learner's views about the quality of the courses or programmes and judging the impact that completing the programme has had on learners. Achieving the aims should allow judgments to be made about the quality of programme and the value and worth of the programmes.*

*The issue of Master's in Political Science (MPS) programme of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is known to be competition oriented and useful in building careers of the learners. The MPS programme was introduced in 2004 and it is a successfully running programme. The MPS Self Learning Materials (SLMs) is very well received and appreciated, it was felt that such programme/ courses are important for human resources development and increasing GER. This programme provides the learners, freedom to shape an individual programme of study to meet their personal interest and career goals. The learner can specialize in the areas of Political Theory, International Relations, Comparative Politics and Area Studies, and Indian Politics. There was a need to conduct an evaluation study of MPS programme, so as to analyze the relevance of the curriculum and effectiveness of the SLM materials, and suggest the areas which need revision and development/ improvement of curriculum or programme/course content.*

*The present paper aims to analyze the quality of the programme, its usefulness in career building and in facing competitive exams and the various problems faced by the Open and Distance Learners of MPS, the need for monitoring the implementation and utility of the programme with the changing needs of the learners. Further, the study also aims to assess and analyze as to whether IGNOU has been successful in achieving its motto to reach out to the marginalized sections of the society.*

**Key words:** *Masters in Political Science; Programme Evaluation; Learners; Academic Counsellors*

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#### Introduction:

The success of any open and distance-learning programme depends on how well it is designed, executed and evaluated. Evaluation of a programme not only demonstrates its strengths but also points out

the inherent shortcomings of the programme. According to Thorpe, (1993) evaluation is the collection, analysis and interpretation of the information about any aspect of a programme of education and training, as part of a recognised



process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have. Ebel, (1965) defined evaluation as a judgment of merit based solely on measurement provided by test scores but frequently involving the synthesis of various measurements and kinds of evidence. Tyler, (1950) points out that the process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are being realised by the programme. As stated by Rubin, (1995) evaluation means to understand the value of something in order to do things better.

According to Dolley, (1994) “Evaluation is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information that enables Judgments to be made about the value of a programme (of leaving ) and its effectiveness and /or efficiency in achieving a set of outcomes”. Pradhan, (2006) “Programme Evaluation is regarded as the process that leads to judgment about the worth, effectiveness and efficiency of an educational programme”. Panda, (1991) “Programme Evaluation is necessarily concerned with the specific programme, it is an ongoing process and the evaluation will lead to long-term decisions of the programme”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the programme evaluation constitutes an important function in an open and distance learning system.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is a Central University and is the world’s largest university. It was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985, ‘To advance and disseminate learning and knowledge by a diversity of means, including the use of information communication technology, to provide opportunities for higher education to a larger segment of the population and to promote the educational well-being of the community in general, to encourage the Open University and Distance Education System in the educational pattern

of the country and to coordinate and determine the standards in such systems.

#### **Review of Literature:**

Review of literature on any of the proposed research plays a vital role for better understanding and the study under consideration. In open and distance learning, programme evaluation is an integral concept. It encompasses the evaluation of programme objectives, course content, instructional design, support services, assessment practices, student achievements, and use /impact of technology so as to improve the quality of teaching-learning, to enhance the relevance of the programme, to assess how the programme is perceived by its stakeholders and meets their expectations, and to provide regular feedback on the factors that affect outcomes.

Some of the programme evaluation studies are available in public domain. Fentiman, A. (2003) SOMDEL: Somali Distance Education Literacy Programme, report prepared for Africa Educational Trust (AET) by the International Research Foundation for Open Learning (IRFOL), Cambridge, UK: IRFOL . The SOMDEL programme involves the use of radio, print and face-to-face teaching. In order to assess the effectiveness of this programme the International Research Foundation for Open Learning was commissioned to undertake an external evaluation. The evaluation used the logical framework of the programme on the basis of which these achievements were measured. Various research methods were employed to gather the evaluation data including examination and scrutiny of statistical records and documents, focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews, case studies, surveys and participants observation. (COL, PREST B4)

#### **Programme Evaluation studies at IGNOU:**

Mishra, Vijashri and Garg (2009) did programme evaluation study of the undergraduate physics programme at IGNOU. They adopted the major



tenets of CIPP model. The sample size of 509 randomly chosen learners across the country. The results of this study showed the need for improving the presentation of the course material, student support system as effective for learners, study material to be learner friendly. The findings for the study were analysing records, document and database analysis, surveys and case studies. Kapoor. B. (2004) evaluated 'The Mental Health Nursing Care' course — a competency-based course- offered in the B.Sc. Nursing of IGNOU and used a model akin to the CIPP evaluation model. The study revealed that the self-learning materials (SLMs) and laboratory experience for the course were interesting and useful but access to electronic media facilities at the study centres was poor, even though teleconferencing had been made mandatory. Fozdar et. Al. (2006) reported a variety of factors (Personal, academic, and financial) that were responsible for the dropout of B. Sc. Students at IGNOU. Quimbo, (2002) the PhD programme in Education at the University of Philippines has been evaluated by using the CIPP model. The study revealed that significant improvement in input and process variables made positive impact on learner performance. Calder & Patel, (2002) the CIPP model was also used to monitor and develop an evaluation framework for technology-based community learning centres in India.

Gaba and Dash, (2004) did a course evaluation study in open and distance learning — a case study from IGNOU. A distance education course 'Instruction in higher education' from the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE) Programme of IGNOU. The sample size was 230 respondents and they used structured questionnaire method. The results of this study showed that majority of students were satisfied with self-instructional materials, assignments, the extended contact programme and delivery

mechanisms but some of the respondents were dissatisfied with academic counselling and use of audio-video programmes. Generally, the respondents provide useful feedback and suggestions which will help the course revision.

#### **Programme Evaluation in Distance Education:**

Programme evaluation is an important aspect of distance education. It requires the development of a design, model and procedure for evaluation, which provides feedback for further improvement of a distance education programme. It includes evaluation of the programme structure, its components, objectives, implementation as well as a programme outcome. Evaluation of the Distance Education programme may be carried on in the areas of quality of learning materials and service needs of sections of the population served. According to Thorpe (1993), it may be an evaluation of a single aspect of an ongoing Distance Education programme or a new programme, or to demonstrate its acceptable outcomes, or to detect any problems in such ventures. It may also be used to improve teaching and learning in distance education. According to Panda (1991), programme evaluation is necessarily concerned with the specific programme in Distance Education that has already taken place. The evaluation might adhere to either an accountability perspective or a managerial perspective. Nichols (2002) suggests that all tertiary institutions aiming to improve their practice, when using flexible forms of course delivery, should undertake programme evaluation on a regular basis.

Knox, (2002) suggested that the evaluation was based on eight indicators of programme quality: i) educational gains, ii) programme planning, iii) curriculum and instruction, iv) staffing and self-development, v) support services, vi) recruitment, viii) retention, viii) programme coordination and institutional support, and also analyzed a combination of quantitative and qualitative data that allow cross-



validation on the basis of multiple indicators for key variables.

Woodley, Allan (1995) analysed that the basic course evaluation and monitoring has its place. Course evaluation, which takes into account the context in which the course is being studied. At the individual course level, this requires research into who is taking the course and how they are studying it. The point is that in an 'open' system where students can select their own route through an array of courses, there is no guarantee that they all have the prior knowledge that was assumed by the course designer. Therefore, he suggested that course writers should work towards meaningful and quality material for the learners. According to Knox, (2002) the stakeholders for programme evaluation are course developers, administrators, and collaborators. Programme evaluation is used to assess the relevance, and utility of ongoing as well as completed programmes.

Research in the field of evaluation also provides its multiple perceptions. It is considered as a determination of goal achievement by Tyler (1950), as an assessment of merit by Scriven (1967), and as a process of providing information for decision-makers by Stufflebeam et al. (1971), and a kind of research by Suchman (1967). Thorndike (1961) uses it as a synonym of measurement. Cronbach (1980, 1982) considers it as important for improvement of curriculum. Scriven (1986) makes use of this concept in the exercise of authority and accountability. Evaluation is considered to play an important role in strengthening educational programmes. It helps in improving various components of an educational programme at the designing, development and implementation levels. Evaluation is considered to be the starting point for the feedback loop in the instructional process. At this stage, the information on whether the desired outcomes have been achieved or not is brought back to the first stage of the

instructional process, i.e., at the designing stage, for further improvement and strengthening. Evaluation involves three steps, viz. (i) identifying and defining the intended learning outcomes; (ii) constructing or selecting tests and other evaluation tools relevant to specified outcomes, and (iii) using the evaluation results to improve learning and teaching.

#### **Programme Evaluation:**

A programme of education connotes a set of courses which have a unified theme of content and learning experiences. A programme may be a set of instructional material, instructional activities or educational experiences of a learner. The aim of an educational programme is to prepare students in a particular branch of knowledge to complete a requisite number or series of courses. Programme evaluation has been defined as the collection and use of information to make decisions on the effectiveness of an educational programme (Cronbach, 1983). It is considered as a process to determine the effectiveness of the training activity and its outcomes. More specifically, this process helps the planners to focus on the goals and objectives of an educational programme; provides information for decision-making in two of its components, and identifies its strengths and weaknesses. It allows for programme accountability, provides data on major accomplishments, and identifies ways of improving future programmes. According to Stufflebeam (1981) and Tutman (1983), programme evaluation helps in improving the programme delivery and making it more responsive to the learners' needs, and for academic enrichment. In short, programme evaluation is a scientific method to measure the effectiveness of implementation and outcome of an educational programme on the basis of which decisions can be made.

The process of programme evaluation as a scientific method to measure the effectiveness of



implementation and outcome of an educational programme has been emphasised by several pioneering research workers. Scriven (1967) considers it as a methodological activity which combines performance data with a goal scale and has introduced the terms formative and summative evaluation for developing curriculum. Stake (1967) describes variables of programme evaluation, viz. antecedents, transcendent and outcome. Stufflebeam (1968) delineates four phases or processes of programme activities which indicate the focus and purpose of evaluation, viz. context, input, process and product.

According to Patton (1980), Guba and Lincoln (1981), and Lincoln and Guba (1985), evaluation of a programme is best organised with minimum constraints on antecedent conditions and the output of a research inquiry. The Evaluation Research Society (1980) identifies six categories for evaluation of a programme, viz. front-end analysis, evaluability assessment, formative evaluation, impact evaluation, programme monitoring and evaluation of evaluation strategy. According to these categories, a programme evaluation can be done from pre-installation to the outcome stage. Further, it may be done by an external body or by internal evaluators.

#### **Objectives:**

The following were the specific objectives of MPS study to:

- Analyze the relevance of the curriculum design and development of MPS
- Study the profile of the learners enrolled in MPS programme
- Analyze the relevance of the programme in the face of rapid changes in the Global and National level scenario.
- Find out effectiveness of learners Support Services; and

- Suggest recommendations for revision of the programme

#### **Research Methodology:**

Research methodology plays a vital role in any of the studies. The methodology comprises of many tools and techniques. The proposed study makes use of mixed research methodology. It would primarily comprise of survey method and case study along with Semi-structured interviews with a small number of student's and academic counsellors were conducted. However, in view of the paucity of response, it was decided to include learners enrolled upto 2014. The study is confined for the past ten years only i.e., 2004 to 2014. Both quantitative and qualitative methods adopted in this study is to examine the effectiveness of the programme which includes: a collection of data from stakeholders like learners, academic counsellors, institution, student support services, experts and cost analysis and also to find out the effectiveness of the media used. The MPS programme evaluation would be conducted at 5 regions recognised by the IGNOU. They are south, north, east, west and special zone of the northeast.

#### **Population Sample (2500):**

The evaluation sample would involve/include various stakeholders like learners enrolled, pass out, dropped out, the persons involved in the student support systems for this programme, including academic counsellors, programme study centre-in-charge, Regional Directors (RDs), Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs), Student Registration Division (SRD), Student Evaluation Division (SED), Material Production and Distribution Division (MPDD) other learner support services etc. (last 10 years). During the survey, questionnaires were sent to 2000 learners. Various variables like urban, rural, employed, unemployed and male, female should also be considered for the sample size. The research was conducted at five regional centers i.e., north, south,



east, west and special zone of north-east which is recognised by the IGNOU. Each zone was divided into two programme study centres (PSC), one is urban and another is rural. In addition, in order to understand the real grass root issues, in-depth/a small number of face-to-face interviews was conducted at field level with five percent of the sample size. A questionnaire containing various questions relating to the programme was sent to them for feedback.

Primary data was collected from the stakeholders, like learners, academic counsellors, university, subject experts and peer groups through questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

Secondary data was collected from SLMs and relevant documents, through faculty concerned.

*Tools* for data collection was generated through a questionnaire, interviews and observations were used to collect data.

The methodology for the evaluation of MPS programme aimed a critical assessment of the different components and activities that constituted the programme and were evaluated with the stated objectives as per commonwealth of Learning Practitioner Research and Evaluation Skills Training in open and distance learning (COL PREST A5). A growing number of research and evaluations studies make use of mixed methods, i.e., both quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study. Sometimes it is very difficult to obtain comprehensive results using a single method. A mixed method study attempts to bring together different paradigms.

#### **Sample:**

**Learners:** The sample size consists of 2000 learners of both (first and second year) including January and July batch of the past ten years (2004-2014). The questionnaire for learners was developed in English and Hindi, both version seeking information related to why the learners had sought admission in this

programme, and their feedback regarding course material, Personal information, Counselling, Self-learning Material (SLM) Assignments, Support Services, Multimedia, Examinations etc. The data was collected through appropriate tools, questionnaires, interviews, observations. The questionnaires were sent to learners for getting their response and questions were asked through telephone also. Interviews were conducted to get a response from various stakeholders. The researcher has visited some study centres to observe the counselling sessions. However, reply of responses received from 202 learners. Overall, it contained 06 sections and a total of 61 questions. It took approximately 25-30 minutes to fill up the responses.

**Academic Counsellors and Programme Incharges:** According to the Regional Services Division (RSD) available data was a total of 500 questionnaire for Academic Counsellors and Programme Incharges. It was prepared to obtain information related to the use and the content of the course materials, counselling, support services, etc., pros and cons of the programme, and suggestions for its improvement. The questionnaire contained 30 items. Further interviews were held with Academic Counsellors and programme in-charges for seeking the feedback of the programme. It took approximately 15-20 minutes to fill in the responses. However, a total of 50 questionnaires were received back and considered.

In addition to this questionnaire prepared for the Course writers and Experts for seeking information about the content of the course material in different aspects and implementations of the programme. The questionnaire contained 17 questions. Furthermore, questionnaire for the Regional Directors (RDs) was prepared to obtain information related to the delivery, and implementations of the programme. Overall, the questionnaire contained 15 questions. Furthermore, questionnaire was prepared to conduct face to face



interview schedule for programme coordinators and other divisions like RSD, SED, MPDD, SRD and EMPC, etc. A structured interview schedule contained 7-9 questions about school and division concerned very specific.

**Case studies:** The selected MPS learners have undertaken to share their experiences and to develop a deeper understanding of the various issues involved in the programme.

#### **Ethical Issues:**

While conducting the study the following ethical issues were taken care of:

- The identity of the students involved in the survey was kept confidential.
- The data gathered was kept confidential.

#### **Limitations:**

The field work visit was restricted to the three Regional Centers of Delhi-1,2,3 (NCR) due to limited time and budgetary constraints. A limited number of stake holders like learners, academic counsellors, study center coordinators were involved for data collection through postal services. Many of the learners did not respond/ return the filled-in questionnaires, and some of the questionnaires were returned back as addresses were incorrect/ not found.

#### **Results and Discussion:**

##### **Content Analysis:**

The content analysis of the programme documents was done wherein the objectives and rationale for the programme was studied. The programme development process was also analyzed. The self-learning materials analysis was done in view of the IGNOU norms about the content, format, legibility and language etc.

##### **Programme Guide:**

Programme Guides are a very important component of IGNOU programmes. It is an Information bulletin of the University, which describes the policies and practices adopted for a specific programme of a

study. The programme guide contains all the necessary information about the University i.e., the Contact Details, Places/Divisions of IGNOU, etc. It is simultaneously printed in Hindi and English. It is written in a lucid language. On the whole, the programme guide is designed well.

- It was well designed and developed
- The Guide also states the authenticity of the degrees and diplomas of the University which are recognised. It is essential information for the learners.
- The details of ODL system and SLM are found in this, which prove to be helpful for the beginners who are new to this system.
- Apart from the most important credit system being explained in it, the programme Guide also states about the assignments and the continuous evaluations.
- The programme's objectives are mentioned in it.
- The detailed programme structure of MPS provided for learners reference in it.
- Information related to Counselling, Teleconferencing, IRC, Gyan Vani and various other modes of Interactions are explained well in it.
- Useful information about the tips for effective learning in Open University is also found in it.
- It also encompasses the Contact Details of the university and its staff.
- Samples of important forms are also enclosed in it.
- University rules related to Reservation, Scholarship, Fee reimbursement and refund are also found in it.
- The programme guide contains 10 contents.

##### **Analysis Procedure:**

Data analysis was carried out by using appropriate statistical techniques. Percentages were used for

analyzing the questionnaire responses. Graphical representation along with quantitative interpretation was carried out with the responses.

#### Admission Data Analysis:

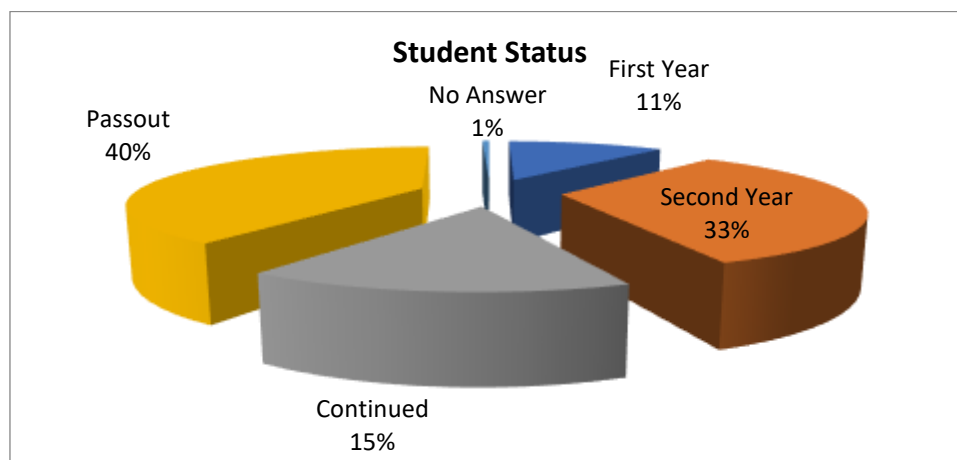
The admission related data was obtained from Student Registration Division(RSD). It is not an

#### 1. Learner Profile:

In order to carry out M.A Political Science (MPS) Programme Evaluation, 2000 questionnaires were sent to learners and 500 questionnaires to the academic counsellors, out of which 202 feedbacks were received from the learners and 50 feedbacks from the academic counsellors, which are analysed below:

**Table 1: Learners Sample Status**

First Year	Second Year	Continued	Passed out	No Answer	Total
23	66	31	81	1	202
11%	33%	15%	40%	0%	



Based on the inputs received about learners profile on the status of the students, Table 1 indicates that 11% First Year, 33% Second Year, 15% continuing and 40% pass out learners have responded. Passed out students were more eager to respond than the first, second and the continuing students. The eagerness shown by the passed out is an indication of showing their gratitude to the institution.

#### 2. Gender

**Table 2: Gender wise learner distributions**

Male	Female	Total
141	61	202
70%	30%	



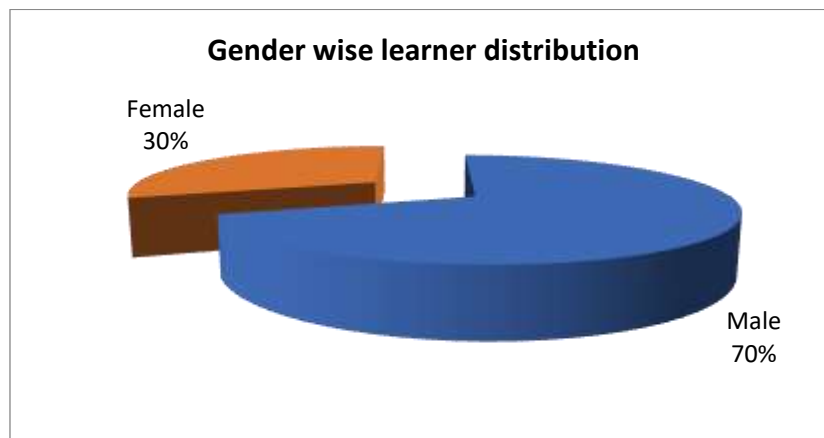


Table 2 reveals that out of the total 202 learner respondents, 141 were male whereas 61 were female respondents. Female respondents are less in comparison to male respondents which nearly counts below 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of male respondents.

### 3. Area

**Table 3: Area wise learner distribution**

Rural	Urban	Metro	No Answer	Total
92	56	52	2	202
46%	28%	26%	1%	

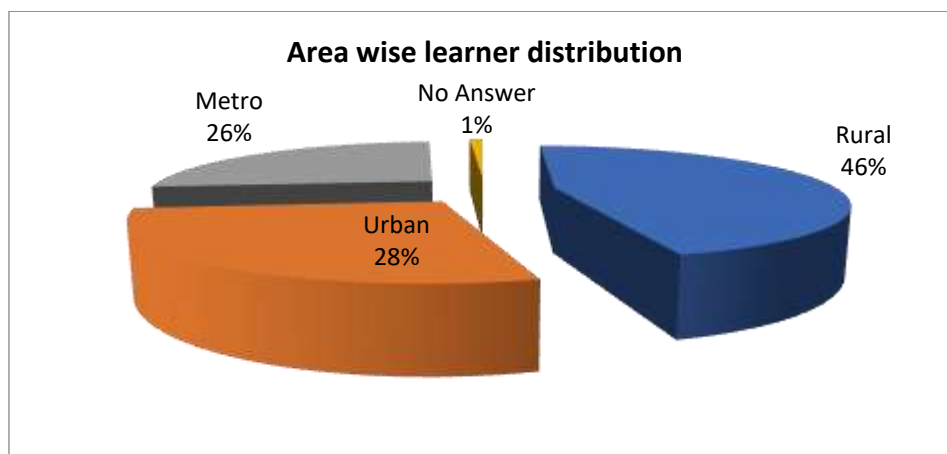


Table 3 shows that out of 202 responses received, 92 were from Rural, 56 from urban and 52 from Metropolitan cities. The response to the questionnaire is so good, however, 2 have not responded. In comparison to urban and metro, the percentage of rural response is so impressive which constitutes 46% rather than 28% and 26% of urban and metro respectively.

### 4. Reasons for joining the programme

**Table 4: What are the reasons for enrolling in MPS programme?**

Job Skills	Promotion	No Answer	Total
82	20	100	202
41%	10%	50%	

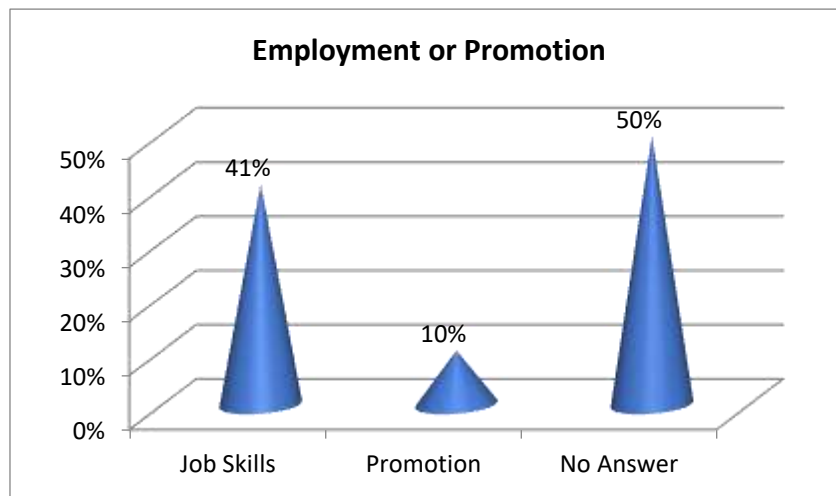
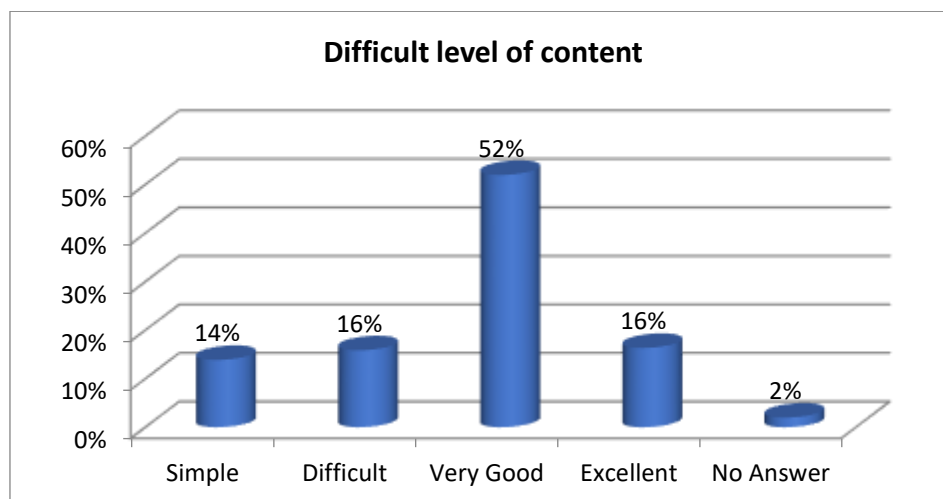


Table 4 reveals the positive impact of MPS Degree in their career. Out of 202 responses, 82 stated that it helps in job skills and 20 stated that it helps in promotion. On an overall conclusion, it can be seen that an MPS Degree helps in providing good careers.

### 5. Course Material (SLMs)

**Table 5: Learners feedback on programme content and difficulty level.**

Simple	Difficult	Very Good	Excellent	No Answer	Total
28	32	105	33	4	202
14%	16%	52%	16%	2%	



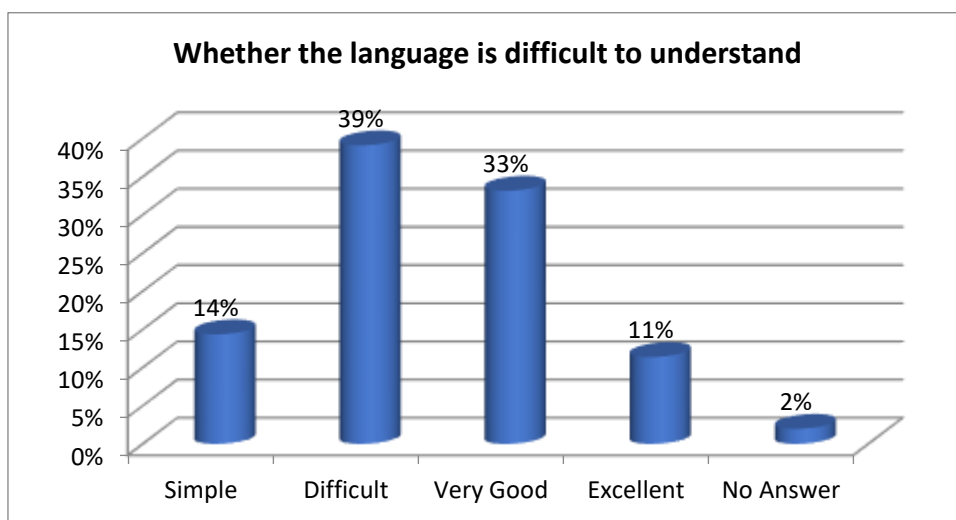
In table 5 the response of the learners about the course materials is indicated. Out of 202 responses, 105 learners ranked it as very good, 33 ranked it as excellent 28 stated it as simple and 32 stated that it was difficult. 4 learners did not state anything. 52% and 16% of the respondents expressed the material as very good and excellent compared to 16% and 14% stating it as difficult and simple.



## 6. Language

**Table 6: Whether the Language was difficult to understand?**

Simple	Difficult	Very Good	Excellent	No Answer	Total
29	79	67	23	4	202
14%	39%	33%	11%	2%	



When asked about the language, table 6 indicates that out of 202 responses, 67 and 23 are of the view that it is very good and excellent and 79 and 29 have expressed it as difficult and simple. 39% found the language to be difficult.

## 7. Political Developments

**Table 7: Whether MPS is relevant to understand the political developments at the national and international level?**

Yes	No	No Answer	Total
191	5	6	202
95%	2%	3%	

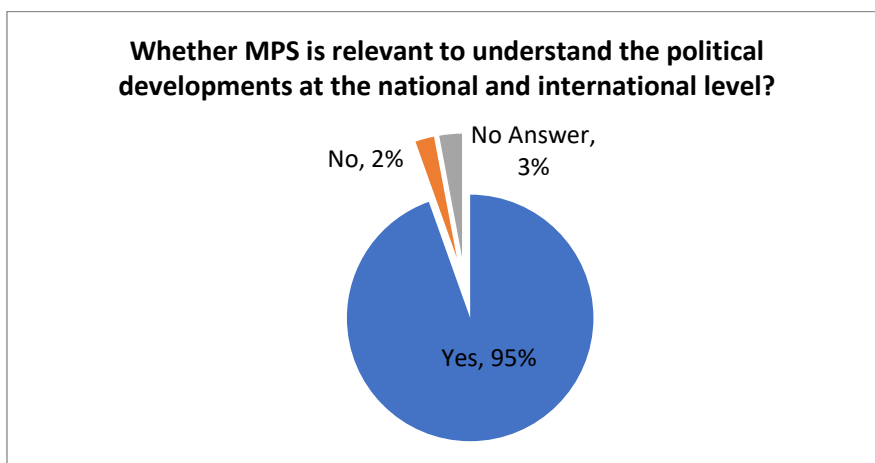


Table 7 reveals about MPS Programme's relevance to Political developments within the country and across the globe. Out of the 202 responses, 191 answered it positively and 5 negatively. It is important that the learners of the MPS Degree are coped with to understand the national and international political scenario.

### 8. New areas of knowledge

**Table 8: Did the programme help you in identifying new areas of knowledge/learning?**

Yes	No	No Answer	Total
169	20	13	202
84%	10%	6%	

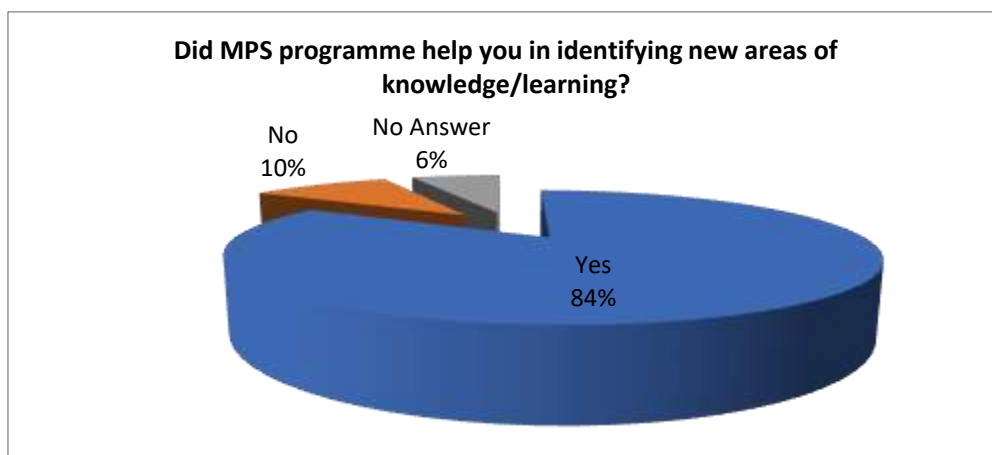


Table 8 indicates that the programme helps in identifying new areas of learning and knowledge.

### 9. Assignments

**Table 9: Whether the assignments were useful to gain knowledge and prepare for TEE?**

Yes	No	No Answer	Total
187	9	6	202
93%	4%	3%	

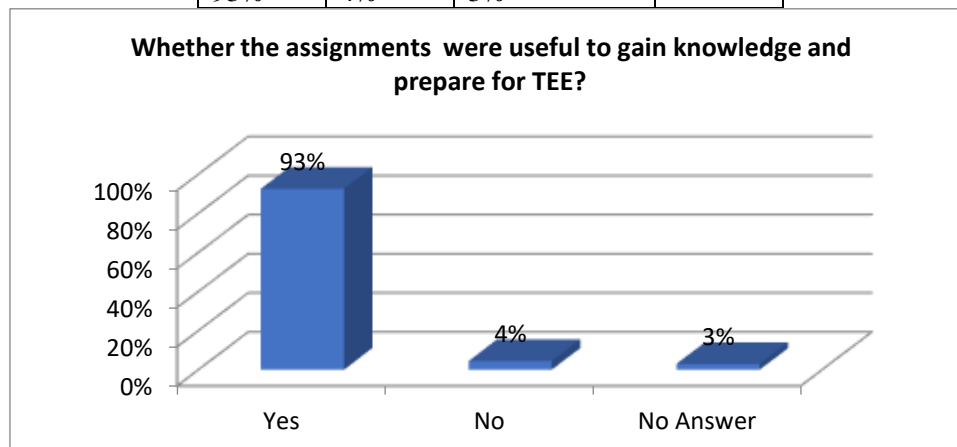


Table.9: About the usefulness of the assignments in providing knowledge and preparing for TEE, out of 202

responses, a very negligible response i.e., of 9 learners, which constitutes 4% said no, in comparison to an overwhelming response of 187 positive responses which constitutes 93%. Only 3% of learners did not respond.

**Table – 10: Views on the various aspects of the course material of the programme.**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory	No Answer	Total
Content	27 54%	15 30%	6 12%	1 2%	0 0%	1 2%	50
Language comprehensibility	18 36%	17 34%	8 16%	4 8%	2 4%	1 2%	50
Style of presentation	15 30%	21 42%	12 24%	1 2%	0 0%	1 2%	50
Size and style of fonts	17 34%	22 44%	9 18%	0 0%	0 0%	2 4%	50
Illustrations and examples	16 32%	17 34%	12 24%	3 6%	0 0%	2 4%	50
Quality of printing	17 34%	11 22%	17 34%	3 6%	1 2%	1 2%	50
Quality of the paper	13 26%	13 26%	17 34%	4 8%	1 2%	2 4%	50
Activities in the material	12 24%	13 26%	16 32%	5 10%	0 0%	4 8%	50
Size of the Blocks	16 32%	8 16%	22 44%	3 6%	0 0%	1 2%	50
instructional design	15 30%	10 20%	20 40%	1 2%	0 0%	4 8%	50

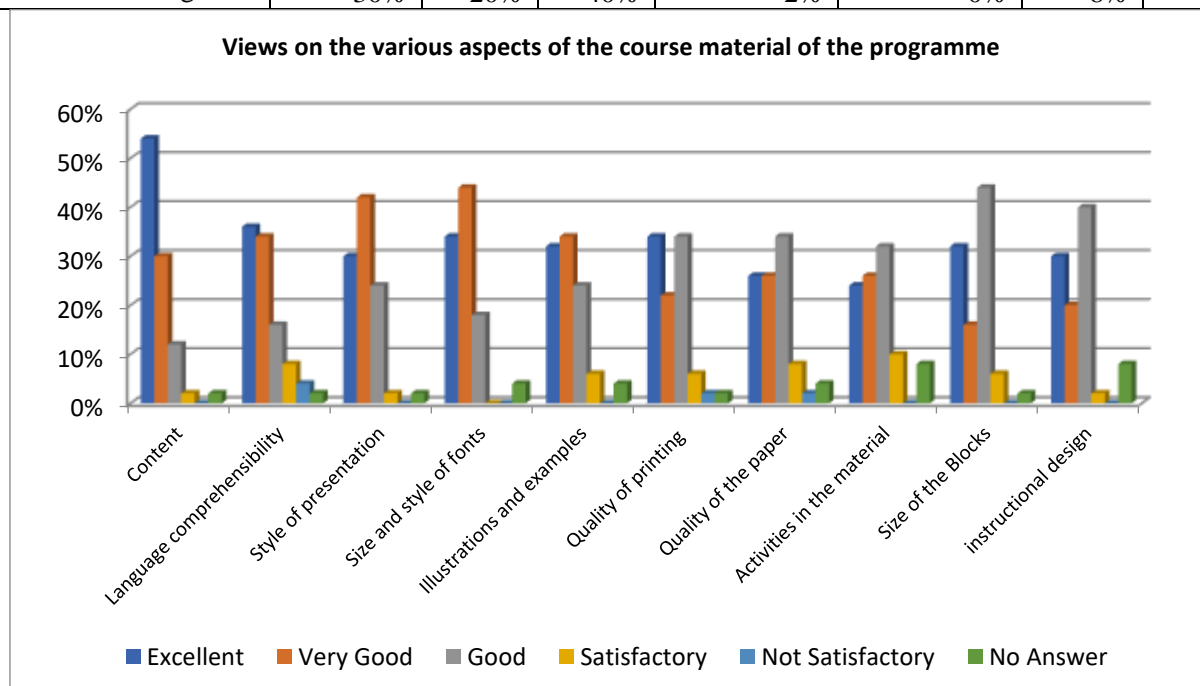
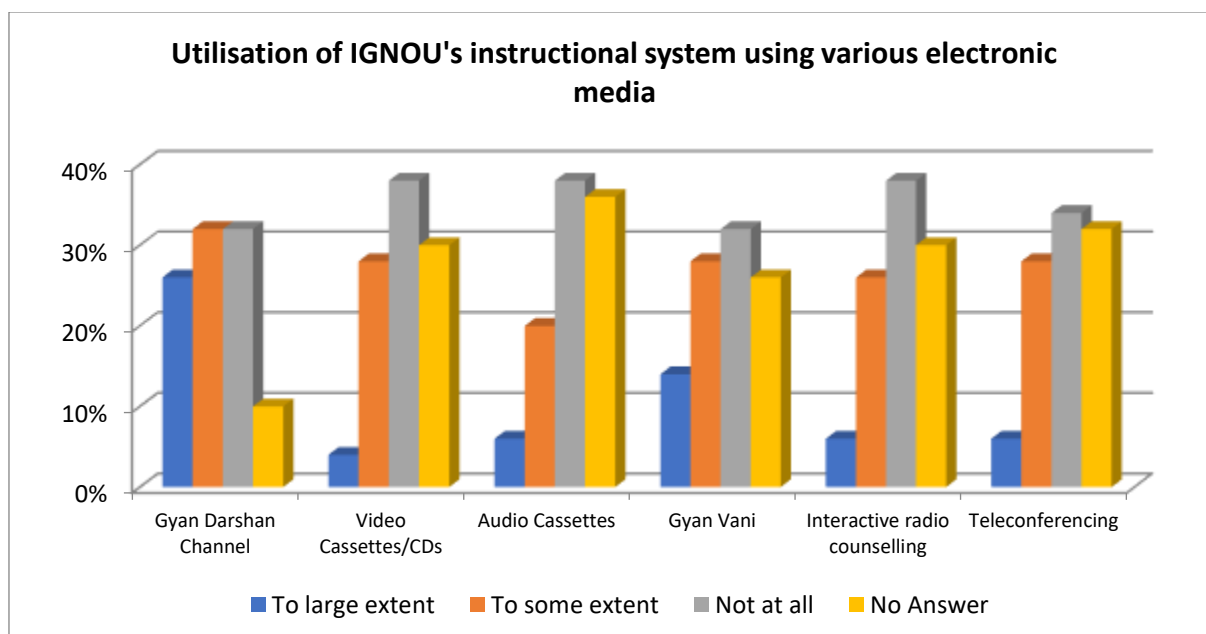


Table-10 indicates the views of the Academic Counsellors on various aspects of the course material. It reveals that the content and language comprehensibility is excellent; style of presentation, the size and style of fonts and illustrations and examples are very good; the quality of printing was excellent, quality of the paper and activities mentioned in the material were good, the size of the blocks and covers of all instructional design are considered to be excellent.

**Table –11: Views on the utilization of various electronic media during counselling sessions.**

	To large extent	To some extent	Not at all	No Answer	Total
Gyan Darshan Channel	13	16	16	5	50
	26%	32%	32%	10%	
Video Cassettes/CDs	2	14	19	15	50
	4%	28%	38%	30%	
Audio Cassettes	3	10	19	18	50
	6%	20%	38%	36%	
Gyan Vani	7	14	16	13	50
	14%	28%	32%	26%	
Interactive radio counselling	3	13	19	15	50
	6%	26%	38%	30%	
Teleconferencing	3	14	17	16	50
	6%	28%	34%	32%	



It is noticed that in table-11: the Academic Counsellors made use of the Gyan darshan Channel (26%), compared to the other media which include video cassettes (4%), Audio Cassettes (6%), Gyan Vani(14%), Interactive radio counseling(6%) and Teleconferencing(3%) for interactive counseling sessions. Gyan darshan channel was used by Counsellors effectively for the advantage of Learners.

**Table: 12. Views on various aspects of the counselling sessions.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided	No Answer	Total
Counselling sessions helped to break the feeling of isolation among students	32	15	0	0	0	3	50
	64%	30%	0%	0%	0%	6%	
Resolving academic problems of students	30	18	0	0	0	2	50
	60%	36%	0%	0%	0%	4%	
Establishing rapport between the teaching faculty and students	26	22	0	0	0	2	50
	52%	44%	0%	0%	0%	4%	
Most of the problems raised by students were personal and non-academic rather than academic	5	14	15	12	1	3	50
	10%	28%	30%	24%	2%	6%	
Spending so much money and resources in organising the counselling sessions is not worth the expenses being spent.	3	5	20	15	4	3	50
	6%	10%	40%	30%	8%	6%	

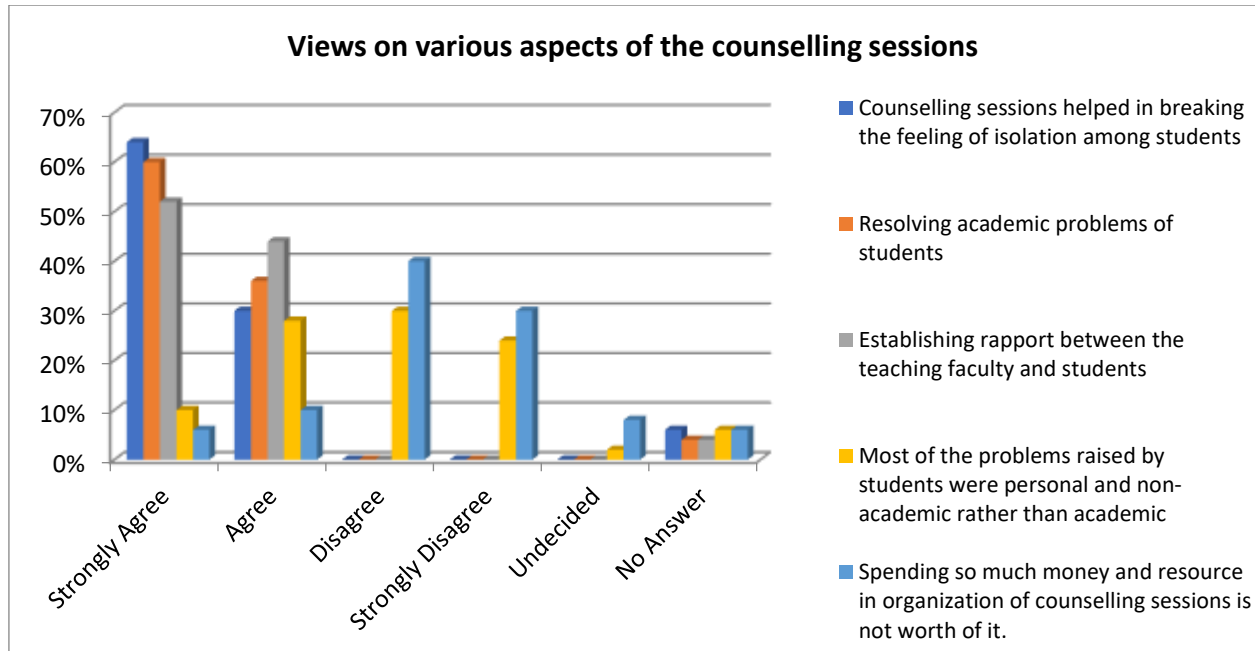


Table-12 indicates the overall view of Academic Counsellors on various aspects of the counselling sessions. Most of them viewed that counselling sessions helped breaking isolation among students. It also helped in resolving academic problems faced by students. Further helped in establishing a rapport with both the students and the Teaching faculty. The problems raised by the students were academic and personal, and so the expenses on conducting the counselling sessions are totally worth the cost.



#### Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion:

This programme evaluation study on MPS was based on Primary data collected from stakeholders i.e., learners, academic counsellors, university/institution, subject experts, peer groups, and Secondary data i.e., Faculty concerned, SRD & SED Division, EMPC, RSD, and Study Centres. The study was limited to collecting the data through the survey questionnaire and face to face discussion method. The total number of learners whose data was available at IGNOU of the duration 2004 to 2014 were 73,847. Out of these, 2000 questionnaires were randomly sent to the Learners while 500 were sent to the Academic Counsellors, of these we received the enthusiastic responses of 202 Learners and 50 Academic Counsellors. Face to face interviews were carried out with 49 learners and 14 academic counsellors. The data collected was then analysed with the help of appropriate statistical techniques.

Some of the major findings resulting from this study are based on the feedback received from the Learners, Academic Counsellors, Programme Study Centres, Subject experts, Regional Centres of IGNOU, which are as follows:

#### Recommendations:

- The quality of counsellors appointed for MPS Programmes at respective Study Centre's needs to be improved.
- Training/counselling sessions should be held for Academic Counsellors at a regular basis.
- The Academic Counsellors names should also be included in the evaluator's list.
- The library facility needs improvement with the availability of more relevant books and journals.
- Feedback on submitted assignments to be sent to the learners without fail.
- Audio-Video Programmes need to be enhanced.

- Hindi language print material needs to be simplified.
- Teleconference sessions to be increased.
- Steps required for improving the participation of learners in the teleconferencing sessions and utilization of Audio-Video programmes.
- The learners requested for more counselling sessions as the present number of sessions were not meeting their requirement.
- The reason was given by most of the learners for not attending the Counseling Sessions owing to the distance of the Study Centre from their home.
- Participation of learners at least 50% attendance in counselling sessions to be made mandatory so as to increase the participation of the learners.
- Support services from administrative and academic needs to be improved.

#### Conclusion:

An overview of the findings of this study reveals that the learners appreciated this programme and found it to be useful in building their careers, acquiring knowledge, writing competitive examinations such as UPSC, State Service Commissions, UGC NET, RRB, SSC etc. The course material is well designed and is of high standards. Some of the stakeholders felt that they got the courage to face interviews confidently by studying the material.

The study also finds interaction with the learners, it was felt that there is a dire need to provide internet facility at the Regional Centres and Study Centres. On interaction with Study Centre Coordinators, it was found out that there is a need to improve the infrastructure and library facilities, and there is also a need to look into the issue of an 'honorarium' of the Coordinators and Academic Counselors. There was a request from the Academic Counsellors to include their name in the Evaluators List. Orientation programme for the academic counsellors and study





center coordinators should be regularly organized so that the delivery of programme can be further enhanced and improved for the future learners of the MPS programme.

There is a need to review the Hindi Language material. There is also a need to disseminate the information in advance about Audio-Video, Teleconference, Interactive Radio Counselling (IRC), Gyan Darshan Programmes through SMS-Alert and creating Google groups and WhatsApp groups etc. One new App called 'Wissler' is taking over the tech-savvy generation as it is widely used for sending notifications. It would definitely prove to be an asset for providing information to the learners. So that the learners do not miss out on these sessions.

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