ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

Volume–X, Issues– II Jan –Feb 2021

# TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS AND ACADEMICS OF INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

**Dr. Pulla Lakshmi* & Dr. G. Mythili****

**Assistant Professor (Senior Scale), STRIDE, IGNOU, New Delhi.*

***Deputy Director, STRIDE, IGNOU, New Delhi*

**Abstract:**

*This paper seeks to identify the training needs of teachers and academics of Indira Gandhi National Open University. This is in tandem with the 'skill-development program', a vision document of the Government of India. This study is aimed at renewing the skill-set of the experienced dispersers of knowledge, namely, the teachers and academics of IGNOU. With regards to the approach adopted to undertake this study, it can be understood as having adhered to making 'democratic ethos', a central component of this research. This was done by involving the participants to the extent of providing them with the platform to suggest the topics and issues for forthcoming training needs programs. Such a study, aimed at providing a list of demand-based training programmes can be beneficial on a number of fronts, to name a few, it will ensure that the participants devote their energy towards a training that caters to introducing/improving the skill-set that is of actual use to them, and also to that of ensuring that the resources of the university are put to proper use. Hence, training needs analysis is essential for the successful running of any university.*

**Key Words:** *Teachers, academics, Open and Distance Learning (ODL), IGNOU, Training Needs Assessment (TNA), capacity building, demand-based.*



## Introduction:

Training is understood as the process that equips a person with the essential knowledge for performing well at a workplace. However, since time immemorial, organizations have a tendency to be preoccupied with the training needs of only the amateurs. Such a practice in the long run can prove to be futile for the organization in the same terms as that of making use of

an obsolete technology despite the presence of innovation and advanced technology. Therefore, an organization should, on the one hand, seek to look into the training needs of not just the amateurs but also those of the neglected group, i.e., the experienced workforce, and on the other hand, there arises a need for the continuous evaluation of the training needs of all, to help keep up with the demands of the present era.

Acknowledging the benefits offered by the potential of the Government of India's 'Skill-Development Programme', a vision document, this paper is an attempt to emphasize the same. The study serves as an inquiry into the required knowledge and skill-set of an employee, aimed at improving their work efficiency and productivity.

The study was undertaken with the belief that a systematic identification of the training requirements of the focused group, namely, 'Teachers and Academics of IGNOU' may help in planning an appropriate, demand-based training programme in the coming years. Training Needs Assessment, is a needs-based research undertaken in a democratic manner that is centered on improving the skill-set of the focused group by involving them in the process to the extent that the participants themselves suggest the arenas on which future training programmes should be centered on.

**Review of Literature:**

The rapid advancement in the sphere of information and communication technology, has contributed to the expansion and advancement of Open and Distance modes of Education. The pandemic has further accelerated the desirability quotient of ODL in terms of ensuring the continuity of learning at the comfort of our homes, amidst the pandemic. These dual indicators render ODL to be as imperative as the conventional forms of education. Given ODL's capacity to disperse knowledge to a bigger pool of students, there arises an immediate requirement for prioritizing the skill development of teachers, academics, administrative and technical staff, and of all those involved in the ODL education system. This points to the opening up of a research avenue pertaining to Open and Distance modes of Learning.

The historical trajectory of research in ODL can be traced back to the 1960s when the British Open University came into existence. However, the research activities in ODL have picked up their momentum only recently.

There exist certain preconceived reservations with regards to the training needs of those

involved in ODL modes of education owing to its unconventional nature. In order to clear the air of misconceptions, Sir John Daniel, former Vice Chancellor of Open University UK, commented as early as in the 1988, stating, 'distance education constitutes those forms of learning and teaching in which there is a much greater use of other forms of communication as opposed to the conventional form based on face-to-face teaching-learning process, however, the process of teaching and learning remains the same (STRIDE, Hand book-1**)**'. To sum up, the only major difference between conventional modes of education and open and distance learning methods, can be found in the ability of the ODL system to rely on self-learning, which is carried out through print-based and technology-based modes of learning. However, this does not in any way point to ditching the role played by a teacher, in the ODL mode.

Some prominent researchers who have contributed to the literature on the vitality and rising need to look into the training needs analysis of those involved in ODL platforms include Pulist (2016), Gaba and Mishra (2015), Clark Dobbins (1998), Ladd (1993), and Santosh and Stuart (2013).

Gaba and Mishra (2015) highlighted the advantages of training programmes in general and that of ODL in particular. They point out that training programmes are vital for improving the job behavior of the employees, and hence adopting strategies that call for continuous evaluation are bound to advance the skills of trainees. Pulist (2016) seconded these claims, and further elaborates on the need to ensure that these training programmes be aimed at reaching specific targets. Ladd observed that involvement of trainees in the planning of training programmes is bound to be beneficial for the participants, and increases the chances for training effectiveness. Santosh and Stuart support Ladd's claim and added that the involvement of trainees in the planning process of training programmes, increases the effectiveness of the programme, with respect to achieving the targets.

Commenting on the distinct needs of the staff involved in ODL modes of learning, Koul (1990) finds that, 'the training needs of the staff involved in ODL are slightly different from that of those involved in conventional forms of teaching. The rapid use of technology and E-learning mediums for the dispersion of knowledge calls for training programmes in the use of multi-media'.

The track-record of IGNOU on conducting training needs programmes fares well with timely

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

Volume–X, Issues– II Jan –Feb 2021

spaced-out induction and orientation programmes, refresher courses, etc., however, these targets only the new recruits. This is perhaps an outcome of the recommendations of Panda, Mishra and Murthy (2006) who gave due attention to the training needs of the newly recruited teachers and academics to provide in-depth knowledge of different components of open and distance learning. Such an approach inadvertently led to the neglect of the experienced staff. The lack of research focusing on the technology driven skill-set requirement of the teachers and academics have left them with no option but to confine themselves to the routine of attending only curriculum design programmes, development of self-learning material, etc., has not helped them keep pace with the demands of the changing times. Perraton and Creed (1999) highlighted the inappropriateness of conducting training programmes that lack fresh perspectives and are but a recourse to performing traditions and rituals for the sake of it. This calls for target specified/demand-based programmes, as they will help eradicate the lethargy and inappropriateness of vaguely themed training programmes. Moreover, Sehrawat (2012) throws light on the detrimental impact caused by the conduct of incorrect training needs programmes.

Biswas (2012) states that "the evaluation of training is a continuous process which traverses through all the activities and processes starting from the design and development of a training programme till its follow up to assess its impact on trainees. Assessment and evaluation of training is a must to motivate the trainees to transfer their learning to the workplace and thus, enhance the effectiveness of the training. The purpose of evaluation of training and development activities is to provide the stakeholders with feedback on i) effectiveness of methods of training and approach for organizing of training programme, ii) level of achievement by the trainees in the light of the achievement by the trainees in the set objectives, and iii) extent of fulfillment of the needs identified by the organization and individual; and its reflection in improved work and behavior".

With regards to the question on the approach one should adopt while planning training programmes for those involved in ODL modes, Lama and Menon (2012) find in their study that open and distance learning as a mode should focus on the development of the skills of their staff in varied modes of communication and interactive technologies. Teachers, academics, administrative and other functionaries should be well versed in the usage of

multimedia technologies. Koul (1998) advocated the familiarization with the tools that are required to carry out teaching-learning processes via multi-media, as they can be useful for not just for the academics, administrative and technical staff, teachers and students, but for practically everyone'.

Rosette (1987) indicates the importance of training needs analysis, and claims that TNA proves to be a powerful tool for checking in on the Human Resource Management index of an organization. Advancing one's skills in this fast paced ever evolving mode of technology is an indication of the advancement of humans as a species and the profession of teaching, with its eternal aim of empowering people and dispensing knowledge should not hesitate from taking advantage of the by-products of human intelligence. (Sharma and Porwal, 2013) claims that the development of higher education is connected to the social and economic development of a nation and ODL serves as a step in the direction of human progress. Needs assessment studies are considered to be very important activity for starting any training programme or academic programme in ODL. Needs assessment study enables a planner to assess the real need of a programme as its determines' who needs the programme, how great the needs are and what might work to meet the need' (Bansal, 2013).

The above-mentioned literature indicates the necessity for training needs analysis of all those involved in ODL modes. Therefore, this study, focuses on identifying those who have never been a part of any training programme. Keeping in mind the findings of Vakola (2006), Sharma and Porwal (2013) and Koul (1998) who agrees on the need to design target-specific training needs programmes, this study, secondly focuses on the identification of the needs of trainees based on the nature of their job.

Clough, (2000), Hjalager & Anderson (2001), Clarke (2003), Koech & Nzulwa (2017) suggest that factors such as age, marital status or education background limit employees from attaining career development, limit lifelong learning opportunities and hinder employee's development. Hence, ensuring that the training programmes are designed keeping in mind the necessity to value work-life balance of the trainees can help reap benefits. This brings us to the third objective of this study, that aims at presenting a suitable time-frame for the training programmes, that is in tandem with the comfort of the participants. This is one of the elements that is usually neglected and holds the potential to impact the training of the participants.

ISSN–2278-5655
AMIERJ
AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL
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Lastly, the literature overwhelmingly calls for the development of skills in the areas associated with the various mediums of technology, as the lack of which can hamper the process of teaching-learning and impact the achievement of the outcomes of these sessions. The review of literature stated above helps derive the objectives of this study.

**Objectives:**

This exploratory study can be understood with the help of the following objectives:

(i) Firstly, it identifies those employees who have never attended any training programme, and enquires about their training needs

(ii) this is followed by identifying the training needs of employees belonging to different categories and the specific skill-set they would like to renew or be introduced to,

(iii) further, it prescribes the preferred duration for future training programmes (which is in accordance with the comfort of the participants and would ensure active participation rather than drain them out);

(iv) moreover, it suggests the arenas that will equip the focused group to keep pace with the demands of the time,

(v) and finally, the ultimate objective that encompasses in itself the above-mentioned objectives, can be understood as that of helping trainers identify the target specific topics for future training programmes.

**Significance of the Study:**

The finding of this study can supplement in designing and developing capacity building activities not just for the employees of IGNOU but also for those working in similar capacities in other ODL institutions.

**Research Method:**

Since the study is aimed at providing a platform to the respondents to outline their interests with regards to the topics for future training programmes, the questionnaire was made to be of a descriptive nature. The questionnaire was drafted on Google forms, to help gather a large pool of participants. The questionnaire consisted of a total of forty-three (43) questions, which were a combination of objective and subjective type questions.

**Population**

The population of the study comprised of university teachers, Academics, and all those

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

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involved in the teaching-learning process of Indira Gandhi National Open University.

**Sample**

The sample consisted of five hundred (500) university teachers, Academics and staff of Regional Centre's of IGNOU.

**Research Instrument**

A self-developed questionnaire consisting of forty-three (43) descriptive questions was formulated on and sent via Google forms. The questionnaire was of a semi-structured nature. The content validation of the questionnaire was carried out by experts in this field.

**Data Collection**

Data collection was carried out through Google form, which was sent to all schools/Divisions/Centre's/ institutes/ units and Regional Centers of IGNOU.The questionnaire was sent to five hundred (500) participants. A total of eighty-four (84) responses were received. Survey based descriptive approach has been adopted.

**Findings and Discussion:**

The data was analyzed using appropriate tools. The figures are shown in frequency and percentage. The training areas selected and contents suggested or proposed by the respondents were analyzed and presented in tabular/graphical form. While analyzing qualitative data, overlapping/ repetition of suggestions were eliminated and the broad training areas/ topics were considered, listed and presented in the paper.

**Profile of Respondents:**

| **Gender** | **Percentage %** | **No.** |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 52.81% | 52 |
| Male | 47.19% | 37 |
| **Grand Total** | **100.00%** | **89** |

While analyzing the profile of the respondents, it was found that out of 89 responses received, the majority of the respondents belonged to the female category, namely, 52 participants were female while the male's participation rate comprised of 37 respondents.

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

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**Table 1 Designation wise distribution of Respondents.**

| Designation | | |
|---|---|---|
| Assistant Director | 4.49% | 4 |
| Assistant Engineer | 1.12% | 1 |
| Assistant Professor | 26.97% | 24 |
| Assistant Professor (SS) | 1.12% | 1 |
| Assistant Regional Director | 26.97% | 24 |
| Assistant Regional Director (Senior Scale) | 7.87% | 7 |
| Associate Professor | 12.36% | 11 |
| Deputy Director | 5.62% | 5 |
| Director i/c | 1.12% | 1 |
| Producer | 3.37% | 3 |
| Professor | 3.37% | 3 |
| Reader | 2.25% | 2 |
| Regional Director | 1.12% | 1 |
| SECTION OFFICER | 1.12% | 1 |
| Sr. Research Officer | 1.12% | 1 |
| **Grand Total** | **100.00%** | **89** |

**Table I:** The designation-wise distribution of the respondents comprised of Assistant Professors accounting for (26.97%), Assistant Regional Directors accounting for (26.97%), and Associate Professors accounting for (12.36%) while others comprised of below 5% participation rate. The overall low participation rate is dismal to note. This calls for steps to be taken in the direction of ensuring a more enthusiastic and active participation from the respondents. This data reflects that employees occupying important designations are not keen on attending training programmes.

**Areas of Training:**

IGNOU being a National Open University has always been striving to keep its employees updated on various innovations and interventions in terms of knowledge, technology, etc. This process begins with the organizing of induction programmes for the freshers. These include Academics, Faculty, Administration, Engineers, etc. Employees including fresher's, seniors

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

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are continuously oriented and updated about emerging trends in ODL system, social issues, emerging laws like Right to Information Act, (RTI), Information Technology Act, (ITA) etc., and with a focus on trends functioning, support services, academic and administration etc.

**Table 2: Open and Distance Learning**

| Theme | Already attended | Face to Face Training | Not required | Training through online | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Induction/ Orientation to Open Distance Learning** | 50.00% | 29.76% | 11.90% | 8.33% | **100.00%** |
| | 42 | 25 | 10 | 7 | **84** |
| **Support services in ODL** | 18.75% | 45.00% | 16.25% | 20.00% | **100.00%** |
| | 15 | 36 | 13 | 16 | **80** |
| **Design and Development of SLM** | 28.75% | 42.50% | 12.50% | 16.25% | **100.00%** |
| | 23 | 34 | 10 | 13 | **80** |
| **Instructional Design in ODL** | 22.78% | 46.84% | 11.39% | 18.99% | **100.00%** |
| | 18 | 37 | 9 | 15 | **79** |
| **Curriculum design in ODL** | 24.69% | 41.98% | 14.81% | 18.52% | **100.00%** |
| | 20 | 34 | 12 | 15 | **81** |
| **Course writing in ODL** | 21.95% | 51.22% | 13.41% | 13.41% | **100.00%** |
| | 18 | 42 | 11 | 11 | **82** |
| **Editing of SLM** | 13.51% | 51.35% | 14.86% | 20.27% | **100.00%** |
| | 10 | 38 | 11 | 15 | **74** |
| **Academic counselling** | 12.16% | 45.95% | 17.57% | 24.32% | **100.00%** |
| | 9 | 34 | 13 | 18 | **74** |
| **Course revision** | 5.06% | 54.43% | 15.19% | 25.32% | **100.00%** |
| | 4 | 43 | 12 | 20 | **79** |
| **Management of ODL** | 2.53% | 60.76% | 10.13% | 26.58% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 48 | 8 | 21 | **79** |
| **Quality Assurance in ODL** | 6.17% | 62.96% | 7.41% | 23.46% | **100.00%** |

ISSN–2278-5655

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | 51 | 6 | 19 | **81** |
| **Assessment in ODL** | 21.25% | 42.50% | 8.75% | 27.50% | **100.00%** |
| | 17 | 34 | 7 | 22 | **80** |

It is evident from the responses of the teachers and academics (Table 2) that, ODL stood in the first place with 50 percent of participants having attended induction/orientation programmes in the ODL mode. About 45% have expressed their desire to attend programmes catering to Support services. With regards to the themes, about 42.50% demand for training programmes on the Theme of Design and Development, 46.84% in Instructional design in ODL, 41.98% in Curriculum design in ODL and 51.35% on course writing in ODL. All these are preferred in the face-to-face mode of training. With regards to the themes of Editing of SLM 51.35%, Academic Counselling 45.95%, and Course Revision 54.43%, the respondents are of the opinion that these too will be beneficial when held in the face-to-face mode. The respondents prefer to have quality assurance programmes in the face-to-face mode with 62.96% people expressing their desire to attend these sessions in the face-to-face mode. Overall, a good response from the respondents that they wish to attend the training programmes. Since, this group is keen to learn SLM, there should be an attempt to make SLM more interactive with graphical representation, keep points to remember and summary etc.

**Table 3: Media**

| **Theme** | **Already attended** | **Face to Face Training** | **Not require** | **Training through online** | **Grand Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Media in ODL** | 9.76% | 56.10% | 6.10% | 28.05% | **100.00%** |
| | 8 | 46 | 5 | 23 | **82** |
| **Design and development of Audio/Video programme** | 14 | 51 | 9 | 11 | **85** |
| | 14 | 51 | 9 | 11 | **85** |
| **Quality Assurance in Audio/Video** | 8.54% | 63.41% | 8.54% | 19.51% | **100.00%** |
| | 7 | 52 | 7 | 16 | **82** |

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

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Media has no boundaries in broadcasting, expressing opinion, etc., but it should be self-restricted and within limits. Out of the themes referred in table 3, preference of respondents in training through the online mode in Media in ODL has been expressed by 28.05 percent and quality assurance in audio/video with 19.51 in comparison to Design and Development of Audio/ Video programmes. In all the themes, the majority preferred of attending face to face training and the Percentage of already attended in all the themes are very low i.e., between 8.54% to 9.76%.

**Table 4: E-Learning**

| Theme | Already attended | Face to Face Training | Not required | Training through online | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Design and development of online programme** | 2.41% | 74.70% | 4.82% | 18.07% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 62 | 4 | 15 | **83** |
| **E-content development** | 4.65% | 66.28% | 4.65% | 24.42% | **100.00%** |
| | 4 | 57 | 4 | 21 | **86** |
| **Delivery of online course through LMS** | 4.76% | 69.05% | 5.95% | 20.24% | 0.00% |
| | 4 | 58 | 5 | 17 | |
| **Emerging trends in ICT** | 5.81% | 72.09% | 2.33% | 19.77% | **100.00%** |
| | 5 | 62 | 2 | 17 | **86** |
| **Student support services using social media** | 3.80% | 54.43% | 6.33% | 35.44% | **100.00%** |
| | 3 | 43 | 5 | 28 | **79** |
| **Design and development of MOOCs** | 3.53% | 75.29% | 3.53% | 17.65% | **100.00%** |
| | 3 | 64 | 3 | 15 | **85** |
| **MOOC platform** | 2.41% | 68.67% | 2.41% | 26.51% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 57 | 2 | 22 | **83** |
| **Quality Assurance in online programme** | 1.23% | 66.67% | 4.94% | 27.16% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 54 | 4 | 22 | **81** |
| | 2.53% | 67.09% | 10.13% | 20.25% | **100.00%** |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Design and development of learning activities** | 2 | 53 | 8 | 16 | **79** |
| **Personalized/Adaptive learning** | | 66.67% | 8.64% | 24.69% | 100.00% |
| | | 54 | 7 | 20 | 81 |
| **Learning analytics** | | 67.47% | 9.64% | 22.89% | **100.00%** |
| | | 56 | 8 | 19 | **83** |
| **Learning strategies (collaborative learning, problem solving, scenario-based learning, case study-based learning)** | 2.53% | 62.03% | 12.66% | 22.78% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 49 | 10 | 18 | **79** |
| **Virtual lab** | 1.23% | 61.73% | 8.64% | 28.40% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 50 | 7 | 23 | **81** |
| **Innovative teaching methodologies** | 1.19% | 69.05% | 5.95% | 23.81% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 58 | 5 | 20 | **84** |
| **Open Educational Resources (OER)** | 8.33% | 52.38% | 8.33% | 30.95% | **100.00%** |
| | 7 | 44 | 7 | 26 | **84** |

If we analyze areas mentioned in table 4, the highest-number of respondents prefer for face-to-face training for sessions on E-Learning. (ranging between 52% to 75% compared to those who prefer online mode of training.) The participants have requested for training programmes centered on the themes mentioned in table 4, these include ‘Design and Development of online programme’, ‘Emerging trends in ICT’, ‘Design and Development of MOOCs’ and the lowest percentage (52%) requested for training in ‘Open Educational Resources’ (OER). The dismal figure of below 6% in the category of ‘those who have already attended training programmes in the themes mentioned in E-learning (Table.4) calls for the need to increase the respondents’ rate in E-learning. About 2-12.66 percent of respondents are of the opinion that they do not require training in any of the themes mentioned above.

A good number of respondents ranging between 15-35 percentage call for training through online mode. The overall analysis of Table no.4 indicates that the participants are inclined

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

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more towards face-to-face training as compared to training through online. In the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic, face to face training is not advisable, though it has several advantages than training through online. Since, special times call for special measures, hence, there is a need to keep up with the covid protocols. Therefore, online training is preferable, but it is the duty of the training institution to ensure that no interceptions arise during the training. There is a need to deal with connectivity/ network issues.

**Table 5: Programme Evaluation**

| Theme | Already attended | Face to Face Training | Not required | Training through online | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Course/Programme Evaluation** | 10.00% | 57.50% | 10.00% | 22.50% | **100.00%** |
| | 8 | 46 | 8 | 18 | **80** |
| **Feedback, Assessment and Evaluation** | 12.35% | 53.09% | 8.64% | 25.93% | **100.00%** |
| | 10 | 43 | 7 | 21 | **81** |
| **Online Assessment and Evaluation** | 1.22% | 59.76% | 8.54% | 30.49% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 49 | 7 | 25 | **82** |

A good number of respondents have shown interest in attending training programmes centered on all the themes referred in Programme Evaluation (T.5) through face-to-face training followed by training through the online mode. The highest percentage in the category of already attended in the themes referred in programme evaluation was in course/programme evaluation (10%) next to feedback, assessment and evaluation (12.35%). The lowest in the category of already attended in the themes in online assessment and evaluation, and not-required ranging between 8-10 percent. Findings showed that they were extremely interested in getting exposure to specialized themes.

ISSN–2278-5655

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**Table 6: Research themes for Training**

| Theme | Already attended | Face to Face Training | Not require | Training through online | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Design and development of research proposal** | 13.25% | 55.42% | 15.66% | 15.66% | **100.00%** |
| | 11 | 46 | 13 | 13 | **83** |
| **Research methodology in ODL** | 7.23% | 62.65% | 10.84% | 19.28% | **100.00%** |
| | 6 | 52 | 9 | 16 | **83** |
| **Quantitative and qualitative data analysis for research** | 4.88% | 69.51% | 8.54% | 17.07% | **100.00%** |
| | 4 | 57 | 7 | 14 | **82** |
| **Report Writing** | 4.82% | 56.63% | 14.46% | 24.10% | **100.00%** |
| | 4 | 47 | 12 | 20 | **83** |

The themes mentioned in research (Table 6), 69.51 percent of respondents, preferred face to face training on the theme of 'quantitative and qualitative data analysis to research'. 24 percent requested for report writing sessions through the online mode. All the themes referred in table 6 are important and they are interlinked in completing higher studies. Face to face training is more useful to a scholar/learner to clear his/her doubts, ambiguity etc. In case any doubts arise, the teacher/guide in the programmes should be contacted instantly. There is a need for Learner's modules/ handbooks/ easy to remember points booklets, etc.

**Table 7: Computer awareness**

| Theme | Already attended | Face to Face Training | Not require | Training through online | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Office automation system (ODLSoft)** | 2.41% | 55.42% | 19.28% | 22.89% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 46 | 16 | 19 | **83** |
| **Interactive PPTs** | 5.95% | 59.52% | 11.90% | 22.62% | **100.00%** |

ISSN–2278-5655

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5 | 50 | 10 | 19 | **84** |
| **Database** | 2.50% | 56.25% | 13.75% | 27.50% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 45 | 11 | 22 | **80** |
| **Advance Word Processing** | 2.44% | 54.88% | 19.51% | 23.17% | **100.00%** |
| | 2 | 45 | 16 | 19 | **82** |
| **Spreadsheet** | 1.23% | 53.09% | 23.46% | 22.22% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 43 | 19 | 18 | **81** |

Analysis of Table 7. reveals that respondents prefer face to face training in all the themes with a preference ranging between 53-59 percent-and between 22-27 in training through online. A good number of participants have shown interest in attending training in all areas referred in table 7. Computer proficiency is necessary to those who are serving in IGNOU because IGNOU adopted ODL software for office automation, online course, etc. COVID-19 pandemic forced the world/ public to move towards computer awareness/ acquiring more knowledge, and use of it. However, at the same time, cyber frauds/ crimes have also increased, so public, institutions should be more cautious with computer operations so as to be safe from misuse/frauds by others.

**Table 8: Other Areas for Training**

| **Theme** | **Already attended** | **Face to Face Training** | **Not require** | **Training through online** | **Grand Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender sensitization** | 3.90% | 41.56% | 25.97% | 28.57% | **100.00%** |
| | 3 | 32 | 20 | 22 | **77** |
| **Stress management** | 1.22% | 63.41% | 9.76% | 25.61% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 52 | 8 | 21 | **82** |
| **Ethics and value** | 1.23% | 56.79% | 13.58% | 28.40% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 46 | 11 | 23 | **81** |
| **Team building and leadership in workplace** | 1.18% | 67.06% | 11.76% | 20.00% | **100.00%** |
| | 1 | 57 | 10 | 17 | **85** |

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

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Table 8 reveals, that 67.06 percent, respondents are interested in face-to-face training in team-building and leadership at work place, whereas around 28 percent are interested in online training in the themes of gender sensitization and ethics and value respectively. Participants who opted for 'training not required' for the themes referred in T.8 range between 9-25 percent with a higher preference in gender sensitization and the lowest in stress management. In the category of already attended, except gender sensitization (3.90%), other themes account for around one percent. Overall analyses reveal that proper and systematic training is necessary for awareness of laws, rights and duties towards other, to maintain peace and decorum in the work place. It is not out of place to mention that in the prevalence of atrocities against females, compulsory training is suggested on the laws which are aimed to protect females. Such as the sexual harassment of women at workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressed) Act, 2013, Indian Divorce Act, 1869, Matrimonial cases Act, Domestic Violence Act, 2005, CCL Rules etc.

**Duration**

With regard to the preferred duration of a training needs programme, the majority of respondents expressed the desire to attend these programmes on a virtual medium, namely, through e-learning, Multi-media learning strategies, Design and Development of MOOCs, Emerging trends in ICT, OER and programme evaluation etc. STRIDE conducts capacity building activities for human resource development i.e., refresher courses, induction programmes, workshops and training programmes. Duration of these programmes should range between 01 day to 21 days. This is one of the objectives of the present study, to ascertain the number of days preferable for any training programme designed on any specific theme. The correct amount of duration has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the training programme. A training programme of longer duration may prove to be unproductive at times. Teachers and Academics wanted that the training programme to be of 5-10 days (UGC rules) and the duration of training should be decided keeping in view the topics covered in the training programme.

**Conclusion:**

It is no doubt that the growth of Distance Education has been exponential over the last four decades in the country, beginning with the establishment of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open

University, Hyderabad in 1982 and Indira Gandhi National Open University in 1985 in New Delhi, India. IGNOU is in the line of promoting 'skill-development programme' of the Government of India. The respondents of this survey questionnaire have responded freely and without any hesitation. The inputs provided by them might be of great help for the training planners, designers and capacity building professionals not only for those of IGNOU but also for those of other open universities. On the basis of the findings, the following are recommended:

- The themes referred in the training programmes are to be continued in all.
- Training programme is required to protect not only the institution but also for the individuals from cyber frauds/crimes.
- Training programme is required on welfare laws/new enactments so as to familiarize and get benefit of it by the IGNOU staff.
- Training programme is required on the enactment of Public Premises (Eviction and Unauthorized Occupants) Act 1971 so as to prevent the misuse of IGNOU quarters, etc.
- Training on time management is required.
- The preferred duration for training programme was found to be between 1 to 5 days and 21 days. The majority of the participants have found training sessions of less lengths to be more comfortable;
- In order to ensure participation in training programmes, employees of IGNOU should be asked to attend at least one training programme on a bi-annual basis; so as to ensure capability enhancement of all employees;
- Although, face to face training programmes have been found to be the most helpful, yet, considering the constrains posed by the pandemic, virtual training programmes can be used as a viable alternative. The pandemic has contributed to the likeness of training programmes /sessions held virtually to be as useful as those following conventional modes.
- Staff working at regional centers are requested to be nominated frequently for training programmes at the headquarters or outside, however, virtual mode appears to have solved this problem.

ISSN–2278-5655

AMIERJ

AARHAT MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL

Volume–X, Issues– II Jan –Feb 2021

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