

# Programme Evaluation under Open and Distance Learning: An Evaluation of MCA Programme offered by IGNOU

Anil Kumar Misra\*

IGNOU Regional Centre, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India; anilkumarmishra@ignou.ac.in

## Abstract

Programme evaluation is very essential in open and distance learning to know the strengths and weaknesses of a particular programme. It is carried out to guide decision makers, Programme Coordinators and other stake holders with an overall objective to improve the student support services offered to learners. The present study undertakes to evaluate the MCA programme offered by IGNOU with the existing programme structure since 2005. Sincere efforts will be made to critically evaluate the objectives of MCA programme, various parameters of Self Learning Material supplied to the learners, counseling sessions (Theory/Practical) organized, various aspects of assignments, preparation of project report, Term End Examination etc. The findings of the above study will provide an insight to the higher authorities for making appropriate changes in the programme structure to suit the present day requirements.

**Keywords:** Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Master of Computer Applications (MCA), Open and Distance Learning (ODL), Self- Learning Material (SLM)

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## 1. Introduction

Indira Gandhi National Open University had launched Master of Computer Applications (MCA) in 1994. The above programme was revised in year 2005. The objectives of the MCA programme is to prepare graduate students for the software industry as well as academia by providing a rich learning environment for teaching and research in the core and emerging areas of the discipline. The programmes thrust is on giving the students a thorough and sound background in theoretical and application oriented courses relevant to the latest computer software development. The emphasis of this programme is on the application of software technology to solve mathematical, computing, communications/networking and commercial problems. A rigorous training enables learners to make a career in the software industry in india as well as abroad. The programme structure of the MCA programme are as follows:

A learner has to complete all the courses for successful completion of MCA programme.

## 2. Literature Review

Programme evaluation is a systematic way of gathering, analyzing and utilizing information to answer basic questions about projects, policies and programmes. Methodologies included cross sectional surveys and review of literature to gather data.

Evaluation in open and distance learning is undertaken to guide decision makers programme leaders, programme coordinators with an overall objective to improve service delivery and client satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

Programme evaluation is defined as “a process used to determine whether the design and delivery of a programme were effective and whether the proposed outcomes were met”<sup>1</sup>. While programme evaluation first focuses around this definition, important considerations often include how much the programme costs per participant, how the programme could be improved, whether the programme is worthwhile, whether there are better alternatives, if there are whitened outcomes, and whether the programme goals are appropriate and useful.<sup>2</sup>

Evaluation is one of the critical steps in the process of performance improvement. Evaluation feeds evidence based information back to the next cycle of performance improvement. However, organizations often neglect to conduct comprehensive evaluations on their programmes due to environmental barriers or the lack of practitioners’ evaluation expertise.<sup>4</sup>

Pradhan (2006)<sup>5</sup> described some of the components of a programme evaluation activity. Distance and Open Learning programmes are designed for learners. They should be learner centred and should be continually evaluated to improve the quality of the graduate. Programmes must be evaluated to decide if the programmes are actually useful to the learners and whether they are achieving their stated objectives.

**Table 1.** IGNOU MCA Program Structure

Course Code	Title of the Course	Credits
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>		
MCS-011	Problem Solving and Programming	3
MCS-012	Computer Organization and Assembly Language Programming	4
MCS-013	Discrete Mathematics	2
MCS-014	Systems Analysis and Design	3
MCS-015	Communication Skills	2
MCSL-016	Internet Concepts and Web Design	2
MCSL-017	C and Assembly Language Programming Lab	2
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>		
MCS-021	Data and File Structures and Programming	4
MCS-022	Operating System Concepts and Networking Management	4
MCS-023	Introduction to Database Management Systems	3
MCS-024	Object Oriented Technologies and Java Programming	3
MCSL-025	Lab (based on MCS-021, 022, 023 and 024)	4
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Semester</b>		
MCS-031	Design and Analysis of Algorithms	4
MCS-032	Object Oriented Analysis and Design	3
MCS-033	Advanced Discrete Mathematics	2
MCS-034	Software Engineering	3
MCS-035	Accountancy and Financial Management	3
MCSL-036	Lab (based on MCS-032, 034 and 035)	3
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>		
MCS-041	Operating Systems	4
MCS-042	Data Communication and Computer Networks	4
MCS-043	Advanced Database Mathematics Management Systems	4
MCS-044	Mini Project	4
MCSL-045	Lab (UNIX and Oracle)	2
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>		
MCS-051	Advanced Internet Technologies	3
MCS-052	Principles of Management and Information systems	2
MCS-053	Computer Graphics and Multimedia	4
MCSL-054	Lab (based on MCS-051 and 053)	2
MCSE-003	Artificial Intelligence and Knowledge Management	3
MCSE-004	Numerical and Statistical Computing	3
MCSE-011	Parallel Computing	3
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Semester</b>		
MCSP-060	Project	16

The main purpose of programme evaluation can be to “determine the quality of a programme by formulating a judgment”<sup>6</sup>

Programme or course evaluation is an important tool used by ODL systems to access and improve the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning involved<sup>7,8</sup>.

Rekkeda, t. (1998)<sup>9</sup> has given many reason as to why evaluation and other measures to control and improve quality have been so important and have been taken seriously by distance education institutions.

### 3. Objectives

The objectives of present study are:

- To evaluate the objectives of MCA programme.
- To examine the effectiveness of Self Learning Material provided to the learners.
- To assess the effectiveness of counseling sessions organised at various Study/Programme Study Centres.
- To study the impact of assignments on overall success of learners.
- To evaluate the usefulness of Project Work done by learners in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester of their study.
- To examine the examination system of IGNOU.
- To discuss the views of Academic Counsellors on the various aspects of MCA programme.

#### 3.1 Sample Size

The sample size of present study is one hundred and ninety four (194).

#### 3.2 Limitation

The above study is limited to learners of MCA programme admitted in IGNOU programme study centres located at Allahabad,

Lucknow, Kanpur, Sultanpur, Gorakhpur and Jhansi districts of Uttar Pradesh.

### 4. Methodology of Study

A well structured questionnaire had been prepared and used for getting feedback from the learners on various aspects of MCA programme. The questionnaire was administered to one thousand two hundred and seventy four (1274) learners for seeking learner's opinion on wide range of issues ranging from general profile of learners, objectives of MCA programme, self learning material supplied to learners, counseling sessions (theory/practical) organized, preparation & evaluation of assignments, preparation of project report and Term End Examination. A total of one hundred and ninety four (194) learners responded to the questionnaire which is 15.23% of total learners.

The data was classified, tabulated and processed with the help of computer packages. The processed data is presented in the form of tables. Both qualitative and quantitative technique had been used for analysis and interpretation.

The number of learners admitted in MCA programme from 2010 to 2014 under Lucknow region are given in table-02.

**Table 2.** Enrollment in MCA Programme

S. No.	Year	No. of Learners admitted								
		Male	Female	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Employed	Unemployed	Total
1.	2010	203	97	<b>300</b>	53	247	<b>300</b>	35	265	<b>300</b>
2.	2011	180	107	<b>287</b>	65	222	<b>287</b>	30	257	<b>287</b>
3.	2012	171	88	<b>259</b>	53	206	<b>259</b>	05	254	<b>259</b>
4.	2013	123	102	<b>225</b>	42	183	<b>225</b>	02	223	<b>225</b>
5.	2014	115	87	<b>202</b>	31	171	<b>202</b>	17	185	<b>202</b>

The above table reflects that MCA programme of IGNOU is popular both among male and female. The learners taking admission in MCA programme belongs both to rural and urban. However the inclination of urban learners are more towards IGNOU's MCA programme than rural learners. The rural learners are less inclined towards MCA programme as medium of instruction is English and they have done 10+2/graduation from Hindi Medium. The learners who have taken admission in Jan, 2014 had appeared in the viva-voce examination in the month of Nov, 2016 and final examination of 6<sup>th</sup> semester in Dec, 2016.

The general profile of learners who have responded our questionnaire are given in table-03 below:

The analysis of above table reveals that 70.10% male, 29.90% female, 37.11% residing in rural areas, 62.89% residing in urban areas, 34.02% employed and 65.98% unemployed learners had responded to our questionnaire. The above response fully tally with their proportion in enrollment as shown in table-02. This clearly reflects that learners of all category, territory and employment status have participated in answering our questionnaire.

Table-04 below shows the learners views on the objectives of MCA programme.

**Table 3.** General Profile of Learners

S. No.	Main Parameter	Sub Parameter	Male	Female	Total
1.	Category	General	109 (66.87)	54 (33.13)	163 (84.02)
		OBC	26 (89.66)	03 (10.34)	29 (14.95)
		SC	01 (50)	01 (50)	02 (1.03)
		ST	0	0	0 (0)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>136 (70.10)</b>	<b>58 (29.90)</b>	<b>194 (100)</b>
2.	Territory Status	Rural	52 (72.22)	20 (27.78)	72 (37.11)
		Urban	84 (68.85)	38 (31.15)	122 (62.89)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>194 (100)</b>
3.	Employment Status	Employed	51 (77.27)	15 (22.73)	66 (34.02)
		Unemployed	85 (66.41)	43 (33.59)	128 (65.98)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>194 (100)</b>

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

**Table 4.** Learners Views on the objectives of MCA Programme

S. No.	Objectives	Learners Views						Total	Mean Opinion Score
		Strongly Agree (05)	Agree (04)	Undecided (03)	Disagree (02)	Strongly Disagree (01)			
1.	It has helped me to get thorough and sound background in theoretical and application oriented courses relevant to the latest computer software development.	98 (50.52)	84 (43.30)	08 (4.12)	03 (1.55)	01 (.51)	194 (100)	4.42	
		$\text{Mean Opinion Score} = \left\{ \frac{98 \times 5 + 84 \times 4 + 8 \times 3 + 3 \times 2 + 1 \times 1}{194} \right\} = 4.42$							
2.	It has prepared me for the software industry as well as academia by providing a rich learning environment for the teaching & research in the core and emerging areas of discipline.	81 (41.75)	87 (44.85)	16 (8.25)	10 (5.15)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.23	
3.	It has equipped me with the application of software technology to solve mathematical, computing, communications/ networking and commercial problems.	75 (38.66)	89 (45.88)	14 (7.22)	12 (6.18)	04 (2.06)	194 (100)	4.13	
4.	It has enabled me for a rigorous training to make a carrier in the software industry in India as well as abroad.	94 (48.45)	81 (41.76)	08 (4.12)	09 (4.64)	02 (1.03)	194 (100)	4.31	
5.	It has also sensitized me to choose computer science as my career.	78 (40.21)	94 (48.45)	09 (4.64)	13 (6.70)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.22	
Overall mean opinion score =		$\left\{ \frac{4.42 + 4.23 + 4.13 + 4.31 + 4.22}{5} \right\} = 4.26$							

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

The objectives of starting MCA programme are given in column-2 of table-04. The learners views were taken on these objectives on a five point rating scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with respective weightage of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively to find out the extent these objectives are being fulfilled by the various courses of the MCA programme.

Around ninety four percent (94%) learners are of the opinion that MCA programme has helped them to get thorough and sound background in the theoretical and practical oriented courses relevant to the latest computer software development courses. Only two percent (02%) learners have shown disagreement and four percent (04%) learners could not say anything about above objective.

More than eighty six percent (86%) learners are of the view that MCA programme has prepared them for the software industry as well as for various academic positions. Five percent (05%) learners do not agree with this and eight percent (08%) learners have not said anything about above objective.

Around eighty five percent (85%) learners felt that pursuance of MCA programme has equipped them with the application of software technology to solve mathematical, computing, communications/networking and commercial problems. Eight percent (08%) learners disagree with this and seven percent (07%) learners were undecided on above objective.

Ninety percent (90%) learners are of the opinion that MCA programme have enabled them for a rigorous training to make a career in the software industry in India as well as abroad. Six percent (06%) learners have shown disagreement on this and four percent (04%) could not say anything on above objective.

Eighty nine percent (89%) learners have expressed that pursuance of MCA programme has sensitized them to choose computer science as their career. Thirteen percent (13%) learners do not agree with this and nine percent (09%) learners were neutral on this issue.

It had also observed that response of learners on various objectives of MCA programme were almost same irrespective of whether they are male or female. The residential background (Rural/Urban) and employment status (Employed/Unemployed) also could not change the response of the learners i.e. MCA programme has achieved the objectives of launching it.

The mean opinion score of learners on objectives of MCA programme varies from 4.13 to 4.42 with overall mean opinion score of 4.26 which falls in the category of "Agree". This shows that the learners are of the view that they have been benefitted to large extent by pursuing MCA programme. The success score of MCA programme in meeting its objectives are quiet high.

Table – 5 below shows the learners views on the various aspects of Self Learning Material.

The learners views were taken on all the aspects of SLM mentioned in column-2 of table-05 on a five point rating scale of Excellent, Very Good, Good, Average and Poor with weightage of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Self Learning Material is one of the most important components of instructional system in Open and Distance learning. It is therefore essential to judge the quality of SLM by taking the learners view on its various aspects. Thirty percent (30%) learners have rated content of SLM as excellent followed by thirty one percent (31%) as very good, thirty two percent (32%) as good and six percent (06%) as average. No learner has rated content of SLM as poor. This shows that more than ninety percent (90%) learners are of the view that content of SLM supplied to them falls in the category of good to excellent.

Thirty two percent (32%) learners have rated the density of SLM as excellent, next thirty two (32%) percent as very good and thirty (30%) as good. Around six (6%) percent learners have rated density of SLM as average and no learner rated as poor. This shows that more than ninety four (94%) percent learners believed that density of SLM is good and above.

**Table 5.** Learners Views on the various aspects of Self Learning Material

S. No.	Aspects	Learners Views					Total	Mean Opinion Score
		Excellent (05)	Very Good (04)	Good (03)	Average (02)	Poor (01)		
1.	Content	59 (30.41)	60 (30.93)	63 (32.47)	12 (6.19)	0 (0)	194 (100)	3.86
2.	Density	62 (31.96)	63 (32.47)	58 (29.30)	11 (5.67)	0 (0)	194 (100)	3.91
3.	Style	54 (27.84)	59 (30.41)	62 (31.96)	18 (9.28)	01 (.51)	194 (100)	3.76
4.	Language	25 (12.89)	67 (34.54)	90 (46.39)	10 (5.15)	02 (1.03)	194 (100)	3.53
5.	Practical Aspects	63 (32.47)	58 (29.90)	62 (31.96)	10 (5.15)	01 (.52)	194 (100)	3.89
6.	Adequacy	65 (33.51)	61 (31.44)	60 (30.93)	08 (4.12)	0 (0)	194 (100)	3.94
7.	Structure	68 (35.05)	62 (31.96)	52 (26.80)	12 (6.19)	0 (0)	194 (100)	3.96
Overall mean opinion score =		$\left\{ \frac{3.86 + 3.91 + 3.76 + 3.53 + 3.89 + 3.94}{6} \right\} = 3.82$						

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

Around twenty eight (28) percent learners have mentioned style of writing SLM as Excellent, thirty percent (30%) as “Very Good”, thirty two percent (32%) as “Good” and nine percent (9%) as “Average”. One learner has rated style of writing SLM as poor. This reflects that more than ninety percent (90%) learners are satisfied with the style of writing SLM.

Only thirteen percent (13%) learners have indicated language of SLM as Excellent, thirty four percent (34%) as Very Good, forty six percent (46%) as Good, five percent (5%) as Average and one percent (1%) as poor. This reflects that more than ninety three percent (93%) learners have indicated language of SLM varying from “Good” to “Excellent”. The percentage of learners rating language of SLM as excellent is only thirteen percent (13%) which is quiet less as compared to rating of content (30%), density (32%) and style (28%).

Around thirty two percent (32%) learners have rated practical aspects of SLM as Excellent as well as Good followed by thirty percent (30%) as “Very Good”, five percent (5%) as average and one learner as poor. This indicates that more than ninety four percent (94%) learners are satisfied with the practical aspects incorporated in the SLM.

Approximately thirty three percent (33%) learners indicated adequacy of SLM as Excellent, thirty one percent (31%) as Very Good and Good followed by four percent (4%) as Average. No learner has indicated adequacy of SLM as poor. This reflects that more than ninety five percent (95%) learners agree that SLM of MCA programme is adequate.

Around thirty five percent (35%) learners have indicated structure of SLM as excellent, thirty two percent (32%) as Very

Good, Twenty seven percent (27%) as Good and six percent (6%) as Average. No learner has indicated structure of SLM as poor. It is clear from the above that more than ninety four percent (94%) Learners are satisfied with the structure of SLM.

The mean opinion score on various aspects of SLM varies from 3.53 to 3.96 with over all mean opinion score of 3.82. All these mean opinion scores falls in the range of 3.50 to 4.49 which indicates that learners have rated content, density, style, language, practical aspects, adequacy and structure of SLM as “Very Good”. Thus from the learner’s point of view Self Learning Material is upto the Mark in meeting the objectives of MCA programme.

The Learners views on various aspects of counseling sessions are given in table-06 below:-

Counselling sessions for theory /practical courses are organised at IGNOU Study/Programme Study centres. The counselling sessions are necessary to sort out learner problems as well as to provide practical exposure. Theory counselling sessions are not compulsory whereas seventy percent (70%) attendance in practical counselling sessions are required to appear in term end practical examination.

Around ninety four percent (94%) learners have received SLM before start of counselling sessions and four percent (04%) do not agree with this. Two percent (2%) learners were undecided on this issue. The effort of IGNOU to provide SLM to learners before start of counselling sessions is really appreciated. One can not sort out his/her problem in counselling sessions without studying the SLM.

Approximately fifty four percent (54%) learners agreed that counselling sessions were scheduled as per their requirement/

**Table 6.** Learners Views on Organization of counseling sessions (Theory/Practical)

S. No.	Parameter	Learners Views					Total	Mean Opinion Score
		Strongly Agree (05)	Agree (04)	Undecided (03)	Disagree (02)	Strongly Disagree (01)		
1.	Self Learning Material has been received before start of counselling sessions	82 (42.27)	101 (52.06)	04 (2.06)	07 (3.61)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.33
2.	Counselling sessions were scheduled as per the learners requirement/convenience	10 (5.15)	95 (48.97)	24 (12.38)	55 (28.35)	10 (5.15)	194 (100)	3.21
3.	No. of counselling sessions organized as per norms were sufficient for completion of MCA programme in Minimum duration	42 (21.65)	96 (49.48)	34 (17.53)	20 (10.31)	02 (1.03)	194 (100)	3.80
4.	The counselling sessions organized were effective, encouraging, and motivating	80 (41.24)	98 (50.52)	12 (6.18)	04 (2.06)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.31
5.	Knowledge of Academic counsellors were adequate	61 (31.44)	105 (54.13)	22 (11.34)	06 (3.09)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.14
6.	Overall presentation of Academic counsellors were upto the mark	48 (24.74)	108 (55.67)	26 (13.40)	11 (5.67)	01 (0.52)	194 (100)	3.92
Overall mean opinion score		= $\left\{ \frac{3.80+4.31+4.14+3.92+3.21+4.33}{6} \right\}$						<b>3.95</b>

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

convenience where as thirty four percent (34%) did not agree with this. Twelve percent (12%) learners were undecided on this issue. This reflects that around one third of the learners who have responded the questionnaire are not satisfied with the scheduling of counselling sessions.

Around seventy one percent (71%) learners are of the view that no. of counselling sessions organised as per norms of IGNOU are sufficient for completing the MCA programme in minimum duration whereas eleven percent (11%) learners had disagreement on this issue. This shows that more than two third learner are satisfied with the no. of counselling sessions organised.

Around ninety two percent (92%) learners agreed that counselling sessions organised were effective encouraging, communicative and motivating whereas two percent (2%) learners did not agree with this. Six percent (6%) learners were undecided on this aspect. Effective organization of counselling sessions had positive impact on the overall success of the learners.

Approximately eighty six percent (86%) learners are of the opinion that knowledge of academic counselors were adequate whereas three percent (3%) learners had disagreement on this issue. The academic counselors having good knowledge of subject matter will definitely sort out the learners problems in a systematic way.

Around eighty percent (80%) learners are of the view that presentation of the academic counsellors were upto the mark where as six percent (06%) learners did not agree with this statement. The fourteen (14%) learners were undecided on this issue. Effective organization of counselling sessions enhances the over-

all charm of the counselling sessions. The mean opinion score on various issues of counselling sessions varies from 3.21 to 4.33 with overall mean opinion score of 3.95 which falls in the range of 3.50 to 4.49 (except mean score of 3.21) which indicates that almost all the learners agree to the various parameters of organization of counselling sessions. Thus from the learners point of view organization of counselling sessions were very helpful in meeting the objectives of MCA programme.

The Learners views on various aspects of assignments are given in table-07 below:-

Assignment plays a crucial role in open and distance learning. It is used as a teaching-learning tool in ODL.

Around ninety one percent (91%) learners agree that assignment questions cover all the blocks of SLM and three percent (3%) learners had disagreement on this aspect. Six percent (6%) learners were undecided on this issue.

Approximately eighty nine percent (89%) learners are of the opinion that academic counsellors had explained the procedure of preparing assignments during counselling sessions where as five percent (5%) learners did not agree with this. This shows the counselling sessions were helpful in the preparation of assignments.

Around seventy five percent (75%) learners agree that tutor comments written on evaluated assignments reflects the performance of learners. It also correlates the marks/grades obtained where as seventeen percent (17%) did not agree with this. Eight percent (8%) learners could not say anything on this issue.

**Table 7.** Learners Views on various aspects of Assignments

S. No.	Parameter	Learners Views					Total	Mean Opinion Score
		Strongly Agree (05)	Agree (04)	Undecided (03)	Disagree (02)	Strongly Disagree (01)		
1.	Assignment questions cover all the blocks of self learning material and it is evenly distributed.	67 (34.54)	109 (56.18)	11 (5.67)	05 (2.58)	02 (1.03)	194 (100)	4.21
2.	Academic counselors have explained the procedure of preparing assignments during counselling sessions.	89 (45.88)	83 (42.77)	12 (6.19)	07 (3.61)	03 (1.55)	194 (100)	4.28
3.	Tutor comments written on evaluated assignments actually reflects the performance of learners. It also correlates the marks/grades obtained.	34 (17.53)	112 (57.73)	16 (8.25)	28 (14.43)	04 (2.06)	194 (100)	3.74
4.	Preparation of assignments have actually helped in securing good marks/grades in final Term End Examination.	97 (50)	68 (35.05)	23 (11.86)	05 (2.58)	01 (0.51)	194 (100)	4.29
5.	It is one of the most important teaching – learning tool in open and Distance learning.	86 (44.33)	89 (45.88)	14 (7.21)	05 (2.58)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.32
Overall mean opinion score =		$\left\{ \frac{4.21+4.28+3.74+4.29+4.32}{5} \right\}$					= 4.17	

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

Approximately eighty five percent (85%) learners agree that preparation of assignments had helped them in securing good marks/grades in final term end examination where as three percent (03%) learners did not agree on this issue. Twelve percent (12%) learners were undecided on this issue. This is one of the most important advantage of writing assignments.

Around ninety percent (90%) learners are of the view that assignment is a teaching-learning tool in ODL where as three (03) percent did not agree with this. Seven percent (7%) learners are undecided on this issue.

The mean opinion score on various aspects of assignments various from 3.74 to 4.32 with overall mean opinion score of 4.17 which falls in the range of 3.50 to 4.49 indicates that all the learners agree on various aspects of assignments. This shows that assignments have positive impact in completing the MCA programme successfully as it provides two way communication between learners and academic counsellors.

The Learners responses on various aspects of preparation of Project Report are given in table-08 below:-

The project report is one of the most important course in MCA programme. Learners has to do the project work in 6<sup>th</sup> semester. After completion of project work, learners are fully equipped with latest development in computer and information technology.

Around forty three percent (43%) learners agreed that SLM, Project guidelines and counselling sessions organised are sufficient for preparation of project report whereas forty two percent (42%) learners did not agree with this. Fifteen percent (15%) learners were undecided on this issue. The learners were almost equally divided on this issue.

Approximately fifty five percent (55%) learners were of the opinion that, qualified guides are available as per norms of IGNOU where as thirty four percent (34%) learners had disagreement on this. Eleven percent (11%) learners could not say anything on this. More than one third learners are not satisfied on this issue.

Around fifty nine percent (59%) learners felt that, required softwares are available at IGNOU study/programme study centres whereas thirty one percent (31%) learners did not agree on this issue. This means that IGNOU study/programme study centres are equipped with required software.

Around ninety percent (90%) learners are of the opinion that six (06) months time allotted by IGNOU is sufficient for completion of project work whereas two percent (2%) learners did not agree on this issue. Eight percent (8%) learners were undecided on this issue. This issue puts a positive note on IGNOU authorities as far as time allotment for various courses are concerned.

Approximately ninety five percent (95%) learners are of the view that they have gained sufficient knowledge after completion of project work whereas three percent (3%) learners did not agree on this. Only two percent (2%) learners were undecided on this issue.

The mean opinion score on various aspects of project work varies from 3.03 to 4.45 with overall mean opinion score of 3.69. The mean opinion score of 3.03, 3.30 and 3.40 falls in the range of 2.50 to 3.49 indicates that on these three aspects learners have not given their clear view. The mean opinion score of learners on other two aspects are 4.26 and 4.45 which falls in the range of 3.50 to 4.49 which indicates that learners agree on these two aspects.

**Table 8.** Learners responses on Preparation of Project Report

S. No.	Parameter	Learners Views					Total	Mean Opinion Score
		Strongly Agree (05)	Agree (04)	Undecided (03)	Disagree (02)	Strongly Disagree (01)		
1.	Self Learning Material/Project guide lines and counselling sessions (Theory/ Practical) organised are sufficient for preparation of project report.	10 (5.15)	74 (38.14)	28 (14.43)	70 (36.09)	12 (6.10)	194 (100)	3.03
2.	Qualified guides are easily available as per norms of IGNOU.	24 (12.37)	82 (42.27)	21 (10.82)	62 (31.96)	05 (2.58)	194 (100)	3.30
3.	Required software are available at IGNOU Study/Programme Study Centres.	26 (13.40)	89 (45.88)	19 (9.79)	57 (29.38)	03 (1.55)	194 (100)	3.40
4.	Six (06) months time allotted by IGNOU are sufficient.	76 (39.18)	98 (50.52)	15 (7.73)	04 (2.06)	01 (.51)	194 (100)	4.26
5.	Gained sufficient knowledge after completion of Project Report	101 (52.06)	84 (43.29)	04 (2.07)	05 (2.58)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.45
Overall mean opinion score		= $\left\{ \frac{3.03+3.30+3.40+4.26+4.45}{5} \right\}$					= 3.69	

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

The Learners views on various aspects of term end examination are given in table-09 below:-

The main purpose of pursuing MCA programme is to get a degree of post graduation in computer applications. The MCA degree is awarded only after successful completion of all the courses listed in table-01 by appearing in Term End Examination.

Around eighty two percent (82%) learners agree that question papers of TEE cover all the blocks of SLM whereas fourteen percent (14%) learners did not agree on this. Four percent (4%) learners were undecided on this issue. This reflects that all the blocks of SLM were given due weightage in term end examination.

Ninety one percent (91%) learners were of the view that time allotted for answering the questions were sufficient whereas four percent (4%) learners did not agree on this issue. Six percent (6%) learners were undecided on this issue. This shows that most of the learners were satisfied with the time allotted for TEE.

About seventy four percent (74%) learners are of the opinion that marking/grading pattern of answer scripts are upto the mark where as twenty three percent (23%) learners did not agree with this. Three percent (3%) learners were undecided on this issue. This shows that more than two third learners were satisfied with the evaluation of answer scripts.

Ninety three percent (93%) learners agree that overall examination of IGNOU is of high standard and transparent whereas on percent (1%) learners had disagreement on this. Six percent (6%) learners were undecided on this issue. This shows that IGNOU's examination is of high standard and transparent.

Ninety eight percent (98%) learners are of the opinion that any kind of unfair means is not permitted in IGNOU. This is the credit earned by IGNOU internationally.

The mean opinion score on various aspects of examination are 3.99, 4.31, 3.72, 4.42 and 4.75 with overall mean opinion score of 4.24. This show that all the learners agree that IGNOU's examination are of high standard.

## 5. Views of Academic Counsellors on various aspects of MCA programme

A meeting of Academic Counsellors were organised in Lucknow to discuss the various aspects of MCA programme. The outcome of the meeting are as follows:

- The objectives of launching MCA programme have met to a large extent.
- The overall quality of Self Learning Material is very good. They expressed that language of SLM in few blocks are slightly tough. It has to be made easier.
- The no. of counselling sessions are required to be increased by fifty percent (50%). The remuneration of counselling sessions are required to be doubled considering the overall background of the academic counsellors.
- The assignments are very useful in ODL system. The performance of learners attempting assignment questions seriously were found better as compared to other learners.

**Table 9.** Learners Views on Term End Examination

S. No.	Parameter	Learners Views						Total	Mean Opinion Score
		Strongly Agree (05)	Agree (04)	Undecided (03)	Disagree (02)	Strongly Disagree (01)			
1.	Term End Examination questions cover all the blocks of Self Learning Material and it is evenly distributed. It is as per the level of the examination.	68 (35.05)	91 (46.91)	07 (3.61)	22 (11.34)	06 (3.09)	194 (100)	3.99	
2.	The time allotted for answering the questions are sufficient for a particular course.	87 (44.85)	89 (45.88)	11 (5.67)	06 (3.09)	01 (.51)	194 (100)	4.31	
3.	The marking/grading pattern of answer scripts are upto the mark.	46 (23.71)	98 (50.52)	06 (3.09)	39 (20.10)	05 (2.58)	194 (100)	3.72	
4.	Overall examination system of IGNOU is of high standard and transparent. A learner can ask for re-evaluation of answer scripts and take photocopy of answer scripts as well.	102 (52.58)	79 (40.72)	11 (5.67)	02 (1.03)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.45	
5.	Any kind of unfair means is not permitted during examination.	153 (78.87)	37 (19.07)	01 (.51)	03 (1.55)	0 (0)	194 (100)	4.75	
Overall mean opinion score =		$\left\{ \frac{3.99+4.31+3.72+4.45+4.75}{5} \right\} = 4.24$							

\* Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

- Most of the academic counsellors are of the opinion that learner's performance were improved further after completion of project work.

All the academic counsellors have mentioned that IGNOU conduct its examination without permitting any kind of unfair-means.

## 6. Conclusion

The MCA programme has achieved its laid down objectives very effectively. The overall mean opinion score of learners measured in quantitative terms worked out to be 4.26 at Likert five point scale. Thus the success score of the MCA programme is very high and most of the learners have been benefitted by pursuing this programme.

The learners response on various aspects of Self Learning Material i.e. Content, Density, Style, Language, Practical Aspects, Adequacy and Structure is very good which reflects that they were satisfied with the overall quality of the SLM.

Most of the learners agree that counselling sessions organised both theory and practical were very useful for them. Their most of the problems could be sorted out during these sessions.

The learners are of the opinion that preparation of assignments have helped them for appearing in the term end examination because pattern of questions were same.

The learners agree that overall facilities offered by IGNOU for preparation of project report is adequate. During discussion some learners mentioned that it is difficult to get good guide with the present payment norms of IGNOU. It is therefore essential to increase the remuneration for guiding the project work. Almost all the learners agree that they have learned so many new things during preparation of project work.

Almost all the learners agree that examination activities of IGNOU are beyond doubt. Any kind of unfair-means are not permitted during examination. They were sure that they will get good jobs after completion of MCA programme.

The learners response were same irrespective of whether they are male or female, rural or urban, unemployed or employed on almost all the issues.

The academic counsellors associated with MCA programme were also satisfied with the overall delivery mechanism of IGNOU. The academic counsellors have recommended for the revision of MCA programme as it is more than ten (10) years old.

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## Annexure-I

### Programme Evaluation under Open and Distance Learning : An Evaluation of MCA Programme offered by IGNOU

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