

## **DISTANCE LEARNING (Maharashtra)**

### Innovations in Distance Learning

#### **Introduction**

NITTTR developed a scheme of providing diploma programme through correspondence mode for Maharashtra state. The Director of Technical Education implemented it in 1968-69 for providing diploma level programmes through correspondence mode to variety of learners. It was dually supported by technical expertise in course design and implementation of the scheme by NITTTR till it became self-sustainable. In India, Maharashtra correspondence cell at Pune was the only institution, which offered recognised diploma courses in engineering.

Maharashtra correspondence cell was established in 1968-69 and had been working in this direction. However, a lot of concern has been shown about the functioning of the cell by a number of people including the administrators. Due to its interest in distance learning strategy NITTTR Bhopal started looking at the functioning of the cell from April 1982. Visits by the British Consultants helped the NITTTR faculty considerably in this endeavour. A healthy relationship developed and NITTTR Bhopal collaborated very closely with almost all the activities of the cell.

NITTTR Bhopal faculty members have studied the problems of the cell related to various administrative and academic matters. Some of the specific achievement of Maharashtra correspondence cell are as follows:

- Development of self-study material in different subject /courses.
- Installation of Distance Learning System
- Guidance for problem solving and extension activities
- Collaboration with industries for providing correspondence courses to industry personnel.

NITTTR faculty members have highlighted the positive aspects of distance learning system and its problems at various forums and to several authorities at different times. These efforts resulted in multi directional moves for improvement of the cell.

Some of the moves were:

- Rates of remuneration for conducting practical have been enhanced. This was expected to result in better cooperation with the polytechnics for conduct of resident sessions.
- Moves were made to recruit sanctioned staff for the cell.
- Cell prepared proposal for direct central assistance so as to improve its facilities.
- Nearby polytechnic teachers were being engaged to provide tutorial support to those students who send assignments to the cell.
- Continuous efforts were made to improve the quality of learning material. The participants of the workshop were selected on the basis of their interest and commitment to this type of work.

High dropout rate of students was a serious problem.