

Arming the armed forces for a civilian life-An experience of IGNOU

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Abstract

Period of employability and sudden termination either due to individual preference or due to disaster or due to end of the employable period are a constant endeavour in Armed forces. In addition, the importance of secrecy of movement of the armed personnel is crucial as it directly indicates the protection due for the Country. Service exigencies, constant move, shelter in camps and in places away from home, earmarked service benefits which remove the day-to-day hassles, mark the life of army men. In spite of the organisational facilities streamlined to increase the conduct of training programmes for upgradation of the knowledge, certification of the educational qualification of army men necessitated the collaboration between the armed forces and a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI). In addition, equipping an individual educationally, to face reality of employment procedures in the civilian life, is one of the preventive/proactive measures of rehabilitation. An example of such collaboration that facilitates the education of the armed forces is the Army-IGNOU Educational Project which is in vogue from the year 2001. This paper discusses about the issues related to this project and how the opportunity for continuing education enables the armed forces for a civilian life after their term of employment in the armed forces. This paper throws light about the importance of the armed men as a new audience of the Distance Learning System and how the implementers are equally new for executing the various activities prescribed by the Distance Teaching Institution especially while maintaining the work-life-learning balance. The practical difficulties are mainly those age old difficulties encountered for taking education into the employees' doorstep, eventhough the beneficiaries seemed 'new' both from the eyes of the Armed forces and the DTI. The social cause of rehabilitation/preparing for the post-service period/retired life/civilian living initially posed as a challenge not only for the educational institution and the society has been re-engineered into the Army-IGNOU Educational Project by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), thus making the Distance Education System (DES) as a responsive to learners in the armed forces who ultimately have to merge with their respective society after the period of service.

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1. Introduction

Accessibility enhancement is generally targeted at the expansion of the available education system (Kumar and Dorothy, 2009). While the availability of the education sources has been optimised at each level of education in India, the accessibility to the education providers is still at stake due to various physical, geographical, economic and social barriers. Reachability of the education providers to the doorstep of the learner is vivid in the ways the education is made available. In India, even with the existence of the Conventional Educational System (CES) at one end, and Distance Educational System (DES) at the other, accessibility of education is still difficult due to the vast and unique domain in all spheres

prevalent in the Indian society (Srinivasan et al., 2008). The scheme of Gyandeeep for the Indian Army provided by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), a Distance Teaching Institution, intends to fill the gap especially for the specific audiences who have to be accommodated in the civil life after their initial service period.

2. The Indian Army

According to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Army (2013) the Indian Army (IA) is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and it is commanded by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), who is a four-star general. The Indian Army originated from the armies of the East India Company, which eventually became the British India Army and finally the National Army after independence. The units and regiments of the Indian Army have diverse histories and have participated in a number of battles and campaigns across the world, earning a large number of battle and theatre honours before and after independence. The Indian Army has a regimental system (where each regiment is responsible for recruiting, training and administration; each regiment is permanently maintained and therefore the regiment will develop its unique esprit de corps –morale (- often contrasted to the “continental system”) but is operationally and geographically divided into seven commands, with the basic field formation being a division. It is an all-volunteer force and comprises more than 80% of the country’s active defence personnel. It is one of the largest standing armies in the world, with 1,129, 900 active troops and 960,000 reserve troops.

3. A Brief about the Gyandeeep Programme of IGNOU

The IGNOU-Army Scheme referred to as Project “Gyandeeep” was dedicated to the nation by the then Honourable President of India, Smt.Prathibha Devisingh Patil on 19th November 2009, on the 24th Foundation Day of the University. The Project “Gyandeeep” is also referred to as the Gyandeeep Programme of IGNOU or the Gyandeeep Scheme of IGNOU in day-to-day dealings.

As per Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Indian Army (IA) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) signed on 04th September, 2009, the objective of the MoU is to confer educational certification to soldiers of the Indian Army as per the parameters laid down by IGNOU for Community Colleges, recognising the ‘in service’ training done by them. Initially in 2009, the Project clientele were the soldiers and later extended to the Officers also.

The registration is being done through Regimental Training Centres/Human Resource Development Centres and Army Schools of Instruction and the same would be known as “Army-IGNOU Community Colleges”. The 66 Army-IGNOU Community Colleges are registering the students located at different parts of the country.

“Gyandeeep Centre of Excellence” was inaugurated by the Honourable Union Minister for Defence Shri A.K. Antony on 14th September 2011at the Delhi Cantt. According to <http://www.ignou.ac.in/gyandeeep/News3.html> (2013) as for as IGNOU is concerned, this centre is a way for increased in the strength of learners and campuses. For the Army, this Centre is an employee welfare measure and gainful use of resources. For the army personnel, this Centre has the potential to transform the post-retirement life by equipping them with a

formal qualification and preparing them for competitive job avenues. For the nation, this Centre means a boost in the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) as well as the Gross Graduation Ratio (GGR).

The former Prime Minister of India Shri. Rajiv Gandhi mentioned during his inaugural speech of 19th November, 1985 when IGNOU was established 'Our endeavour is that in India, the poorest, the most backward children receive the best possible education, and in this direction today, we are here to take step forward-This Open University will extend education opportunities to all corners of the country' (Aslam, 2013). It can be said that the Gyandeeep Programme is one of the ventures of IGNOU to extend education opportunities to the captive audience in the Indian army.

The various aspects related to the Gyandeeep are given below:

3.1 Guidelines for Gyandeeep: The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has established a separate wing namely the Defence Unit to coordinate the admission related activities to the army personnel.

3.2 Institutions behind the Scheme: The Institutions behind the Scheme are the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), which is an education provider and the Indian Army.

3.3 Objective: Achievement of the projected targets related to access and equity in Higher Education during Eleventh Five year plan (2007-2012) is the objective of the Scheme. (The Eleventh Five year plan was approved by the National Development Council on 19th December 2007. Five year Plans in India are formulated by the Planning Commission, an institution in the Government of India). An integral part of this Scheme is the facilitation of the establishment of the Community College between the Armed forces and the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System in India through enhanced and optimal utilisation of the physical facilities, intellectual and knowledge resources in institutions for educating the in-house clientele-who otherwise do not have access to education due to the working conditions and demands. It is also an employee welfare measure as it facilitates the equipping process of the individual for a second innings of workforce after existence from the present service.

3.4 Collaboration Criteria: Under the Scheme of Gyandeeep, collaboration is intended between the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the Indian Army , for the cause of education.

3.5 Options under the Scheme: At present, Three options are available under the scheme. The IGNOU has entered into a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) separately with Indian Army for the Gyandeeep Scheme, for collaborating in providing their personnel an access to Bachelor's Degree Programme (BDP) of IGNOU. This is limited to only those personnel who have either passed 10 + 2 or those who have not studied even up to that level (for whom the entry into the BDP is through the Bachelor's Preparatory Programme (BPP). As per the collaboration the IGNOU will provide certification to Armed Forces personnel for the knowledge and skills obtained by them through their training in their respective cadres and related areas of work assigned to them. The training of Armed Forces personnel is spread over a number of years. The overall knowledge and skills are imparted to them through the training modules developed by various wings of Armed Forces in their assigned areas of

work by the respective Training units of the Armed Forces. These personnel are periodically evaluated to assess their levels of learning and skills. The IGNOU has decided to accept the evaluation process of Armed forces and based on their evaluation has agreed to provide certification. The levels of certification are decided on the basis of level of courses taught at training and also the time put in by the soldiers in training and learning. Based on the above, three levels of Programmes are being offered:

- Certificate : 16 Credits
- Diploma : 32 Credits
- Associate Degree : 64 Credits

1 credit is equivalent to 30 hours of work for a learner in ODL mode and 15 hours of classroom interaction.

The armed forces personnel receive Certificate, Diploma and Associate Degree when they earn the credits specified (16, 32 and 64) for each of these in the area of their study. The Associate Degree is awarded in 3 broad areas (Disciplines): Arts, Commerce or Science depending on the type of training modules a soldier has studied. These Associate Degree holders earned through the IGNOU-Army Community Colleges can join IGNOU to obtain a Bachelor's Degree.

To complete the Bachelor's Degree Programme (B. A., B. Com. or B. Sc.) of IGNOU a student is required to earn a total of 96 credits in 3 years period of Study. The Associate Degree holders have already earned 64 credits, which is a workload of 2 years of Bachelor's Degree. The University has provided such students a facility to take admission in the 3rd year and give them the benefit of credit transfer of 64 credits. This special programme is aimed at those soldiers who join the forces without a formal degree as they find it difficult to get employment after retirement. In a highly competitive job market, they find it extremely tough to meet the academic qualifications required for jobs in public and private sectors, where a formal degree from a recognised university is mandatory. This scheme is an initiative towards offering academic Graduation Degree to the holders of Associate Degree, a major step forward taken to empower the soldiers of the armed forces to live a life of dignity and confidence after they leave the Services and pursue a second career. The process allows for lateral entry into the regular university system after these personnel successfully complete Certificate, Diploma and Associate Degree to accumulate 64 credits based on their on the job training and assessment done in Services.

The programme is unique and innovative in many respects. The salient features of the Lateral entry programme are as follows:

- Exclusively designed for Defence personnel holding Associate Degree.
- Students without a formal qualification of 10+2 can also seek admission.
- Student can study at his/her own pace and convenience over a period of time. He/She is not required to attend regular classes.
- High quality self-instructional print materials are provided to students.
- Print materials are supported with audio and video programmes.

3.6 Eligibility Criteria for Different Streams of BDP: The Eligibility Criteria for Different Streams of BDP are as follows:

- **B. A. :** All those who have completed 10 + 2 or Non 10 + 2 who have already completed either the Bridge Course offered by the Armed Forces or the BPP from IGNOU or its equivalent and possess an Associate Degree in Arts, Commerce and Science.
- **B. Com:** All those who have completed 10 + 2 or Non 10 + 2 who have already completed either the Bridge Course offered by the Armed Forces or the BPP from IGNOU or its equivalent and possess an Associate Degree in Commerce.
- **B. Sc.:** All those who have completed 10 + 2 or Non 10 + 2 who have already completed either the Bridge Course offered by the Armed Forces or the BPP from IGNOU or its equivalent and possess an Associate Degree in Science.
- Students can carry the credits (Upto 64 Credits) earned while undergoing on the job training.

3.7 Programme Structure for Bachelor's Degree Programme (BDP): The Eligibility Criteria for the Bachelor's Degree Programme namely Bachelor Degree in Arts (B.A) / Bachelor Degree in Commerce (B.Com) and Bachelor Degree in Science (B.Sc) the three different Streams of BDP available through the Gyandeeep scheme are as follows:

The University follows the credit system for its Bachelor's Degree Programme. Each credit amounts to 30 hours of study comprising all learning activities. Thus, a 4 credit course involves 120 study hours and an 8 credit course involves 240 study hours. To successfully complete the B.A. /B. Com. /B.Sc. programme, the student will have to earn a total of 32 credits over a period of one year in addition to its 64 credits earned while completing the Associate Degree. One can take a maximum period of 3 years to complete the programme depending on their convenience.

Students have to take 32 credits courses during Third Year after availing admission through the Lateral Entry Scheme from a large number of courses available under the Elective Courses (24 to 28 Credits) and Application Oriented Courses (4 to 8 credits), which are also common for the Third year learners of the Bachelors's Degree Programme.

3.8 Evaluation and Examination: Continuous internal assessment and Term End Examination (TEE) are prominent in IGNOU. Evaluation and examination are being handled as per the IGNOU pattern.

3.9 Classes and Method of Instruction: Classes may be organised, for Programmes offered through face-to-face mode, at different times such as during late hours of working days, or on holidays / during vacations. The time-table of the classes should be generally announced at the beginning of the session. Self Learning Materials (SLM) supplemented by face-to-face component-Academic counselling is the suggested method of instruction for the programme offered. Wherever possible Students may be encouraged to form study groups, as it regularise the learning speed. The process of teaching and learning may be supplemented by the use of Audio-video and multimedia materials of IGNOU, as IGNOU has one of the largest repositories of educational materials in multimedia format. Tele-conferencing,

Video-conferencing and other technological facilities are provided or arranged through the Regional Centres of IGNOU, located in different parts of the country.

According to Trainer's Kit 002(1999), in the field of adult learning, androgogy-the art of science of helping adults learn-is clearly differentiated from pedagogy-the art and science of teaching children. The andragogical model is based on several assumptions like 1.Adults are self-directed; 2.Adults have a many and varied experiences; 3.Adults are ready to learn when they recognise the need to know; 4.Adults prefer problem-centred or performance-centred learning.

The characteristics specified for the adult learners by Trainer's Kit 002(1999), are applicable to Gyandeeep learners also.

4. Envisaged Advantages of the Gyandeeep Scheme of IGNOU

The Advantages of the Gyandeeep Scheme of IGNOU can be the cumulative of the Convergence Scheme and the Community College Scheme of IGNOU. At this juncture, it is worthwhile to recall the envisaged Advantages of the Convergence Scheme put forth by Srinivasan et al (2008) and the Community College Scheme by Kumar and Dorothy (2009). The side headings of these authors with relevance of the description to the Gyandeeep Programme can be envisaged as the Advantages of the Gyandeeep Programme.

The following are the Advantages of the Gyandeeep Scheme:

4.1 Increase the profile in the employment market: The Gyandeeep Scheme ensures gaining of more than one academic qualification during the stay of the candidate in the Army. As a result, the candidate gets equipped in interdisciplinary education suitable for multi-skill tasks in the employment sector. This is sure to enrich the profile in the employment market.

4.2 Ensure equity, access and excellence in academic transactions: The Gyandeeep Scheme is the acquisition of an academic qualification from the DES. As a result, the learners irrespective of the educational background are held on par with the others by equating eligibility criteria whereby the equity is ensured. Excellence in academic transactions is ensured because of the qualified academic faculty employed for handing the Academic Counseling, who is also oriented to the transactions of the Open and Distance Learning System (ODL). As the academic transactions are done in the vicinity of the Army under the norms prescribed by the DES, the access of the Candidate to education opportunities is optimised.

4.3 Facilitate to fulfill personal desires: In India, the academic move of the learner is basically decided by the elders in the family. Obedience to the choice of the profession defined/preferred by the elders still exists in the society. Hence, the drive to fulfill personal desires in terms of enrolling for a programme of study which is in tune with the personal leisure time activities is not generally attended to. The availability of an array of programmes offered by the DES in the campus of Army is sure to motivate candidates who aspire to fulfill personal desires. Academically, this merging will evolve personnel proficient in more than one field, with exemplary multi-skills potential to discharge any given task. In addition, the Learner here as a personnel from the army can also opt for a course which will

be useful in the post-retirement engagement as an activity or employment after entering into the civilian life.

4.4 Prevent Duplication of efforts/activities: Since the programmes on offer through the DES are readily available for use by the Army, efforts for generating the programme, such as laying down the syllabi, printing of the study material to cover the course content, course revision etc., are taken by on the DES and this prevents duplication of efforts/activities of similar kind by the Army in line with the kind of the Corporate Universities.

4.5 Facilitate to have tailor-made programmes to study: As the pre-entry eligibility criteria from the Army Training to the DES are available at the same platform i.e., Army Campus, the pre-entry programmes are available tailor-made to suit the interest and calibre of the learner as they are related to the work experience in the field level, rather than programmes being forced upon with little option for the learner to exercise.

4.6 Facilitate completion of the programme even after moving out of the Army: The Gyandeeep Scheme opens new vista to continue an educational programme from a DES- especially related to the lateral entry scheme, even when the learner moves out/drops out of the Army provided the pre-entry requisites are fulfilled while on service.

4.7 Remove isolation in distance learners and create mentor-mentee relationship: Under the Gyandeeep Scheme, the third year of the Bachelor's Degree Programme is common for the Armed forces entering through the lateral entry scheme and the regular IGNOU Learners enrolled through the various Regional Centres. The Regional Centre of IGNOU is the second-tier administrative structure of IGNOU for the rendering of the Student Support Services. The Regional Centre is also the venue for providing and arranging Tele-conferencing, video-conferencing, web-conferencing and other technological facilities to the learners. The address of the Regional Centres is available in the IGNOU website. Incidentally, the distance learners attached to the various Learner Support Centres of IGNOU also come to the Regional Centre to avail themselves of these services. Generally, the distance learner is profiled as one who has other commitments besides studying and seriously suffers from peer isolation, though enjoys the benefit of experience both in life and job front. Interaction between the distance learners attached to the regular Learner Support Centres (LSC) and the learners from the Gyandeeep Scheme amidst their restricted confidential movements- especially when made in the civilian dress in the public transport- will not only help enrich each other but also is sure to remove the isolation prevalent among the distance learners and stabilise the relationship between the slightly older distance learners and the much younger learners under the Gyandeeep scheme, which may yield productive results when well channelized- by means of using the Alumni to promote the learners to enroll into the Programme of Study.

4.8 Provide the advantage of Self-Instruction Materials of DES for the subjects of Armed Forces Training: The Self-Instructional Materials (SIM) of IGNOU is written by using the Course Team Approach with the expertise drawn from those who have made a mark in the field. The SIM is written in an easily understandable language with the objectives, unit structure clearly spelt out for each subject head covered. These SIM can also

be used for the subjects covered under the various streams of study under the various Training Programmes like Office Management.

4.9 Present opportunities for beneficial utilisation of the free time: Education in Gyandeeep Scheme is for a specific period of time duration in the leisure day and the time-table/schedule of operations fixed for a year of study. Bearing the time used for the transaction of the curriculum, the available time is enough to be engaged in a fruitful activity. The Gyandeeep Scheme ensures channelisation of such time to fruitful academic activities which is sure to have spin-off benefits for the learner engaged in that activity especially after the retirement of the individual and entering the civilian life.

4.10 Prevail benevolent-control behaviour in the Army: Gyandeeep Scheme is mainly meant for the Armed Forces of the Army, which lodges the highest number of youth volunteered for the cause, in a single place of study. Many of the Personnel in Uniform ensure returning to the civilian life after sufficing the minimum time period of service to ensure service benefits in the army. Development of personnel depends mainly on the peers and trainers irrespective of the family background. Many a time, armed forces personnel are away from their home and depend on their colleagues/Seniors for guidance in day-to-day affairs which will have an impact in the civilian life after retirement from the service. The benevolent-control behaviour exhibited on the part of the Counsellor/Trainer/Senior, and 'autonomy-compromised with-control' behaviour from the Personnel, makes the leisure time/captive inactive time (in terms of employment) to be channelised for the purpose of education. Gyandeeep Scheme, which provides learning opportunities beyond the Army curricula, opens avenues for the prevalence of benevolent-control behaviour mainly carried out by the education faculty/Trainers/Seniors/Counsellors in the Army. The prevalence of the benevolent-control behaviour will also have a direct effect on the success rate in terms of the completion of the programme enrolled.

4.11 Avenue for upgradation of the educational qualification: Many a time, the qualification earned by a learner in a Training/Work spot is mainly to equip them with the basic skills for excellence in their relative employment to have a livelihood. However, the Gyandeeep scheme of IGNOU opens avenue for upgradation of the educational qualification of the individual so that they are employable with better skills and knowledge.

4.12 Avenue for cross system movement and cross institution movement: In India, specific system identity exists especially with a clear-cut demarcation for the Conventional Education System (CES), Distance Education System (DES) and the informal/Nonformal Education System. The Gyandeeep Scheme of IGNOU opens avenue for mobility and movement across the system and the institution for education purposes.

4.13 Avenue to ascertain employability: Credit transfer of the syllabi prescribed to be covered in the Army Training Programmes/Work related activities is one of the milestones in accessing education through the Gyandeeep scheme of IGNOU. In such a situation, the probability of the Army to standardise the content of the programmes offered by them, which is sure to improve the quality of the programme on offer and also the quality of the passed outs through this scheme, which in turn improves their employability. Specifically speaking

the employability of the individuals after the acquisition of the Degree Programme in the civilian life cannot be undermined.

4.14 Avenue for integration of the various system of education: Team work and symbiotic association yield better results than solo performance. In India, each system of education functions in their defined administrative pattern and needless to say that each and every system has its own merits and demerits. The Gyandeeep scheme of IGNOU opens an avenue for integration of the various system of education for optimum output in terms of quality learning environment, quality content transaction and quality service rendered.

4.15 Avenue for expansion of the clientele populace for the DTI: The Gyandeeep scheme of IGNOU has opened avenue for IGNOU as a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to expand its reach to the in-house clientele in the Army and thereby increasing the number of potential learners to be benefited from the higher education system in general and Distance Education System in particular.

4.16 Avenue for creating a quality learning environment at Grassroots level: Collaboration between the IGNOU and the Army under the Gyandeeep scheme would step up/standardise the learning environment prevailing in the Army so that optimum effort is mobilised to reap the expected learning outcomes of the beneficiaries of the Gyandeeep Programme. In addition, as upward mobility for the learners of Army is quantified for an Associate Degree to facilitate the Lateral entry to the Bachelor's Degree Programme from IGNOU, the content of the syllabi on offer for the pre-requisite entry level qualifications at the Army is also standardised in terms of the norms prescribed by IGNOU to facilitate credit transfer for the courses studied by the learners, thereby maintaining quality in the learning environment.

4.17 Avenue for creating reengineering in the higher education system: In lay man's language, the IGNOU-Army Community Colleges of the Gyandeeep Project are a hybrid of Schooling and Collegiate Education. This is because, just like schooling the syllabi and timing for academic transaction is fixed without any avenue for the learner to exercise the option. Similarly, like Collegiate Education, the learner is placed in a job. Through the Gyandeeep scheme of IGNOU, the learner's thirst for higher education is not only fulfilled but also serves as a diving board for the learner to pursue higher education from other system (Face-to-face/distant/part-time) of education. Thus, the Gyandeeep scheme of IGNOU paves way for creating reengineering in the higher education system.

5. Administrative Issues and Academic concerns

The administrative issues and academic concerns of the Gyandeeep Scheme of IGNOU can be the cumulative of the Convergence Scheme and the Community College Scheme of IGNOU. At this juncture, it is worthwhile to recall the envisaged administrative issues and academic concerns of the Convergence Scheme put forth by Srinivasan et al (2008) and that of the Community College Scheme by Kumar and Dorothy (2009). The side headings of these authors with relevance of the description to the Gyandeeep Programme can be envisaged as the administrative issues and academic concerns of the Gyandeeep Programme.

5.1 System identity versus Institution identity: The Question to be answered is whether the learner who studied while on service in an army has also done a Programme from IGNOU or a learner of the Army availed of the academic benefits from the Distance Education System (DES). This is a matter of concern to both the provider and the public, as through the Gyandeeep scheme, wide opportunities for the DES to sail in the reputation of the Army training/education process and vice-versa situation exists. This may be transitory, till the acceptability of Army training/education and the acceptability of DES are set on par.

5.2 Requirement of the personnel: Personnel are required not only to handle the merging process but also to sustain and implement the idea behind the merging. People of outstanding competence and unquestionable integrity with sound understanding of the structural differences and distinct pedagogical approaches are necessary to handle the functions of the system to be an ongoing process.

5.3 Availability of Counsellor for guiding Students: Preadmission counselling by personnel, who have a thorough knowledge about the various linkages between the subjects offered through Army training/education and DES, a passion for thinking in terms of the long term goals leading to the development of the individual especially after retirement from the army service for restabilising in the civilian life with local relevance (as most of the time, the army personnel are posted away from their native place), and a conviction in the credibility of DES, are necessary to ensure that academic benefits are drawn from this scheme by the enrollees available in-house of the Army.

5.4 Sustainability of the Scheme after the period of financial assistance: As per the guidelines, IGNOU provides the financial assistance (Non-recurring and Recurring) to the institutions as the initial launch is through the IGNOU-Army Community Colleges. The Sustainability of the Scheme in the collaborating institutions after the period of financial assistance/University-Army leadership is also a matter of concern.

5.5 Coexistence of divergent systems in a symbiotic relationship: The Army has its own rigid structure and time frame for study coupled with work assignments. Similarly, the DES has its characteristics often depicted as free from teacher, time, place and speed of study and described as independent autonomous study. The Army is mainly oriented towards tutor-guided instruction and basically involves listening centred learning activities linked with the job profile. But, the DES is mainly oriented towards self-guided instruction and involves reading centred learning activities. Both Army and DES have different ideologies and specific methodologies for curriculum transaction. Under the Gyandeeep scheme, these two different systems of education are bound to exist together, with the motive of increasing access to quality education, with a view to provide the avenue for entering into the civilian life after the service period. The involvement of two different types of institutions within the stipulated time period to fulfill the requirements as specified in the modus operandi for each type of programme offered, pave way for the coexistence of two different systems on a single platform. This leads to a symbiotic relationship, of enabling the learner to gain mastery through the positive features of the two different systems. The mastery so gained, in the long run, enables the learner to pilot the learning process for himself/herself. The manifestation of the symbiotic relationship between the Army and DES, acknowledging each other's strengths

and weaknesses, is expected to prove that one plus one is more than two, when it comes to the productive outcome.

5.6 Preference for one system over the other: Since the beneficiary is exposed to both the Army and the DES with institution specificity at the same time-with availability of more Distance Teaching Institutions (DTI) in the vicinity as an education provider, the probability to prefer one system over the other remains a challenging issue to be dealt with by the officials at the grass-roots level. The ability of the implementing officials has a direct effect on the utilisation of the best of both of the systems of education by the beneficiaries.

5.7 Ensuring win-win situation: Any collaboration/partnership/network is initiated on the assumption of ensuring a win-win situation. But in the practical implementation process, either of the institution is prone to have an upper hand and thus shifting the association to a horse-rider situation. Ensuring a win-win situation, without hurting the ethos of either of the system involved namely DES and Army is also one of the administrative concerns.

5.8 Autonomy and collaboration: Generally the IGNOU-Army community colleges under the Gyandeeep Project, have autonomy to frame their own syllabi, as the Programmes offered are in tune with the caliber of the in-house populace and the potential sector needs of employment available for them without dislocation. Army has certain predefined criteria for functioning-which in layman language is viewed as rigid and the DES functions flexibly in an accommodative mode leading to optimum learner benefit.

5.9 Resistance to the model: Any change is prone to resistance. However, any creative change survives any criticism and resistance. The IGNOU-Army Community College scheme of IGNOU (Gyandeeep Scheme) by creating reengineering in the higher education system is equally prone to criticism and resistance. This is mainly because, this Scheme paves way for mobility from one system of education to the other at the same time ensuring the vertical mobility of the learner in the higher education system in general and in specific to the Army Personnel paves way for the civilian life after retirement.

5.10 Quantification of the skills imparted: The Army Community Colleges under the Gyandeeep Project are a part of the alternative system of education and are generally targeted at employability in the sphere of work for which they have been recruited. Many a time, technical know-how is practical based and related to the work of the army personnel with the importance of theory component given the top priority for knowledge retention from previous learning. In addition, the learners of community colleges learn from the daily chores associated with their potential employment (Experiential learning), learn at their convenience (Flexible learning), and learn from others (Open learning). Besides this, the learner would be able to express perfectly by practical execution of the task rather than to express it verbally or in writing. Hence, the academic transaction encountered due to the Army Community College Scheme of IGNOU (Gyandeeep Scheme) cannot be exclusively quantified but has to be viewed in whole with the other skills/knowledge learnt 'at ease on their own' with the mode of assessment to suit certification of each of the skills.

6. Challenges for the DTI to aid Staff Development in an Army

The Challenges envisaged by Srinivasan et al, (2008b) to be encountered by a Distance Teaching Institution (DTI) to facilitate in the Staff Development of a Corporate University is also applicable to the DTI reaching out to the Army personnel-mainly because of the specific need in the execution of the task especially in terms of the utilisation of the knowledge after the access into the programme. In order to be the provider of education for staff of an Army and thereby aid in the staff development, the DTI may have to face the following challenges:

1. Constant revision of the syllabi in pace with the changes in the business environment prevalent in the civilian life
2. Multiple exit levels for the same programmes on the basis of the content of the Programme as opted by the enrollee
3. Courses with Short term duration
4. Offer of Programmes on-demand
5. Immediate certification
6. Flexible entrance specifications for the enrollee
7. Multiple entry level to suit each entrant on the basis of the assessment of prior learning (APL)
8. Nomenclature of programmes in par with the terminology used in the Corporate Sector prevalent in the civilian life
9. Nuggets of courses given in a nutshell
10. Use of technology to reach out to the aspirants spread over a wide geographical terrain
11. Ear marked programmes specific for the staff
12. Minimal dislocation of the staff from the work and physical location
13. Innovative Andragogy techniques to reach out to educated adults who are already on a job in the Army
14. Optimum usage of Cross cultural, Trans cultural techniques to suit the array of learners drawn from various cultural background as identified with the Indian Army.

7. Advantages of accessing education through Distance Education System (DES) by the Army Personnel

The Advantages put forth by Srinivasan et al (2008c) for utilisation of the Distance Teaching Institutions (DTI) as a stake-holder in the training programmes of the Corporate Sectors is applicable to the access of education for the army personnel by the DTI. Even though, the DTI is an invisible partner in each of the Gyandeep Project, it has potential to have a visible impact in the qualification-earning power of the employees.

The Advantages of accessing education through Distance Education System (DES) by the Army Personnel are as follows:

- 1. Public access of the DTI:** Training programmes of the Army are meant only for their employees. DTI being a domain with public access has the potential to train employees within a given national jurisdiction and sometimes even beyond, thereby fulfill the need-driven aspirations with ease, even after leaving the service in the army.
- 2. Unlimited capacity:** Most of the DTI have no maximum limit for their holding capacity in terms of the applicants. Hence, this enables more aspirants to get benefited from the education provided.

3. The best means for certification: Training programmes of the Army Training can enrich an employee. But the education earned under the banner of the DTI, opens avenues for universal acceptance and recognition in the long run. Each country has a board governing the technical, professional and general education. The Programmes recognised by the statutory councils indicates that the programmes have met the set norms and procedures deemed essential for the programme. For example, in India, the All India Council for Technical Education recognises the educational qualifications that are offered for the programmes related to Computer, Engineering and Management education. The content, method and process of the delivery of the Programme of Study is generally standardised at a DTI to suit the requirements specified for the said educational qualification.

4. Flexibility in terms of entry qualifications: For training programmes of the Army, entry is generally restricted to specified groups of job description, job specification, cadre, educational status, age matter. But, for a DTI only aspiration for further study is the criteria subject to the fulfillment of the entry level qualification prescribed for each Programme offered by the DTI.

5. Economy for both the provider and the aspirant: Most of the DTI resort to mass production of the courseware which in turn contributes to the cost-effectiveness of the Programmes offered. This leads to prescription of comparatively lower fees for a Programme of Study.

6. Optimum coverage of the subject matter: Most of the DTI use a course team approach to write the courseware in print. This either supplemented or complemented with the other technology centred delivery mechanisms items like the broadcast, Telecast, and Teleconference not only facilitates to accomplish the content coverage but also proves to be at the best for utilisation by those aspiring employees to know more about the subject. DTI course materials when used as the base for the training programme in a corporate sector paves way for creating awareness among those related subjects to the theme of training.

7. A tool to utilise the Concept of the assessment of Prior Learning: Assessment of prior learning (APL) is the general term used for the award of academic credit on the basis of learning that has occurred at some time in the past. This learning may have come about as the result of a programme of study or as the result of experience gained at work or during voluntary activities, in the home or during leisure pursuits (Malcolm Day, 2002). In the era of prominent underemployment, highly qualified personnel are found in much smaller jobs in keeping with their formal qualifications. This can also be true for the army personnel taking up a job upon entering the civilian life. The equivalence for the training gained in the Army as an entry qualification for a programme of study in a DTI is also an example of APL.

8. Couple study amidst other commitments: Most of the DTI provide time limit beyond the minimum prescribed duration of the programme of study. This flexibility enables the aspirant to complete the Programme successfully amidst work/social/family commitments- more so for the Army Personnel-whose volunteered nature of service demands availability 24X7 of their time in the year, with the demand to be called for service even on leave for social/family commitments.

6. Conclusion

Reengineering models of merging, to increase the accessibility of the available resources, is the emergent need identified by educationists/educational institutions in the knowledge era (Srinivasan et al, 2008). The Gyandeeep Programme, being a meeting point for the Army and the Open Learning system in India, is sure to remove compartmentalisation of education and

create an avenue for preparing the service sector for a civilian life. The continuing education being offered through an exclusive wing- Defence unit in IGNOU is paving way for wider access and greater acceptability among the clientele. According to <http://www.ignou.ac.in/gyandeep/News1.html> (2013), the IGNOU's Army Community College Project are important step towards mainstreaming one of the largest defence workforce in the world under the ambit of higher education by recognizing the skills/prior learning. At this juncture, being in the sector of Education Provider, it is apt to remember the quote "But the victory comes from the Lord"(Proverbs 21:31), which implies that the usefulness of the success gained after the access to a programme of Study in one's real life situation, is ultimately dependent on God. Each and every usefulness of the success gained after the access to a programme of study by personnel in the army is sure to make a difference not only in their lives but also in the profile of the Education Provider.

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