

OLIMPIC - a Newsletter covering Open Learning Innovations & Management Practices in IGNOU Regional Centre, Cochin

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The Regional Centre (RC14), Cochin Newsletter is named as OLIMPIC in the year 2017 by the team comprising Dr. M. Rajesh (RD), Dr. Sindhu P. Nair (DD), Dr. V.T. Jalajakumari (ARD) and Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan (AD)

April– June 2021

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Face-to-Face Resumption of Office after Second Lockdown



The second wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic situation again put forth various challenges for all and the Higher Education sector was no exception. The Second Lockdown period due to COVID-19 Pandemic began in the month of April, 2021 and has in a way unleashed various unexplored avenues for rendering Student Support Services with the use of ICT enabled innovative measures and Regional Centre, Cochin has again been in forefront with its innovative initiatives and strategies.

As per Govt. of Kerala Order G.O (Rt) No.647/2021/DMD dated 15.06.2021, it was notified that all public offices would be functioning with up to 25% staff on rotation basis and remaining staff will be on work from Home. Accordingly, IGNOU Regional Centre, Cochin Office resumed working in face-to-face mode with 25 percent staff capacity with effect from 17.06.2021. The face-to-face mode with full staff capacity was subsequently resumed with effect from 01.07.2021. The present Newsletter intends to cover the various Virtual/Online/Face-to-face initiatives which were undertaken during this period. Homage to Late Dr. V.V. Reddy, Former Regional Director, RC Cochin during the period from 01.08.2011 to 02.11.2012 is also done with deepest condolence to the kith and kin.

34th Convocation

The 34th Convocation is first to two events in the University- the first convocation being held virtually collectively for all Regional Centres after the University has been accredited with NAAC A++ grade. The University awarded 2,37,844 Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of different programmes to the successful students at 34th convocation on 15.04.2021. The Convocation function was held virtually from the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Convention Centre, IGNOU Headquarter in light of the surge in COVID-19 cases. The Convocation ceremony was streamed live on 'You Tube' and Swayam Prabha Channels for Higher Education Managed by IGNOU in addition to Gyan Darshan, Channel of the University, the 56 Regional Centers and the learners across the country.



Guest of Honour Sh. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Hon'ble Minister of Education, Govt. of India delivering the 34th IGNOU Convocation address through virtual mode on 15.04.2021

Sh. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Hon'ble Minister of Education, Govt. of India delivered the Convocation Address through virtual mode.

Congratulating the successful students Sh. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Hon'ble Minister of Education, Govt. of India lauded the role played by IGNOU since its inception in making quality higher education accessible to all through the affordable Open and Distance Mode. The Hon'ble Minister in his speech stressed on the need to provide education that could make one self-reliant is the key-highlight of the New Education Policy that integrates vocational education bringing constructive changes in the education system. In order to achieve the goal of 50% GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) by 2035, the University will have to be a crucial contributor, he added. Highlighting the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) which is a key part of the New Education Policy, 2020, the Hon'ble Minister said that it provides learners with the flexibility to choose his bouquet of courses and also letting him/her to complete it even after a gap. He urged the University to

revamp the existing Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes while working on the new programmes according to the needs of the country which not only provide education but also employment to accrue the demographic dividend. On the occasion, he congratulated the University for getting NAAC A++ grade. The Hon'ble Minister also congratulated the meritorious students for their performance.



The 34th IGNOU Convocation ceremony at IGNOU, New Delhi on 15.04.2021

Twenty Nine (29) Medals were awarded to the meritorious students at the ceremony virtually. Degree certificates were also conferred to the successful students in different streams for 55 PhD and 13 M.Phil degree recipients at the convocation. This time female students have excelled and out of total 29 medals, 21 were awarded to female students and of the total PhD and M.Phil degrees awarded, 37 were to female students.

Prof. Nageshwar Rao, Vice-Chancellor of the University in his welcome address presented and apprised the Hon'ble Minister and Audience (virtually across the dispersed locations) of the last year report summing up the activities undertaken by the university in the trying times of COVID-19 pandemic. He informed that the university through its network of 56 Regional Centers and 21 schools provided non-stop academic support to learners through Digital technology. He highlighted that apart from the online sessions held by the Regional Centers during the pandemic more than 300 sessions were conducted by IGNOU faculty through the Facebook platform of the university. He reiterated the vision and mission of the university to provide affordable, accessible quality higher education to all sections of society irrespective of their backgrounds increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).

As per the Standard Operating Procedure, adherence for Social Distancing, wearing of masks and frequent washing of hands were followed in view of the second wave of the

COVID-19 pandemic at the Convocation Venue while keeping the gathering to witness the 34th Convocation.



IGNOU Regional Centre Cochin learner Ms. Thasni Shahul was awarded Gold Medal for MCA programme during 34th IGNOU Convocation ceremony on 15.04.2021

During the convocation, 4139 learners from Regional Centre, Cochin of have successfully completed their Academic programmes in this convocation. Around 2274 learners collected their Degrees and Diplomas Certificates.

Induction Meeting (January 2021)

A Live Facebook Online/Virtual Induction Meeting hosted by IGNOU Regional Centre, Cochin for students of January, 2021 session was conducted through Google Meet platform on 01st June, 2021 from 11.30 pm to 3.00 pm and the session was live streamed through the Official Facebook page of IGNOU. The Coordinators/staff of various LSC along with the staff of Regional Centre, Cochin attended the meeting and the meeting was live streamed on the Facebook page of IGNOU on 01.06.2021. The Live streamed Induction Meeting video was then uploaded on the RC Cochin Facebook page and RC Cochin YouTube channel and has received 5.8k views as on 30th June, 2021.

Dr. J.S. Dorothy, Regional Director, RC Cochin welcomed all the participants and addressed the learners on how to study with IGNOU. The importance of Self check questions and use of study materials online was highlighted along with the importance of life skills for a Distance Learner. It was emphasized that Honesty, Taking one day at a time, Persistence, Expression of Interest, Stead fastness and Peer Interaction are very important life skills for a Distance Learner to enable him/her cope up with the Professional, Social and Educational responsibilities.

Ms. Sujini Babu, Assistant, Regional Centre, Cochin then explained about the significance of Enrolment Number, the difference between Fresh Admission and Re-registration, Minimum and Maximum period of Study made available at IGNOU.



Screenshot of the Live Facebook Online/Virtual Induction Meeting through Google Meet platform live streamed through the Official Facebook page of IGNOU on 01.06.2021

Dr. L. Chandra Sekaran, PS then elaborated on the facilities available at Regional Centre, Cochin for the Learners in which the facilities available for students including the location, timings, accessibility to Regional centre was highlighted. The IGNOU website and Regional Centre, Cochin website was elaborated upon so that learners can avail of the support services by visiting the website on a regular basis.

After this, Dr. Sindhu P. Nair, DD explained about the importance of Study Materials, its structure and how it can be downloaded from the IGNOU website; pre-requisites of Scholarship for special clientele and the procedure to apply; Facilities available at the Learner Support Centres.

In the next presentation, Dr. V.T. Jalajakumari, ARD explained about Online Counseling session to the learners in which it was mentioned that Online/Virtual platform would be used to enhance the reachability, to facilitate learning without moving from one place to the other. The process of intimation of the schedule to Learners by uploading in the Regional centre website and intimation through SMS/email was highlighted. The Learner etiquette needed was also informed to learners. Dr. Jalajakumari also explained about the Internal Assessment at IGNOU specifically emphasizing on modalities of writing and submitting Assignment Response. The online method of downloading of Assignment questions and uploading of Assignment Response was also explained.

Dr. S. Vijayaragavan, Asst. Regional Director, Regional Centre, Cochin explained about Examination and Convocation to the students in which online submission of Examination form was highlighted. The Convocation being held once in a year was also informed to the Learners.

The Coordinators of various LSCs like Dr. A.K. Prema, SC14000, Dr. Tom Varghese, SC1402 and Dr. Aishwarya S. Babu, SC1407 also shared their inputs for

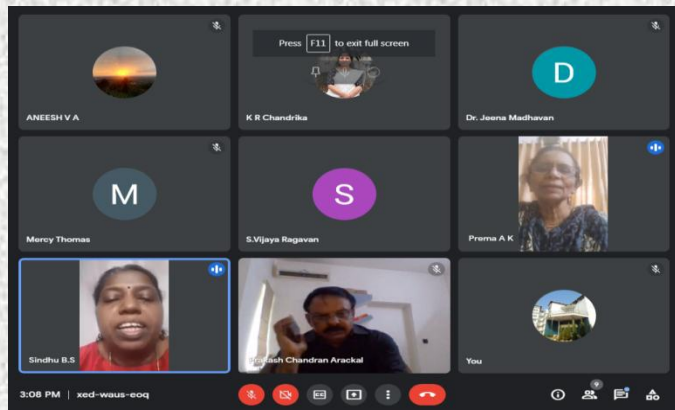
Learners in the Induction meeting wherein the important points to be kept in mind by learners was highlighted again.

Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, Asst. Director, Regional Centre, Cochin finally summarized the session by covering the main points as a Checklist starting from downloading of ID card to receiving of Certificate from IGNOU, so as to enable the Learners to successfully complete their programme from IGNOU.

The Online/Virtual Live session for students of January, 2021 learners was well received by one and all. The programme was coordinated/administered by Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan AD and technical assistance for the same was provided by Shri. Muhammad Ansar, AEDP.

Orientation Programme - Academic Counselors of BA Psychology (BAPC)

Indira Gandhi National Open University, Regional Centre Cochin (RC 14) conducted an Online/Virtual Orientation Programme for the BA Psychology Academic Counselors of all LSCs under IGNOU Regional Centre Cochin on 18.06.2021. 4 Four empanelled academic counselors participated in the Orientation Programme. Discussions were held to facilitate the staff of SC14000 for the smooth functioning of BAPC programme.



Screenshot of the Online/Virtual Orientation Programme for Academic Counselors of BA Psychology programme through Google Meet platform on 18.06.2021

Online Counseling

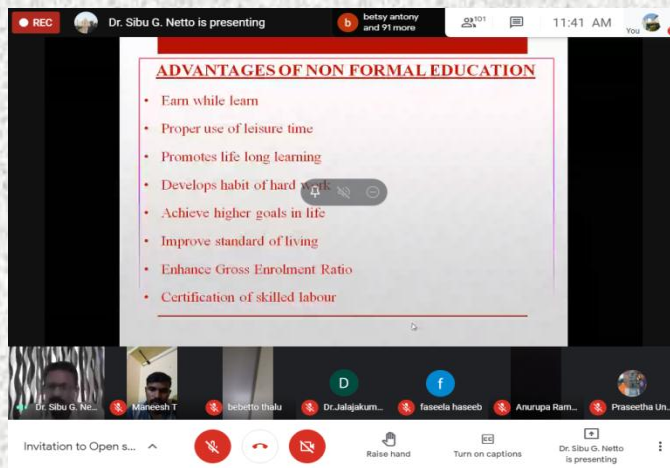
As an innovative initiative undertaken by Regional Centre, Cochin; clubbed Online Counseling sessions were conducted for July 2020 learners with support all LSCs during this period. The same was coordinated by Dr. V.T. Jalajakumari, ARD and Ms. Sujini Babu, Assistant. From April, 2021 to June, 2021, around 428 Counseling sessions for 10 number of programmes were conducted during this period.

Innovation Club Activities

The Innovation Club at Regional Centre, Cochin was initiated under the encouragement of the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) of IGNOU. The sessions are being held at Regional Centre, Cochin with an objective to enrich and generate awareness amongst the learners of IGNOU on a wide range of topics ranging from Exploring Social and Biological Perspectives of Women Empowerment to Digital Services of IGNOU through which the learners were made aware about various issues and motivated to think innovatively, generate ideas and embark on a path which could lead to future development of the Nation.

Three Online/Virtual monthly lecture identified as Open cum Enrichment Session were held at the Regional Centre, Cochin as per the following schedule during this period. The meetings were coordinated/administered by Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD who is also the Nodal Officer for the Innovation club activities at Regional Centre, Cochin.

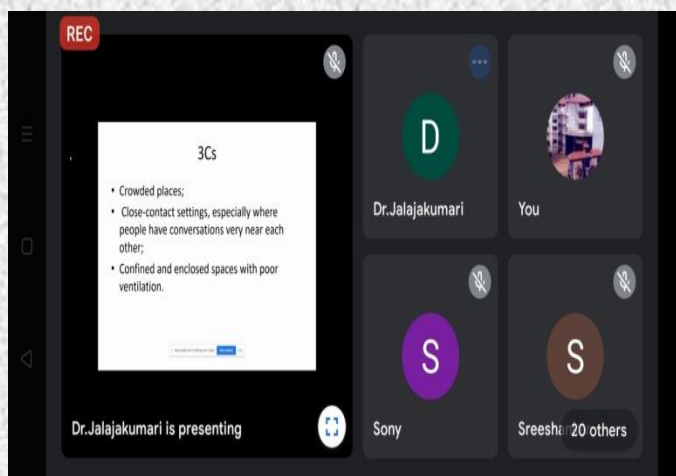
S. No	Date	Resource Person	Topic of Presentation
1	27.04.2021	Dr. Sibu G. Netto, School of Pedagogical Sciences, MG University	Non-Formal Education - Reaching out to the Unreached
2	26.05.2021	Dr. Sindhu P. Nair, Deputy Director (DD), IGNOU Regional Centre, Cochin	Management – Perspectives for Open and Distance Learning (ODL)
3	29.06.2021	Dr. V.T. Jalajakumari, Asst. Regional Director (ARD), RC Cochin	COVID 19: A Review of Personal Accountability towards Precautions



Screenshot of the Virtual/Online Open Session cum Enrichment Session addressed by Dr. Sibu G. Netto, Asst. Prof, MG University, Kottayam on 27.04.2021



Screenshot of the Virtual/Online Open Session addressed by Dr. Sindhu P. Nair, DD, RC Cochin Session on 26.05.2021



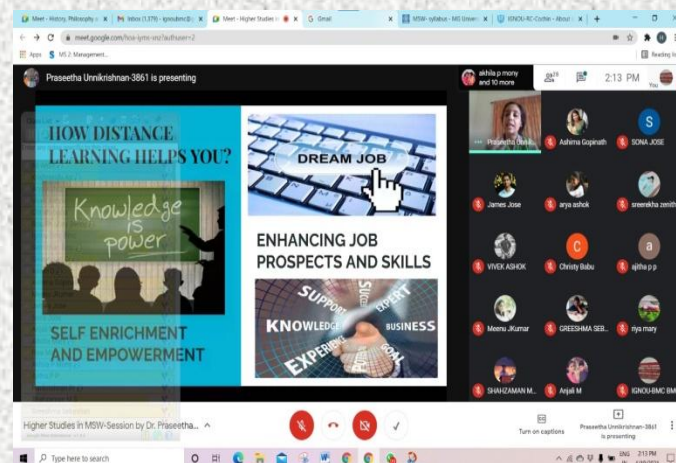
Screenshot of the Virtual/Online Open Session cum Enrichment Session by Dr. V.T. Jalajakumari, ARD, RC Cochin on 29.06.2021

Promotional initiatives

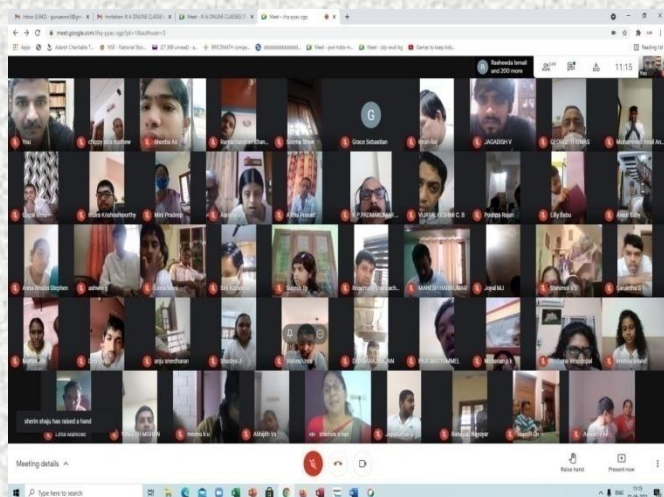
Online/Virtual Promotional Meetings, Campaigns and Events with a view to improve enrolment for January 2021 Admission cycle was organized by the Regional Centre, Cochin through various Study Centres and other Institutions to promote IGNOU programmes by reaching out to the unreached. Facebook Live sessions were also organized for the Learners/General public associated with Regional Centre, Cochin for sharing of information pertaining to IGNOU Admissions for July 2021.

The Live Programme using Regional Centre Cochin Official Facebook Page was Administered/Coordinated/interacted by the Academics of Regional Centre, Cochin. The Technical support for the Face Book Session Programme was provided by Sh. Muhammad Ansar, AEDP, Regional Centre Cochin.

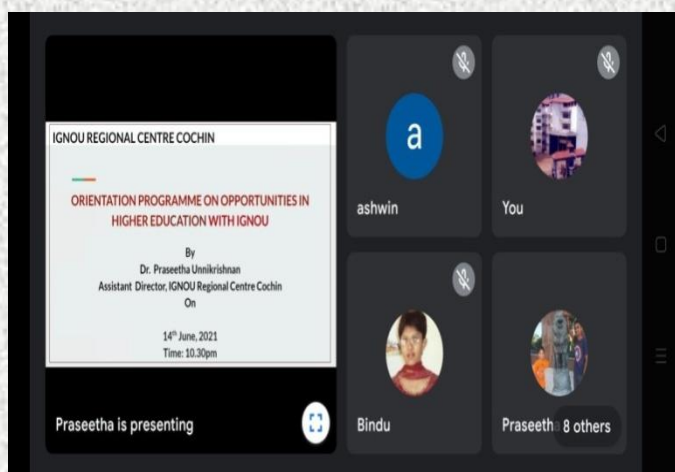
S. No	Date & Time	Meeting organized/ administered by	Participants	Purpose
1.	19.04.2021	Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD	Around 28 students and Faculty participated	Admission and Promotional campaign for Post-Graduate students (MSW –II year) studying at Bharat Mata College, Thrikkakkara
2.	01.06.2021	Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD	Around 60 students and Teachers participated	Online/Virtual Admission address on Higher Education with IGNOU during Pravesanolsavam-2021 conducted by Adarsh Charitable Trust, Ernakulam
3.	14.06.2021	Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD	Around 15 students and Teachers participated	Online/Virtual Promotional Meeting on Higher Education with IGNOU in association with Adarsh Charitable Trust, Ernakulam
4.	28.06.2021	Dr. Sindhu P Nair, DD	The Facebook session was viewed by many and has 1.3k views	Facebook Live session on topic 'Computer and Information Science programmes at IGNOU'
5.	30.06.2021	Dr. Sindhu P Nair, DD	The Facebook session was viewed by many and has 841 views	Facebook Live session on topic 'Continuing Education for Chartered Accountants and Management Professionals'



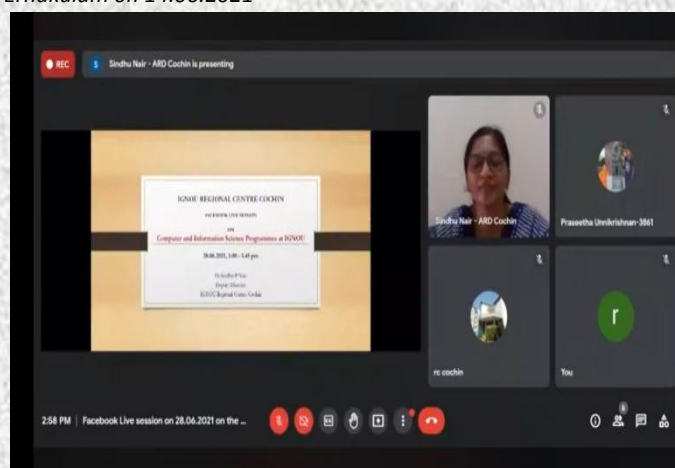
Screenshot of Presentation presented by Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD during the Online/Virtual Promotional Meeting with SC 14165-Bharat Mata College, Thrikkakkara on 19.04.2021



Screenshot of Admission Promotion by Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD during the Online/Virtual Pravesanolsavam-2021 conducted by Adarsh Charitable Trust, Ernakulam on 01.06.2021



Screenshot of Presentation presented by Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD during the Online/Virtual Promotional Meeting on Higher Education with IGNOU in association with Adarsh Charitable Trust, Ernakulam on 14.06.2021

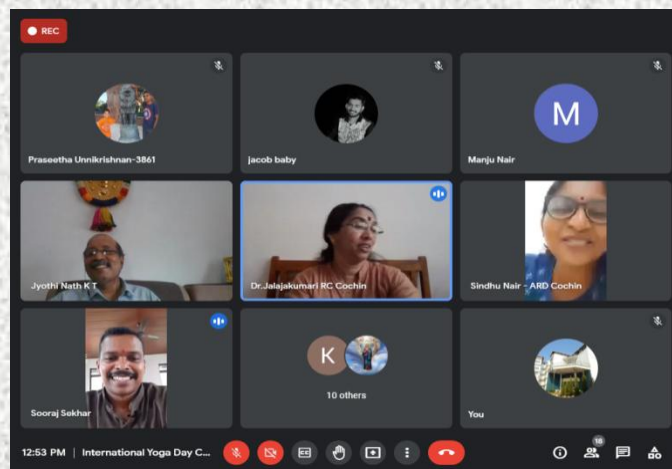


Screenshot of Presentation presented by Dr. Sindhu P. Nair, DD during the Facebook Live Promotional Meeting on 28.06.2021

Other Activities at Regional Centre, Cochin

International Yoga Day

The Regional Centre Cochin organized a Webinar on the topic - Pranayama and Yogic Breath on the occasion of International Yoga Day on 21st June 2021 at 11.00 am in Online mode through Google meet.



Sh. Sooraj P. Sekhar, Resource Person addressing participants during the Online/Virtual Yoga day celebration at Regional Centre, Cochin on 21.06.2021

Sh. Sooraj P. Sekhar, Director of Sahasrara Institute of Yoga and Mind Culture and President of Yogashastra Parishad, Ernakulam District was the resource person. Dr. Sindhu P Nair, Deputy Director Introduced the Yoga Expert by Sh. Sooraj P. Sekhar. Dr. J.S. Dorothy, Regional Director delivered the Inaugural Address on the occasion of International Yoga Day.

The resource person Sh. Sooraj P. Sekhar introduced the topic by providing inputs on the concept of Yoga and the different streams of Yoga. The expert then highlighted the importance of Pranayama for overall physical and mental health. The significance of doing Pranayama in the current Pandemic time and the benefit by way of improved body immunity were explained by the expert. The concept of Pachapranas was detailed to the participants. The expert also spoke about the various types of sectional breathing and the combination of these with Yogic breath and its benefits. This was followed by the demonstration of Kapalabhati Pranayama by the yoga expert. Participants also did a practice of this Pranayama technique. The entire session was in an interactive mode.

Sh. K. Muraleedharan, Section Officer proposed the Vote of Thanks. The Staff of Regional Centre Cochin and Regional Evaluation Centre Cochin participated in the Programme through Online mode. The screenshots of the programme is enclosed. The recording of the programme has been

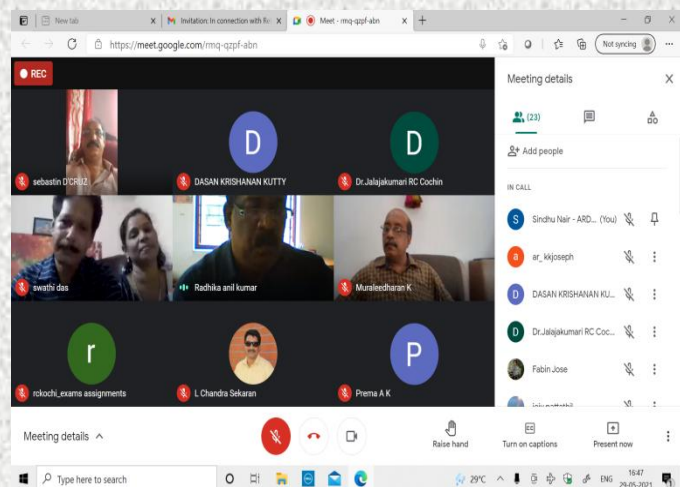
uploaded in the IGNOU Regional Centre Youtube channel. The entire event was coordinated by Dr. Sindhu P Nair, Deputy Director and Sh. K. Muraleedharan, Section Officer. The Technical assistance was rendered by Sh. Sebastian D'Cruz, EDP and Sh. Muhammad Anzar T.A, AEDP. Back office correspondence was facilitated by Dr. L. Chandrasekaran, PS and Ms. R. Manju, Assistant.

Virtual Felicitation to Sh. P.K Baladasan, MTS, RC Cochin

Sh. P.K. Baladasan, MTS retired from services of IGNOU service on 31.05.2021 (last working day in May 2021) after completing 33 years of service towards IGNOU.

Sh. P.K. Baladasan joined IGNOU Head Quarters, New Delhi in June 1989 and was transferred to Regional Centre Cochin in September 1989. Sh. P.K. Baladasan has worked under various Former Regional Directors- Late Prof. V. Vasudevan, Dr. P. Ashok Kumar, Dr. M. Shanmugham, Late Dr. V.V Reddy, Dr. K.S. Divakaran Nair, Dr. M. Rajesh and Former Regional Director In-charge namely Dr. B. Sukumar, Dr. Sindhu P. Nair, Dr. V.T. Jalajakumari at Regional Centre Cochin.

A virtual Felicitation ceremony for Sh. P.K. Baladasan through Google meet platform was organized by Regional Centre, Cochin for Staff of Regional Centre Cochin and Study Centre 14000 on 29.05.2021 at 4 pm. Besides the staff of Regional Centre Cochin, Study Centre 14000, Dr. M. Shanmugham, Former Director, RSD also felicitated Sh. P.K. Baladasan in the virtual Felicitation and shared their memories of working together. It was decided to follow the COVID-19 protocol and have a Face-to-Face felicitation after resuming normalcy for social gathering.



Virtual/Online Felicitation ceremony of Sh. P.K. Baladasan, MTS at Regional Centre, Cochin on 29.05.2021

During the virtual Felicitation ceremony for Sh. P.K. Baladasan wherein every Staff/Academic spoke of their interactions with Sh. P.K. Baladasan, and expressed pleasant memories for the same. Multi-lingual skill of Sh. P.K. Baladasan was highlighted by everyone.

Study Centre Corner

MES College of Education, Edathala (LSC 1453)

Muslim Educational Society (MES) Training College is a self finance college functioning under Muslim Educational Society, affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and recognized by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). MES offers Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) in English, Social Science, Commerce, Physical Science, Mathematics and Natural Science. MES has carved a niche for itself in the field of education and a new feather has been added to its cap with the commencement of the Training College in the month of June 2005.



Entrance of MES College of Education, Edathala

The College is situated in the land sufficiently far from the madding crowd of Cochin city, at Edathala, about 6 km from Aluva town in Ernakulam District.

IGNOU Programme Study Centre (1453P) is functioning from the campus of MES College of Education, Edathala. It is a Programme Study Centre established under Regional Centre Cochin in the year 2006 with 100 students and has presently grown to 178 IGNOU students as on 2020. There are three IGNOU programmes MA(Education), PG Diploma in Educational Technology and PG Diploma in School Leadership Management activated at this Study Centre.



Ms. Bindu M.K, Programme In-Charge of IGNOU Programme Study Centre LSC 1453P MES College of Education, Edathala

IGNOU Regional Centre Cochin thanks Ms. Bindu M. K., the Programme In-Charge of IGNOU Programme Study Centre 1453P MES College of Education, Edathala for providing inputs on behalf of the Management of Host Institution of LSC 1453P for this issue of Newsletter.

Meet an IGNOU Learner



This 'Meet an IGNOU Learner' is about Ms. Thasni Shahul, Gold Medalist of Master of Computer Applications (MCA) at IGNOU. Ms. Shahul was awarded the Gold Medal for standing first in the University in the MCA programme in the 34th Convocation Ceremony of IGNOU. Her profile was shared to Dr. Praseetha Unnikrishnan, AD for use in the Newsletter of IGNOU Regional Centre, Cochin.

In the words of Ms. Shahul,

"...IGNOU is one of the best University in the World and being an MCA student, I consider as a privilege to be a alumnus of IGNOU"

According to Ms. Shahul, during her period of study with IGNOU, she gained a good knowledge of the subject. Further the study materials provided by IGNOU under the MCA

programme was very much appreciated by Ms. Shahul and in her own words an 'excellent resource material'. Support from the family, LSC staff, preparation for writing Assignment Response, availability of old question papers were the contributing factors to top the programme of study enrolled.

IGNOU Regional Centre, Cochin appreciates her spirit, dedication, motivation and is proud of her achievements and wishes her all the best in all her future endeavors!

Homage to Dr. V. Venugopal Reddy (1957-2021; RD Cochin from 01.08.2011 to 02.11.2012)



Dr. V. Venugopal Reddy born on 01.04.1957 was a renowned Educationalist and Administrator of IGNOU and superannuated from the services of IGNOU in 2019. Dr. Reddy began his career as Assistant Professor in the Department of Commerce, School of Management Studies of IGNOU, New Delhi in February, 1987 and later shifted to Student Support services in 1989. Dr. Reddy worked in different capacities as Assistant Director, Deputy Director and Regional Director in Regional Centres such as Bangalore, Cochin, Delhi-I, Delhi-2, Jammu and Vijayawada and served as the first Director, Research Unit IGNOU, New Delhi between 2009 and 2011 and as Regional Director (Sr. Scale) in Regional Services Division (Hqs). Dr. Reddy superannuated from the services of IGNOU in the year 2019 as Senior Regional Director, Regional Centre Bangalore.

IGNOU Regional Centre Cochin deeply condoles the sad demise of Dr. Reddy on 12.06.2021. His contributions towards the progress of Regional Centre Cochin is duly acknowledged by one and all and will be remembered forever.
