

## IGNOU Special Study Centers Plays A Central Role in Imparting Higher Education to Jail Inmates: Case Study of Rajasthan

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### Abstract

The role of education has been widely recognized in the modern concept of prison reform. From the social point of view also, we cannot deny that prisoners are also a part and parcel of our society and hence it is required to enable them to bring them in the mainstream of the society and boost their self-esteem. Therefore, it is necessary to make them eligible to command respect in the society after release from the jails. **“WITHOUT LEARNING, THE WISE BECOME FOOLISH, BY LEARNING THE FOOLISH BECOME WISE.”** therefore, education has been treated as a right of prisoners which has been incorporated in the various guidelines given by the United Nations, Supreme Court of India and National Human Rights Commission of India. *Model Prison Manual* says that “Education is vital for the overall development of prisoners. Through education their outlook, habits and total perspective of life can be changed. Education of prisoners benefits the society as well as it leads to their rehabilitation and self-sufficiency. Education reduces the tendency to crime. This would mean less crime, fewer victims, fewer prisoners, more socially productive people, and less expenditure on criminal justice and law enforcement. Education is harmonious and all-round development of human faculties—mental as well as physical. It is a tool by which the knowledge, character and behavior of the inmates can be molded. It helps a prisoner to adjust to the social environment and his ultimate resettlement in society. This paper describes the operationalization aspects and status of this initiative of IGNOU in Rajasthan. The paper tries to present a glance of the University on the basis of data collected of the prison inmates admitted to various courses in Rajasthan.

**KEYWORDS**-Special Study Center, Higher Education & Jail Inmates

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution is committed to the equality of citizens. The Directive Principles of the State Policy are also for the promotion of the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society, particularly the SC/STs and Minorities. To achieve the objective of "Equality" with many facets, special provisions have also been made in the Constitution of India. Keeping this spirit of the Indian Constitution IGNOU was established in 1985 with a mandate to democratize Higher Education and to reach the unreached. The setting up of IGNOU was a significant milestone in imparting Higher Education to people who otherwise had little access to any system of education. In addition to large sections of population

who were deprived of education due to various reasons of caste, creed, gender, religion and geographical barrier, even jail inmates who could not have imagined, that while they are serving their terms in jail, could add on and contribute constructively to self- development, are now doing courses from IGNOU.

### **CONCEPT OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)**

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in its endeavor to reach the unreached, to democratize higher education and to provide better Learner Support Services, University has designed and developed a vast network of Regional Centers and Learner Support Centers. In view of the geographical, social, economic and other kinds of barriers a diversified delivery system has been evolved which needs different kinds of Learner Support Centers. IGNOU has adopted a collaborative approach for the establishment of these Learner Support Centers. It strives for the cooperation and collaboration with existing universities and other institutions of higher learning in its mission to reach the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of the society. Article 46 of the Indian Constitution states that, “The State shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.” The establishment of Special Study Centers by IGNOU is one of the ways of enacting the provisions laid down in this Article. Therefore Special Study Centers have been established by the University, primarily for reaching the unreached, for those disadvantaged groups of the society who for one reason or the other could not access higher education. The ultimate object of education is the return of these jail inmates to society with skills & knowledge. The concept and objective of establishing Special Study Centers in various jails by IGNOU was:

- ❖ To provide an opportunity for jail inmates to return to main stream life with quality education and future development both morally and vocationally.
- ❖ To create the interest of jail inmates towards higher education.
- ❖ To access high quality education to all Jail inmates, who could not get the education due to their socio-economic conditions.
- ❖ To socialize the jail inmates through education. Jail Inmates are a special group who have the right to equitable access to all basic benefits of the society
- ❖ To provide study materials and library facilities through IGNOU to all jails under the supervision of an IGNOU Coordinator and supporting staffs.
- ❖ To make provisions of teaching-learning transactions, including holding of examination for all learners within the jail premises.

### **JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY**

Today it is the need of the democratic world to provide educational opportunities to the jail inmates for improvement in quality of life. Many studies advocated the Jail Inmates’ education for reducing the offending, rehabilitating the jail inmates after release from the jails and decreasing cost of governments to bring them in to the main stream of the society.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the status of enrollment of jail inmates in education through distance education programmes

2. To study programme-wise enrollment of Jail Inmates in IGNOU's Programmes in different academic years.
3. To study support services provided to the Jail Inmates for pursuing their study through special study centers.
4. To study IGNOU's approach, of imparting education to the imprisoned to improve their mental status and well- being.

## **IGNOU AND EDUCATION OF THE JAIL INMATES**

IGNOU has played a major role in its 32 years of journey for qualitative and quantitative expansion of higher education system catering to all sections of the society. IGNOU is the largest University in the world serving the educational aspirations of nearly cumulative 30 lakh learners in India and other countries through 21 Schools of Studies and a strong network of 67 Regional Centre's including 6 Army Centre's, 4 Navy Centre's and 1 Assam Rifles Centre located all over India, more than 3000 Learner Support Centre's and 28 overseas Centre's. The University offers more than 237 Certificate, Diploma, PG Certificate, PG Diploma, Degree and Doctoral Programmes. IGNOU established 144 Special Study Centre's in jails , these were established within the jurisdiction of 45 Regional Centres across the country to cater to the educational requirements of the jail inmates leading to their socio-economic rehabilitation.

## **POPULAR PROGRAMME ACTIVATED IN JAIL CENTRES.**

Taking a positive approach of the statement of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, former P.M. of India, that education is a liberating and democratizing force. The Govt. of India keeping this fact in consideration established IGNOU in 1985 by an Act of Parliament to achieve the objectives of democratizing higher education with need-based academic programmes—Professional and Vocational in nature.

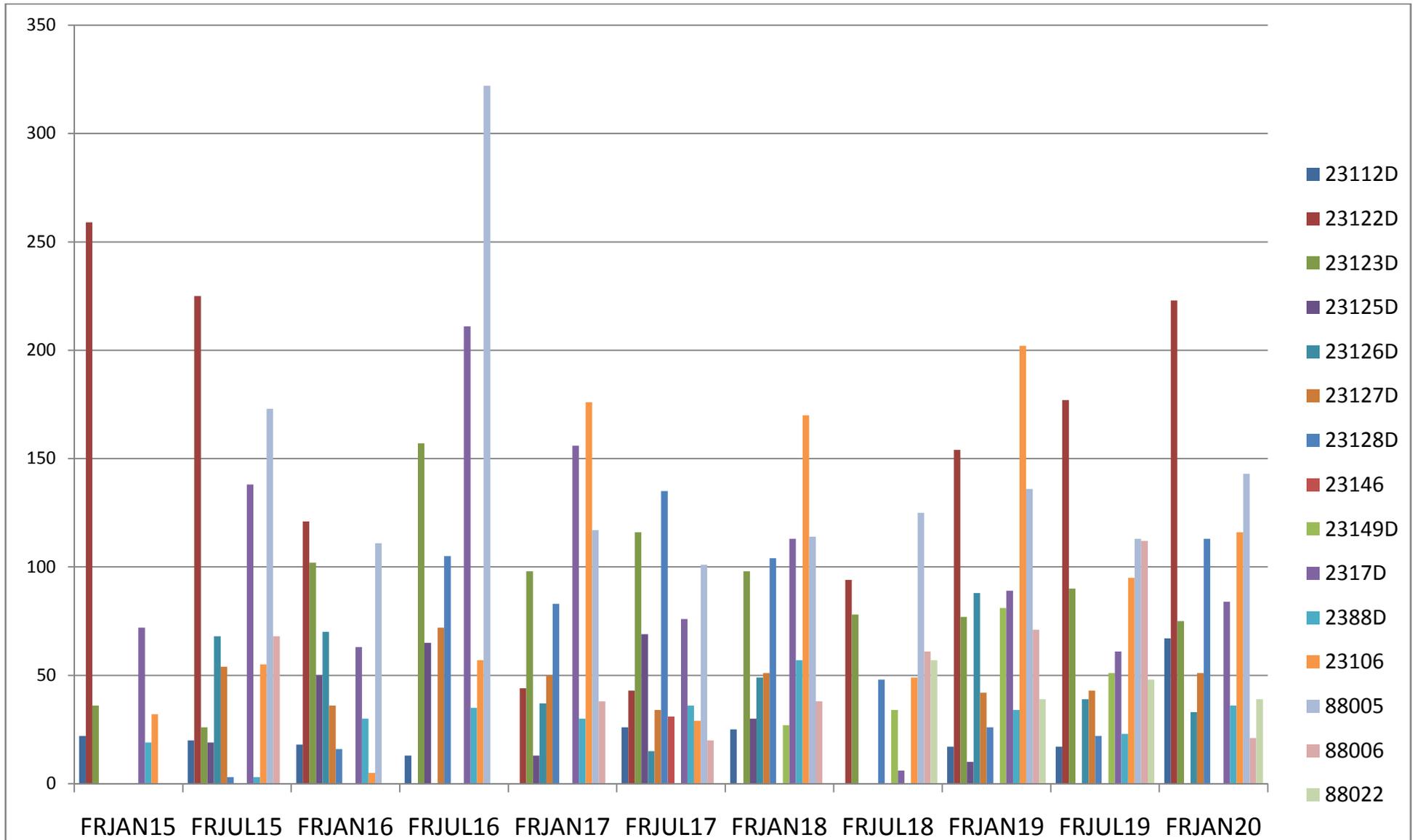
The programmes which are mainly activated in different jails as per need of their local situations are from the following list of programmes:

- ❖ Bachelor's Degree Programme ( BA, BCom ) etc.
- ❖ Bachelor's in Social Work (BSW)
- ❖ Bachelor's in Tourism Studies (BTS)
- ❖ Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)
- ❖ Certificate in Tourism Studies (CTS)
- ❖ Certificate in Information Technology (CIT)
- ❖ Certificate in HIV and Family Education (CAFE)
- ❖ Certificate in Food and Nutrition (CFN)
- ❖ Certificate in Nutrition and Childcare (CNCC)
- ❖ Certificate in Human Rights (CHR)
- ❖ Master of Commerce (M.Com)
- ❖ Master's in Public Administration (MPA)
- ❖ Master's in English (MEG)
- ❖ Master's in Sociology (MSO)
- ❖ Master's in Business Administration (MBA)

**IGNOU SPECIAL STUDY CENTERS PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN IMPARTING HIGHER EDUCATION TO JAIL INMATES:  
CASE STUDY OF RAJASTHAN (DATA REPORT)**

Session	23112 D	23122 D	23123 D	23125 D	23126 D	23127 D	23128 D	23146 D	23149 D	2317 D	2388 D	23106 D	88005 D	88006 D	88022 D	G. Total
FRJAN	22	259	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	19	32	0	0	-	440
RRJAN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	9
FRJUL	20	225	26	19	68	54	3	-	-	138	3	55	173	68	-	852
RRJUL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
FRJAN	18	121	102	50	70	36	16	-	-	63	30	5	111	0	-	622
RRJAN	-	2			-			-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	14
FRJUL	13	-	157	65	-	72	105	-	-	211	35	57	322	0	-	1037
RRJUL	-		4		-	-	-	-	-	9	4	-	-	-	-	17
FRJAN 17	-	44	98	13	37	50	83	-	-	156	30	176	117	38	-	842
RRJAN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
FRJUL	26	43	116	69	15	34	135	31	-	76	36	29	101	20	-	731
RRJUL	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	14
FRJAN	25		98	30	49	51	104	-	27	113	57	170	114	38	-	876
RRJAN	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	9
FRJUL		94	78				48	-	34	6	-	49	125	61	57	552
RRJUL	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	9
FRJAN	17	154	77	10	88	42	26	-	81	89	34	202	136	71	39	1066
RRJAN	-	-	22	-	16	-	76	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	116
FRJUL	17	177	90	-	39	43	22	-	51	61	23	95	113	112	48	891
RRJUL 19	-	-	7	2	-	-	25	-	-	5	-					39

FRJAN 20	67	223	75	-	33	51	113	-	-	84	36	116	143	21	39	1001
RRJUL 20	-	-	4	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	14
G.Total	225	1342	994	258	421	443	764	31	193	1112	318	986	1455	429	183	9154



## **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

Educated prisoners can be associated with the project as resource persons and it will save resources and expenditure .It will be easier to socialize the jail inmates through education when they will come outside because Jail Inmates are a special group who has rights to equitable access to all basic benefits of the society. The education provided here will prove as an asset to them.

This article may prove as one of the substantial contribution for realizing the educational need and aspirations of the Jail Inmates and accordingly to provide the support for molding their life for better living and make them self-sufficient in the mainstream society. This study may also provide inputs/suggestions to IGNOU and Jail functionaries to understand the difficulties faced by the Jail Inmates and suggest measures to provide them with better education.

## **CONCLUSION**

Access of higher education to jail inmates is one of the most remarkable steps through Open and Distance Learning. Prisons are high security zones where entry to the outsiders is restricted to the large extent. Security is the primary concern of the prison officials.” Jail inmates Education” even through is practiced widely, but is within these parameters of security. The Government of India has made various policies to upgrade the life standard of the jail inmates, through IGNOU, it is being achieved. Presently 144 Special Study Centres are offering various programmes to the jail inmates across the country free of cost. This move has been a significant milestone in encouraging and rehabilitating prisoners in order to improve their quality of life post release. IGNOU is offering “Free Education” to the Jail Inmates (Prisoners) by waiving off the programme fee, exam fee and prospectus cost. Jail inmates’ education is socially relevant and cost effective. This is an opportunity for jail inmates to returns to main stream life with quality education & future development both morally and vocationally. Need-based academic programmes for jail inmates. ---- The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), since the past decades, has been making Open and Distance learning (ODL) programmes and has been experimenting with various innovative ideas and methods to cater to the diverse needs of its prospective learners. The University, realizing its mandate to reach out to the unreached, ventured into educational intervention behind bars in its attempt to empower this marginalized section of the population. This intervention caters to the learning needs of both literate and semi-literate prisoners and is aimed at reformation of under trials as well as convicted prisoners; all expenditure under this initiative being borne by the University. IGNOU’s approach, of imparting education to the imprisoned, falls in line with its vision and mission and with the objectives of democratizing higher education; which is the need of time.

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