

ABSTRACT

Title: Evaluation of the Student Support Facilities Provided by the Regional Offices of Allama Iqbal Open University

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Distance education is an academic discipline that paves the way to the expansion of education to large sections of the masses specially to those who have no access to education in the formal system and who wish to upgrade their social status through acquiring education. Student support facilities are the means to achieve the objectives of distance education. Student support facilities include tutorials, workshops, study – centers, Regional Offices, media support, library services, resource centers etc.

The research study aimed at evaluating the program of Student Support Services extended by the Regional Directors of Allama Iqbal Open University at M.A/M.Ed. level. The research population consisted of all distance students and tutors related to M.A./M.Ed. programmes in Autumn 2002 and Spring 2003 and the

officials of all A.I.O.U Regional Directors in Punjab. 270 students, 72 tutors and 28 officials of Regional Directors were included in the sample.

A Likert – type 80 – item five-point scale was administered on 270 male and female students. Another Likert scale of 40 items (39 close-ended and one open-ended) was administered on 72 tutors. The third Likert scale (29 close-ended and one open-ended question) was administered to 28 Regional Directors, Deputy and Assistant Regional Directors.

In case of students, on 53 statements (66%) there was an agreement; while on 27 statements (34%), disagreement was observed. In case of tutors on 31 statements the mean score was more than 3.00 and on 8 statements it was less than 3.00. The proportion of agreement and disagreement was 79% and 21% respectively. In case of officers of Regional Directors, 23 out of 29 statements, there was an agreement and on 6 statements there was disagreement. The proportion of agreement and disagreement was 79% and 21%. The results showed that the majority of all the three sample was in agreement to the nature and level of efforts of Regional Directors regarding provision of student support facilities.

On the basis of findings and conclusions, it was recommended that tutors should be regular and punctual in tutorials; they should record their comments on students' assignments; they should be careful and honest in their scoring; they should use modern techniques in their face-to-face instruction and return assignments after scoring within stipulated time. It was suggested that number of tutorials should be enhanced. It was also recommended that resource persons may use modern technology in workshops. There should be a close relationship and coordination

between Allama Iqbal Open University Regional Offices and Study Centres. The process of the selection of study – centers and examination centers should be systematic. Courses may be improved in the interest of distance – students. Library services may be provided to the students and above all positive reinforcement should be given to lead out the best in the distance – students.