

IGNOU offers courses on women empowerment

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Woman-specific studies seem to be getting serious attention at Indira Gandhi National Open University, with the varsity announcing an entire array of gender-related courses. These programmes include an MPhil in gender and developmental studies, an MA in women and gender studies, certificate and diploma in gender studies and nutritional security, then a certificate and diploma in gender and labour studies and lastly, a certificate and diploma in gender in cinema.

There are also new programmes which include a certificate and diploma in gender and law, gender and science and gender agriculture and sustainable development.

The director, school of gender and development studies, Prof Savita Singh said, "Women's empowerment and education are intrinsically related and the one is not possible without the other. Our country still has a long way to travel before women's empowerment is achieved. Social evils against women abound whether it is violence against women, female foeticide, dowry or wife beating,

there is scope for a lot of original work to be done in the field."

Prof Singh added, "There is also considerable interest among a dedicated section of students who are willing to work in this field and there is also a need for trained social workers who will intervene in this area and work steadily towards women's empowerment. Hence, we set up the school for gender and development studies and also started a slew of courses in this challenging field."

The syllabus for the course has been formulated by a panel of experts from within the varsity and expert opinion from outside the varsity has also been considered.

In accordance with the university policy, the MPhil programme will have workload equivalent to 48 credits. Eligibility includes an MA degree in women and gender studies.

The MA in women and gender studies would equip students with the ability to deconstruct the complex power hierarchies and relationships operating in society.

The course structure and syllabus have been carefully devised by a panel of experts. Eligibility conditions include a graduation in any discipline.