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Growth and development of distance education in India and China: a study on policy perspectives

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Abstract

India and China are two fast growing economies of the world and need large skill based manpower to sustain the economic growth. The existing formal higher educational system in these countries will not be able to meet the demand of the economy. The paper will try (i) to compare the development of economy and distance education in India and China with reference to policy perspectives; (ii) to examine the course design, development and delivery of distance education programmes in national open universities of India and China i.e. Indira Gandhi National Open University of India (IGNOU) and Open University of China (OUC); (iii) to analyze the trend of enrollment in IGNOU and OUC; and (iv) to compare the recognition /accreditation and quality control process of distance learning in both these countries. The paper highlights the policy strategies of two countries towards quality control mechanism as par with conventional system.

Keywords: Distance Education; Policy; Quality Control; India; China

Introduction

India and China share a common uniqueness in terms of having the largest population comprising wider geographical areas and rising economies with a faster growth rate. In the last couple of years, economies of both countries benefited due to success of globalization processes. Both economies are often treated similar in terms of increase in the rate of growth and per capita income. But there are differences between characteristics of these economies. Indian economy is a mixed economy with larger dominance of private sector, whereas Chinese economy is a socialist market economy with smaller dominance of private sector but approaching fast towards to capitalist economy. The economic growth rate of China has increased at an average annual rate of about 9.5 percent since the last two decades compared to Indian counterpart (5 to 6 percent) during the same period. The growth rate of China and India increased from primary to service sector. However, of the total employment, percentage of employment in industry increased in both countries: from 22.5 percent in 2005 to 29.5 percent in 2012 in the case of China, and from 19 percent in 2005 to 24.7 percent in 2012 in India. Of the total labor force participation rate, percentage of labor force participation rate for ages 15–24 years has declined in both these economies from 2005 to 2013 (ILO estimate). It has decreased from 60.5 percent to 56.2 percent in China and from 47.1 percent to 35.3 percent in India during the same period (World Bank, 2015). Most of the problems in both economies are similar i.e. inadequate generation of employment and growth with inequalities.

At present, both economies are growing together. World Bank data predicts India's economic growth will match China's growth rate in the current year (Figure 1). Higher education development in India and China are also growing parallel to their economic growth. India is matching gross enrollment ratio of higher education as par with China's gross enrollment ratio since the last couple

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of years (Figure 2). Both countries are concerned with increasing gross enrollment ratio in higher education.

Consistent with rapid economic development, the education scale and quality were highly promoted in China also. The Ministry of Education in China (2010) put forward the specific education development goals for the next 10 years, which are: "basically modernize education, bring a learning society into shape, and turn China into a country rich in human resources by the year 2020" (p. 9). Wen Jia Bao (2013) pointed out that national government spending on education totaled 7.79 trillion yuan over the past five years, increasing at an average annual rate of 21.58% to reach 4% of GDP in 2012 for the first time in the last fifty years. Also, it made free nine-year compulsory education universal across the country and the Gross Enrollment Ratio of Higher Education rose to 30%. In contrast, India government is focusing on providing skill-based education to meet the growing demand of industry. Open and Distance Learning System (ODL) can enhance gross enrollment ratio in both these economies.

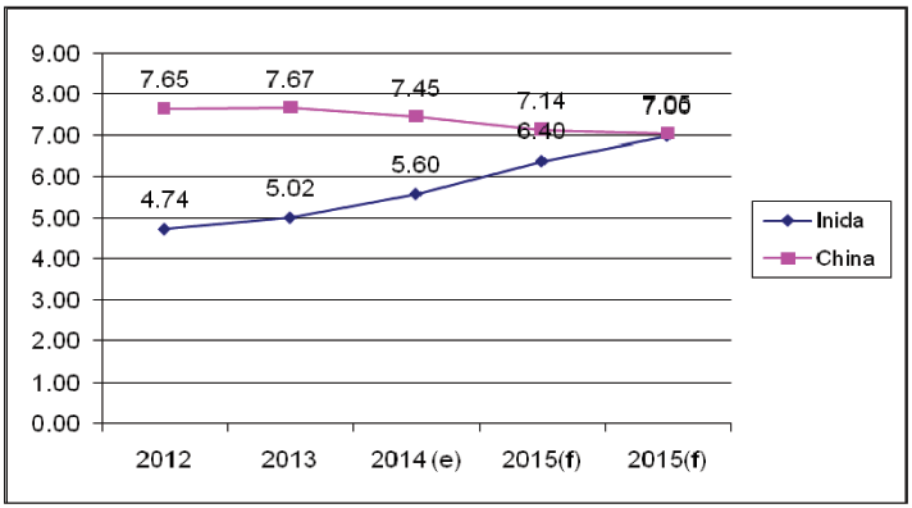

Figure 1: Growth rate of India and China from 2012 to 2015

Source: Data compiled from the Database of World Bank retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org
Note: e = estimates; f = forecasts

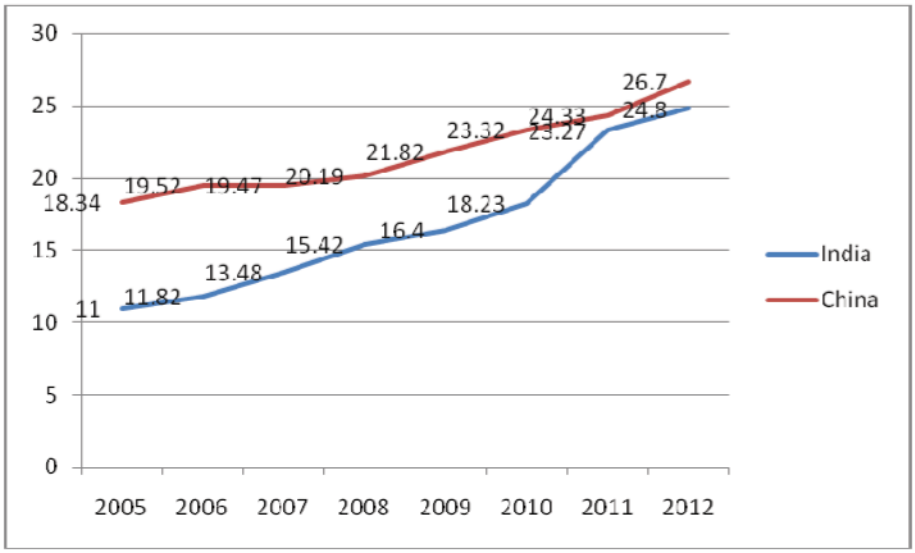

Figure 2: Gross Enrollment Ratio of higher education in India and China

Source: Data compiled from the Database of UNESCO, retrieved from data.uis.unesco.org

Research design

The study is based on secondary sources of information. Data and information are used from published and unpublished documents. The information available on web pages was also used for the analysis purpose.

Genesis of ODL system in India and China

India

In India, the University of Delhi first established the School of Correspondence Courses in 1962 as a pilot project. Later, Punjabi University, Patiala set up a Directorate of Correspondence Courses in 1968 and enrolled a large number of students. The establishment of the Open University in the UK (1969) encourages Indian Policy Makers to intensify corresponding education through an Open University system in the country to provide accessibility of quality education to those who couldn't continue their education due to one reason or another. Government of India constituted an eight member working group on the proposed Open University in 1974. During the same time, various other universities also established Directorates of Correspondence Courses at their respective institutions. Andhar Pradesh southern state established the first open university in India as 'Andhra Pradesh Open University' in 1982. During the same year, the International Council of Correspondence Education (ICCE) was renamed as International Council of Distance Education (ICDE) recognizing 'distance education' as a non-conventional education system across the world. Later, Andhra Pradesh University was renamed as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University. To meet the continuous increase in demand of correspondence courses, Government of India made a policy statement for establishment of the Open University in the Country. The Government of India introduced a Bill in the Parliament and it was passed by both Houses in August, 1985. It was named after the late Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi as Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). About 3 million students are enrolled in more than 225 programmes in this university. At present, more than 220 dual mode universities/institutions, 15 Open Universities (1 national and 14 state open universities) and some private institutions recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC) are offering correspondence/open and distance learning programmes in the country.

Till 2012, IGNOU was playing a dual role as an apex body in the country through Distance Education Council (DEC). It was established in 1991 under section 5 (2) of IGNOU Act passed by the Indian Parliament. DEC was responsible for promotion, coordination, and maintenance of standards of ODL system in the country. The Council also extended funding support to ODL institutions for the development of their infrastructure, course materials and learner support systems and use of ICT in various institutional activities. It also facilitated recognition of ODL institutions and programmes through apex bodies such as UGC, the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). In 2012, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India (GOI) withdrew DEC from IGNOU's act under section 5(2) and attached a separate Distance Education Bureau (DEB) in UGC. Since then, Distance Education Policy in the country is under revision.

China

The ODL system in China began in the late 1970s. It was initiated for typical political, economic and social reasons. At that time, China was in its early stage of Reform and Opening up, and needed a big amount of human resources for the economic recovery and the construction. Deng Xiaoping,

the then Vice Premier, learning from the experience of the Open University, UK, and decided to set up Chinese Radio and TV University to solve the human resources problem. As the State Council (1979) pointed out, "to establish radio and television universities is a strategic choice for expanding higher education, upgrading the scientific and cultural level of the masses, as well as having a larger number of professionals" (p. 1).

The development of ODL in China is closely related to the government regulation. To transform Radio and Television University to Open University is one of the most important policies recently made by national government in developing ODL market. Founded in 1979, the Central Radio and Television University (CRTVU) is the largest open distance higher education institution in China. A study by Liu Yi Zhan (2009) showed that the higher education graduates of CRTVU reached 7.2 million from 1979 to 2009, accounting for approximately 24% of the total higher education graduates. In 2012, the national government decided to establish Open University of China (OUC) on the basis of CRTVU. The Ministry of Education (2012) required OUC to try to build the overpass of lifelong learning, meet the diversified and personalized learning demands of the public and contribute to the construction of open and flexible lifelong education system. OUC (2012) also puts forward its 10-year strategic plan, which aims to be a new kind of university in China's higher education system, a world-class Open University featuring Chinese characteristics and an important pillar for constructing a learning society. It was designed to be open to all members of society in China, not only working adults but also school-age students, the elderly, farmers, the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups, and it provides application-oriented formal tertiary education and non-formal education like short-term learning programs and certificates (Li, 2014). It is obvious that the mandate of CRTVU and OUC changed a lot since its very beginning.

After nearly 40 years, ODL system in China is now far more developed. The market is growing dramatically. It covers all education levels, attracts public and private sectors and provides various scopes of services. ODL system contributed a lot to Chinese education development.

As stated above, the national governments of both countries have taken the right steps to restructure their ODL policy in the same year 2012 through shifting DEC from IGNOU to UGC as DEB in the case of India and establishment of OUC from CRTVU in the case of the China. It was very much needed to match the faster growth rate of India and China. Before analyzing its implication, let us analyse the process of course design, development and delivery of ODL programmes in national open universities of both countries.

Course design, development and delivery model

India

In IGNOU, the courses were prioritized as per the need. Faculty conducts need-based survey for a particular course/programme before obtaining approval from various statue approvals in the university. The needs of the prospective students, employment avenues, and the like have also been important considerations for designing the courses. Faculty coordinator-writer-editor approach to course design and development evolved and has become the mainstream course development approach in the university. With the change in time, much more flexibility, openness and learner centeredness were introduced in the university, which eventually reflected in the course design process too. ODL characteristics i.e. relaxation of entry qualifications, increasing duration for completion of the programme, addition of audio, video, teleconferencing, radio counseling and application of ICTs—all had implications for course design process in the University. A programme can be initiated by any faculty (teacher or academic), called the 'programme coordinator', irrespective

of one's designation or status. One has to follow a few stages in the process of course design and development to finally reach the stage of printing and production of materials. The programme coordinators have been concerned since with i) establishing academic credibility of programmes, ii) optimum utilization of limited resources for programme development and implementation, iii) availability of experts in the area and iv) credibility/valuing of degrees and diplomas by other academic institutions and the prospective employers.

A broader framework depicting the process of development of an academic programme is given in Figure 3, which depicts seven stages in the course design and development process adopted in IGNOU.

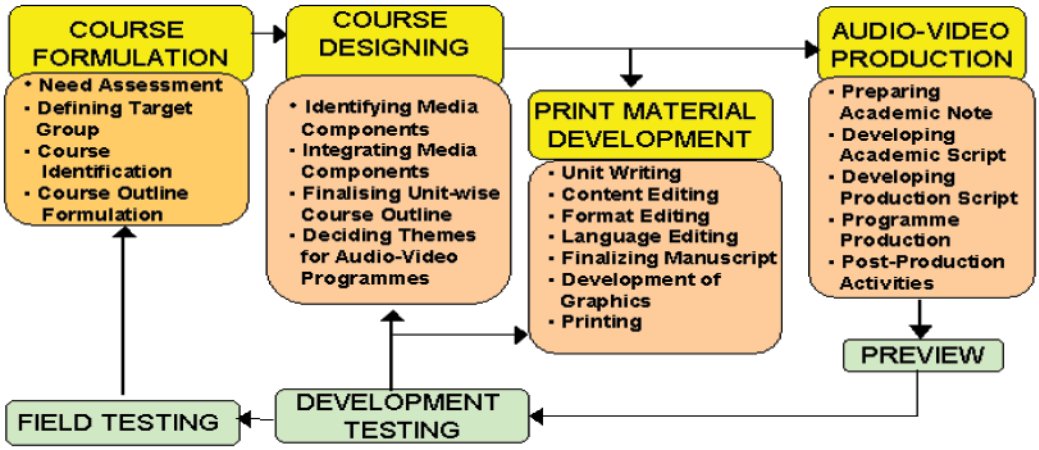

Figure 3: Course development process in IGNOU

China

The course design is based on market demand and student job skills, and the courses are divided into several categories, such as core courses and mini MOOCs. Secondly, the course development team is strong. Not only OUC teachers but also teachers from research universities and experts from enterprises and industries are joined in. Some of the team is international-formed. Thirdly, the course construction follows certain standards, namely *The Course Construction Work Procedures* (CRTVU, 2008) and *The Curriculum Construction Workflow* (CRTVU, 2007). The former one points out concrete rules about the basic requirements and the process of course construction, the preparation prior to the curriculum construction, the formulation of syllabus, the establishment and approval of an integral project, the multi-media teaching resource development, curriculum instructional design making, use of multi-media teaching resources and course evaluation, so that rules can be followed in all aspects of the work. The latter one divides the course construction process into five stages, as shown in Figure 4.

Role of ICT in Pedagogy of distance education programmes

India

IGNOU established EduSat (a satellite dedicated only to education) on 20th September, 2004 to play a lead role in a new era of technology-enabled education in the country. The university emphasized the development of multi-media and an online learning component in the existing distance learning programmes. The application of ICT continues in learner support services but its use in pedagogy is stopped at the moment due to not having a regulatory framework in place, not

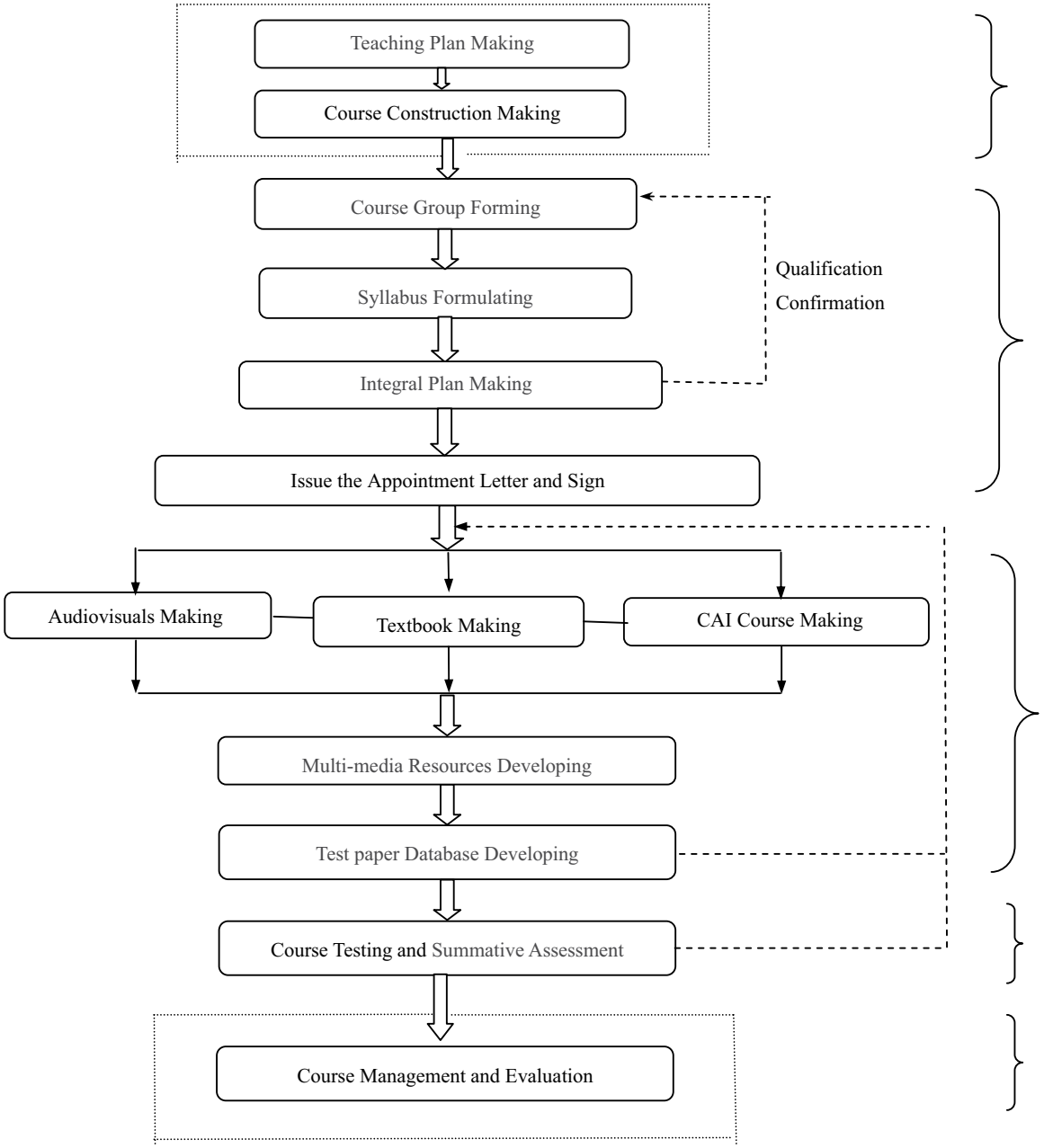

Figure 4: Course development process in OUC

only for online courses but also for distance learning programmes. The regulatory authority like UGC, its Distance Education Bureau (DEB) or AICTE are not recognizing any programmes which are offered through online mode only (Sharma, 2015). It is not only online programmes of IGNOU or State Open Universities or Dual Mode distance Teaching Institutions in the country; even formal institutions who are offering programmes through online mode are not being recognized by the UGC. Despite the fact, online programmes are being offered by some of the ODL as well as formal institutions across the country. However, it can be supplemented with print or any mode of delivery of the programme. Like IGNOU, other SOUs are also supplementing the learning material with additional material through digital technology.

China

The application of information technology and learning support services are the two main characteristics of ODL systems. OUC (2012) put "deeply converged application of technology and education" as its priority working areas, hoping to become a university on the "cloud". It will strengthen application of technology in teaching, research and management with a focus on five areas such as technical support, teaching application, resource construction, engineering research and intelligent management. At the same time, OUC is now adopting intensive learning support services. The services are provided in the whole learning process. Students can get academic support from academic teachers, nonacademic support from management staff and emotional support from tutors.

In both countries, ICT is being used in teaching and learning support services. The converged application of technology and education is going deeply and deeply. No legal framework exists at the moment to recognize online/e-learning/MOOC programmes in these countries.

Trend of enrollment in IGNOU and OUC

Table 1 shows that the growth rate of enrollment of both open universities was fluctuating. For instance, it increased 30 percent from 2009 to 2010 and 14% during 2010–2011 in the case of IGNOU. It declined 42% from 2011 to 2012 and increased 3% during 2012–13. In the case of OUC it declined 4.2% from 2009–2010 and increased 6.5% during 2010–2011. It again declined 2.5% from 2011 to 2012 and increased 6.2% from 2012 to 2013. It may be due to changing distance education policies of both open universities or the need for acceptance of distance education in the job market. It needs further research to find out the factor responsible for the fluctuation of the growth rate of enrolment in both open universities.

Table 1: Trend of enrollment in IGNOU for the last five years

Year	IGNOU		OUC	
	Enrollment	Growth Rate*	Enrollment	Growth Rate
2009	652946	-	1014362	-
2010	852740	30%	971900	-4.2%
2011	993471	14%	1034815	6.5%
2012	696753	-42%	1013571	-2.5%
2013	722390	3%	1075787	6.2%

Note: * Growth rate was calculated by $(P_t\text{-}P_0/P_0)*100$

Funding of IGNOU and OUC

As mentioned earlier, the IGNOU was given the distinctive additional responsibility of funding, maintaining quality and accrediting the distance education programmes and systems in the country through DEC till 2012. The national government was funding the capital and operating expenditure of the university till 1991. Afterward, the university source of income was mainly from tuitions fees. In view of this, Government of India reduced its grant to IGNOU about 15 percent of its total income. It is therefore not surprising that the income from student fees as percentage of its gross operating costs has gone up from 17.29 percent in 1986–87 to 69.0 percent in 2003–04 (Gaba & Bhusan,

2004). Government of India didn't develop any funding policy for the open universities as such. It has also been observed that most of the dual mode distance teaching institutions in India are generating revenue for their respective universities because of budget deficit of these universities. It means distance learner is paying subsidy to formal learner of the same institution. The amount generated from these students in the form of tuitions fees was not spent for their services.

In China, the ODL institution, either public or private, gets majority funding from the tuition fees like India. No funding formula/policy has been developed by the Government of China for open universities and other distance teaching Institutions in the country (Li, 2014). Although as a national public higher education institution, OUC cannot get as much as other HE institutions from national government budgets. The national government only pays OUC for some special HE programs, but it is unsustainable and unstable.

The funding structure for support services of OUC is different from India. OUC does not have to pay for the funding of its branches and student centers. The local governments are responsible for employing teachers and grant funding for OUC local branches and centers. This structure reduces the heavy burden of budget resources problem of OUC but causes the problems of integrality management of the whole university.

Open and distance learning policy and future pathways

It has been observed from the comparative analysis of development of economy as well as ODL system in India and China that there is a need for re-structuring ODL policies in their respective countries due to fast changing economy. China has already taken its steps by extending CCRTVU to OUC. India is in the process of revising the Distance Education Act giving more focus on quality control mechanism. Since its inception, IGNOU and OUC adopted asynchronous communication approaches i.e. self-learning printed materials, audio/video, radio, teleconferencing and CDs. In recent times, these institutions used multimedia extensively including synchronous communication methods while delivering ODL programmes. The governments of India and China have maintained national policies to ensure that one-third population of the world representing these countries are educated in the 21st century (Carter, 2009). Of the total enrollment in distance learning programmers, half of them belong to these countries. These learners represent heterogeneous groups. They scattered from different geographical regions. For example, due to fast development of urbanization and industrial development, both populations of these two countries enjoy different and better basic infrastructure i.e. internet facility, faculty and laboratory etc. Hence, the impact of distance education policy for creating more skill based manpower, particularly belonging to unorganized sector will be more in India (93%) and China (95%). Despite the fact, about 69% population of India belong to rural areas.

ODL policy and legal framework

In India and China, there is an urgent need to define the role and function of each ODL institution. At present, employers, including the government institutions, are hesitating to recruit distance learners at their respective institutions. In India, recently two judgments i.e. Supreme Court and Calcutta High Court related to the degrees awarded through distance mode by two different universities have raised a question on the credibility of the ODL programmes in the country. The court's observation is a serious concern among academia and experts of ODL system. They perceived that the ODL system not being qualitatively at par with conventional system is due to deteriorating quality and lack of a strong regulatory mechanism (Sharma, 2015). In China, the quality

of ODL institutions is always a hot issue to discuss and be questioned by the governments and experts. The quality standards of Open Universities cannot be considered in the same way as conversational universities. To some extent, we agree that some periphery in ODL regulation has violated norms and procedures and entered into unacceptable ODL practices. It may happen in formal or conventional systems too. The problem is not with any system but the people who misuse the system for the sake of their own interest. One of the legal experts in the area of ODL in India who chaired committee on reforms in distance education said that

> in principal there should be no distention between conventional and open university degrees. He further stated that there is lack of credibility in ODL system because all types of players have been allowed to play and no proper regulatory system is in place today (Sharma, 2015).

At present Distance Education Draft Bill is pending for the approval of the Government. It is to be noted that Open Universities emerged in India and China to meet the increasing demand of quality higher education. Most of the dual mode distance teaching institutions are offering programmes based on print media as correspondence institutions were offering for the last four decades. It affected the quality and delivery of the distance learning programmes in the country too. We hope the government focuses on quality, strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism so that nobody can dilute norms and procedures. Policies should be designed in such a way that skill and competency based degrees are elaborated to meet the needs of industries in both economies. It will not only meet the demand of domestic industry but also international industries/corporate companies. For India, the court observation on falling standards of distance education may be right. It is also true that the same system has produced the countries' highest civil servants, doctors, engineers and changed thousands of people livelihood after getting a degree from these institutions (Gaba, 2005).

Pedagogy of distance education

Carter (2009) rightly stated that change in distance education is not driven only by available technologies but also by the winds of political and economic changes, which determine the maintenance of technology usage. Carter further stated that change must not be for the sake of change; rather, it must be contemplated in the light of its potential impact on individuals and communities of practices. IGNOU and OUC have to focus on delivery of skill/vocational based programmes through digital technology. India is expected to have 213 million mobile Internet users by June, 2015. Among them 53 million users will be from rural India. 78 per cent of the active Internet users in urban cities and 67 percent in rural villages access the Internet on their mobile phones (TOI, 2015). China is expected to have 637 million mobile Internet users during the same period. The challenge before IGNOU and OUC is to deliver these programmes with different target groups. The role and responsibilities of two mega open universities should be given to deliver programmes through digital technology with more focus on using social media. Youth of both countries frequently use social networking i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp in day-to-day life. IGNOU and OUC can use these tools i.e. Blogging, You Tube and real time audio and video while delivering their distance learning programmes. Research has already established that use of digital technology enhanced in pedagogy of distance education. Hence, the learning package should be delivered through a blended learning approach. Faculty of these two OUs should use live online classes to deliver counseling/tutoring sessions through this technology. Laboratory and Hands On experience can be provided through real life activities at lab/industry and uploaded their output on you tube. This process will not only bring transparency of teaching, learning and evaluation process to certification of their course work but also anybody in the world can view their progress. It will enhance quality of the distance-learning programme and will be as par with the conventional

university in nationally and globally. These packages should be available online or offline mode so that leaner can use it at his/her convenient time. Each vocational/skill-based packages should be blended with media mix of text, audio/video/live online sessions/e-content. These modules should be designed in such a way that these learners are trained through real life situations where they can achieve learning objectives i.e. knowledge, skills and attitude.

Use of OER and MOOC

In India, the Ministry of Human Resourse Development (MHRD), Government of India's annual report (2014–15) document states that ODL system is inadequate and new models are needed for open education system with Massive Open Line Courses (MOOCs). The existing course development process by the OUs to be converted into e-content as open education resources (OERs) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). In China, Ministry of Education (2015) recently released a plan on fascinating the development of MOOCs on HE institutions. It mainly focuses on the teaching reform of conventional universities but also mentions the important role played by OUC in gathering MOOCs in all Chinese universities.

Using of OER and MOOCs will auxiliary the culture of open knowledge among diversified learners. Hence, MOOC has created a culture for online learning. Some of the high ranked higher education institution in India like Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) started to offer basic IT courses in data structure, programming, and algorithms to students of undergraduate students through Moods). Peking University and Tsinghua University in China provided online courses in World's famous MOOCs Platforms like Edx and Coursera. Among all the MOOC students, we found that Indian and Chinese students are considered as most users of MOOCs. For example, of the total 2090 thousand registered users of Coursera, more than 250 thousands were from India (Jeelani, 2014). There are several issues and challenges which emerge while using MOOCs at OUs. One of them may be inadequate basic and infrastructure connectivity. But in both countries, there is a need to develop a suitable model to use MOOCs in OUs. In India, it is to be noted here that at present, online programmes offered by various institutions in India are not recognized by the Government's statutory bodies in India. Various formal and informal educational institutions are adopting OERs and MOOCs in teaching learning process across the globe. These developments created confusion among academia and learner about the future of ODL system in the country when Supreme Court and High Court of India have given judgment on ODL system.

To competent national and international development of delivery of quality ODL programmes leads to confusion among public. The policy on OER and Moods should be formulated as per the local needs without comprising the quality and monitoring mechanism. Whatever model to be adopted but it should not be compromise in diluting the proper teaching learning process, well designed evaluation and monitoring system.

Recognition of prior learning

As mentioned earlier that In India 93% people are working in un-organized sector. Hence, OUs can play a crucial role in the recognition or prior learning (RPL) and develop capacity building programmes for those who have skills but no certification. IGNOU and OUC are already implementing credit choice system. OUC (2012) was asked by the Ministry of Education to establish a national credit bank framework and start to do the recognition of RPL on some programs of its students. Using OER and MOOCs can play a significant role for these communities. In India, there are people who have skills but no recognition. Most of them belong to rural and semi-urban areas. IGNOU and OUC can help these people who are deprived from national schemes of the country.

Discussion

We find from above analysis that fast developing countries have common issues and challenges. Both countries are representing two Mega Open Universities in the World. It is true there are some differences in priority areas for trained people through their respective universities. There are various models of ODL is adopted by ODL institutions in these countries. The Role of OUs should be categorically defined. The national open universities should prioritize research and content development activities whereas state open universities and dual mode distance teaching institutions should focus on delivery of the ODL programmes in case of India. In China, OUC faces many challenges. Some of the challenges have already existed for a long time whilst some are pretty new. Just like many other Open Universities, the high dropout rate is one of challenges for OUC. And so far, a good national quality assurance system of ODL institution has not built yet. It is hard for the government to monitor the quality of ODL systems and help the market to be well-ordered. As showed before, a lot of Internet companies are now stepping into the ODL market, many of which have successful Internet use experience, abundant capital, good industrial chain and powerful technology research background. Following the wave of MOOCs, the research universities in China have strived to develop ODL, in 2013, Tsinghua University and Peking University joined the Edx, while Fudan University and Jiaotong University joined Coursera. (Li, Yao & Chen, 2014) The dominance of OUC in the HE market of ODL is challenged.

In past, we experienced that Act and Statue has defined clearly about the role of distance education norms and procedure. But it has not been implemented at the time of its operation. It has happened due to poor monitory mechanism adopted by the ODL institutions in the country. It diluted the quality of ODL programmes and uncertain future of distance learns. The application of new technology can remove this problem to some extent.

There is a need for well-defined meaning of ODL model which include its sub system i.e. learning, mobile learning, OER and MOOCs, blended learning etc. with national and International acceptance. For example, ICDE defined as 'Open Universities are institutions offering courses with no entry requirements'. Local legal bodies in the respective countries are not accepting this definition. The meaning of Open is also challenged by Academia and policy makers. Open universities now started offering face to face as conventional universities are offering programmes. As we all knew that conventional education systems in the world are also using ICT/OER/MOOCs in teaching learning process. Hence, there is a need for debate to well define role of Open University locally and its acceptability globally. At present, OUs are facing huge challenge and prove its credibility despite of the fact in past IGNOU and OUC designed, developed and delivered high quality distance learning programmes.

Suggestion and recommendation

- There is a need for development of national policy on open and distance education in both countries.
- There is an urgent need for restructuring of National Open Universities' Act, Statues and Ordnances of both the countries as per the revised national policy on ODL.
- Both the governments and National Open Universities should work collectively on policy framework, content development and research and development activities. Sharing cost will help both these economies to reduce cost for common concern.
- China and India are now in the stage of changing economic structure and upgrading labor skills. As the national Open University, OUC and IGNOU should constantly meet the national development needs, and improve their social service function.

- Core competitiveness is the key to the success of ODL institutions. How to enhance the internal strength i.e. role of the faculty to deal with technological change, severe market competition, and high dropout rate are all the key areas for development. OUC and IGNOU should strengthen international cooperation and share experiences.

Conclusion

To conclude, the study is based on the secondary source of information. The findings of the study may not be generalized, and treated as preliminary findings. There is a need for conduct in-depth study based on primary data based. However, the study contributes significantly to understanding an analysis of the ODL system of the two emerging economies and Mega Open Universities of the World. Findings of the study suggest that ICDE should deal with these issues particularity for developing economies and come forward with broader framework to solve these issues with well-defined ODL system. ICDE should design legal framework for the use of digital technology by educational institutions across the world. For instance, blended learning approach can be used by formal and informal institutions. All the ODL institutions should adopt legal procedure like conventional system without compromising quality in terms of course design and development, delivery and well structure evaluation mechanism with more use of digital technology.

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