Outcomes Based Evaluation of Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education

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Abstract

Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE) is one of the popular programmes of School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University. PGDHE Programme was launched in the year 1992 and consists of six courses. The main objectives of the programme are to acquire a perspective regarding the System of Higher Education in India, to develop professional competencies associated with an effective University teacher and to develop readiness to undertake reforms and innovations in the practice of Higher Education. This programme is basically for teaches and for those who aspire to become teachers in Higher Education System.. An attempt is being made in this study to evaluate the programme through the outcomes of critical parameters related to active students, passive students, dropouts and successful students. Through Cohort Analysis an effort is made to understand the passing pattern of Distance Learners of this programme which would through light on the average time taken for the successful completion of each course as well as the programme in total. This study also reveals the percentage of active students, passive students, dropouts and successful learners. The relationship between the successful learners and their social status is also touch upon in the study.

INTRODUCTION

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established in September 1985 through an Act of Parliament. The main campus of the university is located at New Delhi. IGNOU has 62 Regional Centers and 1,890 Study Centers spread across the country. There are also 46 overseas Study Centers in 32 countries. The university has Twenty One Schools of Studies housed in the main campus offering 138 programmes through various Study Centers supported with student support services, learning technologies, audio and video programme delivery, etc. Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE) is one of the popular programmes of School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University. It is a one year programme launched in the year 1992. This programme is basically for teachers and for those who aspire to become a teacher in the higher education system. The University Grants Commission of India recognized this programme equivalent to one orientation programme for teachers from all disciplines except education. In the case of Education as a discipline, this programme is treated as equivalent to two refresher courses. Department of Education of various State Governments also recognizes this programme for their teachers. Since teachers are the target group of this programme, more serious and sincere effort is expected in pursuing the programme. Therefore, the programme "Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education" was selected among the programmes of IGNOU for the study. Since the launch of the programme, in the year 2004 an attempt was made to evaluate the programme through feedback study by Gaba & Dash, researchers of IGNOU. Therefore, it is now proposed to evaluate the programme through cohort analysis. In distance education because of the rare interaction with the students it becomes difficult to understand the problems related with the learners. Normally student voice is rarely heard about their experience while pursuing the programme which severely limits the measures that can address issues related to dropouts (Tricker et. al, 2001) However, review of the literature found that majority of studies showed no significant difference in student performance based on their location of study or on the delivery of the programme (.Jodi L. Olmsted (2002). It is also discovered that technology does not teach it only provides the tool that enables the delivery of

teaching at a distance (Xiangyang & Shu-chiu, 2007). Xiangyang & Shu-chiu further insists that the blending and integration of high technologies with low technologies would be the best option to meet the needs of the distance learners for countries such as China.

The main aim of the study is to understand the learner dynamics with respect to the programme activities through cohort analysis. Cohort analysis is a form of longitudinal study generally used in medicine and social sciences where a set of individuals enter into a system at the same time. Such Individuals are presumed to have similarities on their experiences in the system. Cohort analysis seeks to explain an outcome through exploitation of differences between cohorts, as well as differences across two other temporal dimensions; the time of entry into the system and the period i.e. the times when an outcome is measured (William & Nicholas, 2001) It is an analytic approach to conduct an investigation on a group of students who share a common experience within a defined time period. The parameters to be considered in distance education are flexible in nature (David Kember, 1989). In this study the cohort is the students of the PGDHE programme and their actions on submission of assignments, appearing for the examinations, attending the contact class, completing the projects and finally completing all the courses was desired to study. This study is expected to through light on the average time taken for the successful completion of each course as well as the programme in total. The percentage of active learners, passive learners, dropouts and successful learners was also desired through the study. This study is also expected to highlight the social background of the successful learners.
The main objectives of the programme are

   i)   To acquire a perspective regarding the system of Higher education in India.
   ii) To develop professional competencies associated with an effective university teacher, and
   iii) To develop readiness to undertaker reforms and innovations in Higher Education.

PGDHE programme Comprises of 6(Six) courses, out of which, 4(four) courses are theory in nature, one course is on project work and the other course is on extended contact programme. The extended contact programme is a 4 credit course where as all the theory courses and the project work course are 6 credit courses. The courses are designed and developed in such a way that the course content equivalent to 1 credit would require 30 study hours. Therefore, the PGDHE programme would require 1020 study hours as it is a 34 credit programme.

Following are the title of the theory courses with their codes

   i)   Higher Education : Its Context and Linkages--------------(MES-101)
   ii) Instruction in Higher Education-------------------------------(MES-102)
   iii) Higher Education : The Psycho-social context------------(MES-103)
   iv) Planning and Management of Higher Education----------(MES-104)

The first course focuses on higher education in its socio – historical and development perspective in relation to the constitutional provisions. This course also highlights the progressive role of the Indian University teachers to show the right direction to the society as a whole. The second course deals with various classroom instructional inputs and discusses their potential in the context of different instructional objectives. The mechanism involved in the evaluation of higher education instructional outputs is also touched upon in this course. The third course basically attempts to understand and to address the issues that influence teaching, learning and student development during the college and University years from experimental frameworks of psychology. The forth course discusses on the planning and management of higher education in India. This course as well gives some tips to the teachers for reorienting their managerial skills. The fifth course is a project work where students/learners can select a theme and work in an area of their choice within the framework of the contents of the above four courses. The sixth course is an extended contact programme which is a compulsory ten day face-to-face programme with the objectives of developing advanced skills and competencies for teaching of higher levels. This contact programme will cover various aspects related to all the five courses of the PGDHE programme.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY SYSTEM

The course material is self instructional in nature. Apart from course material, learners are supported with various learning aids such as Teleconferencing, counseling, Audio Video programme etc. The programme is offered through 91 Study Centers located across the country. Learners are supported with counseling sessions at the study centers. These sessions are not compulsory but would provide an opportunity for the learners to meet and interact with the subject experts and with fellow students. Since the year 2003, the Extended Contact Programme (ECP) is organized through teleconferencing by the faculty at the headquarters and therefore this event happens at all the Regional Centers of IGNOU simultaneously. The audio and video programme supplements the self instructional material.

Admission System for the Programme:- Registration and Evaluation Division (SR&E) of IGNOU handles student admission through the Regional Centers across the country. The Regional Services Division of IGNOU extends all kinds of administrative and academic support to the students. Each year the students are admitted in the month of January and their term end examination would be in the month of December. After the completion of the minimum period of the programme, students can appear for term end examination. After the minimum period, the students can give their examinations after every six months up to a maximum period of 4 years to complete the programme.

Assignments of the Programme: - Assignments are integral and compulsory component of all the four theory courses of the programme that carries 30% weightage of the total marks. Students submit three tutor marked assignments for each theory courses. However, the third assignment in each course is compulsory. The best two assignments in each course would be considered for the successful completion of the programme.

Examination system for the Programme:- The SR&E Division organizes the term end examination, evaluates the answer scripts and declares the results. All the theory courses has a weightage of 75% where as the course 5 and course 6 carries 100% weightage of the total marks in the term-end examination. The students will have to obtain at least D grade (40% marks) in both the assignments as well as the term-end examination separately for each theory courses. However, the overall average should be at least C Grade (50% marks) for the successful completion of a course. The courses on project work and contact programme would require a minimum of 50% marks for the successful completion.

METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The student admission data pertaining to the learner profile was colleted from the SR&E Division for all the years from the launch year of the programme. The data collected was first structured then organized and then converted into Access database format for data analysis. The data pertaining to admission, assignments and term end exams were maintained in three files. Enrolment number is the common field for all these files and thus this field was made as an index key for the search and computation purpose. Enrolment number is an 8 digit number in which the first two digits denotes the year of enrolment, followed by the region of study, place of study so and so forth . All these files was first sorted and then filtered to segregate the data for each year. The structured data highlighted that the programme took a period of 2 to 3 years to stabilize in term of offering the programme with all kinds of support services across the country. It is also realized that during the initial 2 years the study materials did not reach in time and there was a delay in the academic year for the programme. The structured data also highlighted that there was a delay in declaring the results during the initial years after the launch of the programme. The students enrolled in the launch year are expected to complete the programme by the year 1995 as 4 years is the maximum period to complete the programme. Since the programme took some time to stabilize, the first 4 years is not considered for the study. The maximum period available for the completion of the programme for the students enrolled beyond the year 2003 goes beyond the year 2007, the year the data was collected from the SR&E Division. Therefore, data

pertaining to the students enrolled between 1996 and 2003 was considered for the study. The flow chart of the study is given in Figure 1.0.

Each enrolment number in the assignment file was used to look for the same in the admission file in order to separate the records of the active students. This exercise was carried out for all the study years. From the students who have submitted only one assignment to the students who have successfully completed the programme was categorized as active students. Where as the students who failed to submit even one assignment was categorized as passive students. The year wise number of assignments submitted for each course is tabulated as Table 1.1. This table gives the number of active students for each year. The number of passive students was calculated by subtracting the number of active students from the total enrolment of each year. Thus the total number of active and passive students is tabulated in Table 1.2 and graphically presented in Figure 1.1. Pivot tables were created by Microsoft Excel Application software for all the database files to analysis the data. Pivot table basically gives the sum of occurrence for each parameter in a database. By considering the parameter "Enrolment Number" as rows and the parameters such as the year and month of the exam, courses, grades and results as columns, the progress of each active student was tracked and the comprehensive information on each year about the number of students appeared in each course with their results are tabulated in Table 1.3. The output of the pivot table furnishes detailed information on each active student about their appearance of examinations with results for a period of 4 years from the year of enrolment. From the pivot table, the list of enrolment numbers for the students who have successfully completed the programme within the maximum period is prepared. This list of enrolment numbers is used to check for their completion of assignments, project work and extended contact programme. The social profile for the students who have successfully completed the programme was extracted from the admission data file for each year through filter techniques and tabulated as Table 1.4.

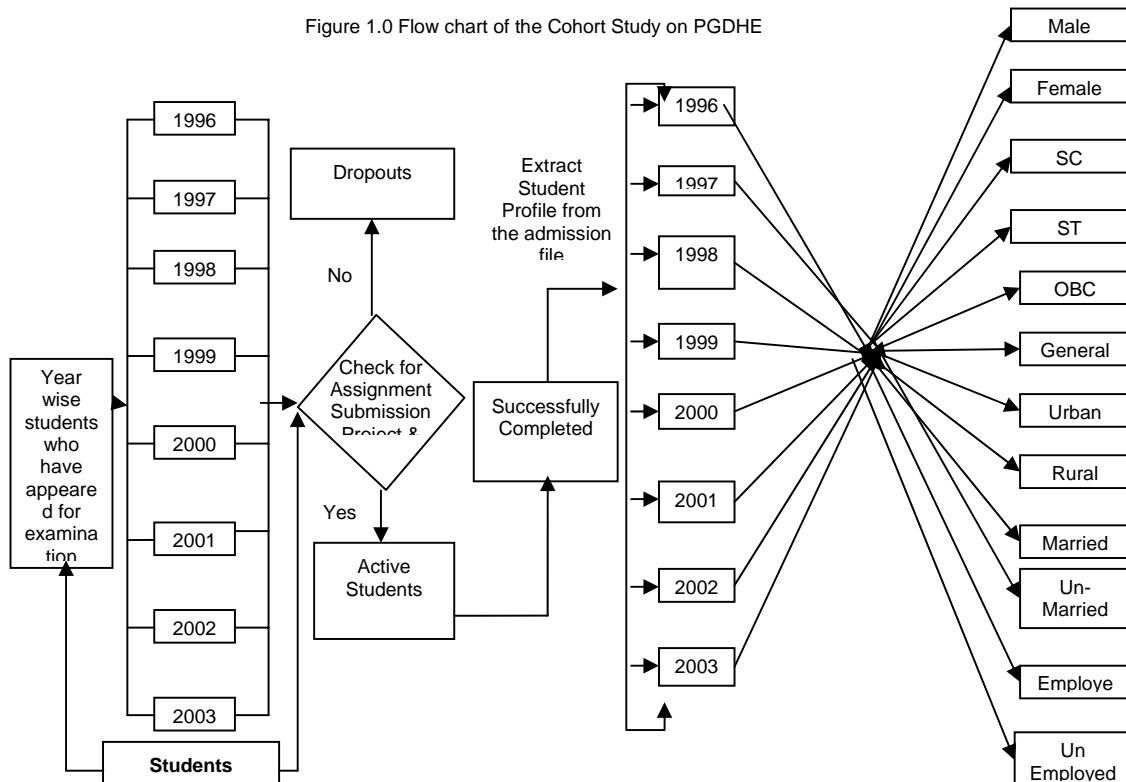Figure 1.0 Flow chart of the Cohort Study on PGDHE

Table 1.1 Year wise number of students who have submitted assignments for each theory courses.

Assignment Summary														
		MES-101			MES-102			MES-103			MES-104			
Year	Total Active Student	1st Assignment	2nd Assignment	3rd Assignment	1st Assignment	2nd Assignment	3rd Assignment	1st Assignment	2nd Assignment	3rd Assignment	1st Assignment	2nd Assignment	3rd Assignment	Total Assignments
1996	33	28	21	17	22	15	18	23	16	20	24	20	21	245
1997	80	67	57	55	58	57	56	53	60	57	52	48	54	674
1998	101	95	86	76	84	75	67	80	59	78	NA	NA	68	920
1999	240	236	220	140	192	185	126	175	176	120	119	148	111	1948
2000	120	116	113	104	99	83	74	76	74	72	79	70	74	1034
2001	137	130	126	114	98	88	88	89	84	89	89	87	79	1161
2002	78	56	65	57	42	42	45	39	42	40	41	39	41	549
2003	85	72	69	63	52	43	44	45	36	42	28	36	33	563

Table 1.2 Year wise enrolment with their respective number of Active and Passive Students.

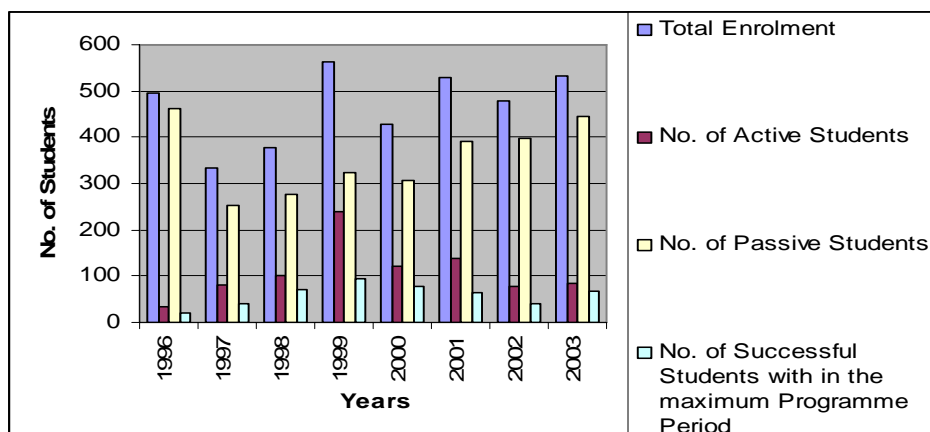| Year	Total Enrolment	No. of Active Students	No. of Passive Students
1996	495	33	462
1997	334	80	254
1998	378	101	277
1999	562	240	322
2000	427	120	307
2001	529	137	392
2002	477	78	399
2003	531	85	446

Figure 1.1 Graphical representation of year wise enrolment with the respective number of Active, Passive and Successful Students.

Table1.3 Year wise number of successful learners in each theory course.

Year	Total Enrolment	Year of Exam	All COURSES		MES-101			MES-102			MES-103			MES-104			Successful Completion	
			Appeared	Passed	Appeared	Failed	Passed	Appeared	Failed	Passed	Appeared	Failed	Passed	Appeared	Failed	Passed	Current	Over the Period
1996	495	Jun-98	3	3	5	0	5	5	0	5	6		6	3	0	3	3	
		Dec-98	6	6	8	0	8	10	0	10	11	0	11	9	0	9	6	
		Jun-99	3	2	4	1	3	5	0	5	5	0	5	6	0	6	2	
		Dec-99	5	5	8	1	7	7	1	6	7	0	7	9	0	9	5	20
1997	334	Jun-98	5	3	7	0	7	9	2	7	7	1	6	6	0	6	3	
		Dec-98	15	14	15	1	14	17	0	17	17	0	17	15	0	15	14	
		Jun-99	6	5	9	1	8	9	0	9	7	0	7	6	0	6	5	
		Dec-99	2	1	6	3	3	3	1	2	4	0	4	5	0	5	1	
		Jun-00	5	4	9	0	9	8	1	7	6	1	5	7	0	7	4	
		Dec-00	3	3	5	0	5	5	1	4	4	0	4	6	0	6	3	
		Jun-01	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	42
1998	378	Dec-98	45	41	49	4	45	50	0	50	50	0	50	45	0	45	41	
		Jun-99	5	3	10	2	8	7	0	7	6	0	6	6	0	6	3	
		Dec-99	8	6	13	3	10	11	1	10	9	0	9	11	0	11	6	
		Jun-00	5	3	7	1	6	5	2	3	6	2	4	7	0	7	3	
		Dec-00	4	4	8	0	8	6	0	6	6	0	6	7	0	7	4	
		Jun-01	2	2	3	0	3	2	0	2	3	0	3	3	0	3	2	72
1999	562	Dec-99	49	42	58	3	55	54	5	49	52	0	52	54	0	54	42	
		Jun-00	23	22	26	3	23	31	1	30	27	0	27	27	0	27	22	
		Dec-00	8	7	12	0	12	9	1	8	11	0	11	13	1	12	7	
		Jun-01	7	7	8	0	8	13	0	13	10	0	10	13	0	13	7	
		Dec-01	0	0	9	0	9	4	0	4	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	
		Jun-02	1	1	3	0	3	2	0	2	3	0	3	5	0	5	1	
		Dec-02	1	1	2	0	2	4	0	4	4	0	4	2	0	2	1	95
2000	427	Dec-00	27	26	28	1	27	33	2	31	29	2	27	28	2	26	26	
		Jun-01	13	12	18	0	18	17	1	16	15	0	15	15	0	15	12	

Year	Total	Month																
		Dec-01	0	0	10	0	10	11	1	10	11	1	10	0	0	0	0	
		Jun-02	5	5	5	0	5	8	0	8	7	1	6	6	0	6	5	
		Dec-02	3	3	4	0	4	6	0	6	6	0	6	5	0	5	3	
		Jun-03	0	0	2	0	2	3	1	2	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	
		Dec-03	4	4	4	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	4	5	0	5	4	79
2001	529	Dec-01	43	43	50	0	50	51	4	47	50	0	50	43	0	43	43	
		Jun-02	13	11	20	0	20	19	3	16	16	0	16	17	1	16	11	
		Dec-02	1	1	3	0	3	7	0	7	4	0	4	5	0	5	1	
		Jun-03	5	5	8	0	8	7	0	7	6	0	6	6	0	6	5	
		Dec-03	3	3	5	0	5	4	0	4	6	0	6	7	0	7	3	
		Jun-04	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	1	65
2002	477	Dec-02	26	25	34	0	34	37	1	36	33	0	33	34	1	33	25	
		Jun-03	10	9	20	3	17	23	1	22	20	0	20	20	0	20	9	
		Dec-03	10	6	12	1	11	6	1	5	28	0	28	14	2	12	6	
		Jun-04	3	3	7	0	7	5	1	4	8	2	6	9	1	8	3	40
2003	531	Dec-03	54	52	60	3	57	57	4	53	56	2	54	57	3	54	52	
		Jun-04	18	16	25	1	24	24	0	24	25	0	25	23	1	22	16	68

Table 1.4 The social profile of the Successful Students.

Social Profile of the Successful Candidates											
Percentage of											
Year	Total	SC	ST	OBC/GEN	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Married	Un-Married	Employed	Un-Employed
1996	20	5	0	95	45	55	100	0	60	40	80	20
1997	42	17	5	79	55	45	100	0	100	0	100	0
1998	72	18	8	74	51	49	72	28	67	33	83	17
1999	95	3	0	97	49	51	74	26	64	36	84	16
2000	79	3	0	97	46	54	77	23	61	39	77	23
2001	65	5	3	92	60	40	74	26	49	51	62	38
2002	40	7	22	71	61	39	75	25	47	53	66	34
2003	68	12	6	82	47	53	78	22	54	46	60	40

FINDINGS WITH DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The average enrolment of the PGDHE is 467 per year out of which an average of 109 students are active. The data Analysis with regard to assignments clearly highlights that more students are active during the initial period of the programme. This is evident from the large number of submission of first assignment. The table shows that more students submit their third assignment when compared with the second assignment. But, it is still very low when compared with the number of submission of the first assignment. This shows the seriousness of the students during the initiate stages and while nearing the term end examination. The submission of the third assignment is compulsory for each theory course and therefore there is a marginal raise in the number of submission of third assignment for each course.

The data analysis with regard to the examinations during the study period highlights that an average of 81.3% successful students come from Urban Areas, 76.5% are employed and 62.8% are married. Further it shows that an average of 51.8% is male and 48.2% are female. Indian society follows social class that was defined on the bases of the ancestors' occupation. Under this system certain social classes are categorized as under privileged section. The Indian Government groups these under privileged classes as Scheduled Caste (ST) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) for special schemes, reservation of seats etc. for uplifting this section of the society. Very few under these classes are as teachers. Considering their low presence in the system, their performance in PGDHE is very encouraging. From table 1.1 and 1.3 it is evident that an average of 23.3% of the enrolled students is active in pursuing the programme. But, it is only an average of 13.10% students is actually completing the programme successfully. Further it is evident from table 1.3 that 90% of the students who appear for the examinations are successful in completing the course. This shows the seriousness of the students who give their exams. It is also learnt through the interview with some of the students, counselors and faculty that some students especially female students face difficulty in attending the extended contact programme and whereby resulting in dropouts. Therefore it is strongly suggested to conduct a questionnaire based study to understand the reasons for being a passive student and for dropping the programme.

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