

## **Brief Report on AAOU Fellowship at KNOU from 14<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

### **Research Topic: Life Long Learning through Open Educational Resources and MOOCs: A Comparative Study of Korea National Open University and K.K. Handiqui State Open University**

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#### **1. Introduction:**

The institutions of higher education across the world should be the think tank for ensuring socio-economic mobilization of the people of as a whole. Thus, it becomes imperative that the educational institutions should bring up the multifaceted human resources development and provide world-class education to all so that the gap in between haves and have-nots can be mitigated to ensure social peace and progress in the society. Introduction of the world-class education or internationalization of education helps to ensure distributive justice to ensure equity and quality of living among the people of a country. Therefore, no one should deny the role education should play in mobilising the human resources by accelerating their capabilities and skills into a productive direction. A country can be developed only when its people are engaged in some vibrant and productive activities, which is otherwise possible only through quality and need-based education only.

In countries like India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the working forces are not properly engaged. Eventually the problems like unemployment, underemployment and brain drain are rising day-by-day. Again, many countries of Asia are having huge gender disparities in providing quality education, disparities between rural and urban, digital division between haves and have nots, marginalization of weaker sections in terms of providing modern education and so on. In the context of higher education, the average Gross Enrolment Ratio in Asia is 30% but there are also some variations within the Asian countries. For example, China has more than 39% GER in tertiary education; India has 23% and Bangladesh 13%. If we see the Gross Enrolment Ratio, a country like Korea has more than 95% at tertiary education, (HDR 2016) whereas a low middle-income country like Afghanistan has not more than 9 percent GER. Besides, more than 70% women in some developing countries of Asia are engaged in the unorganised sectors (Economic Survey, 2016), as most of them work for their day-to-day living, which remain uncounted and unrecognised. This has posed a big challenge to each nation of Asian countries, necessitating an urgent need to mitigate this situation and build up the capacities of the population.

For the growth of the national income in near future, the developing countries need to be transformed into a major knowledge economy having adequate and abundance of skilled and trained manpower. Therefore, it is the right time we saw whether the education people are receiving is need-based and appropriately skill-oriented, and whether it is capable of offering them a life with a standard living. Thus, there is an urgent need to explore the various educational avenues and also to find out how such avenues or best practices of educational

institutions in different countries can help people, particularly the women, and the economically and socially disadvantaged groups to become empowered.

Thus, governmental interventions in the educational sector is sure to play a prominent role in upgrading the higher educational institutions as the think tanks to meet people's needs. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the policy makers are discussing how education should be made skill-oriented which would develop and strengthen the capabilities of the people and make them productive citizens in future. Sustainable education, that follows the inclusive and non-discriminatory pedagogy, is the only way that provides the basic knowledge, training and relevant skills to the people and make the citizen productive in the real sense. Sustainable education, which allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a *sustainable* future, is the need of the hour. Sustainable education can only lead towards sustainable development where the basic principle is to develop the wellbeing of both the planet and its people. Therefore, the basic philosophy of sustainable education is to bring long-term benefits and welfare to all. Besides, it is only sustainable education that would prepare the learners for a sustainable living.

Acknowledging, the need for sustainable development through sustainable education, the Heads of States, Governments and High Representatives, in their meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015, adopted the document titled *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The idea was to adopt a new set of global Sustainable Development Goals, which would transform the world in the next 15 years. There are 17 goals to be achieved by 2030 for sustainable development. With regard to education, there is a specific goal (Goal 4), where there is a target to achieve the inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote life-long learning opportunities for all. One of the objectives of the goal is to focus on the acquisition of foundational and higher order skills, greater and more equitable access to technical and vocational education, training and higher education, training throughout life; and the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and values needed to be functional so that it would contribute to society.

Thus, the basic focus of SDG4 is 'lifelong learning opportunities for all' which comprises all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies, within personal, civic, social and employment-related perspectives. Besides, the entire educational transactions of the world have become techno-based where there is the demand for equipping the adults with necessary digital skills, which are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. These modern contexts have facilitated myriad opportunities to people to create and share digital contents, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large.

Thus, it has been increasingly being felt that everyone should be well equipped with digital skills as the pre-requisite for getting jobs and livelihood in the digital economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The utilisation of on-line learning as well as distance and open learning has made learning truly global. Along with this, the whole pedagogy of education is to makes people functionally literate or digitally skilled. It is because; people want such education that ensures better sustenance of living. Therefore, the entire educational system is converted from traditional education system to independent ICT-based learning system. This kind of education would help the learners to possess the relevant digital skills that would further help to promote inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning. Again, the idea of

sustainable education should be designed in such a way that it helps to reduce the inequalities between haves and have nots, the gender divides, while also keeping the learners up-to-date and educationally competent on the basis of their learnt skills.

Even, in the context of India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, has been putting more and more emphasis on developing necessary skills among the learners, as they need to be polished throughout their working life. These skills are necessary not only for securing a job, but also for ensuring personal development in various ways. In fact, the appropriate application of knowledge in some emerging areas such as Agriculture and other manufacturing areas can play a major role in providing a competitive edge to the Indian economy in the global market. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) also has demonstrated that by using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and flexible-blended learning approaches, access to quality technical and vocational skill development can be increased which can further help to overcome the urban-rural and gender divides that exclude learners from training, and create a skilled workforce of life-long learners for the growth of informal and formal economies.

Thus, the idea of sustainable education has the potential to create a knowledge-movement in every aspect of human life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century society. Besides, for promoting and facilitating sustainable education or lifelong learning opportunities, various educational pedagogical techniques or methods are evolving in a massive way so that anyone can access the world-class education at his or her own place and pace. In this context in the modern industrial era, the modern interventions like Open Educational Resources (OERs) and MOOCs have provided the platform for opening up the minds of the people hungry of knowledge. The higher educational institutions mostly the open and distance learning institutions has the flexibility to equip the young people with relevant that prepares all the people of the nation to become responsible citizens who value a democratic and pluralistic society. However, in reality, it seems that still in India, only 5% of the population within the age group of 19-24 acquired some sort of skills through vocational education while the corresponding figure for the country like Korea is as high as 96%. (World Development Report, 2018).

Therefore, it is an urgent need to redefine the policies and giving the stress on implementing the skill-based schemes in a proper and justified way. It is the need of the hour to see to what extent and what are the ways the various online courses as MOOC and Open Educational Resources are designed and implemented for creating the knowledge movement particularly in open and distance learning in a technologically sophisticated country like Korea and technologically nascent country like India.

## **2. Significance of the Study:**

From the above discussion, it has been felt that the pedagogy of the oppressed is a pre-requisite for bringing positive social transformation and make the people in society empowered in every aspects of their life. The Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, who is also the leading advocate of the 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', famously, rejected the banking system of education policy in his seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Because, the banking system of education allows only a few people to receive education in society. Freire wanted to provide pedagogy of education to all sections of people in a liberal way as he felt that pedagogy of the oppressed and marginalised can only boost up the knowledge economy, and subsequently, all people in a society can contribute economically and socially in an equitable manner. Here, the idea of Open Educational

Resources (OERs) and MOOCs can prove very handy as they would provide educational opportunities to all sections of people and thereby help in realising Freire's views in a more engaging way. However, the utilization of on-line learning through ODL makes it an open or global learning in the true sense. Besides, the altruistic philosophy of ODL makes the people functionally literate or digitally skilled. ODL, thus, helps the learners to possess the relevant digital skills that could help to promote inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunity for all.

As the first case across the whole world, the Human Resource Development Ministry, Government of India has introduced SWAYAM or Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds, where teachers from institutions like the IITs, IIMs, and central universities have been offering online courses to the citizens of India. In order to ensure the quality of the contents produced and delivered through SWAYAM, seven National Coordinators have been appointed. They are NPTEL for engineering, UGC for post-graduation education, CEC (Consortium for Educational Communication) for under-graduate education, NCERT & NIOS for school education, IGNOU for out of the school students, and IIMB for management studies. In the first phase, courses in areas of engineering education, social science, energy, management, basic sciences are being offered. Besides, it has been stated that at least 20% materials from the total number of courses by an Indian University should be released in the form of MOOCs (University Grant Commission in India 2016, June) for the fast mobilisation and dissemination of knowledge and information among the masses. Another recommendation is that all universities should develop the learning management system and release their OER materials as MOOCs in the SWAYAM platform as soon as possible for making education more vibrant and sustainable.

Again, when we are talking about quality higher education, access to higher education is still a dream for millions of peoples residing in the world. Besides GER, the need of required higher education avenues or institutional set up against the demand of the population, achievement of global learning etc. by the people in rural and urban areas; providing equal access to learning, justice to cost benefit analysis, research and innovations, use of educational technology, quality and adequate funds for expansion of higher education, modern up to date education to the internal migrants—are some of the challenges that often create an obstacle in the process of making a knowledge enabled population in some countries of Asia. Apart from this, there are some other ground realities prevailing in India, that most of the people are deprived to get their required livelihood mostly in the Government as well as the private enterprises or establishments due to lack of their required skills and competencies. Again, it has also reflected that a major percentage of people is general degree holders rather than professional and vocational skill based holders or takers compared to men. This has led to an increase in the educated unemployment and also more than 90 percent population is engaged in the unorganized sector, which also indicates the poor level of Workforce Participation Rate (WPR) in various parts of India. If we make a comparative study between India and Korea, then it seems that in the context of education mostly tertiary education, India is far lagging behind compared to Korea where the skill-based education has enabled the country to become the third largest economy of Asia and thirteenth largest in the world as a manufacturing hub.

Although India has a rich demographic dividend as 54% of population below the age of 25, and 66% people under the age of 35. (Census of India, 2011, but it is pain stacking that at all India level; the adult (15 + years) literacy rate is 69.3%. For male, it is 78.8%, and for female, it is 59.3%. Again, if we throw light on the percentage of population with at least some

secondary education above the age of 25 and older, it seems that there are also huge disparities between the sexes in India as female constitutes 39.0 percent and male percentage is 63.5. In addition to that, in case of Labour Force Participation Rate, the percentage of female is 27.2%, and 78.8% for male. (HDR, 2018). This proves that there is a lack of adequate skills in the people, mostly the adult learners, for getting their required livelihood opportunities. It also proves that women have comparatively lower skilled learning than men.

In Korea, in terms of population (age 25 and older) with at least some secondary education, female constitute 89.8 and male percentage is 95.6, with the gap of about 5.8 percent. In fact, the disparity between the sexes in terms of accessing education is large in India than in Korea. Again, in terms of Labour Force Participation Rate, in Korea, the female percentage is 52.2 and male 73.2, where it is seen that there are gender inequalities in terms of getting employment opportunities in both the countries to a great extent. Even in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), there is a huge gap between India and Korea at the tertiary sector as Korea has more than 93 percent, whereas in India, the corresponding figure is only 27 percent (HDR 2018). The course content, methodology of course delivery and the learning outcomes also determine the quality education system in a country into a significant extent. This situation also led the countries to stand their rank as very high, high, medium and low human development countries of the world. India is in the 130<sup>th</sup> rank and Korea's rank is 22 among 189 countries in the world in terms of Human Development Index in 2018, which put India country in the Medium Human Development category and Korea as very high human development category. This proves that in comparison to India, the rank of Korea is much better.

Therefore, for the greater interest of educating the 'oppressed' and deprived people in the country like India, there is the urgent need of using and adopting the latest trend of technology in order to suit the needs and demand of the people. Again, at present, the open education system is fast moving towards making people digitally skilled in the entire world by offering various skill-based courses in digital platforms. In this context, it is important to see how far a developed country like Korea and developing countries like India are able to sensitize the people about functional literacy or to make them digitally skilled in the true sense. Are the quality educational opportunity and lifelong learning opportunities achieved by the people with the help of ICTs in equal manner? Is there any prevailing disparity among the people of rural and urban, haves and have nots etc. in terms of accessing education through ODL mode? How will the adopted model of the National Open University of Korea in terms of providing MOOC under lifelong learning show the path to enhance the skills of the young learners in the Indian universities adopting the ODL mode?

### **3. Objectives of the Study:**

Through this study, an attempt had been made to

1. To study how ODL helps in providing equal opportunity to the stakeholders to access lifelong quality education in KNOU and KKHSOU.
2. To explore the online programmes in the form of MOOCs prevalent in KNOU that can help in mapping the practices for KKHSOU.
3. To measures, some suggestions for reducing gender disparity, regional disparity and digital division between haves and have-nots with MOOCs.

### **4. Methodology:**

The study is based on descriptive survey method. Besides, the analysis was done on the basis of available information in the university data sources of KNOU. Apart from the available secondary data, there were some face-to-face interviews with the content experts from KNOU during the stated programme.

## 5. KKHSOU and KNOU: A Comparative Study

The North Eastern part of India, which comprises eight states, share about 4 percent youth in India in the age group of 15-35. However, this region faces lack of development due to culmination of various factors like insurgency, ethnic violence, infrastructural bottleneck, geographical isolation, lack of trained workforce, slow pace of industrialization, peripheral mode of production etc. The region's proportion of unemployed youth is relatively higher and it is almost double as compared to the national average. According to a Study, between 2011 and 2022, the region will create only 2.6 million jobs, but 17 million job seekers during the period. Therefore, a holistic approach for developing skills as well as need based skill training is the utmost necessary for the need of the hour. Therefore, the higher educational institutions of the region should play the prominent role for achieving the holistic development for the region as well as the country as a whole.

By taking the motto of providing access, equity, and quality education to a vast majority of people, Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University—the lone state open University in the North Eastern part of India, has rendered a significant impact on the educational landscape of a state like Assam in its ten years of existence. This university has played bigger responsibilities in a technology-aided educational environment to educate people for sustainable development. KKHSOU has played a leading role by enrolling over 3,00,000 learners in different disciplines since its inception in 2006. With the motto “Education Beyond Barriers” the University has been aptly functioning in accordance with the sole objectives of providing quality education at the doorsteps and reaching the unreached without any barriers of age, academic background, time, and geographical boundaries. Because of the inherent flexibility in terms of pace and place of learning, methods of evaluation etc., KKHSOU holds the promise of providing equal opportunities of higher education to all, bringing into its ambit the deprived and denied sections of the people of the state as well as fresh and new learners.

The Korea National Open University (KNOU), established in 1972, is the first and largest distance learning institution in South Korea. It offers lifelong education to working adults through its different available programmes. It offers over 800 different courses a year. Chang Yeul Yang in his article “Korea National Open University” has tried to provide an overall picture of the University. He has stated that the founding vision of KNOU was as the “Open University in Lifelong Society”. KNOU's role as an open lifelong educational institution is becoming greater than ever, representing a renewable source of the information and knowledge demanded by the 21<sup>st</sup> century society. KNOU advocates open learning principles leading to the lifelong learning society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century under three important mandates: *Distance education* specialising in learning methods; *Lifelong Education* that is open to all people; and *Public Education* that promotes lifelong learning opportunities to all. Since its establishment in 1972, KNOU has produced approximately 2,827,164 (cumulative) until 2019.

If we see the enrolment trend of different courses it seems that KNOU has been able to motivate learners in a huge rate as on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, it was seen that there were 106,828 enrolment at undergraduate programmes and 2,259 at Graduate Programmes. In fact, in Korea, which is an industrial economy, the need of education is basically related to the development of the professionalism of the learners so that they are able to develop their productivity as well as their knowledge, which shall further help them immensely in their employment. Students enrolled at KNOU come from all occupations, from homemakers to lawmakers, teenagers to senior citizens, from Seoul citizens to Jeju islanders and so on. Because the learners can study anytime, from anywhere, they can pursue a higher academic career while also progressing in their social career. From this, it may be assumed that KNOU has played a pivotal role in imparting higher and lifelong educational opportunities to those previously excluded from the formal education system for reasons related to social, economic, age, and time limitations. According to EFA National Report Republic of Korea, 2015, the national vision of the university is to enhance women's economic activities offering some need-based courses mostly through online mode.

As a nascent open university KKHSOU too has brought under its ambit such deprived section of population as—the dropped out learners from schools and colleges; the women getting married early and discontinued their education in schools and colleges; those working in offices and industries without completing degrees, diplomas required for their professions; housewives who simply could not carry on their studies in the conventional system on time and now desirous of pursuing education and so on. Besides, the ODL system has enabled the in-service persons or professionals to enhance their skills, qualifications and training while on the job. Thus, with a view to making higher education more and more accessible, KKHSOU has been preparing its diverse academic programmes to suit the potential learners through about more than 300 access points (Study Centres) in the Indian state of Assam. Most of the study centres are located in rural and remote areas. This has confirmed that a university is a public property, and that it can take bigger responsibilities in encouraging the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' in a technology-aided educational environment. Besides, KKH State Open University also made some plans or policies by facilitating the Recognition of Prior Learning under National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) through which people irrespective of their age, sex, and geographical distance can get formal recognition of their traditional skills so that they can use these kinds of informal skills into a productive form. The NSQF also helps alignment of the Indian qualifications to international qualifications in accordance with relevant bilateral and multilateral agreement. In this connection, in order to make this university a truly people's university, the various educational interventions in the forms of OERs and MOOCs used in Korea National Open University would surely guide and help in adopting similar initiatives in KKHSOU. Besides, the sharing of specific experiences related to MOOCs and OER by KNOU officials and academic staff, during the research, would help us to adopt the strategies to achieve our mission and goals in near future.

After the Independence from Japan in 1945 and mostly following the Korean War in 1950's, reforms were made to generate the employment opportunity to the people of Korea where the basic focus of the government policy was to give the vocational training and retraining to the people than providing the university degree and certificates. By acknowledging the vocational aspects, KNOU was established in 1972 as a faculty branch of Seoul National University and in 1982, it became as a full-fledged National Open University in Korea. Today KNOU is one of the top ten mega open universities of the world. KNOU is the largest educational institution in Korea in terms of enrollment. It provides degree and non-degree programmes for the learners and also .provide plenty of opportunities for both the fresh and

the re-enrolling learners in Korea as a whole. In Korea, the basic objectives and vision of the educational institutions are mostly to offer vocational and need based educational programmes as per the country's requirement. Korea, as an industrial country, has laid basic focus on producing work force who could easily be adopted with the demand of the industries and companies.

If we make a comparative study between KNOU and KKHSOU, it seems that KKHSOU is a state open university whereas KNOU is the largest national Open University that suits the need the requirements of the learners as per their industrial requirements. We can have a brief look at the programmes of KNOU first. With an affordable tuition fees, KNOU also has contributed to cultivating human resources. It is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in National Outstanding People DB, 6<sup>th</sup> in producing senior public officials and 1<sup>st</sup> in turning out heads of the basic local governments.

Let us have a look at the prevailing status of academic programmes and schools of KNOU and KKHSOU in the following table.

**Table 1: Basic information on KNOU as per the year 2019**

<b>1. KNOU (Basic Information)</b>	<b>2. Best Facilities of KNOU to the Students</b>
4 colleges with 23 Departments	Convenient Smartphone-PC lectures
One National Open Graduate School-18 Departments	Generous Scholarship to the students
One Prime College that offers 100% online lifelong courses	Campus life everywhere in South Korea
Graduate school of Business Administration offers Graduate Courses (8 majors)	Network Power with 800 thousand of KNOU alumni
13 Regional Campuses	Functional training under the Hub University of 'work first, study later'-designated by Ministry of Education
34 Study centres under Regional Campuses	<b>3. Learning Support Services of KNOU</b>
660 courses offered as academic programmes	KNOU helps the students to study with various learning support services, which is also known diversified ways of learning
145 full-time teaching faculty and 800 non-teaching staff	Tutoring: Tutors support individual learning by a study guidance, mentoring and advising
54 media production specialists	Mentoring Mentors who are seniors at KNOU guide and support campus life of newly transfers students. There may be 10-20 students per senior faculty of KNOU.
KNOU press-nationally reputed in Korea	Student Support Services Centre where professional advisors offer counselling service on academic affairs, human rights, career development and mental and physical health.
Web based programmes for the learners. For instance, KNOU produces 49 TV based programmes, 2 web based programmes and	Library and computer lab: student can use 48 libraries and computer labs nationwide, including central library of headquarters.

314 multimedia programmes in a year on 2017 only.	
Faculty of the KNOU headquarters are mostly engaged in producing the web-based programmes	Teaching assistant provides the customized learning support and give the guidance on academic schedule.
In terms of Gender, it seems that more than 68% are female learners.	Day care centre or the nursery school for the kids of the students.

In terms of Methods of Learning, KNOU provides blended learning to the students with high quality educational programmes running through online and offline classes. Classroom lectures in face-to-face mode for some subjects are offered, but in some cases where the attendance of the students are not feasible, then 100% online learning facility is also available. Even there is a used of Mobile learning as a device of transmitting the contents to the learners. U-Knou campus provides about 1000 of KNOU course and various free contents. Students can access the content and learning materials by using Personal Computer in his or her own place. KNOU TV (OUN), which is lifelong educational channel of KNOU, transmits or provides various educational contents to all citizens in Korea. In fact, in 2011, KNOU acquired 'ISO 9001 Certification' in "Digital Contents Development and Quality Assurance" from British Standard Institute, which is the first and the only case in Korea.

Prime college of KNOU opens and operates education courses for vocational competency and improvement of job competency of the workers, job applicants and people-getting job first and studying. The basic objective of the course is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the learners that will be applied in the industrial sites, besides improving the liberal arts knowledge of the workers. The course is run through 100 percent online. Under the prime colleges, there are some lifelong education hub course like basic course on employees, corporate university course, partner university course, consigned course, multicultural ethnic course for Korean Refugees Support Procedure. For giving or delivering the course to the learners the faculty of the prime colleges have been developing e-content or web based video programmes, developing the e-learning environment setting, e-content related to the program, guide manuals for the first time users and providing the answers to the learners under FAQ etc.

In fact, KNOU is a leading academic institution providing the digital based learning programmes to the learners and also helps the learners to gain knowledge and information from the open educational resources as they have that eventually help the learners to gain the fruitful knowledge as per their job requirements or demand or livelihood requirements.

**Table 2: Basic information on KKHSOU as per the year 2019**

<b>1. Basic Information about KKHSOU</b>	<b>2. Best Practices at KKHSOU</b>
6 schools, 19 Departments, 1 Regional centre and 300 Study centres.	Free education to the differently able learners. KKHSOU has been developing the learning materials in the format of Braille system and audio programmes in CD format for blind learners.
One Research Institute i.e. BKRI, where all research activities are undertaken.	Through "Mother Teresa Social Welfare Mission", five relatively very backward tribal villages of Assam were adopted from 2016 onwards where free health camp, digital

	training on basic computer have been organized from time to time.
CIQA: Developing ICT, Faculty, Learner's Support System, Examination reforms etc.	KKHSOU offers Scholarship of Rs.1,00,000 each from the "APJ Abdul Kalam Social Welfare Mission" to 5 women candidates from Assam each year who successfully clear the civil service (Preliminary) examination conducted by UPSC.
Certificate programmes: 4	Free education to the jail inmates across the State as well the transgender learners.
P G Diploma and Diploma Programmes:12	<b>3. Learning Support Services of KKHSOU</b>
Bachelor's Programmes: 15	<b>Community Radio Service (CR):</b> "Jnan Taranga" (90.4 MHz) is an important platform for the broadcast of educational programmes, which include debates, discussions and talk shows. The i-Radio can also be accessed through the URL: <a href="http://jnantaranga.kkhsou.in/iradio/">http://jnantaranga.kkhsou.in/iradio/</a>
Master's programmes: 4	<b>Ekalavya:</b> KKHSOU with the help of Prasar Bharati has launched a special educational programme named 'Ekalavya', which is aired every Saturday from 8.00 PM to 8.30 PM through All India Radio, Guwahati and Dibrugarh.
M Phil: 17 (Total)	<b>Akashvani Phone-in Programme:</b> KKHSOU offers one hour live phone-in programme every Thursday from 9.15 AM to 10.15 AM through AIR, Guwahati and Dibrugarh where officers and experts from the University clarify queries put across to them over telephone.
PhD: 81 scholars total (19 were awarded)	<b>e-SLM:</b> This serves as the digital repository where e-study materials are uploaded for the benefit of the learners. e-SLMs can be accessed through <a href="http://eslm.kkhsou.in">eslm.kkhsou.in</a> .
	<b>KKHSOU Digital Library:</b> This acts as the resource centre for the University. The Digital Library at Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is an online locus for collecting, preserving and disseminating the institute's output to the Global community. URL: <a href="http://dlkkhsou.inflibnet.ac.in/">http://dlkkhsou.inflibnet.ac.in/</a>

In India, there is a huge gender disparity as women are deprived of accessing higher education compared to men and this challenge could be sorted out only by putting the efforts of the ODL system in India. For instance, in Assam, my university is able to motivate more female learners than the male in pursuing general higher education i.e. at both undergraduate

and post graduate levels. Besides, along with the people living in plain areas, even those belonging to remote and hilly terrains could also find access to the benefits of using online technology or devices in getting admission and receiving academic materials and supports available in the university website and other important portals.

As an open university, KKHSOU is not only trying to identify the needs of various stakeholders, but is also trying to ensure sustainable living by taking so many altruistic initiatives besides offering many need-based programmes like producing audio-visual contents on areas like agriculture, small scale industries, mobile phone repairing and so on. The university has also been producing important open educational resources in local languages to meet local requirements. A number of educational audio-visual programmes are uploaded in YouTube that can be accessed through the university's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/user/kkhsou>.

Although there is a Governmental mandate to each university (both conventional universities and ODL Institutions) for mobilising the online educational programmes among the masses in order to ensure the better access of education, but until now KKHSOU applied only three online programmes running through SWAYAM platform.

## **6. Summary of the Findings:**

After going through the detailed study on both the Universities, it has been found that KNOU is a highly techno-based university whereas KKHSOU is limited to offering a very few online programmes to the learners. In India although various initiatives have taken place for making the digital India but there is a lack of governmental intervention in terms of providing the internet based infrastructure in the entire nation. There are some places located particularly in villages or rural India where still electricity is a far cry for the people living in that areas. In this position how we can expect to provide the 100% online courses to the learners. KKHSOU is restricted to provide the online opportunities related to getting admission, accessing information through the university Learner's portal, Internet based radio, some academic programmes available in the university's YouTube only.

If we look at the academic set up of KKHSOU, particularly the online programmes, it seems that KKHSOU is in a nascent stage in terms of offering the online programmes to the learners in comparison to KNOU. In KNOU, the MOOC courses are offered through the virtual university of Korea. KNOU provides the 100% online course, which is not considered as MOOC. So, the objectives of my paper is not feasible in this context. Instead of MOOC, the term online course for the lifelong learners looks more appropriate. The prime colleges play the crucial role for providing the training and re-training to the learners or the employees in Korea.

Regarding the enrolment of female learners, both the universities are able to motivate more female learners than male. However, the dropout rate is a big issue of concern for both the universities. It seems that in KNOU, there is no gender discrimination and none of the gender specific course is offered by KNOU. In KNOU, learners can use the diversified ways to access the information, but in terms of KKHSOU, it has seen that about 80% learners use the mobile application for accessing the online materials and e-based materials. 75% learners are the age group of 20-45 in KNOU and most of them (about 80%) are working, and at the same time, they are learning there courses in KNOU. In KKHSOU, the age group of majority of the learners is from 24 to 34.

Finally, I have to mention that in KKHOU, which is only 12 years old, we have to do many things related to the needs and requirements of the stakeholders so that it may really become a people's university in the true sense.

## 7. Conclusion:

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Asian Association of Open University (AAOU) for giving me this opportunity following which I was able to do my research in KNOU which is a leading and internationally recognized and one of the top mega open universities in the world. I hope the experiences and knowledge that I have gained during my stay in Korea shall help me a lot to do some more research in both the countries in near future. These experiences would also help and guide me to make important strategies in terms of providing quality lifelong learning opportunity that will enhance the productivity level of the people residing in my own region. Finally, I seek the support and guidance from KNOU in conducting further research in the different areas of interest. Thus, we can do some collaborative works with KNOU that would also help my university to contribute something important to the ODL system of the world.

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