

CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION:

This particular chapter focuses on the analysis of the data and makes an attempt to explain the findings resulting from the analysis. The study is qualitative and the data for the study have been collected from available primary and secondary sources.

Institutional records and unpublished documents along with observations and interviews that were conducted constitute primary sources. Secondary sources for the study were the published books, articles and journals. Data from the key informant interviews have been interpreted in descriptive themes.

The collected data have been analysed in tables and diagrams followed up by the interpretations. The data analysis in this chapter has been categorized into following segments:

7.2. Enrolment trend under Off-campus Distance Education Institutions

7.3. Enrolment Trend under IDOL

7.4. Enrolment Trend under DDE

7.5. Enrolment Trend under KKHSOU

7.6. Enrolment Trend under Open Universities

7.7. Enrolment Trend under Dual Mode Universities

7.8. Growth of Distance Education in Assam: A Trend Analysis Report

7.9. Main Findings of the Study

7.2. Indira Gandhi National Open University

Fig. 91. Growth in enrolment under IGNOU (1986-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Enrolment number |
|---------|------|------------------|
| 1. | 1986 | NA |
| 2. | 1988 | 480 |
| 3. | 1991 | NA |
| 4. | 1994 | NA |
| 5. | 1997 | 2061 |
| 6. | 2000 | 4187 |
| 7. | 2003 | 4520 |
| 8. | 2006 | 3841 |
| 9. | 2009 | 5257 |
| 10. | 2011 | 5897 |
| 11. | 2012 | 6607 |

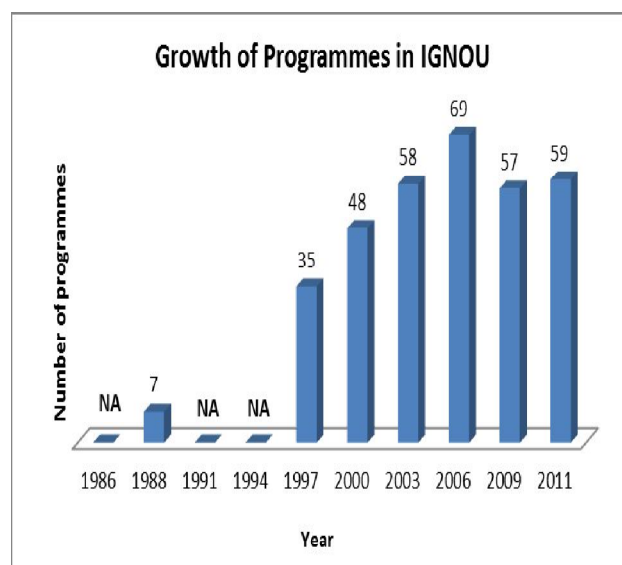
In the table and bar diagram given, the enrollment growth under IGNOU is mentioned. From the time of its inception in 1987 in Shillong, the enrolment under IGNOU reveals an odd pattern of growth over different years.

In 1988 it was 480 students for the Guwahati Centre even though the Shillong served as the Regional Centre for the entire North East Region of India. In 2006, the enrolment dropped to 3841 in 2006 from 4520 in 2003. The fall can be attributed to the news of the establishment of the State Open University in the State and the fall of the study centres.

The enrolment strength under IGNOU however, has not diminished over the years due to its long presence in the state of more than two and a half decade and the credibility as an Open University at the national level has helped to enhance its brand image and as the connoisseur in the field of distance education.

Fig. 92 Growth of programmes under IGNOU (1986-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | No. of Programme |
|---------|------|------------------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | 7 |
| 3 | 1991 | NA |
| 4 | 1994 | NA |
| 5 | 1997 | 35 |
| 6 | 2000 | 48 |
| 7 | 2003 | 58 |
| 8 | 2006 | 69 |
| 9 | 2009 | 57 |
| 10 | 2011 | 59 |
| 11 | 2012 | NA |



The above figure and bar graph reveals that the number of programmes under IGNOU Shillong Regional Centre was in 1988 and in 2011 the number of programmes had increased to 59. However, the 59 programmes offered in

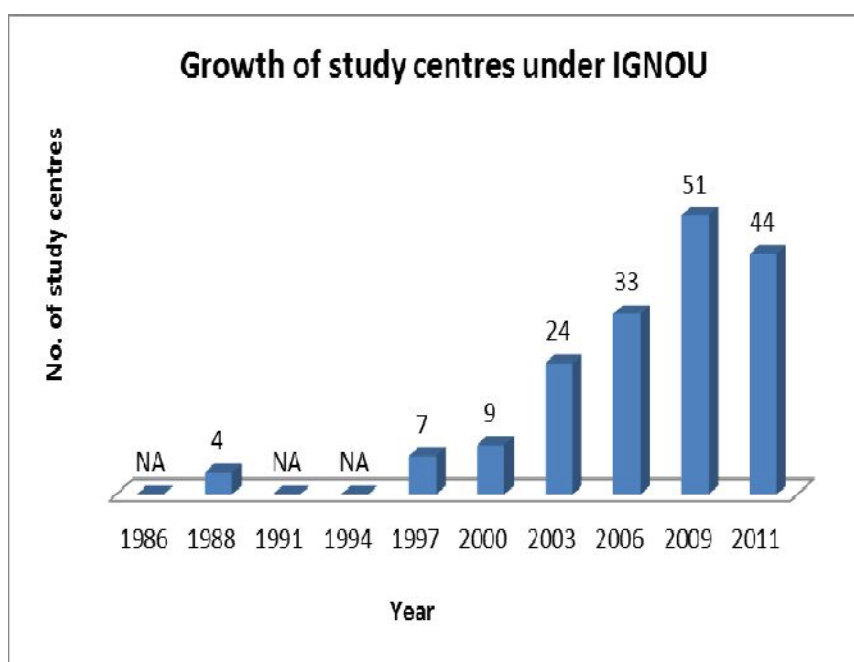
2011 was a massive fall from the 69 programmes offered in 2006.

The programmes offered were: Bachelor Preparatory Programme also termed as Bachelor Degree Programme, Bachelor Degree, Master Degree, Certificate, Advance Certificate, Diploma, Advance Diploma and Post Graduate Diploma. Courses that were traditional and vocational were introduced.

In the course of time, IGNOU tried to introduce new courses and programmes for the learners in Assam, but there were very few takers. Most of the learners lost their interest midway, as a result of which IGNOU had to discontinue many programmes. IGNOU offered many new courses that were meant to open the learners to new opportunities but the learners were keen on traditional courses and programmes.

The attempt of IGNOU to prepare the learners for other tasks and services were thrashed. However, IGNOU has opted for other methods in order to make learning through distance mode equally effective by launching programmes on North East.

Fig. 93 Growth of Study Centre (1986-2012)



| Sl. No. | Year | Number of Study Centres |
|---------|------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | 4 |
| 3 | 1991 | NA |

| Sl. No. | Year | Number of Study Centres |
|---------|------|-------------------------|
| 4 | 1994 | NA |
| 5 | 1997 | 7 |
| 6 | 2000 | 9 |
| 7 | 2003 | 24 |
| 8 | 2006 | 33 |
| 9 | 2009 | 51 |
| 10 | 2011 | 44 |
| 11 | 2012 | NA |

The study centre holds a place of immense relevance in the field of Open and Distance Learning due to the fact that it is the place where the learners interact with their fellow mates and counsellors. The study centre is a place where socialization takes place in the isolated learning world of the distance learners.

The study centres under IGNOU have increased over the years and it must be noted that the study centres are mostly located in the commercial sites and urban towns.

Very few study centers exist in conflict ridden areas of the states, like Karimganj, Cachar and Karbi Anglong. Even if the study centres do exist, the programmes offered are limited and there are very few enrolments owing to the social unrest that prevails in such areas and which act as a barrier to its learners.

The number of study centres has decreased in the later period, which may be due to the less enrolment under those study centres. Inclusive education can be envisaged only when education is distributed in an equal manner to all.

Fig. 94 Programme wise enrolment under IGNOU (1986-2012)

| Year | Highest Enrolment (Rank 1) | Highest Enrolment (Rank 2) | Highest Enrolment (Rank 3) |
|------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1986 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1988 | BDP (60.4%) | DIM (30.4%) | DE (5.6%) |
| 1991 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1994 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1997 | BA (17.3%) | BPP (11.4%) | CIC (6.2%) |
| 2000 | BA (13.2%) | CIC (9.7%) | BPP (6.2%) |
| 2003 | BPP (11.08%) | BA (10.7%) | MEG (6.2%) |
| 2006 | BA (24.0%) | BPP (14.1%) | MP (4.3%) |
| 2009 | BA (27.1%) | BPP (17.3%) | B.Com (8.0%) |
| 2012 | BA (46.2%) | BPP (8.7%) | B.Com (6.3%) |

BDP: Bachelor Degree Programme

DE: Diploma in Distance Education

DIM: Diploma in Management

BA: Bachelor of Arts

BPP: Bachelor Preparatory Programme

CIC: Certificate in Computing

MEG: Master of Arts (English

B.Com: Bachelor of Commerce

MP: Management Programme

From the above figure, it is clear that over the course of time the learner's preference for courses have somewhere changed. Though new programmes/courses have surfaced in the lists of the learner's preference, as mentioned above, like Diploma in Management (DIM), Diploma in Distance Education (DDE), Certificate in Computing and Management Programme and others yet the choice for the majority of the learners continue to be the conventional programmes.

From 1986 to 2000, a majority of the learners (60.4%) studied for the Bachelor Degree Programme. This was followed by the Diploma programme in Management which was 30.4% and Certificate in Computing which was 6.2% and 9.7% respectively in 1997 and 2000. The growing preference for computer and management courses were due to

the technological changes that had taken place. Computers had entered Assam and its importance was recognised. Post 2000, BA programme still had the highest enrolment but enrolment under BPP declined gradually (8.7%) in 2012.

Fig. 95 Area wise enrolment (%) under IGNOU (1986-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Rural | Urban |
|---------|------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | NA | NA |
| 3 | 1991 | NA | NA |
| 4 | 1994 | NA | NA |
| 5 | 1997 | 34.4 | 65.1 |
| 6 | 2000 | 39.2 | 60.4 |
| 7 | 2003 | 38.2 | 61.2 |
| 8 | 2006 | 32.8 | 67.1 |
| 9 | 2009 | 41.4 | 58.6 |
| 10 | 2011 | 44.0% | 55.9 |
| 11 | 2012 | 43.7% | 56.2 |

In the figure above, the trend of enrolment in rural and urban areas is shown. In the figure the enrolment in the urban areas has been high compared to the rural areas.

However, it cannot be said that IGNOU has not made an effort for an inclusive education which is accessible by all. This has resulted in the change of trend with the increase in enrolment under the rural areas. In 1997 the enrolment under rural areas was 34.4% which went up to 43.7% in 2011. And likewise, the enrolment urban areas also seem to come down from 65.1% in 1997 to 56.2% in 2012.

It must be also said that the enrolment in rural areas have been marked with low female enrolment along, possibly due to socio-cultural and economic barrier.. Initially the rural enrolment number revealed a huge

enrolment of the OBC and the SC/ST but gradually the General category of learners began to dominate the seats in the rural areas. The preference of the rural learners is also towards Under Graduate course rather than the certificate or the Diploma course. Most of the rural learners under IGNOU are unemployed.

Fig. 96 Enrolment of females under IGNOU (1986-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Male | Female |
|---------|------|------|--------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | NA | NA |
| 3 | 1991 | NA | NA |
| 4 | 1994 | NA | NA |
| 5 | 1997 | 73.1 | 26.7 |
| 6 | 2000 | 68.4 | 31.4 |
| 7 | 2003 | 58.6 | 41.2 |
| 8 | 2006 | 53.4 | 46.0 |
| 9 | 2009 | 55.6 | 44.1 |
| 10 | 2011 | 57.3 | 42.4 |
| 11 | 2012 | 58.4 | 41.5 |

The enrolment trend under IGNOU in these figures definitely reveals that the female enrolment under IGNOU is lesser than the male enrolment. This could be due to the programmes that were less favourable for the women learners.

However, with the change of time, the enrolment of women increased from 26.7% in 1997 to 46.0% in 2006 from thence onward, there was again a steady decline which came down to 41.5% in 2012. IGNOU appears to have failed to attract the women learners and this may be due to the language or medium of the distance courses.

The female learners under IGNOU are more from urban areas than from the rural areas. The female learners are mostly unmarried and unemployed implying that distance education no longer remains an option for the learners but rather a deliberate choice.

Fig. 97 Distribution of learners according to the social groups (1986-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Gen | SC/ST | OBC |
|---------|------|------|-------|------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA | NA | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | NA | NA | NA |
| 3 | 1991 | NA | NA | NA |
| 4 | 1994 | NA | NA | NA |
| 5 | 1997 | 57.8 | 25.7 | 16.4 |
| 6 | 2000 | 58.2 | 26.6 | 15.1 |
| 7 | 2003 | 53.1 | 21.3 | 25.5 |
| 8 | 2006 | 56.7 | 21.7 | 21.5 |
| 9 | 2009 | 57 | 20.4 | 22.5 |
| 10 | 2011 | 54.2 | 22.5 | 23.2 |
| 11 | 2012 | 50.6 | 23.9 | 25.0 |

From the figure above, it is evident that although the object of DE is to provide equal education to all, the socially disadvantaged groups appear to lag behind.

While the enrolment of the students belonging to the general category was 57.8%, that of the SC/ST was merely 25.8% in 1997. That could be because of the paucity of study centres in areas where they reside in large numbers. Another reason for the low enrolment could be the lack of awareness regarding distance education.

The SC/ST learners under IGNOU are based in rural areas. They prefer BPP and Under Graduate programmes rather than other short term courses.

7.3. Enrolment Trend under Off-campus DEIs

Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU), Madurai:

Madurai Kamaraj University opened its study centre in 1994, and it was one of the first off-campus Universities offering distance education courses in Assam. MKU operated in the state through a study centre, which has been the only centre operating in the North East India.

Madurai Kamaraj University has been offering under Graduate and Post Graduate programmes. M.Phil programme was also provided but due to the UGC ban on research programmes through distance mode, it was discontinued. Similarly, B.Ed. was also discontinued.

The most preferred programmes amongst the learners of MKU were B.Ed., M.Ed., Management programmes and the conventional programmes. However, enrolment post 2000, have declined drastically. The decline has been due to the stiff competition from other Distance Education Institutes. The learners profile of MKU study centre points that between 1994 and 1999, MKU had an enrolment from different places around the state as well as from other states of North East. Enrolments from urban towns were high under Madurai Kamaraj University study centre in Guwahati.

Though MKU still functions in the state, it has well passed its heydays. The enrolment of the learners has gone down drastically and now has only a handful of students. The fall can be attributed to the following reasons: 1). The University could not keep up with the change that occurred with time. While other DEIs of the state had started taking innovative steps for the promotion of Distance Education, MKU made no effort in expanding of support services for the learners, 2). MKU faced a huge competition from

Open Universities and Dual Mode Universities in Assam and could hardly match them in their innovative schemes and 3). MKU had failed as a Distance Education Institute due to its irregularities and haphazard management tactics. The official reports show that there have been complaints in regard to the delay in receiving of exam results, delay in delivery of study materials, the incorrect marking system, etc. This implies that MKU has a loophole in its functioning. The learners of MKU were however disillusioned with its functioning and their dilemmas took a heavy toll for the institution.

International Centre for Distance Education and Open learning (ICDEOL); Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla:

In Assam, The Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla started its Distance Education study centre in Guwahati (Assam) much later than MKU, which had started in 1994. Of the other states in the North East India, the University had a centre at Aizawl. However, the centre could not make much headway and hence it has remained dysfunctional since 2006.

HPU in Assam began offering courses or programmes which were basically the traditional subjects. The records of the University of 1997-98 for Assam, shows that the learners were enrolled in subjects like History, English, under the Master's programme. Besides the Bachelor, Masters and PG Diploma programmes, it is astonishing to find that science programmes at the undergraduate level were also offered. Professional courses like B. Ed and M. Ed were also introduced to the distant learners by HPU. HPU also offered M.Phil programmes for the learners. The institutional register records the number of M.Phil students for the year 2000-01 as 19, all of whom were undergoing M.Phil programme in Hindi under HPU in Assam. This is the only record of M.Phil. programmes offered by HPU.

Most of learners who enrolled themselves in Masters Courses were highly qualified with many having B.Sc. degree, B.Ed. degree and few with LLB

degree too. Gender wise, the enrolment of male learners far exceeded their female counterpart. Amongst the female learners, most of them were enrolled in the Bachelors and Masters programmes. The enrolment of female learners in the professional courses were also comparatively less than their male counterparts. This was due to the skepticism of the learners as well as the lack of publicity of the University.

HPU shut its centre in Assam due to the following problems: low Enrolment of students, disturbing law and order of the state, economic feasibility and competition from other Distance Education Institutions in the state. Distance Education under HPU ended with its closure by 2006.

7.4. Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IDOL); Gauhati University

Fig. 98 Enrolment under IDOL (1999-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Enrolment |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. | 1998-99 | 514 |
| 2. | 1999-2000 | 709 |
| 3. | 2000-01 | 667 |
| 4. | 2001-02 | 1260 |
| 5. | 2002-03 | 1709 |
| 6. | 2003-04 | 1754 |
| 7. | 2004-05 | 2218 |
| 8. | 2005-06 | 2743 |
| 9. | 2006-07 | 2923 |
| 10. | 2007-08 | 3823 |
| 11. | 2008-09 | 3832 |
| 12. | 2009-10 | 5393 |
| 13. | 2010-11 | 9444 |
| 14. | 2011-12 | 11515 |

From the table above and the diagram on the left, it is clear that enrolment under IDOL has increased with time. The diagram shows the increase from 514 in 1998-99, the year IDOL was established, to 11515 in 2011-12. This indicates a meteoric rise of IDOL.

However, the increase in enrolment under IDOL has not been very smooth as seen from the table high above. Though there have there been a few negative trend in the growth with the growth rate fluctuating, however, distance education growth under IDOL only seems to be rising from the stumbles.

Fig. 99 Gender wise enrolment (%) under IDOL (1999-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Female (%) | Male (%) |
|---------|---------|------------|----------|
| 1. | 1998-99 | 34.4 | 65.4 |
| 2. | 2001-02 | 33.9 | 65.7 |
| 3. | 2004-05 | 52.8 | 47.1 |
| 4. | 2007-08 | 52.6 | 47.2 |
| 5. | 2010-11 | 52.4 | 47.5 |
| 6. | 2011-12 | 58.1 | 41.8 |

In the figure and table above, the trend of women enrolment under IDOL has been clearly stated. While initially the participation of the female learner's under IDOL was less as compared to the male learners, there has been a reverse sweep since 2004-05 however.

The trend also reveals that the women enrolment has remained stagnated at around 52%. On the other hand the enrolment of the men under IDOL was initially very high. In 1998-99, it was 65.4% but the enrolment number soon fell with a huge margin and very steadily. In 2012, the enrolment of the male leaners under IDOL was 41.8%.

The enrolment of the women has increased because of the change in the mindset and the need of time for getting jobs and becoming self-

dependent. Besides, IDOL also provides a sense of security by being attached to a conventional University and at the same time not discriminating the distance learners from the regular once by providing the same degrees and certificates, which definitely imbibes a sense of pride amongst the learners.

Fig. 100 Programme wise enrolment under IDOL (1999-2012)

| Year | PG | PG Dip. | Cert. | MSc. IT | UG | Total |
|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|
| 2005-06 | 70.90 | 29.09 | | | | 100 |
| 2006-07 | 66.06 | 33.93 | | | | 100 |
| 2007-08 | 60.94 | 39.05 | | | | 100 |
| 2008-09 | 62 | 37.99 | | | | 100 |
| 2009-10 | 69.34 | 28.64 | 1.14 | 0.85 | | 100 |
| 2010-11 | 69.40 | 27.68 | 1.09 | 0.63 | 1.19 | 100 |
| 2011-12 | 83.59 | 14.18 | 0.85 | 0.47 | 0.90 | 100 |

In the table above and the figure on the left, what probably makes it clear is that programme wise, the preference of the IDOL learners have been for the conventional courses.

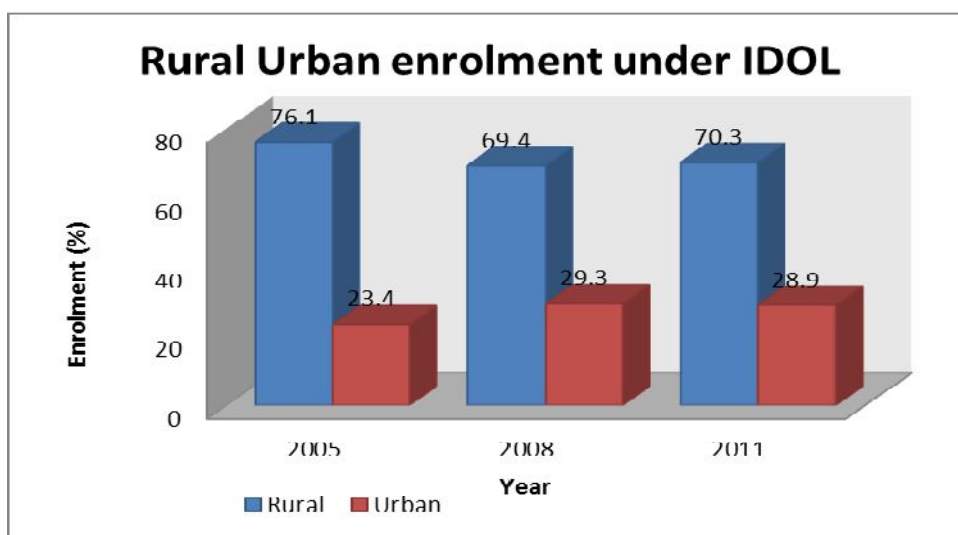
Though the choice for MA has decreased over time, yet it comparatively retains the top spot for highest enrolment in any programme. Initially the Institute began by offering PG programmes and hence the learners had no other option.

But by 2002-03, PG Diploma programme and M.Com course was introduced. And learners had shifted for the PG Diploma courses. The preference of the learners for the PG Diploma course gradually increased from 7.19% in 2002-03 to 38% 2008-09 but shortly later it came down to 28,64%. However, it is noted that enrolment under PG Diploma courses

have been increasing in case of PGD in Journalism and Mass Communication and PGD Computer Application.

The Certificate courses and the IT course are the latest addition to the programmes that were introduced. In 2011-12, Master degree in Education and Sanskrit was introduced.

Fig. 101 Area wise enrolment under IDOL (1999-2012)



| Sl. No. | Year | Rural | Urban |
|---------|------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1999 | NA | NA |
| 2 | 2002 | NA | NA |
| 3 | 2005 | 76.1 | 23.4 |
| 4 | 2008 | 69.4 | 29.3 |
| 5 | 2011 | 70.3 | 28.9 |
| 6 | 2012 | NA | NA |

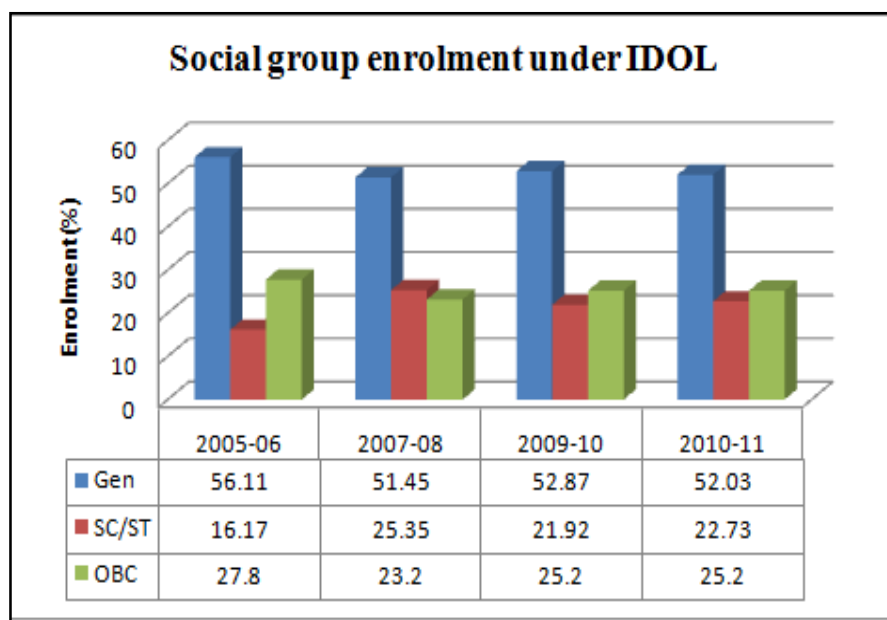
In the graph and table above, it is clearly stated that the learners from the rural areas have higher access than the urban areas under IDOL, Gauhati University.

Since 2005, from the data at hand, it is clear that the learners from the rural areas have higher enrolment compared to that of the urban learners, but over the years, the enrolment has declined. In 2005 the enrolment of the rural learners was 76.1% but by 2011, the enrolment had dropped to 70.3%.

However, the urban learners have increased under IDOL since 2005 when it was 23.4% and by 2011, the enrolment was 28.9%. With the support services provided by the Institution, Gauhati University IDOL has been able to penetrate into the rural areas through its study centres.

The study centres of IDOL are located in very crucial places and attached to Institutions that have high concentration of rural population. The rural areas of the state are prone to unemployment and other socio-economic problems and hence efficient support services can enable the learners to come out.

Fig. 102 Social group wise distribution of learners under IDOL (1999-2012)



Enrolment of the marginalised group under IDOL

| Sl. No. | Year | Gen | SC/ST | OBC |
|---------|-----------|-------|-------|------|
| 1 | 1999-2000 | NA | NA | NA |
| 2 | 2002-03 | NA | NA | NA |
| 3 | 2005-06 | 56.11 | 16.17 | 27.8 |
| 4 | 2007-08 | 51.45 | 25.35 | 23.2 |
| 5 | 2009-10 | 52.87 | 21.92 | 25.2 |
| 6 | 2010-11 | 52.03 | 22.73 | 25.2 |
| 7 | 2011-12 | NA | NA | NA |

From the table above and figure, it is clear that the enrolment of the marginalized social groups (SC and ST) is less in distance education under IDOL.

In comparison with the enrolment figure of the General category of learners, the SC/ST had 16.17% of the total enrolment, whereas the General category had 56.11% of the total enrolments. This trend in disparity continues though.

A ray of hope shines. As we look into the table and the graph, it can be noticed that the enrolment of the SC/ST learners have increased since 2005. In that year the enrolment of the SC/ST learners were 16.17% which increased to 22.73% in 2011.

Fig. 103 Growth of programmes and study centres under IDOL

| Sl. No. | Year | Programmes | Study Centres | Contact Centres |
|---------|------|------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 1998 | 6 | NA | NA |
| 2 | 2000 | 7 | NA | NA |
| 3 | 2003 | 9 | NA | NA |
| 4 | 2005 | 12 | - | 56 |
| 5 | 2008 | 18 | 10 | 79 |
| 6 | 2011 | 24 | 10 | 87 |

From the table above, it is well evident that there has been a growth of programmes in the course of time. As a distance education institute, IDOL has been keen on introducing courses and programmes that have relevance to the learners in the present context of the day to day situations.

However, the contact centres under Institute of Distance and Open Learning functions as an information centre and not counseling centre.

Initially the Master Degree programmes were introduced in keeping with the Gauhati University syllabus and curricula. However, more practical courses were later introduced by IDOL. The Post Graduate Diploma programmes were meant to be professional courses in order to benefit the learners. The Post Graduate programmes are:

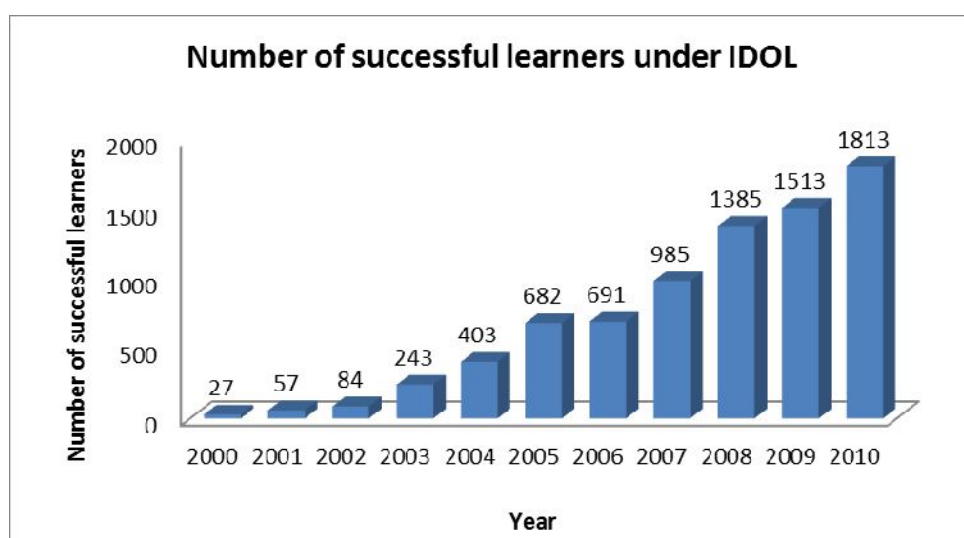
| Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) Programme | |
|---|--|
| PGDBM (PG Diploma in Business Management) | PGDJMC (PG Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication) |
| PGDHRM (PG Diploma in Human Resource Management) | PGDFM (PG Diploma in Finance Management) |
| PGDCA (PG Diploma in Computer Application) | PGDIRM (PG Diploma in Insurance and Risk Management) |
| PGDSMM (PG Diploma in Sales and Marketing Management) | PGDBFS (PG Diploma in Banking and Financial Services) |

The PG Diploma courses have resulted in increased enrolment number. A certificate course was introduced in 2010 along with an IT course in the Master Degree level in the Science stream.

As for the study centre, IDOL has taken utmost care and attention in focusing on developing a wide network of study centres. In 2011, IDOL had 87 study centres all around the corners of the state.

Fig. 104 Successful learners under IDOL (1999-2012)

| Sl. No. | Year | Pass out learners |
|---------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2000 | 27 |
| 2 | 2001 | 57 |
| 3 | 2002 | 84 |
| 4 | 2003 | 243 |
| 5 | 2004 | 403 |
| 6 | 2005 | 682 |
| 7 | 2006 | 691 |
| 8 | 2007 | 985 |
| 9 | 2008 | 1385 |
| 10 | 2009 | 1513 |
| 11 | 2010 | 1813 |
| 12 | 2011 | NA |
| 13 | 2012 | NA |



The above table highlights the number of learners who were awarded Degrees and Diplomas for their successful completion of examinations. In the Distance Education system, it is difficult to assess the success for every year, as a learner gets maximum time limit for the completion of a programme.

7.5. Enrolment trend under DDE, Dibrugarh University

Fig. 105 Directorate of Distance Education (DDE); Dibrugarh University

| Sl. No. | Year | Enrolment |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | 2001-02 | 1187 |
| 2 | 2002-03 | 1064 |
| 3 | 2003-04 | 870 |
| 4 | 2004-05 | 892 |
| 5 | 2005-06 | 953 |
| 6 | 2006-07 | 670 |
| 7 | 2007-08 | 794 |
| 8 | 2008-09 | 913 |
| 9 | 2009-10 | 1296 |
| 10 | 2010-11 | 2126 |
| 11 | 2011-12 | 4267 |

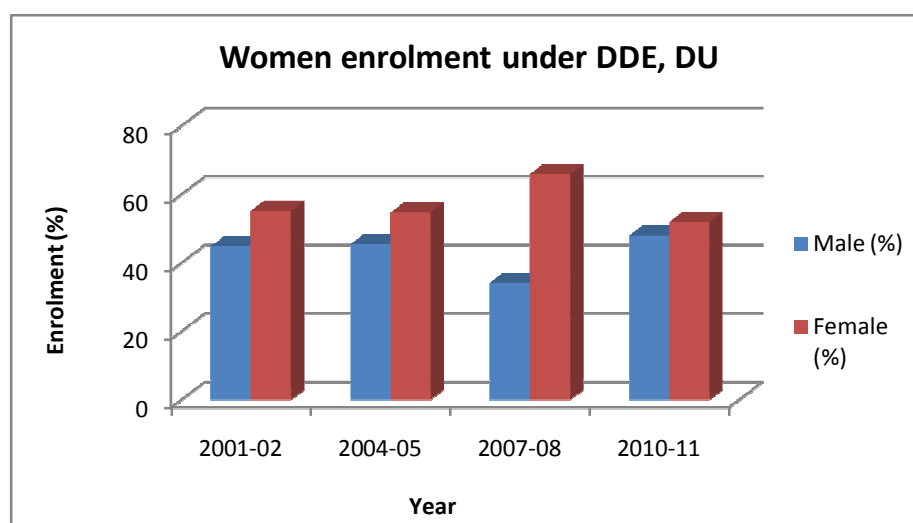
The figures in table show the growth of Distance Education under Dibrugarh University. Dibrugarh University started offered distance courses since 2001.

It is plain clear from the diagram that the fresh enrolments under Dibrugarh University had gone off track somewhere during the period of the study. While it made a good start with the enrolment of 1187 learners, it came down to 670 learners in 2006-07, only to pick up the pieces in 2009-10 with 1296 learners.

Distance Education under Dibrugarh University had to go through some rough patches with the enrolment number dwindling to and forth. There has been a negative growth marked under Dibrugarh University. This trend has been due to the lack of motivation for the distance learners to appreciate the distance education mode of learning.

Fig. 106 Gender wise enrolment under DDE, Dibrugarh University

| Sl. No. | Year | Male (%) | Female (%) |
|---------|---------|----------|------------|
| 1 | 2001-02 | 44.83 | 55.16 |
| 2 | 2004-05 | 45.40 | 54.59 |
| 3 | 2007-08 | 34.13 | 65.86 |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 47.97 | 51.83 |
| 5 | 2011-12 | NA | NA |



In the table above and the graph on the left, it is obvious that there is a wide gender gap in distance education under Dibrugarh University.

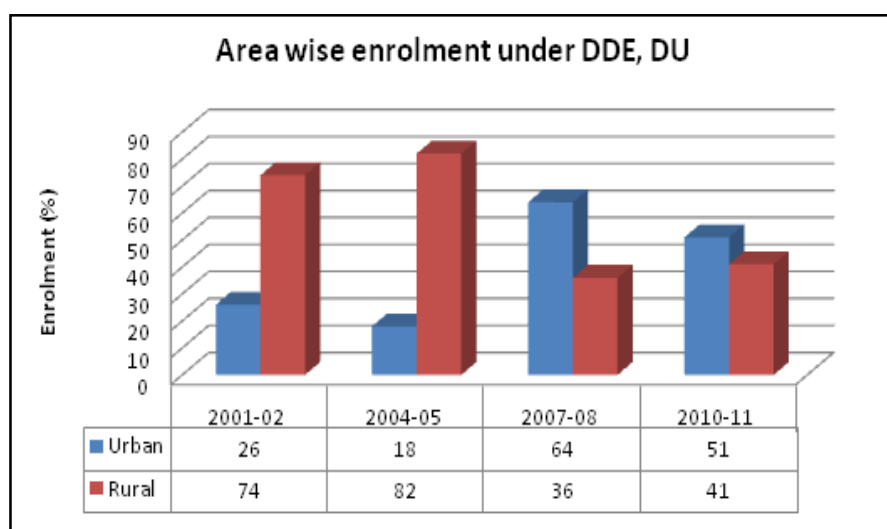
In 2001-02, the male enrolment was 44.83% and for the women, the participation of the female learner was 55.16%. There was a gap of 10.33% amongst the male and the female learners.

The general trend shows that the female enrolment is high, which is definitely a good sign. As the women are now coming out demanding higher education in the regular mode, the same has occurred in the distance education system. Moreover, higher enrolment of the women has been due to the conventional courses that were provided.

In the contrary the enrolment of the men under DDE fell down drastically. Though the enrolment rate was 44.83% in 2001, by 2011 the enrolment had gone to 47.97%. However, the trend tells of the immense effort of the Institution to bring equity in education.

Fig. 107 Area wise distribution of learners under DDE, Dibrugarh University

| SI. No. | Year | Enrolment in Urban (%) | Enrolment in Rural (%) |
|---------|---------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 2001-02 | 26 | 74 |
| 2 | 2004-05 | 18 | 82 |
| 3 | 2007-08 | 64 | 36 |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 51 | 41 |
| 5 | 2012 | NA | NA |



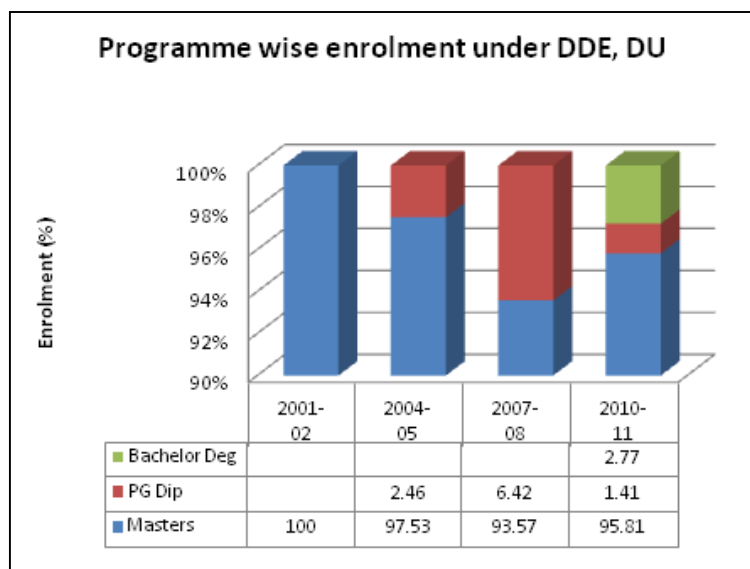
The trend in enrolment under Dibrugarh University clearly shows that urban areas have higher enrolment than the rural areas. Initially the enrolment under rural areas exceeded those in the urban areas. In 2001-02, rural enrolment was 74% compared to 26%. This trend remains till 2005-05.

However, the trend soon was reversed. The enrolment under the urban areas has risen in 2007-08, where the enrolment under urban areas was 64% while in the rural areas it was 36%. By 2010-11, the urban enrolment had come down to 51% but was still higher than the enrolment in the rural areas.

The rise in the enrolment under urban areas implies that the demand for education from the rural areas are either being neglected or have gradually decreased. In either case, the University should facilitate learners from rural areas to come forward for higher education.

Fig. 108 Programme wise enrolment (%) under DDE, DU

| Sl. No. | Year | Masters | PG Dip | Bachelor Deg |
|---------|-----------|---------|--------|--------------|
| 1 | 2001-02 | 100 | - | - |
| 2 | 2004-05 | 97.53 | 2.46 | - |
| 3 | 2007-08 | 93.57 | 6.42 | - |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 95.81 | 1.41 | 2.77 |
| 5 | 2011-2012 | NA | NA | NA |

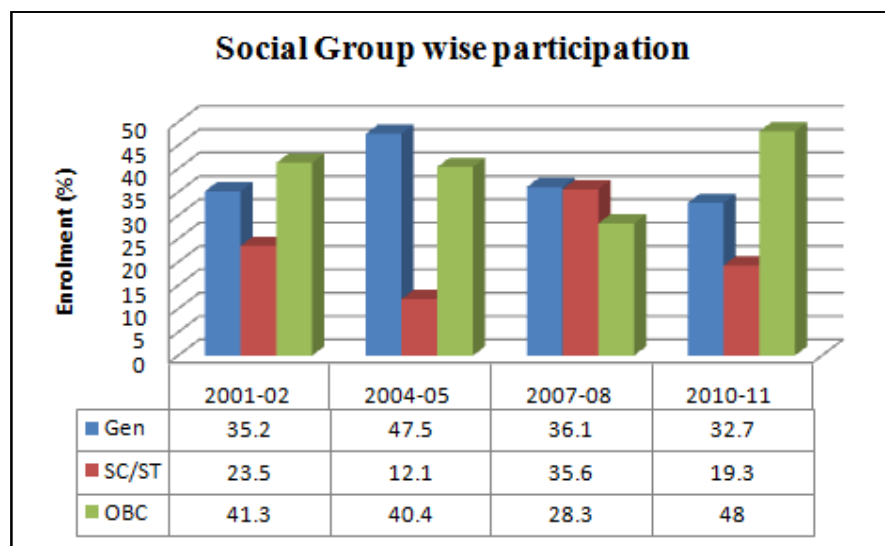


Dibrugarh University offered PG courses initially for the distance learners; it was later in 2010 that Bachelor programme in Computer Application and Business Administration was introduced.

Master degree courses include Assamese, Economics, English, Political Science, Sociology, Commerce and Mathematics. For the first few years, till 2004-05, Master degree programmes had full enrolment. However, the enrolment under Master Degree declined with the options of other courses that were made available for the learners. PG Diploma programmes in Journalism and Mass Communication and Marketing Management were introduced by 2005. The enrolment was recorded at 2.46% which later came down to 1.41% in 2011.

Fig. 109 Enrolment (%) by Social Groups in DDE, DU

| Sl. No. | Year | Gen | SC/ST | OBC |
|---------|---------|------|-------|------|
| 1 | 2001-02 | 35.2 | 23.5 | 41.3 |
| 2 | 2004-05 | 47.5 | 12.1 | 40.4 |
| 3 | 2007-08 | 36.1 | 35.6 | 28.3 |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 32.7 | 19.3 | 48 |
| 5 | 2011-12 | NA | NA | NA |

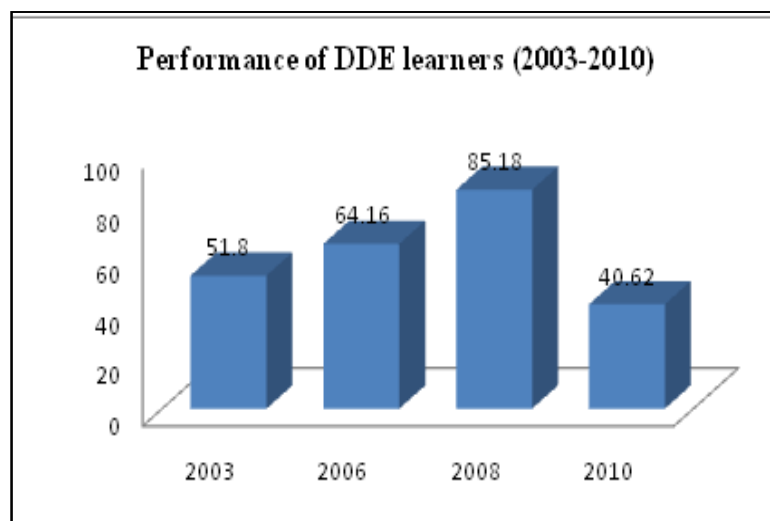


The disparity in enrolment amongst the social groups persists even under Dibrugarh University. While the enrolment of the General category of learners has been consistent and high above the SC/ST learners, the latter have remained fairly visible. In 2001-02, the general category of learners had 35.2% of enrolment while the SC/ST learners were just 23.5%. In 2007-08, the two groups had somewhat closed the gap only to widen up again by 2010-11.

The low enrolment of the SC/ST learners under Dibrugarh University is visible in all the study centres. This trend of low participation by the SC/ST in distance mode must be due to the lack of encouragement. The SC/ST belong to the deprived groups that have been living life on the edge hence, their participation in higher education has been not on their priority list.

Fig. 110 Success rate of learners (%) under DDE, DU

| Sl. No. | Year | Pass %age |
|---------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 2003 | 51.8 |
| 2 | 2006 | 64.16 |
| 3 | 2008 | 85.18 |
| 4 | 2010 | 40.62 |



The success rate of an Institution and specially distance education institutions is hard to be defined or gauged. In the table above and the diagram on the right, it is clearly shown the pass out rate of the learners under Dibrugarh University. It has definitely increased from 51.8% in 2003 to 85.18% in 2009.

This implies that the learners are satisfied with their programmes and have been able to complete their courses/programmes in time.

However, in 2010 the number of successful learners dropped down drastically to 40.62%. This fall was recorded in all the programmes under Dibrugarh University.

Fig. 111 Growth of Programmes and Study Centres under DDE, DU

| Sl. No. | Year | Programmes | Study Centres |
|---------|------|------------|---------------|
| 1 | 2002 | 5 | 12 |
| 2 | 2006 | 5 | 19 |
| 3 | 2010 | 10 | 39 |
| 4 | 2012 | NA | NA |

From the figures above, it is clear that the study centres have grown from 12 in 2002 to 39 in 2010. Study centres under Dibrugarh University have however concentrated more in Upper Assam of the Brahmaputra. The highest number of enrolment was recorded in the following study centre Dibrugarh University, Margherita College, J.B. College and Moridhal College. While Dibrugarh University and J.B. College has the highest enrolment unlike other study centres, the enrolment in the other study centres have declined in a huge number.

As for the programmes, the Directorate introduced Master level Degree programme which remained unchanged till 2007 when Post Graduate Diploma programmes were introduced. By 2011, Bachelor Degree programmes were introduced. The growth of programmes under the University has been very slow and even then the enrolment has been more for the conventional Master Degree course rather than any other professional courses.

7.6. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU)

Fig. 112 Enrolment of learners under KKHSOU

| Sl. No. | Year | Enrolment |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1 | 2007-08 | 3490 |
| 2 | 2008-09 | 18533 |
| 3 | 2009-10 | 28910 |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 40658 |
| 5 | 2011-12 | 31103 |

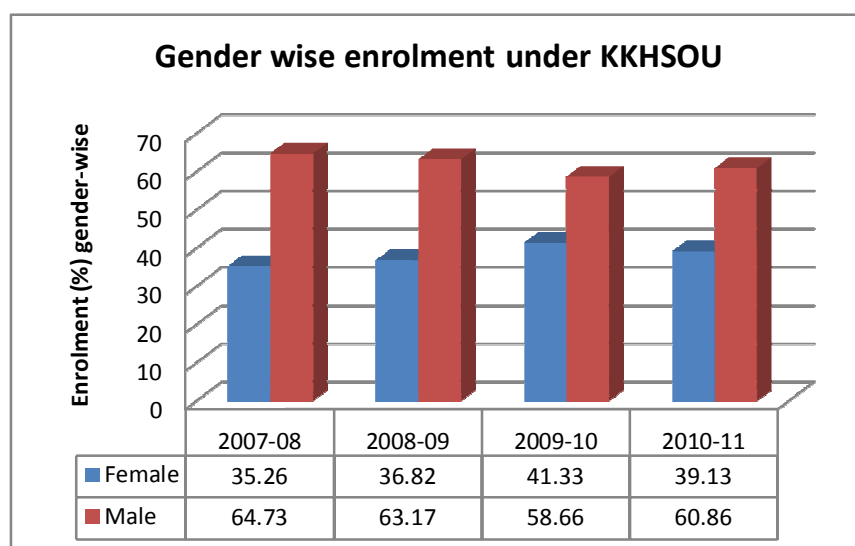
KKHSOU began to offer programmes from 2007 even though it started functioning from December 2006.

The trend of enrolment under KHSOU has been consistently growing higher. In 2007-08, the enrolment was 3490 and by 2011-12, it had grown to 31103. The increase in the enrolment since its establishment has been more than tenfold since its establishment.

The increase in enrolment can be attributed to the following factors- firstly; the establishment of KHSOU has filled the vacuum that was immensely felt by the people of the state in the field of distance education. For the first time, they got an Institution that fully involved itself in the distance learning methods. Hence, the learners could let go their inhibition about distance education being a “supplementary form of education” next to the regular education. Secondly, KKHSOU as a “local University” for the local people got huge coverage from the media and the press which won the learners curiosity and their support.

Fig. 113 Gender wise enrolment under KKHSOU

| Year | Female enrolment (%) | Male enrolment (%) | Total |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 2007-08 | 35.26 | 64.73 | 100 |
| 2008-09 | 36.82 | 63.17 | 100 |
| 2009-10 | 41.33 | 58.66 | 100 |
| 2010-11 | 39.13 | 60.86 | 100 |
| 2011-12 | NA | NA | NA |



The enrolment of the female learners has increased quantitatively over the years but they are still a considerable way behind with the enrolment of their male counterparts. The low enrolment under KKHSOU of the female learners is a very disturbing trend.

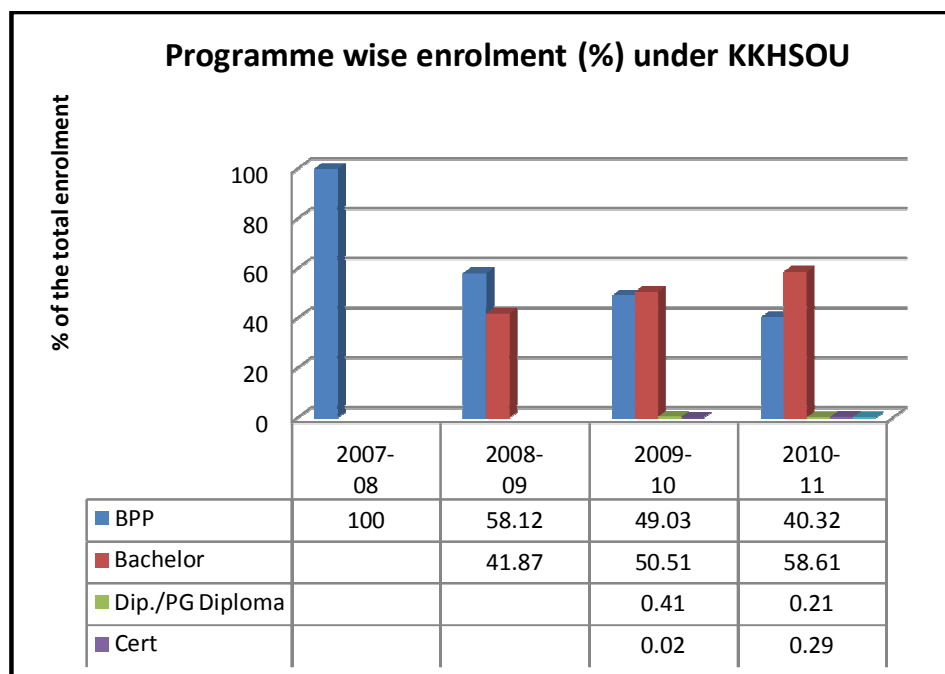
| Academic year | Male (BPP) | Female (Bachelor) |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2007-08 | 35.26 | |
| 2008-09 | 41.34 | 31.34 |
| 2009-10 | 45.57 | 40.21 |
| 2010-11 | 38.67 | 39.91 |
| 2011-12 | NA | NA |

The female enrolment under BPP and Bachelor programme has been consistent even though low compared to the male enrolment number.

While the enrolment under the BPP programme was 35.26% in 2007-08, by 2010-11 it had gone up to 38.67%. Under the Bachelor Degree programme, female enrolment went up to 39.91% in 2010-11 from 31.34% in 2008-09.

Fig. 114 Programme wise enrolment under KKHSOU

| Sl. No. | Year | BPP | Bachelor | Dip./PG Diploma | Cert | Masters | Total |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | 2007-08 | 100 | - | - | - | - | 100 |
| 2 | 2008-09 | 58.12 | 41.87 | - | - | - | 100 |
| 3 | 2009-10 | 49.03 | 50.51 | 0.41 | 0.02 | - | 100 |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 40.32 | 58.61 | 0.21 | 0.29 | 0.21 | 100 |

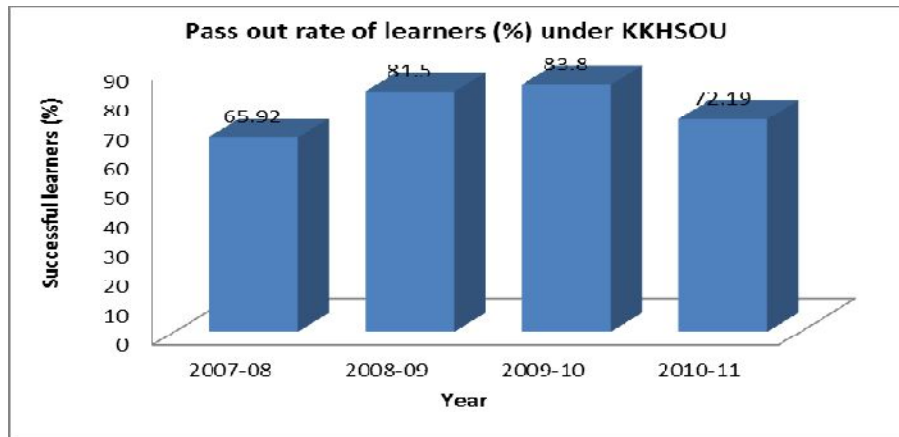


From the table above and the diagram on the left it is evident that the enrolment under BPP has gradually declined since it was first introduced. In 2008-09, BPP still had the highest enrolment with the share of 58.12% of the total enrolment. However, it declined by 2010-11 when it recorded the enrolment at 40.32% of the total enrolment in all the programmes.

The trend that has caught the attention is the growing enrolment under the Bachelor Degree programmes. The enrolment has increased from 41.87% in 2008-09 to 58.61% in 2010-11. The preference of the learners for Bachelor courses seems to emerge.

Fig. 115 Success rate of learners (%) under KKHSOU

| Sl. No. | Year | Pass out Rate (%) |
|---------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2007-08 | 65.92 |
| 2 | 2008-09 | 81.50 |
| 3 | 2009-10 | 83.80 |
| 4 | 2010-11 | 72.19 |
| 5 | 2011-12 | NA |



From the table and diagram, it is clear that the success rate of the learners have been analysed.

From 65.92% in 2007-08 the success rate has increased to 72.19%. The success rate under the vocational courses have been cent per cent

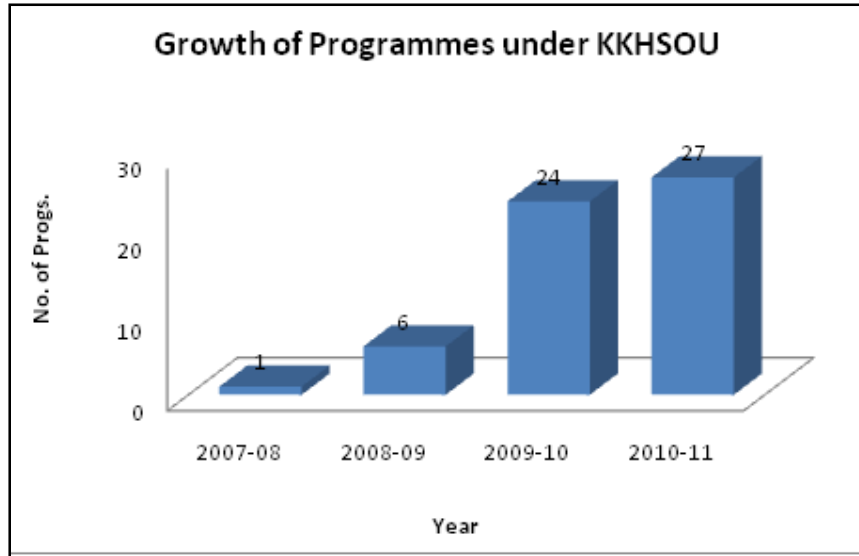
The growing success rate of KKHSOU must be credited to the following factors:

1. The availability of courses and programmes in regional languages is an added benefit for the learners. This increases the motivation level and at the same time, the learners do not drop out due to the language problem.
2. Success rate of the learner also to a great degree rests on the institutional culture and the environment. KKHSOU has been able to reach the students through a wide range of support services.

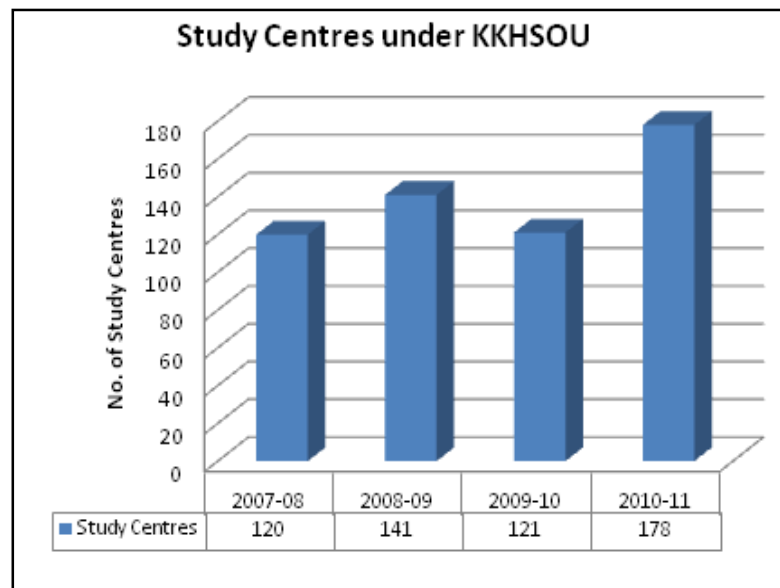
Fig. 116 Growth of Study Centres and Programmes under KKHSOU

| Year | Study Centres | Programmes/Courses |
|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 2007-08 | 120 | 1 |
| 2008-09 | 141 | 6 |

| | | |
|---------|-----|----|
| 2009-10 | 121 | 24 |
| 2010-11 | 178 | 27 |
| 2011-12 | NA | NA |



The support services provided by KKHSOU in regard to the study centres and programmes, definitely have an impact on the learners. The StateOpen University has been focusing on offering programmes for the learners. The growth of programmes testifies to it.



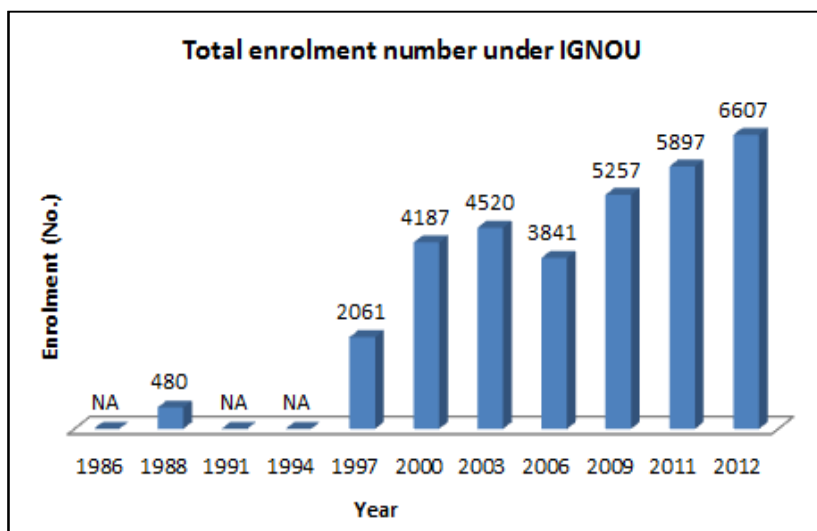
Similarly, study centres too have increased since 2007-08 from 79 to 125 by 2010-11. This increase in the study centres throws light on the effort of the University to reach the farthest corner of the region and offer higher education to the people of the state.

The growth of study centres and programmes play an important role in the enrolment of the learners and their success.

7.7. Enrolment Trend under Open Universities

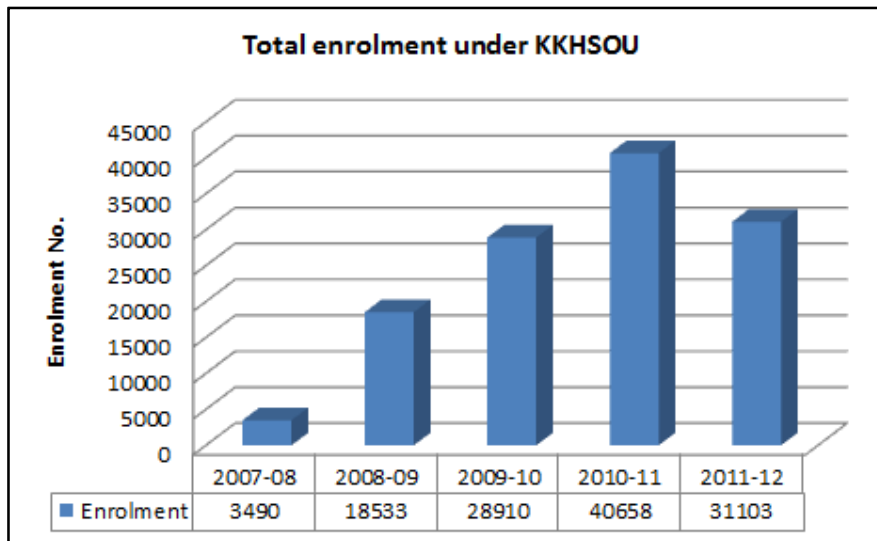
**Fig. 117 Enrolment trend analysis of the Open Universities in Assam:
IGNOU and KKHSOU**

The status of Distance Education today in Assam has been given a new dimension by the two Open Universities- Indira Gandhi National Open University and Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University. While IGNOU began its journey since 1986-87 and has been continuing with its service, KKHSOU saw the light of the day in 2006. The enrolment trend under both the Open Universities presents a contrasting picture.



As seen from the diagram above, the enrolment trend under IGNOU depicts the enrolment growth to be irregular. Variations have been marked in the enrolment of the learners under IGNOU. The enrolment grew from

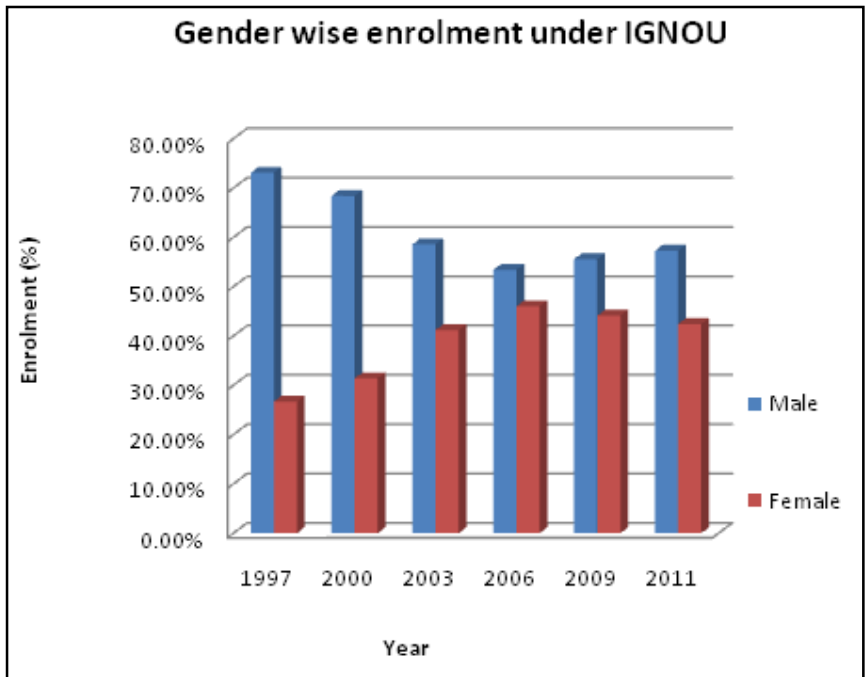
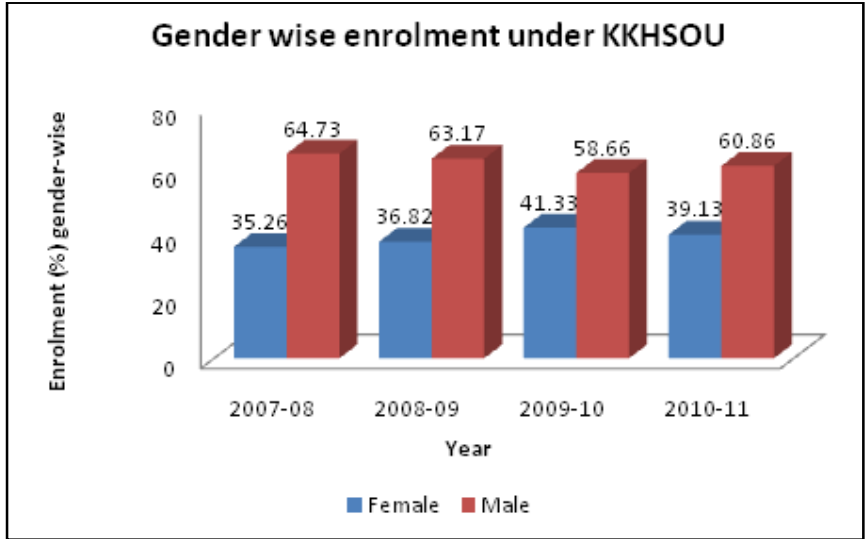
480 in 1988 to 4520 in 2003, only to fall in 2006 with 3841 enrolment of learners. By 2012, the enrolment of the learners had risen to 6607.



As far as KKHSOU goes, though the University began offering programmes since 2007, yet the enrolment trends for the initial years reveal that the number of enrolment has grown consistently. This variation in the enrolment under both the Open Universities can be assigned to the following reasons:

1. Though IGNOU has a brand image as a National Open University in India and being termed as a “mega University”, KKHSOU, due to its image of being a “local University”, has learners coming up in huge numbers, as the learners from the state feel at home in a local Institution.
2. Language as a medium of instruction is definitely another powerful factor. While IGNOU offers its courses in English and Hindi, KKHSOU offers its programmes in the regional language thus motivating the learners.

Fig. 118 Gender wise enrolment under the Open Universities: IGNOU and KKHSOU



| Year | Female Enrolment (IGNOU) | Female Enrolment (KKHSOU) |
|---------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2006-07 | 1770 (46.08%) | |
| 2007-08 | 2193 (44.94%) | 35.26% |
| 2008-09 | 2094 (44.10%) | 36.82% |
| 2009-10 | 1813 (38.19%) | 41.33% |

| | | |
|---------|---------------|--------|
| 2010-11 | 2502 (42.24%) | 39.13% |
| 2011-12 | 2747(41.57%) | NA |

From the enrolment trend depicted in the diagram above, it is evident that both the Universities share a similarity. The enrolment trend of the women learners under the Open Universities falls below the male learners.

While under IGNOU, the female enrolment was 26.7% in 1997 which rose to 46.0% in 2006. However by 2012, the enrolment decreased to 41.57%. IGNOU have failed to attract the women learners under their fold and this may be due to the language or medium of the distance courses.

Under KKHSOU, the female enrolment was equally low than the male learners. It was 37.26% in 2007-08, only to increase in 2009-10 to 41.33% and then to fall again to 39.13% the very next year. Despite the fact that KKHSOU provided regional language as a medium of study the disparity between male and female learners is a serious question.

Even though the objective of the Distance Education system is to reach the not so privileged category of learners, especially women, it has not been successful in its attempts. The reasons for the low female enrolment under KKHSOU or IGNOU must have been due to the uncertainty surrounding their academic career or the validity of their degree despite the recognition earned.

**Fig. 119 Areas wise enrolment (%) under the Open Universities:
IGNOU and KKHSOU**

| Sl. No. | Year | Rural | Urban |
|---------|------|-------|-------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | NA | NA |
| 3 | 1991 | NA | NA |
| 4 | 1994 | NA | NA |

| | | | |
|----|------|------|------|
| 5 | 1997 | 34.4 | 65.1 |
| 6 | 2000 | 39.2 | 60.4 |
| 7 | 2003 | 38.2 | 61.2 |
| 8 | 2006 | 32.8 | 67.1 |
| 9 | 2009 | 41.4 | 58.6 |
| 10 | 2011 | 44.0 | 55.9 |
| 11 | 2012 | 43.7 | 56.2 |

In the figure above, the trend of enrolment in rural and urban areas is shown. In the figure the enrolment in the urban areas has rather been very high comparatively to the rural areas. This implies that the benefits of higher education are still concentrated to those living in the areas that have better facilities and communication advantages. This has been due to the lack of study centres in rural areas and areas where conflict occurs at frequent intervals.

However, it cannot be ruled out that IGNOU has taken every effort for an inclusive education which is accessible by all. This has resulted in the change of trend with the increase in enrolment under the rural areas. In 1997 the enrolment under rural areas was 34.4% which went up to 44.02% in 2011. And likewise, the enrolment urban areas also seem to come down from 65.1% in 1997 to 56.2% in 2011.

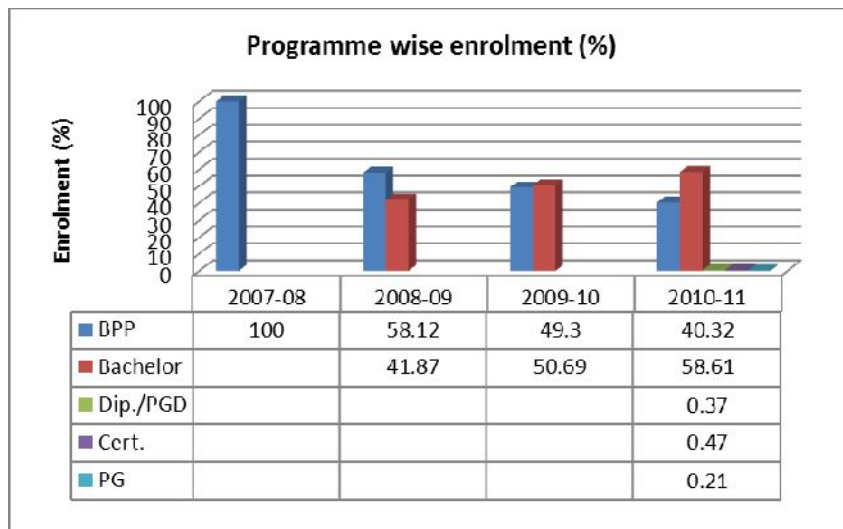
As for KKHSOU, the study centres are highly concentrated in the urban areas. A number of study centres are situated in districts like Kamrup (Metro), Sivasagar, Jorhat and Nagaon which have high urban population as per the Census Report of 2011.

There are few study centres in Kokrajhar, Karimganj, Cachar, Chirang and such places that have certain socio-economic problems. Hence, enrolment in these areas definitely is not at par with the other areas that are in a better off position.

Programme wise Enrolment under the Open University: IGNOU and KKHSOU

Fig. 120IGNOU Enrolment (%) programme wise

| Year | Highest Enrolment (Rank 1) | Highest Enrolment (Rank 2) | Highest Enrolment (Rank 3) |
|------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1986 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1988 | BDP (60.4%) | DIM (30.4%) | DE (5.6%) |
| 1991 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1994 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1997 | BA (17.3%) | BPP (11.4%) | CIC (6.2%) |
| 2000 | BA (13.2%) | CIC (9.7%) | BPP (6.2%) |
| 2003 | BPP (11.08%) | BA (10.7%) | MEG (6.2%) |
| 2006 | BA (24.0%) | BPP (14.1%) | MP (4.3%) |
| 2009 | BA (27.1%) | BPP (17.3%) | B.Com (8.0%) |
| 2012 | BA (46.2%) | BPP (8.7%) | B.Com (6.3%) |

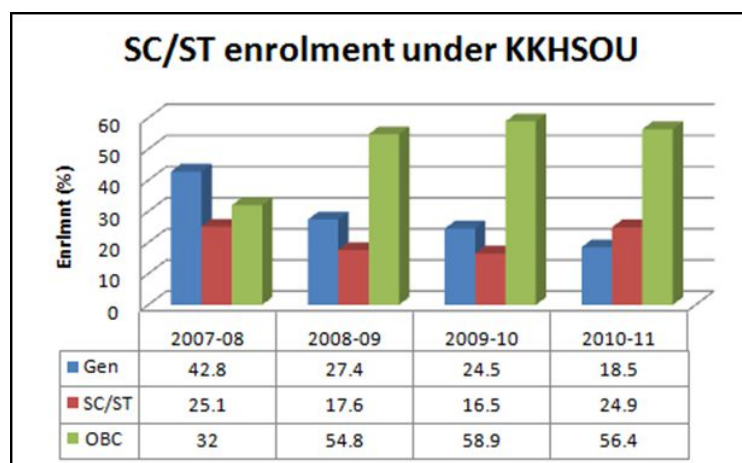
Enrolment under different programmes under KKHSOU

In the figures given, it is evident that the preferences of the learners under IGNOU have been influenced by the changes of the times and the need to prepare themselves for higher achievements. Computer courses and Management programmes have been chosen at the times, when it was

highly popular for better jobs. BPP and Bachelor Degree have in some way remained on the top spot amongst the lists of the learners.

As for the case of KKHSOU, the preference for Bachelor course has been rising. Following next is the BPP programme which engrosses the highest enrolment. From this trend it is clear that despite the best efforts of the Institutions to provide a variety of courses, yet the Open Universities seems to be preferred for traditional subjects.

Fig. 121 Enrolment of learners according to the social groups under the Open Universities: IGNOU and KKHSOU



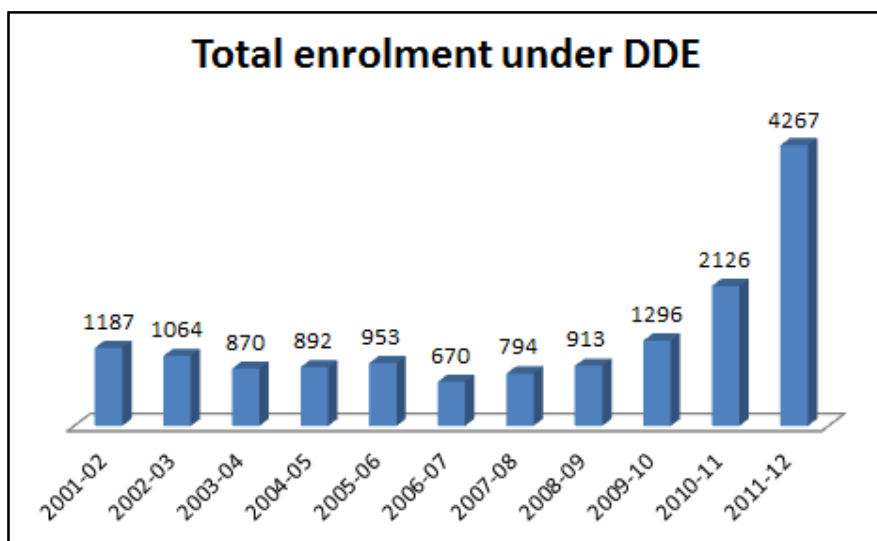
| Sl. No. | Year | Gen | SC/ST | OBC |
|---------|------|------|-------|------|
| 1 | 1986 | NA | NA | NA |
| 2 | 1988 | NA | NA | NA |
| 3 | 1991 | NA | NA | NA |
| 4 | 1994 | NA | NA | NA |
| 5 | 1997 | 57.8 | 25.7 | 16.4 |
| 6 | 2000 | 58.2 | 26.6 | 15.1 |
| 7 | 2003 | 53.1 | 21.3 | 25.5 |
| 8 | 2006 | 56.7 | 21.7 | 21.5 |
| 9 | 2009 | 57 | 20.4 | 22.5 |
| 10 | 2011 | 54.2 | 22.5 | 23.2 |
| 11 | 2012 | 50.6 | 23.9 | 25.0 |

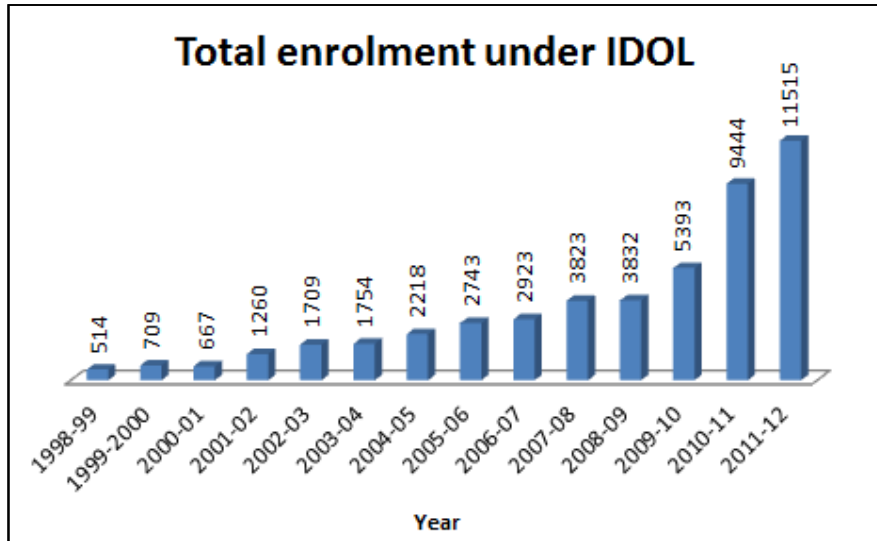
From the figure on the right side, it is clear that the enrolment of the SC/ST groups under IGNOU have few enrolments than the General category of students. The enrolment of the SC and ST learners under IGNOU has been unstable. While the enrolment of the General group was 57.8% and that of the SC/ST was merely 25.8% respectively in 1997. The SC/ST learners were few due to the lack of study centres in areas where they reside in large numbers. And even if there are, it is not adequate. Another reason for the low enrolment can be surely due to lack of awareness regarding distance education.

Under KKHSOU, the enrolment trend among the SC/STs reveals a different picture. In 2010-11, the enrolment of the General group of learners was only 18.5% while the SC/ST enrolment was 24.9% which exceeded the former. This increase in the enrolment can be attributed to the tireless effort of the University to propagate Distance Education in all places through workshops and seminars throughout the years.

7.8. Enrolment Trend of Dual Mode Universities in Assam

Fig. 122 Enrolment Trend in the Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL), Gauhati University and Directorate of Distance Education (DDE), Dibrugarh University.





In Assam, the conventional University started offering distance courses with a view to provide education to those learners who could not be accommodated in the regular mode of learning.

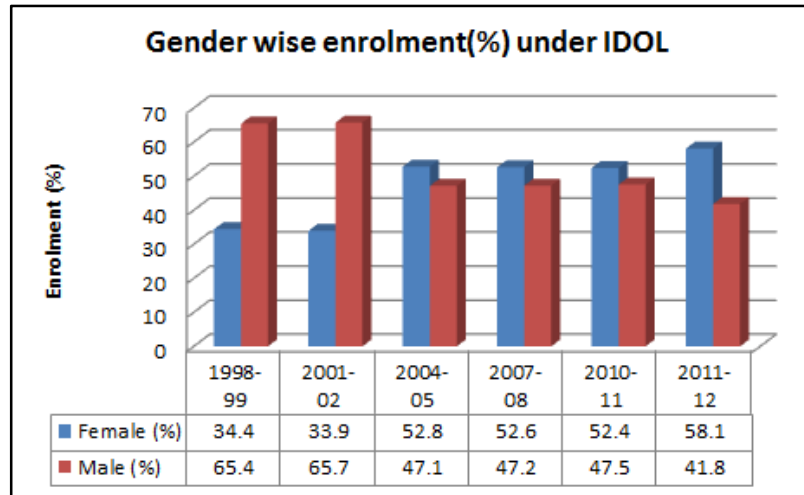
From the two graphs on the left side, it is clear that the enrolment of the learners under the Dual Mode Universities in Assam reveal a different pattern of growth.

While the enrolment growth under IDOL seems to rise since its establishment in 1998-99, the enrolment under DDE has been staggering throughout the years. The enrolment number seems to sway up and down.

Though both the Institution of Distance Education started by offering PG courses to its learners, there has been a marked difference in the growth of enrolment and this variation can be assigned to the following reasons:

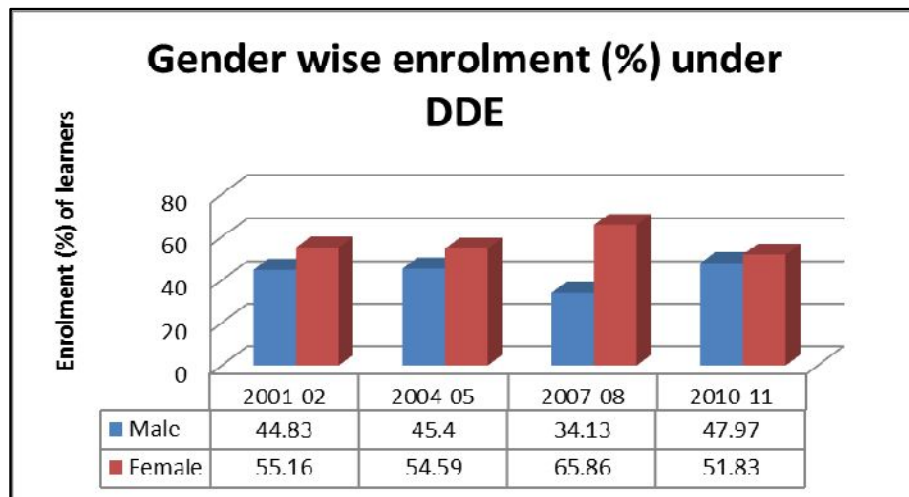
1. IDOL had a clear vision and a strategy at making distance education work right from the start. It began early by introducing new programmes. The growth of programmes and study centres truly defines the strategy of the Institution,
2. While IDOL expanded over different areas, DDE chose to concentrate more on Upper Assam with few choices for the learners of other areas.

Fig. 123 Gender wise enrolment under the Dual Mode University: IDOL and DDE



The enrolment trend under both the Dual Mode University have something common between them and which is strikingly the opposite of what has been noticed in an Open University system.

Though IDOL (Gauhati University) initially had high male learners coming for higher education, gradually their number declined. From 65.4% of enrolment in 1998-99 to 41.8% in 2011-12, the fall has been dramatic.

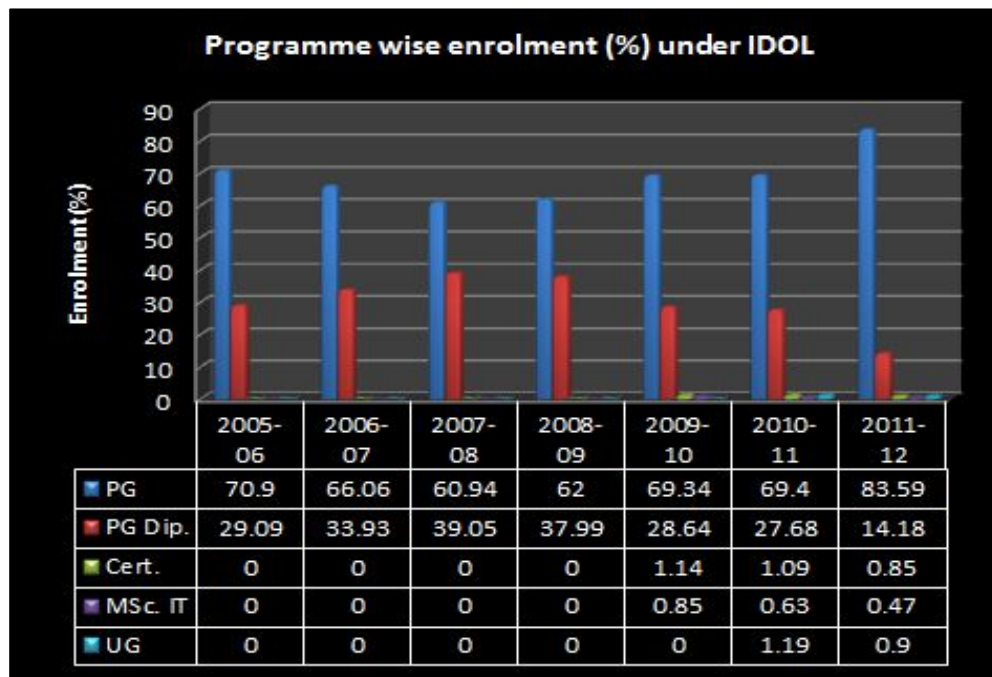


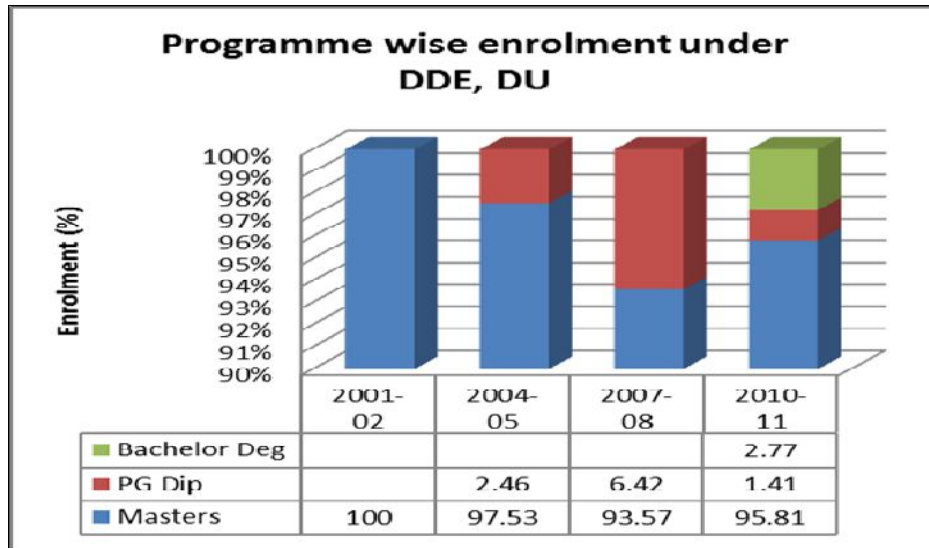
DDE (Dibrugarh University) recorded a high female learner enrolment right from the beginning in 2001-02. It was 55.16% of the total enrolment then

which remains at 51.83%, which though lower than the yester year figure, still manages to bag highest enrolment number in comparison to the male learners. The data for 2011-12 was not available for Dibrugarh University.

This trend of high female enrolment under the Dual Mode University must have been due to the following causes- The progressive shift in the social attitude toward women's education along with the growing participation of women in the workforce has encouraged higher enrolment than the men. Another reason can be the Institutional culture and prestige attached to it that lures the female learners. Compared to the males, the female choose the Institutions carefully. Dual Mode Institutions offers them to make their dream come true of learning in the prestigious University.

Fig. 124 Programme wise enrolment under the Dual Mode Universities: IDOL and DDE





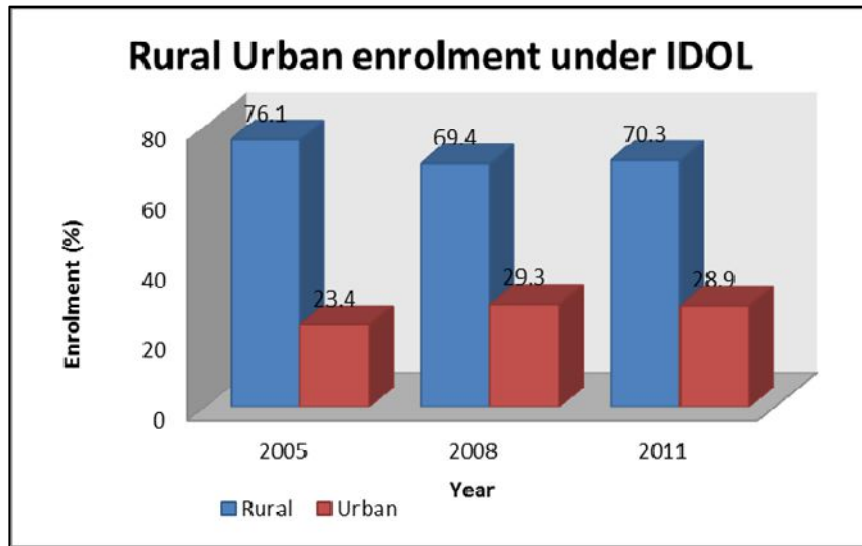
From the graphical presentation, it is to be believed that the enrolment pattern according to the programmes differ for both the Universities.

While the enrolment trend under IDOL for PG Diploma programmes has revealed a slight increase, the PG Diploma programmes under DDE have shown a declining trend. In 2004-05, the enrolment in the PG Diploma programmes was 7.19% for IDOL and 2.46% for DDE.

This total contrast can be assigned to the conflicting preference for the courses. IDOL has the maximum number of PG Diploma courses dealing with the practical skill developments as a result of which, the enrolment under IDOL is higher.

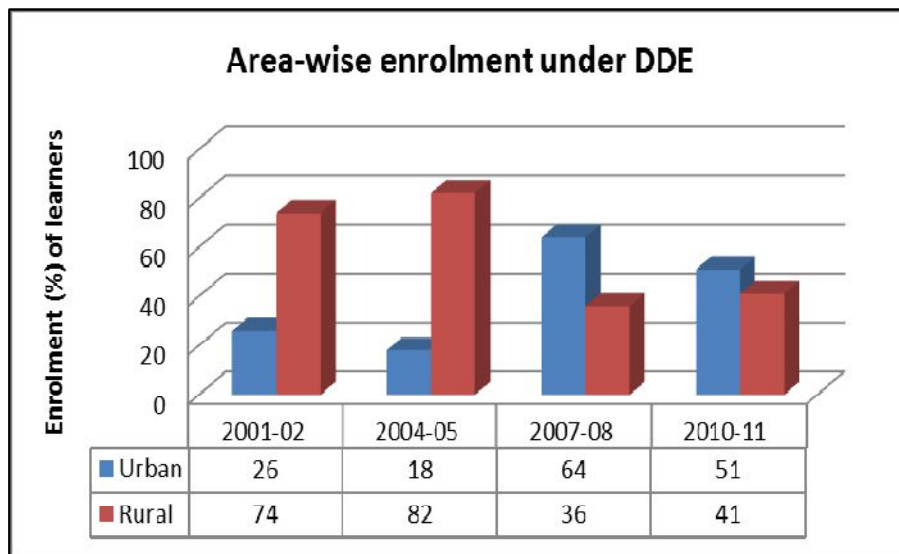
Likewise, the limited number of study centres for PG Diploma programmes has also restricted the enrolment of learners under DDE. The University offers its PG Diploma programmes only through 36 study centres, while in case of Gauhati University (IDOL) most of its study centres offer PG Diploma programmes. An interesting trend however, noticed was that learners had more interest towards traditional courses like the Post Graduate Courses.

Fig. 125Area wise enrolment (%) of learners under the Dual Mode Universities: IDOL and DDE



The enrolment pattern under the Dual Mode Universities in the state throws a shocking trend.

Rural enrolment was recorded highest under the Dual Mode Universities. Under IDOL, the rural enrolment was 76.1% in 2005 which came down to 70.3% in 2011, despite which it retains the upper hand in terms of enrolment in comparison to the urban areas



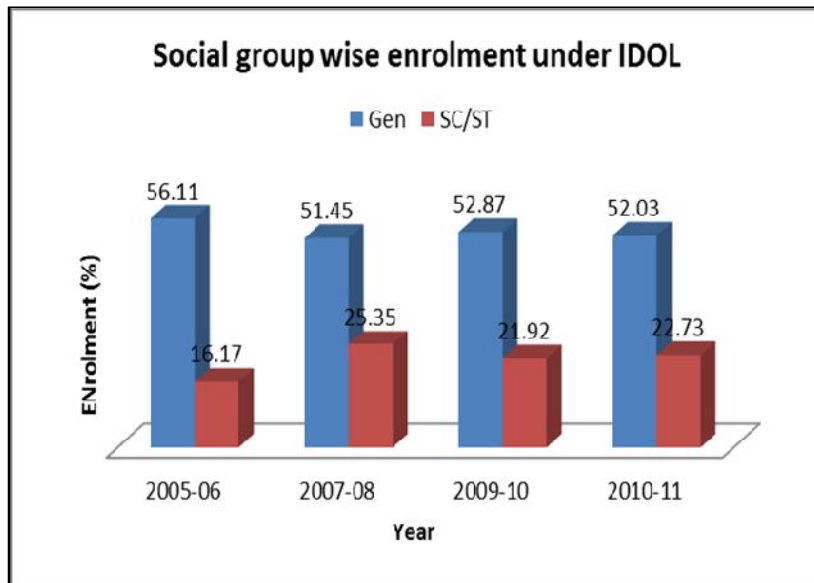
For DDE, however, the rural enrolment was high in 2004-05 which recorded an 82% enrolment from the rural areas, but this trend could not continue for long and by 2010-11 the enrolment had dropped to 41%.

The data for 2011-12 was not available.

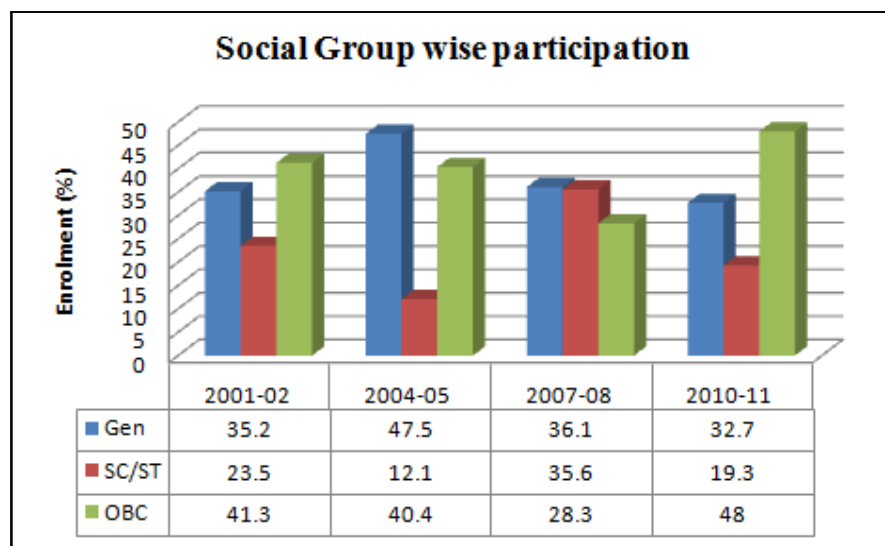
The factors that have played its part in the trend that is seen in the graph above are:

1. With the growth of urbanization, higher education too has become an important element for self-development. Hence, the residents from urban areas are well aware of the need of education and therefore, they grab the opportunity when it arrives. Comparatively, people living in the rural areas do not get adequate information about the University.
2. The programme offered by DDE seems to arouse little interest amongst the rural learners.

Fig. 126 Social Group wise enrolment under the Dual Mode Universities: IDOL and DDE



From the diagram above it is evident that the enrolment trend among the under privileged group seems to be very depressing. While the aim of the distance mode of education was to make higher education accessible to disadvantaged group of people, in reality the problem still persists. Under both the dual mode Institutions, the SC/STs have been lagging behind.



However, IDOL marks an increase in the enrolment of the SC/ST with 22.73% in 2010-11, but as for DDE, there has been a decline in the enrolment of the SC/ST group with just 19% of the total enrolment. This trend of disparity in the enrolment of the social groups can be assumed to be due to the following reasons: Lack of study centres in the tribal zones like Karimganj, Kokrajhar, KarbiAnglong, Cachar etc. along with the problem of illiteracy and poverty among these group of people which result in neglect and ignorance towards higher education or for that matter education at all.

Enrolment Trend among the Off-campus based Distance Education Institutes: MKU, HPU and TNOU

Off campus Distance Education though has been under strict vigilance of the regulatory bodies like the UGC and DEC, yet for a long time, such campus have been enjoying a base in the state of Assam. Madurai Kamaraj University was the first University to offer distance programmes in Assam soon to be followed by Himachal Pradesh University and the Tamil Nadu Open University.

The programmes offered by the off-campus Universities were much updated during those times. MKU offered B.Ed. and M.Ed. to its learners,

while HPU offered M.Phil for its learner's. The programmes were offered in order to bring more students under the distance mode, but with the UGC regulations, many of the programmes were banned and hence, only a few programmes were offered.

The learners under such Universities were situated all over the North Eastern states. Most of them were working professionals who were looking for promotions and career enhancements. The enrolment of the learners under these Institutions was initially very encouraging but with time, the enrolment declined to a very negligible amount ranging from 50-80 learners till 2011-12.

The study centre under HPU stopped functioning due to problems, specific to the region. Similarly, the other Institutions are also not without any problems. These problems are basically:

1. Low enrolment: The off campus Universities have few learners due to the emergence of other Distance Education Institutes like, IGNOU, IDOL (GU), DDE (DU) and KKHSOU.
2. Economic cause: Due to the low enrolment, the study centres are finding it tough to continue with their services, with the parent neglecting its functioning.
3. No Up gradation: Another serious problem with the off campus Institution is that they have been carrying on their services with the motives of earning revenue. There has been no expansion of support services of the students, no other centres for counseling, no practical hands on training for staffs, no qualitative improvement in courses etc.

7.9. Critical Analysis of the key informant interview with the Head of the Institutions of IDOL, DDE, MKU, TNOU, KKHSOU and IGNOU

For this study, key informant interviews formed an important part of data collection technics due to the relevance and credibility imbibed in it. The Administrative Heads of the Distance Education Institutions and their

experiences had the power to throw much light on the progress made by distance education in the state. The interviews were noted down and summarized and framed in the themes mentioned below:

1. State/Institutional Policy:

In regard to the question of any present state policy in the field of Distance Education, two key informants replied that they were totally unaware about any such policies that were initiated by the Government particularly related to the growth of Distance Education in the State. One key informant replied in the affirmative replying that the Government had recently called for the sitting of a Committee on Distance Education.

The other informants were briefed on the same issue and they replied that they lacked any knowledge on the issue. As far as institutional policy was concerned, the respondents from the off-campus Distance Education Institutions (DEIs) revealed that there were no policies or strategies related to any aspect of distance education. There were no specific plans to bring any radical changes or promote distance education.

2. Finance:

In the matter of finance, the key informants had much to say and the response was similar to all.

One key informant informed that the student's fees consisted of the highest chunk of revenue for the Institution. The same key informant also provided the information that the revenue earned from the student fees were then handed over to the main administrative body only to be refunded with a small amount from the same revenue for the purpose of developmental activities of the Centre/Institute. As for the funding source, DEC was offering funds to the Institute, the key informant replied on being questioned as to the source of funding.

A comment from another key informant was on the same line when he said that the funding was basically very poor and with few

students attached to the Centre, the funds that the parent body provided was insufficient to maintain the study centre.

3. Institutional/Industrial Collaboration:

Another important feature of Distance Education was the alliance of distance education with the practical world and the respondents affirmed their collaborations. Two key informants replied in negative. But another two respondents were vocal in regard to the question, replying that such collaborations were being made with other institutions for promoting distance education. These two key respondents informed that the collaborations were basically in academic matters and as far as vocational programmes was concerned there was no such progress made. Another key informant replied that there had been numerous collaborations with Institutions related to programmes basically practical training related programmes.

4. ICT in DE:

All the respondents gave their opinions on this issue. Two key informants replied that the Centre provided no such technological help but the parent organization did and that the use of ICT was minimum and only for administrative purpose.

Another two informants replied that ICT had become an indispensable part of distance education and considered it to be totally useful to bring students together. They informed of the progress made in their Institutes and the expansion of the technological facilities for the learners.

5. Problems of DE:

When asked on the matter of problems faced in DE at the institutional or state level, all the key informants had a lot to say on it. They agreed on some points: funds and lack of infra-structure, and geographical limitations.

One of the key informants stressed on the weak networking and communication level between the Head Quarter and the study

centre as a problem. According to him, there must be a strong commitment in order to make DE possible today. In this matter another key informant brought into light the problem of exam supervision and monitoring of the study centres which were spread far and wide along with the added problem of a limited staffs.

Two other key informants replied that the funds from DEC were not adequate to materialize the vision of promoting distance education. They were of the opinion that the lack of funds acted as a barrier for the growth of distance education. Another problem that was brought into the fore was the inadequate provision of ICT to the learners.

6. Quality Assurance:

Quality Issue is one of the most critical issues in the field of distance education. When asked on the measures adapted for the providing quality education to tis learners, two key informants replied that at the grass root level there was no such mechanisms and it was parent body which concerned itself with the issue and that they were unaware about it. Another two respondents replied that they took such matter seriously and for checking the quality of the Self learning Materials, there were frequent meetings and discussions to check the quality of the self-learning materials.

However, another respondent revealed about the internal quality assurance mechanism that was being organized for maintaining the quality and standard of the learning materials.

8. Innovation in Distance Education:

The Distance Education Institutes (DEIs) in Assam have taken great effort in using innovative ideas and schemes for the benefit of the learners.

Innovations varied from use of ICT in teaching learning method to curriculum or examination reforms.

7. Future of Distance Education:

All the respondents were positive about the growth of distance education due to its relevance in coming times.

7.10. Growth of Distance Education in Assam: A Trend Analysis Report

From 1986-87 to 2010-11, Distance Education in Assam has had a long journey where many adjustments had to be made, many innovations tried and tested and finally arrive at where it is today. What had started as an experiment has today become a crucial element in the lives of the people. IGNOU first made an attempt in the state by starting a study centre in Guwahati and in a decade, Assam had its own Regional Centre which later expanded to two regional Centres by 2010-11.

Distance Education in Assam has been undergoing a transformation evolving with new trends and changes, and it is hoped that it would soon be in the same race as the conventional system of higher education.

In the initial phase, distance mode was carried through print medium and distance education was the option of those who were mostly employed. A small amount of the learners were fresh candidates and were basically enrolled in programmes which required no initial educational qualifications. But there were still much skepticism in the air as the enrolment was not high.

During the decade from 1996-2006, there was a change in the air with the onset of the new decade. This decade has been termed as “an era of expansion” because of the sweeping changes that was come in the field of distance education. The learner’s profile of the Distance Education Institutions during this period reveals that the learners were highly qualified with sound educational backgrounds and that most of these learners had enrolled for career and jobs. Secondly, the expansion of distance education meant that it developed in a University level distance education.

Earlier distance education was offered through a National Open University through its study centre and the off campus institutions, but during this decade, the conventional University began offering distance education. During the period from 2006-2011, the idea of an Open took a concrete

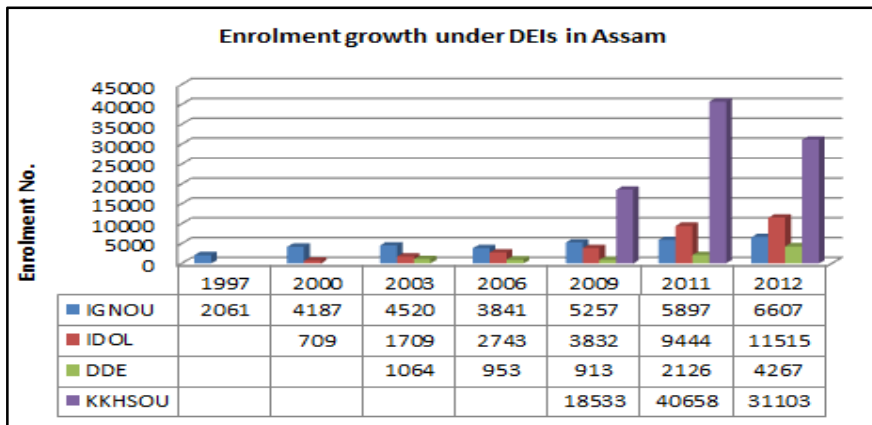
shape under the name of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University which started functioning from December, 2006.

Distance Education became Distance Learning or Open and Distance Learning though at a very nascent stage. The transformation is due to the existence of two Open Universities and a couple or more Dual Mode Universities in the state. Secondly, the pedagogical shift to Open and Distance Learning has been due to the integration of technology in distance education. The Open Universities and the Dual Mode Universities have experimented during this decade with new innovational ideas and projects

7.11. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

1. Distance Education has received a lot of attention and accreditation from the people all around the states. The growing enrolment figures in recent years testify to this statement. This is the result of the change in the attitude of the people towards the need of higher education for a better life. The data for certain trends was counted till 2011 as some of the Distance Education Institutes could not provide any information for the year 2011-12

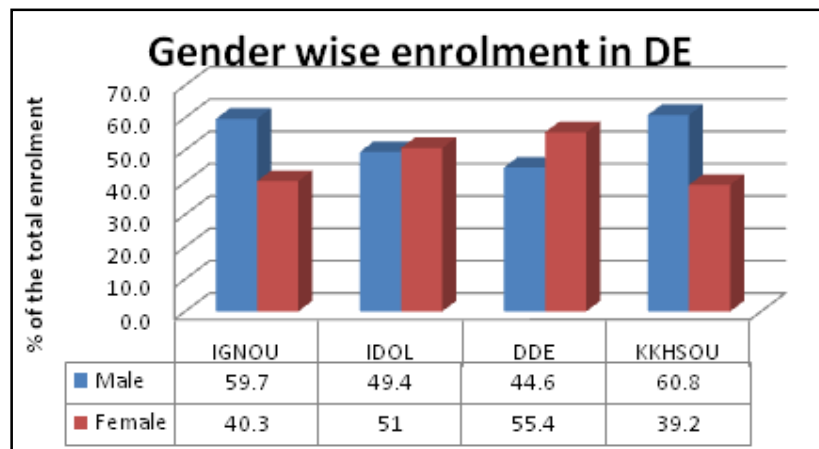
Fig. 127DE Enrolment in Assam (1997-2012)



The above diagram clearly shows the growth of Distance Education in Assam. All the Institutions of Distance Learning show an upward increase in the recent years, which is definitely a good sign.

2. Enrolment in Distance Education is still high for the males than the female learners. But there is a strong exception. Female enrolment is higher in the Dual Mode Universities than in the Open Universities.
3. This has been due to the weight age has given to the prestige of the Institution. IGNOU has lesser women enrolment and lower still from the rural areas. This is due to the social and cultural barriers that prevail in the villages.

Fig. 128 DE Enrolment in Assam: Gender wise



In the above diagram, it is apparent that the women enrolment under Dual Mode Universities has been higher than the male learners. IGNOU and KKHSOU had high male learners with 59.7% and 60.8% respectively.

The data was counted till 2011 as some of the Distance Education Institutes could not provide any information for the year 2011-12.

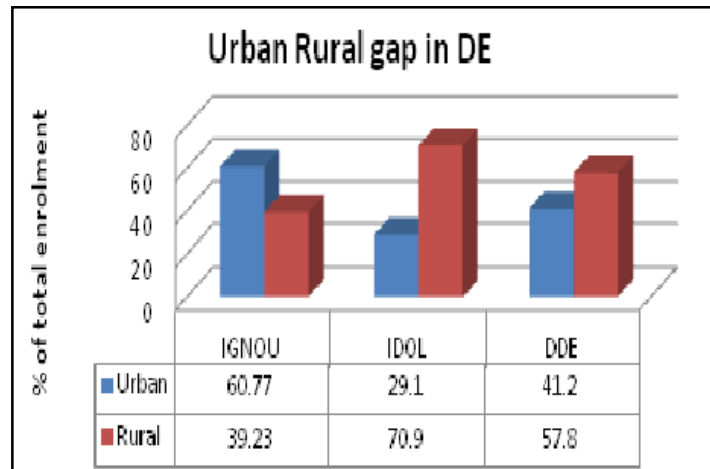
4. The enrolment pattern also reflects that the highest learner enrolment is from the urban areas rather than the rural areas. However, rural areas under the Dual Mode Universities have the maximum enrolment.

The Open Universities in contrast have few rural enrolments and it is to be believed that while the learners from the urban areas have accepted distance education widely the learners from rural areas

still try to go for distance learning tagged alongside the conventional University.

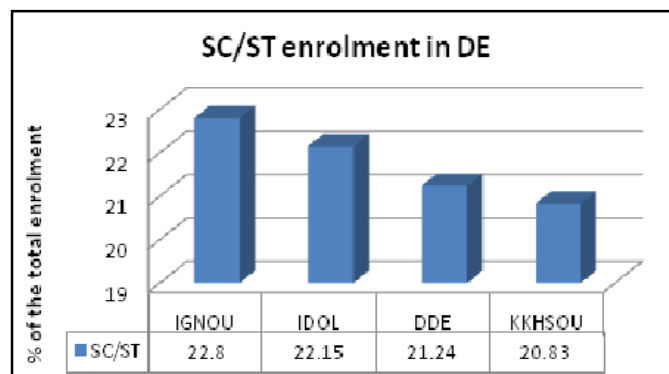
Fig. 129 DE Enrolment in Assam: Urban Rural gap

The diagram below makes it clearly obvious that the Dual Mode Universities, IDOL and DDE have high rural enrolment whereas IGNOU has higher urban enrolment amongst the learners.



5. Distance Education in Assam saw few learners from the SCs and STs group. The Open Universities and the Dual Mode Universities record the low enrolment from the SCs and the STs.

Fig. 130 DE Enrolment in Assam: SC/ST gap



Distance education has failed to appeal to all the sections of the society. Despite the fact that a majority of the population reside in the rural areas, the rural people have less access to higher

education. This disturbing trend is attributed to the fact that the institutional efforts for promoting distance education in the rural areas have been ineffective.

In the above figure, the enrolment of the SC/ST for the distance education Institutes has been 22.8% for IGNOU, 22.15% for IDOL, for 21.24% for DDE and 20.83% for KKHSOU.

6. Programme wise enrolment trend reveals that the enrolment over the years have been more for the traditional subjects Under Graduate and Post Graduate programme. This has been more prominent in case for the female learners. The preference for programmes by the learners has shifted with the changing times. IGNOU being the only Institution alongside MKU have recorded that programmes like Management programmes and Computer courses were popular during the second phase of the growth of Distance Education in the state (1996-2006). These programmes still have pursuers but the number has declined.
7. KKHSOU as an Open University has better infra-structural amenities at the workplace for its staff and learners, though it operates from a temporary building. The office is equipped with trained staffs, furniture's and computers, desktops, projectors, etc. While IGNOU Regional centre of Guwahati also operates from a rented building but infra-structural facilities have been provided. The Dual Mode Universities too have recently started giving attention to the infra-structural requirements of the institute's for the learners as well as the office staff. IDOL has a well equipped office with all required accessories for the staffs and the learners.
8. In the matter of student support services too, the Open Universities and the Dual Mode Universities gave emphasis on its improvement. The Open Universities of the state have a better network of services in the form of study centres, helpful staffs at the centres, libraries, along with the network of technological support for the learners. The

Open Universities have also stressed on the training of its staff's for better services. KKHSOU and IGNOU have frequently organised workshops for providing training for its academic and non-academic staff's. KKHSOU has also provided TV/Radios, printers, LCD screens to its study centres. The Dual Mode Universities have also followed the path.

9. Information and Communication Technology more preferable the use of multi-media in distance education is not new but the recent interest and making an innovation in this field is definitely a paradigm shift in distance education. IGNOU as a national Open University broadcast educational programmes for the learners in Assam through GyanVani and GyanDarshan. With the increasing craze for internet and technology in the last decade, and with the changes due to globalization, distance education in Assam under the Open University made a breakthrough in its use. KKHSOU began by setting up an in-built studio within its office premises. The studio, meant for the production of study materials, was equipped with the state of the art accessories. The University soon launched North East's first Community Radio (Jnan Taranga) as an alternative medium of communication with the stakeholders. SMS services, phone-in-services for the learners had been introduced. By the end of 2011, the University had started making futuristic plans of uploading study materials in the University website for the learners. At the same time, there were plans also for internet radio, e-portal, etc. IDOL and DDE have also managed to make an efficient use of technology in recent times. IDOL launched its web-portal, campus community radio (Radio Luit), SMS services by 2011. As for DDE, programmes were being prepared in the audio format and distributed to the study centres.
10. Similarly, the number of programmes offered by an Institution does not enhance the chances of attracting a large number of learners. IGNOU with more than 50 programmes had an enrolment of 5897

learners in 2010-11. While IDOL under Gauhati University offered 24 programmes and had an enrolment of 9444 learners in 2010-11. Likewise KKHSOU began by offering only the BPP programmes and the very first year, it had an enrolment of 3490 learners which was considerably higher than any other Distance Education Institution when the latter started offering programmes.

11. Of all the factors that enable the growth of distance education is the relevance of the programmes offered by the Distance Education Institutions in the contemporary times along with the needs of the learners. In Assam, the preference of the learners for short term courses is very less in comparison with the general courses or programmes under distance mode.
12. The learners under Distance Education have shown a trend of enrolling higher in conventional than practical courses. A majority of the learners of IGNOU (46.2%) are enrolled in BA in 2010-11. Similarly, 59.42% of IDOL learners were enrolled in MA programmes, as for DDE, the enrolment was 95.81% for the same, while KKHSOU had 58.61% in bachelor Degree programme. The rush towards such programmes is the result of the popular thinking among the people that a Graduate or a Post Graduate degree can help in getting some job for those who are starting fresh in their life. But for those employed and looking for promotion, short term programmes come as an option, but such cases are few.
13. The medium of instruction plays an important role in the growth of distance education. In a multi-lingual country or state, higher education cannot reach the people in a foreign medium but only through the native tongue. The success of KKHSOU and IDOL rests on this factor. IGNOU offered its programme in English and Hindi; hence the learners had a difficult choice to make.
14. Off campus Universities operating in the state through their study centres have negligible enrolments and with few programmes.

These Institutions are functioning under dire constraints and are on the verge of total collapse.

15. The Dual Mode Universities are not funded adequately by the Government. On the other hand the Open Universities avail wider opportunities for receiving funds. KKHSOU has been funded by DEC (IGNOU) and the state Government.

Fig. 131 Funding pattern of KKHSOU

| Year | State Government | Distance Education Council |
|---------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 2006-07 | 19.93 lakhs | 1 cr. |
| 2007-08 | 82.44 lakhs | 2.4 cr. |
| 2008-09 | 89, 87,500 | 3 cr. |

From the above table it is obvious that the SOUs have better access to financial grants. The state Government has been providing immense support on the financial front to the Open University in the state. The funds from the state Government has increased from 19.93 lakhs in 2006-07 to 89.88 lakhs in 2008-09. Similarly, the DEC has also increased its grant to the University from 1 crore in 2006-07 to 3 crore by 2008-09

During the interview of the key informants from the Dual Mode Universities, it was made apparent during the conversations that the Dual Mode Universities had very few options for the incoming of funds. They heavily depended on the student fees and the grant from DEC. Among the Dual Mode University, IDOL had the following pattern of funding.

Fig. 132 Funding patter of IDOL, Gauhati University

| Year | DEC |
|---------|-----------|
| 2005-06 | 25,00,188 |
| 2006-07 | 25,00,000 |
| 2007-08 | 50,00,000 |
| 2008-09 | 50,00,000 |

From the table above, it is apparent that the funding for the Dual Mode University is hardly sufficient to meet the needs of the learners. However, the Dual Mode Universities heavily depend on the student fees for its maintenance. The expenses incurred on the various aspects of distance education under IDOL are:

Fig. 133 Expenditure (%) incurred under IDOL, Gauhati University

| Year | SLM devt. | LSS | ICT | Staff Trng. | R & D | Others |
|---------|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|--------|
| 2005-06 | 40.02 | 20.19 | 19.95 | 19.82 | 0 | 0 |
| 2006-07 | 20.36 | 16.31 | 53.47 | 3.72 | 0 | 6.11 |
| 2007-08 | 39.79 | 22 | 15.95 | 6.04 | 7.96 | 8.22 |
| 2008-09 | 31.58 | 15.35 | 24.12 | 3.96 | 14.14 | 10.82 |

SLM devt.: Self Learning Materials development

LSS: Learner Support Services

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

Staff trng.: Staff Training

R&D: Research and Development

From the table above, it is made clear that the expenditure incurred have shifted over the course of time. The development of SLM has remained the topmost priority of the Institution. However, in recent times the funds have been diverted towards research and development, which appears to be a positive sign for the promotion of distance education.

As per the DEC Plan Grant of 2010-11, the expenditure of the Grant for the SOUs and the DEIs is given below:

Fig. 134 DEC Grant for SOUs and DEIs (2010-11)

| | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| Grants for promotion of SOUs and DEIs attached to conventional Universities | Grants to Government run SOUs & DEIs attached to conventional Universities: | 39.88 Crores |
| | i. Development and un-assigned grants to SOUs other than NER | |
| | ii. Development and un-assigned grants to SOUs in NER | 3.53 Crores |
| | iii. Development grant to DEIs other than in NER | 7.35 Crores |
| | iv. Development grant to DEIs in NER | 1.0 Crores |

As per the table, it is revealed that the NER received 4.53 crores (jointly) for Open Universities and the dual mode universities. According to the outcome budget of Ministry of Human Resources and Development 2010-11, the expenditure in distance learning in comparison to conventional education is much less. The table below gives a sight to it:

Fig. 135 Expenditure on Distance Learning from the Outcome Budget of 2010-11

| Year | Actual Expenditure |
|---------|--------------------|
| 2007-08 | 2.15% |
| 2008-09 | 6.67% |
| 2009-10 | 4.58% |
| 2010-11 | 4.65% |

Though the budget for distance learning has declined since 2008-09 drastically, the allocation of budget to distance learning comprised of the 10% of the total expenditure in University education in 2010-11. The lion share of the capital went to the University education (45%) followed by technical education (43%) respectively.