Learning Analytics of Postgraduate Sociology Students of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India

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ABSTRACT:

Learning analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs (LAK, 2011). Analyzing learners' profile, their learning environment vis-à-vis their learning performance may play an important role for the educators in determining strengths and weaknesses of learning contents. The present paper is a case study of postgraduate sociology students of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India. Analyzing learners' profile including their socio-economic environment, learning behavior and performance in their academic pursuits may reveal dynamic lessons to be seriously discussed in the fraternity of teachers. The tangible outcome of the data mining of admission records and examination performances formulates an advisory for effective pedagogy for learners.

Keywords: Learning Analytics, Open and Distance Learning, Academic Analytics, Learning Behaviour, Sociology, Data, Student Success

INTRODUCTION:

Defining the term *Learning* or *Academic Analytics* to understand the learners in academic pursuit is important for both, the providers and the receivers of knowledge, to enhance learning processes.

Learning analytics and data mining are capable of extracting information from a database that the institutions may not know existed. Relationships between variables and learner behavior that are non-intuitive are the gems that data mining hopes to figure out. And because the educational institution does not know beforehand what the analytics has discovered, it is a much bigger leap to take the output of the system and translate it into a solution to an educational problem. Learning analytics thus, allows users to analyse data from many different dimensions or angles, categorise it, and summarize the relationships identified. Technically, learning analytics is the process of finding correlations or patterns among dozens of fields in large relational databases (Khare, 2012).

Then, arises what learning analytics actually means?

Learning analytics is the use of intelligent data, learner-produced data, and analysis models to discover information and social connections, and to predict and advise on learning (Siemens, 2010).

Analytics are processes of data assessment and analysis that enable us to measure, improve, and compare the performance of individuals, programs, departments, institutions or enterprises, groups of organizations, and/or entire industries. (Norris, et.al, 2009).

EDUCAUSE's Next Generation learning initiative (in Epubgeneration, 2010) offers a slightly different definition "the use of data and models to predict student progress and performance, and the ability to act on that information".

Leighblackall commented on the definition of learning analytics as provided by Siemens (2010), "When the method for analysis is usable, it will complement existing processes inside formal education, such as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or assessment of prior learning (APL) that theoretically help people find accelerated pathways through curriculum. This really only works where assessment is standardised, such as the national unit standards used in Australia or New Zealand. HE resists this standardisation, making RPL and APL impossibly inefficient." (Leighblackall, 2010).

The success of an academic curriculum is determined by the measurement of degree completion. For providing quality education and success opportunities, educational institutes are to be held accountable, and thus there is a need to analyse the learning behaviors and learning styles of the seekers of higher education. Learning analytics can help in identifying our own students, their academic requirements and knowledge provisions that stand out for achieving academic missions.

The importance of student success (commonly measured as degree completion) continues to rise, as does the demand for institutional accountability. Academic analytics can help institutions address student success and accountability while better fulfilling their academic missions.

Academic systems generate a wide array of data that can predict retention and graduation. Academic analytics marries that data with statistical techniques and predictive modeling to help faculty and advisors determine the students who may face academic difficulty, allowing interventions to help them succeed.

The present paper takes up a case study of postgraduate students of Sociology of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), admitted in the academic programme since 2005 till 2013. The paper

analyses the registration and performance records of 62,511 learners (Amongst the total registered students, 1.93% students are from other countries and 0.37% are from army services, and thus they are excluded in the analysis) admitted to the MA in Sociology (Table 1 and Fig. 1).

Year	Total
2005	2459
2006	4116
2007	4661
2008	3995
2009	6199
2010	7620
2011	10139
2012	11035
2013	12287
Total	62511

Table 1: Registration Trends in MA (Sociology)
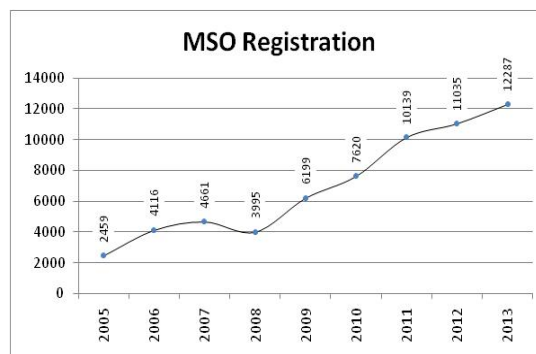
Using learning analytics, an effort is made to highlight the materials needed by the developers of academic contents and the operational divisions to understand about learners and learning, learning style and behavior so that they may revisit the curriculum and delivery mechanisms to improve contents, data standards, systems, processes, policies, and institutional culture. This may enable for further improving the performance assessment so that the dropouts are reduced and success rate is further improved.

CATCHMENT AND DATA:

The learning analysis of the students of MA Sociology is grouped into three aspects:

- First, on the profile of 62,511 learners registered in the programme between 2005 and 2013, to analyze their profile including socio-cultural conditions, access to technology and learning avenues,

- Second on their preferences in the curriculum transactions, and

- Third on their performance in the academic programme.

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1. PROFILE OF STUDENTS

REGION-WIDE DISTRIBUTION:

It may be useful to know where from the learners are coming, particularly when the University's jurisdiction is vast and socio-economic culture is varied from one region to other. For understanding region-wide distribution, the whole country was divided into six zones on the basis of geographical locations, North (covering 5 states - Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttrakhand & 2 UTs - Chandigarh and Delhi), East (4 states – West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and 1 UT – Andaman & Nicobar), North-East (8 states – Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal and Sikkim), Central (3 states – Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh), South (4 states -

Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu & 1 UT - Pondicherry,) and West (4 states - Maharashtra, Rajasthan , Gujarat, Goa & 2 UTs - Lakshadweep and Daman).

Table 2 provides an analysis of region-wide distribution of students. Almost half of the learners' population (47.5%) is from North and surprisingly half of this population (53.98%) comes from rural areas.

Data further reveals that approximately 33.49% of total learner population comes from only one state, Jammu and Kashmir. The reason for such huge rural population could be limited opportunities of higher education in the state. There are only 5 Universities offering general programmes (Wikipedia, 2013) of which 3 are state universities and two central universities established only in 2009.

Of these Universities, only two state universities offer MA in Sociology. There are also 19 PG Colleges in the state and none of them are offering MA in Sociology (DoHE, 2014). This clearly indicates that the higher education opportunity for sociology post-graduation is almost negligible in the state and that is why the percentage of learners registering with IGNOU is high and that too from the rural areas of the state.

REGION	Region % Share	METRO	CAPITAL	CITY	RURAL	TRIBAL	URBAN
NORTH	47.51%	20.25%	9.12%	10.39%	53.98%	0.76%	5.50%
EAST	24.04%	3.90%	9.50%	29.85%	35.50%	1.51%	19.73%
CENTRAL	5.38%		25.48%	56.71%	7.85%	0.43%	9.53%
SOUTH	3.60%	8.65%	4.96%	38.52%	30.92%	0.64%	16.30%
WEST	2.89%	26.45%	1.42%	41.32%	12.88%	0.62%	17.31%
NORTH-EAST	16.59%		38.48%	11.27%	27.97%	10.11%	12.18%

Table 2: Region-wide distribution

The percentage of the learners from Central, West and South India is recorded very poor and calls for appropriate and result oriented strategies by IGNOU in these regions.

In the Central India, most of the leaners in MA Sociology are coming from capital or major cities (82%). There is need to have more visibility of IGNOU programmes in the rural and tribal areas in this region.

The Northeast region of India is of specific interest from where almost 16.5% of learner population comes. This region is having tribal states and the higher educational opportunities are limited or non-accessible due to terrain constraints (mostly hilly area). Still, out of the regional population, 25% of the rural areas are getting benefitted from the availability of PG programme. More such availability in

the region, which comprise 8 states, may increase student population.

The Metro cities (8 in number) do not contribute much in the learners' population of MA Sociology programme. It is only 11%.

GENDER ANALYSIS:

The gender-distribution in MA Sociology (Table 3) is noteworthy to understand that above 62% students are women of MA in Sociology.

This percentage was almost equal to male students when the programme was launched in 2005. But, in subsequent years, the percentage of female students' admissions went up in comparison to male students.

YEAR	% Female	% Male
2005	48.05%	51.95%
2006	53.77%	46.23%
2007	57.94%	42.06%
2008	59.41%	40.59%
2009	60.77%	39.23%
2010	63.05%	36.95%
2011	63.68%	36.32%
2012	65.56%	34.43%
2013	65.90%	34.07%
Total	**62.14%**	**37.85%**

Table 3: Gender Distribution in MA (Sociology)


Gender Distribution
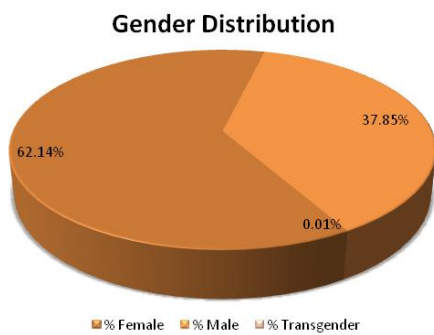
University of North Carolina (2014), while defining Sociology states, "At the personal level, sociology investigates the social causes and consequences of such things as romantic love, racial and gender identity, family conflict, deviant behavior, aging, and religious faith. At the societal level, sociology examines and explains matters like crime and law, poverty and wealth, prejudice and discrimination, schools and education, business firms, urban community, and social movements." In the Indian society context, motivating women to take up the subject for their postgraduate qualification, which is directly relevant to their day to day work profile can be easily visualized by the definition.

It is further remarkable to know that in the women population, from urban background unemployed unmarried women population is 58% and similar is the percentage employed married female students. The women student from rural areas of India, in any category of employment or marital status is also high (31% to 47%) (Table 4). It is clear indication that the social status or the location has not having any noticeable difference for the women while selecting the academic programme.

SEX	Urban	Rural	Tribal
Unemployed unmarried Women	57.97%	38.57%	2.69%
Employed unmarried Women	48.91%	44.85%	2.01%
Unemployed Married Women	46.96%	46.52%	5.79%
Employed Married Women	57.82%	30.98%	3.50%
Unemployed unmarried Men	42.03%	52.43%	4.16%
Employed unmarried Men	40.56%	48.46%	2.50%
Unemployed Married Men	36.50%	56.30%	5.98%
Employed Married Men	48.85%	37.57%	3.23%

Table 4: Gender and Social Status

Area-wise Distribution
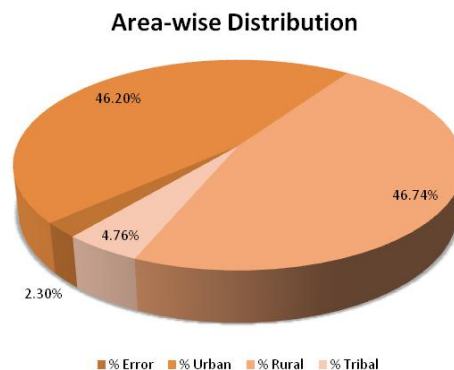
On the other hand, the male populations of unemployed students come mainly from rural areas. There is an appreciable percentage (56.30%) of these students.

AGE ANALYSIS

In Indian educational environment, normal age of graduation is 21 years. Those who continue their studies immediately after graduation falls in the age range of 21-23 years. The age analysis of MA in Sociology learners reveals that only 2.2% learners continued their studies and preferred IGNOU as the institute for their higher studies.

The average age of learners under analysis is 26 years (44.6% students). The average female age falls between 25 to 27 years whereas the male average age range is 27-29 years. It is an indication that male students take more time to decide to go for post-graduation studies once there is break in their studies (Table 5).

YEAR	Age (in percentage)					
	20-22	23-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	> 40
2009	0.0	2.0	49.8	26.3	10.8	11.1
2010	0.0	8.6	50.5	21.0	10.4	9.5
2011	0.2	18.0	46.7	18.5	8.7	7.9
2012	2.3	27.7	41.3	14.9	7.9	5.9
2013	8.5	34.6	34.6	12.2	5.6	4.6
Avg	2.2	18.2	44.6	18.6	8.7	7.8

Table 5: Age-wise Distribution

The percentage of adult learners (above age of 30) which is around 35% is also appreciable. It seems that adult learners feel more comfortable with the ODL programmes with flexibility in time and space, to attain higher education.

SOCIAL STATUS

The constitution of India under Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them. However, the State is not precluded from making special provisions for women and children or any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, including the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST). This exception has been provided since the classes of people mentioned therein are considered deprived and in need of special protection.

(Wikipedia, 2014). Another deprived class comes from Other Backward Classes (OBC).

With the above constitutional provisions, it becomes incumbent on all educational institutes to address to the needs of the socially and educationally deprived communities and thus the analysis of these categories and the religious background plays an essential role to understand the group of learners.

For this study, Social Status is sub-divided in to religious background and the social category. Table 6 is the outcome of analysis of social category. As can be seen, the SC population is limited on average to 6.29% whereas STs are above 12%. It is interesting to note that the state provides 15%, 7.5% and 27% reservations in the seats to SCs, STs and OBCs, respectively. The MA in Sociology programme of IGNOU failed to attract desired percentages in the categories of SCs and OBCs. In the Tribal category, the admitted number of students is still appreciable. This analysis indicates urgent need of the institution to pay more attention to SCs and OBCs to bring them in the mainstream.

YEAR	% General	%SC	% ST	% OBC
2005	72.23	12.38	14.37	0.16
2006	64.91	5.51	14.05	15.34
2007	63.13	6.00	14.22	16.65
2008	63.02	5.21	11.43	16.62
2009	60.97	5.65	12.81	16.61
2010	63.29	5.61	10.69	17.37
2011	60.38	6.38	13.76	18.51
2012	63.16	6.27	11.65	17.89
2013	61.47	6.46	12.48	18.59
TOTAL	62.63	6.29	12.59	16.90

Table 6: Category-wise Social Status

Interestingly, the female population under the reserved categories is opposite to general trend of female population in the programme. The non-reserved category female students capture 40% share out of 60% of female population (Table 7).

Analysis of registered students in the MA in Sociology programme was done on the basis of the religion. It is observed that half of the student population comes from

Hindu religion and about 33% students belong to Muslim religion. The Christian community has around 8% students and other religions like, Sikh, Jains, Parsees, etc. have around one percent students in the programme.

Category-wise Distribution
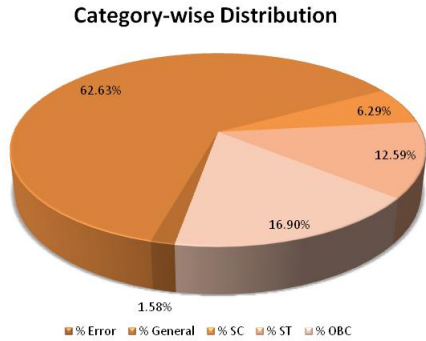
Further analysis reveals that female population dominates in each of the religions. The percentage of Muslim

women is quite appreciable (21.62%) (Table 8). This is a clear indication that female students of Muslim community, prefers to go for higher studies through distance mode.

Year	% General	%SC	% ST	% OBC
2005	34.61	4.52	8.35	0.04
2006	36.65	2.48	7.86	6.77
2007	38.80	2.74	8.51	7.90
2008	41.22	2.54	7.01	7.83
2009	40.25	2.84	7.89	8.83
2010	43.01	2.94	6.85	9.27
2011	40.54	3.70	8.36	10.69
2012	43.60	3.71	7.31	10.44
2013	42.77	3.74	8.01	11.07
Total	**40.16**	**3.24**	**7.80**	**8.09**

Table 7: Category-wise Female Students

YEAR	%HINDU		%CHRISTIAN		%MUSLIM		%SIKHS		%BUDHIST		%OTHERS	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2009	18.5	32.8	4.28	6.57	12.2	17.70	0.27	0.79	0.60	1.39	0.34	0.53
2010	18.1	32.1	3.58	5.31	12.2	21.93	0.30	0.88	0.33	1.08	1.25	1.14
2011	20.2	36.2	4.63	6.59	9.9	17.99	0.37	0.99	0.48	1.29	0.74	0.67
2012	19.6	36.3	0.53	0.92	12.9	25.87	0.30	0.79	0.37	0.95	0.77	0.80
2013	17.7	34.1	2.81	4.60	11.8	24.62	0.28	0.71	0.47	1.18	0.65	0.65
Average	18.8	34.3	3.16	4.80	11.8	21.62	0.31	0.83	0.45	1.18	0.75	0.76

Table 8: Religion-wise Gender Distribution

ENTRY QUALIFICATION

The eligibility for the admission in MA in Sociology programme is open to graduates from different streams including those who have not studied Sociology at the graduate level (IGNOU, 2010).

The laid entry eligibility calls for the understanding that from which stream and with what discipline the aspirants are coming from. It is found that most of the applicants are coming from Arts streams (65.10%) with an average 40 to 49% mark. A good percentage (37%) is with 50-59% marks and around 10% applicants come with higher percentage at the graduate level (Table 9).

The percentage of applicants having Sociology subject in their graduation is

around 19% and they had secured higher percentage (50 to 59%) in comparison to Arts stream applicants.

Surprisingly, the percentage of medicine, engineering, management and science graduates taking admission in the postgraduate social science programme is also very appreciable (around 14%).

The other discipline from where the applicants are coming are, agriculture, tourism, nursing, commerce and IT graduates (those who have done BCA or electronics and communication graduate studies. There are some applicants who have done master degrees in other disciplines. It was also found that 8 students, who have done graduation in Theology, also took admission in MA in Sociology.

The analysis of percentage in the qualifying examinations reveal that maximum number of applicants are with high second division and very less number apply with just pass percentages. It is noticeable that most of the agriculture graduates have attained first division at graduate level and then migrated to sociology post-graduation.   .

Discipline in UG Level	% Students	Entry Qualification Percentage				
		< 40%	40 - 49%	50 - 59%	60 - 69%	> 70%
Arts	65.10	6.88	44.35	37.18	9.72	1.87
Sociology (H)	13.02	3.65	25.66	54.67	14.94	1.09
Science	11.37	2.64	19.09	47.16	25.05	6.06
With Sociology as one of the subjects	5.87	7.67	44.05	36.48	10.37	1.43
Medicine	1.64	0.82	14.69	72.49	10.84	1.17
Commerce	1.55	5.43	34.16	39.21	16.15	5.06
Computer	0.49	0.39	4.71	25.10	47.06	22.75
Engineering	0.40	1.44	3.37	13.94	37.02	44.23
Management	0.32	2.98	8.33	32.14	37.50	19.05
Tourism	0.11	1.69	5.08	69.49	18.64	5.08
Nursing	0.08	0.00	4.76	11.90	59.52	23.81
Agriculture	0.04	0.00	0.00	13.64	31.82	54.55

Table 9: Entry Qualification Analysis

ICT PROFILE

Use of technology in education is an emerging paradigm, particularly when learners tend to remain connected with the providers through ICTs. The basic tool to access Internet is through computers and in recent times it is also through mobile devices. McMclintock (1997) says that HEIs would benefit more from ICTs if they aligned their curriculum with the ICT tools being used.

It is thus essential for the developers of a curriculum to know and understand their learners' reach to ICT. The data reveals that 2010 onwards, half the student population of MA in Sociology extensively use mobiles for their personal use. Around 5% students provided their emails and this number could be more once it is decided to impart support through emails or through mobiles. There are 5.17% students who are using both Mobile and Emails for communications (Table 10).

The most of learners are adults and can tap the potentials of ICTs and can avail facilities if provided by the institution

Year	Not Using	Emails	Mobile	Both
2010	41.59	3.94	49.94	4.53
2011	42.25	3.76	49.66	4.33
2012	41.69	5.93	47.43	4.95
2013	39.36	7.15	46.61	6.88
Avge	41.22	5.20	48.41	5.17

Table 10: Use of technology

2. PREFERENCES IN CURRICULUM

MASTERS OF SOCIOLOGY – AN OVERVIEW

The MA programme in Sociology is designed to provide advanced sociological knowledge, perspectives and skills to a wide cross section of learners, including those in remote inaccessible areas (IGNOU, 2006). The programme contents dedicated on to sociology in India are education, urbanization and developmental issues of contemporary society covering theories, perspectives and research methodologies. The pedagogy is aimed to address social transformation, process of development and social theories and their linkages with the global, regional and local manifestations. At the same time, the target learners are

graduates having interest in gaining knowledge of sociology.

The MA programme comprises of four compulsory courses to be studied in first year and **four elective** courses to be chosen from bouquet of six courses to be studied in second year. The programme structure is given in Table 11.

The academic requirement is to successfully complete 64 credits in a span of two years. In IGNOU system, a credit is equivalent to 30 hours of study. This means, that a student is to study minimum 960 hours including term end exam time.

S.No.	Course Code	Title of the Course	Credits	Type of Course
1.	MSO-001	Sociological Theories and Concepts	8	Compulsory
2.	MSO-002	Research Methodologies and Methods	8	Compulsory
3.	MSO-003	Sociology of Development	8	Compulsory
4.	MSO-004	Sociology in India	8	Compulsory
5.	MSOE-001	Sociology of Education	8	Elective
6.	MSOE-002	Diaspora and Transnational Communities	8	Elective
7.	MSOE-003	Sociology of Religion	8	Elective
8.	MSOE-004	Urban Sociology	8	Elective
9.*	MPS-003	Democracy and Development	8	Elective
10.**	MPA-016	Decentralization and Local Governance	8	Elective

* : Elective course is adopted from MA in Political Science of IGNOU.

** : Elective course is adopted from MA in Public Administration of IGNOU.

Table 11: Programme Structure of MA (Sociology)

In first year of study, all courses are compulsory and thus all the registered students are to study all four courses.

In second year (total 36,991 students took re-registration, i.e. 61%), there is a choice to take all courses from sociology or to have combination of sociology with course from Political Science or Public Administration. The preferences of above 51% learners are a combination of MSOE-001, MSOE-003, MSOE-004, and MPS-003. This combination is indicative that most of the students have taken an elective where word Sociology is reflected, (e.g. Sociology of Education, Sociology of Religion, Urban Sociology) and thought that "Democracy and Development" is a more relevant course.

Table 12 provides 15 combinations that emerge from the six elective courses and number of students taking these combinations. As can be seen, first four combinations accounts for above 85% of students. The combination with course on "Diaspora and Transnational Communities" is not much preferred by the learners and

thus needs a revisit by the designers of curriculum.

Elective Combinations	No of Students	%age
E1, E3, E4, MPS3	19154	51.78%
E1, E2, E3, E4	8201	22.17%
E1, E4, MPS3, MPA16	2387	6.45%
E1, E3, E4, MPA16	1942	5.25%
E1, E3, MPS3, MPA16	1506	4.07%
E3, E4, MPS3, MPA16	1049	2.84%
E1, E2, E4, MPS3	720	1.95%
E1, E2, E3, MPS3	589	1.59%
E1, E2, E4, MPA16	368	0.99%
E1, E2, MPS3, MPA16	278	0.75%
E2, E4, MPS3, MPA16	236	0.64%
E2, E3, E4, MPS3	224	0.61%
E1, E2, E3, MPA16	128	0.35%
E2, E3, E4, MPA16	124	0.34%
E2, E3, MPS3, MPA16	85	0.23%

Table 12: Elective Course Combinations

The aspirants of Indian Civil Services examination prefer to study multi-discipline and this could be another reason for the

combination of Political Science and Public Administration electives with two sociology electives.

The preference of medium is another area that needs to be discussed. Around 71% students preferred English as medium of instructions and remaining 29% preferred Hindi (Table 13).

The preference of medium is evident of access to web resources and additional reading materials that are more frequently available in English in comparison to Hindi.

Year	% English	% Hindi
2007	68.68%	31.32%
2008	71.20%	28.80%
2009	75.86%	24.14%
2010	74.87%	25.13%
2011	71.72%	28.28%
2012	68.00%	32.00%
2013	69.69%	30.31%
Total	**71.43%**	**28.57%**

Table 13: Medium Preferences

3. PERFORMANCE IN ACADEMICS

RE-REGISTRATION

The learners of MA in Sociology are to clear 8 courses in the academic duration of minimum of two years and maximum of 5 years. The flexibility in the academic duration is kept to facilitate distance learners by deciding their own pace for studies.

During the academic transactions, a student is expected to remain engaged through self-study, counselling and continuous assessments, where continuous assessment becomes part of his/her final performance in the academic programme. Each course, thus, have two performance assessment, assignments and term-end exams.

To achieve a success, very first step is to take registration in both year courses. The analysis depicts that only 61% students got registered in the second year of the programme (Table 14). The 40% thus,

became dropout right in the first year of their studies. Though, it is a common phenomenon in ODL programmes, still, IGNOU should consider various efforts to sustain this huge population for continuing their studies.

There is sudden drop in the re-registration in second year in 2013 (26%). The reason could be non-provision of the study material on time to the cohort of 2013. This means, that the deficiency in any of the services committed, may lead to larger dropout for that particular year. Quite possible, these students of 2013 cohort may re-register in later years, if the services are resumed to normal by IGNOU.

YEAR	I YEAR	II YEAR	% AGE
2005	2458	1335	54.31%
2006	3952	2369	59.94%
2007	4570	3114	68.14%
2008	4003	2641	65.98%
2009	6195	4124	66.57%
2010	7621	5211	68.38%
2011	10139	6964	68.69%
2012	11034	7988	72.39%
2013	12296	3249	26.42%
Total	**62268**	**36995**	**61.20%**

Table 14: Second Year Registration

ASSESSMENT

Continuous assessment of learners is done through assignments. With each course, two assignment question papers are provided which are to be attempted by the learners and are to be submitted at their Study center for evaluation and feedback on their study. Assignments of a course carry 30% weightage in the final assessments on the course (IGNOU, 2010). During the complete academic transaction, a student needs to attain 2 assignments in each paper, i.e. 16 assignments and eight term-end papers. The performance of the student thus will be determined on the basis of these 24 components during the two years of studies.

It is, therefore, interesting to understand that actually how many students, after seeking admission in the programme pursue

their academic activities and lead towards successful completion of the programme. Analysis of these transactions of two assessment components is given at Table 15. For determining the real percentage, data of years 2005-2010 taken in to consideration as these students have availed most of their chances of attempts. On average, only 69.28% students initiated their regular studies after registration in the programme meaning they attempted at least one assignment or one TEE in one of the assigned 8 courses. This further means that around 30% students were non-initiators

after taking admission in the programme and are dropouts right at the beginning.

When it comes to attaining all the assessment components, around 52% students did complete all the components, 7.5% attempted only assignments and could not appear in TEE and 1.26% gave only TEE without submitting assignments. This means, that around 17% became dropouts after initiation. Certainly this leads to a greater percentage of drop outs of the programme if their scores are taken into consideration. In next section, this analysis is also done.

YEAR	No of Students	No of Students pursued Assessment	% Students pursued Assessment	% Attempted all components	% Attempted only assign	% Attempted only TEE
2005	2456	1341	54.60%	38.57%	7.16%	1.50%
2006	3956	2681	67.77%	49.71%	7.81%	1.63%
2007	4570	3246	71.03%	52.78%	7.87%	1.47%
2008	4008	2985	74.48%	58.02%	7.18%	1.04%
2009	6196	4542	73.31%	56.36%	7.28%	1.02%
2010	7624	5679	74.49%	57.31%	7.55%	0.91%
2011	10139	7630	These learners will have more chances to attempt in academic transactions as the maximum duration is 5 years for completing the components			
2012	11038	8486				
2013	12285	3016				
Total	**62272**	**39606**	**69.28%**	**52.12%**	**7.47%**	**1.26%**

Table 15: Submission of Assessment Components

SCORES:

The learners who submitted their assignments have obtained on average 70% in first year and around 73% in second year. The weighted average is thus very high in continuous assessment which is around 21 out of 30 marks in first year and 22 out of 30 in second year (Table16). The average percentages have continuously been improving between 2005 and 2012. It can be easily established that the learners who are regular in their efforts, had performed well in the continuous assessment.

On the other hand, the Term-end performance is not as good as continuous assessment. On average, learners have secured only 48% marks in first year and 51% marks in second year. The weighted

averages thus have given 33.65 marks in first year and 35.7 marks in second year out of 70 maximum marks. The continuous assessment have thus, played an important role in improving overall percentage of the learners.

The overall scores, thus, comes to 54.7 out of 100 in first year and 57.5 out of 100 in second year. It is appreciable that these overall performances are normal scoring pattern in any of the academic programmes and MA in Sociology attains the same.

There is a need to analyze course-wise assessment and performance of the learners to find out difficulty levels in understanding the contents or to determine evaluation bottlenecks over the years.

YEAR	First Year Scores (%)					Second Year Scores (%)					Final
	Assig	TEE	Wt Assig	Wt TEE	Overall %	Assig	TEE	Wt Assig	Wt TEE	Overall %	
2005	65.8	49.8	19.7	34.8	54.6	69.0	50.2	20.7	35.2	55.9	55.2
2006	68.7	47.9	20.6	33.6	54.2	71.5	49.9	21.4	34.9	56.4	55.3
2007	69.1	46.7	20.7	32.7	53.4	70.4	50.2	21.1	35.2	56.3	54.8
2008	69.3	47.6	20.8	33.3	54.1	72.6	50.8	21.8	35.5	57.3	55.7
2009	69.2	47.6	20.8	33.3	54.1	72.4	51.5	21.7	36.0	57.8	55.9
2010	72.4	48.9	21.7	34.2	56.0	74.8	51.8	22.5	36.2	58.7	57.3
2011	72.4	48.7	21.7	34.1	55.8	74.8	52.1	22.4	36.5	58.9	57.4
2012	73.3	47.5	22.0	33.2	55.2	75.6	51.8	22.7	36.3	58.9	57.1
Avg	**70.0**	**48.1**	**21.01**	**33.65**	**54.7**	**72.6**	**51.0**	**21.8**	**35.7**	**57.5**	**56.1**

Table 16: Percentage obtained in Assignments and TEE

THE PERFORMANCE CARD:

Keeping in with the earlier discussion on the attainment of various components of academic transactions, there are various points where students are becoming passive in their studies. First of all, they failed to initiate their academic transactions and could not submit their assignments in first year, or could not attain their term end examination. Secondly they had not registered in second year courses though they initiated some of the components, and further they failed to clear their assessments, and then they again could not pursue their second year studies and lastly, they put all the efforts in the academic transaction but could not complete the degree award requirements for want of one or two components and reached the end of academic duration.

A dropout of learners from the programme for all these reasons combined together is given in Table 17. As can be seen, the 2005 cohort of learners, only 59% initiated the programmes and only 32% could successfully complete the programme. Thus, the dropout from this cohort is 68%.

In the subsequent years, the maximum duration of five years is completed by student cohort admitted in 2009 and thus, dropout rate can be determined only for students admitted between 2005 and 2009. Average dropout for these five batches is 57.4%, though 2008 and 2009 cohorts can still take another chance by taking a fresh admission and by applying credit transfer of completed courses from earlier registration.

Year	% Appear	% Prog Comp.	%Drop Outs
2005	59.43	31.96	68.04
2006	59.82	40.74	59.26
2007	56.31	43.68	56.32
2008	53.67	50.79	49.21
2009	60.98	45.72	54.28
2010	58.80	40.79	
2011	55.58	21.44	
2012	33.82		
Total	**54.80**	**42.28**	**57.42**

Table 17: Performance Card

The programme completion rate of 42.28% is quite appreciable. But when data on award of degrees (MA in Sociology) is explored, it is found that total 14,644 degrees are awarded amongst 62,511 registered students. This tantamount to 23.43%. The difference of 18.85% learners, who have successfully completed all the academic transactions, may be kept in waiting for the award of degrees in the forthcoming convocation of IGNOU in 2015.

CONCLUSION:

IGNOU launched MA in Sociology programme in 2005 and had admitted

62,511 students (239 International) students till 2013. The trend shows, on average, 16.81% increase in the student population over the period of 9 years. The popularity

of the programme is recorded in northern region of India with maximum number of students coming from one state, Jammu and Kashmir (33.49%). Most of the students of this state belong to rural population. 62% women in the age range of 25-27 joined this programme. Most of the students came from arts stream of graduation or with sociology honors degree.

Amongst the marginalized communities, SCs (6.29% against prescribed 15%) and OBC (16.90% against prescribed 27%) are poorly represented in the programme, where as Scheduled tribes are having appreciable percentage in the programme (12.6% against prescribed 7.5%). Within the communities, women students are almost half the student population. Muslim women (21%) dominate the women registration after Hindu community.

Mostly women students came from urban setup whereas men students' population came from rural areas. The students preferred English as medium of instructions and opted courses of direct sociology relevance either with political science or with public administration course in second year of their studies.

In a given year, there were only 70% students who initiated the academic transactions and 30% becomes passive soon after taking admissions. Only 61% students took admission in II year. Overall 52% of students attained all the assessment components and achieved 70% in continuous assessments and 50% in term-end examinations. The success rate in MA in Sociology till 2013 is 42.28%. As on date, 23.43% students are awarded the degrees.

The learning analytics of MA in Sociology students of IGNOU provides certain directions to the programme developers and support wings. First of all, a good percentage of students need strong hand-holding during the entire academic duration so they can be motivated to pursue their studies on given timelines. They may need a regular communication channel to keep them informed on the timelines and learning deficiencies. These students, by their choices in picking courses clearly communicate that elective course on "Diaspora and Transnational Communities" to be made more context relevant. The lack of guidelines in performing through term-end examination is also visible and need to be devised to facilitate learning. University also needs to devise mechanisms to curb a very high dropout population of learners.

Timely support in learning may result in better performance and better knowledge dissemination to the seeker of knowledge and knowledge communities.

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