

inductive approach – to listen intently, synthesise information and ideas, to encourage, stimulate and control discussion and interaction between and within sites. (Khan, 1996:3)

Well-trained, effective, distance educators also have another role to play. They have to be more persuasive and forceful in marketing their capabilities and to connect with other sectors. They must inspire confidence in their worth and become energetic missionaries in bringing distance learning to the forefront of a knowledge-driven era.

There is another reason why distance learning and new technologies are important. They can help to create the educated citizenry necessary to develop and sustain open democratic societies. This will not be easy and the cost of doing so will be high. However, the cost of an uneducated population will be far higher.

The societal impact of basic education is evident in comparing India, a market-driven economy with her neighbour, China, a labour-driven command economy. While China emphasised primary and secondary education, India expanded its university sector at a rapid rate though at relatively low cost. By the 1980s, about 72% of the Indian labour force 25 years or older had no schooling versus 44% of the Chinese labour force. In other words the proportion of China's workforce with primary education was over three times that of India's labour force and almost twice the proportion of the Chinese labour force had attended secondary school. At the university level, the proportion of India's labour force is about 4 times that of China.

Distance education entities of the future will practice a variety of expanded skills and employ a range of programmes and technologies from franchises at traditional campuses serving the science, technology and business science needs of those able to pay, to the subsidised, specially tailored programmes directed to learning centres during non-working hours. But they will succeed only with a political commitment to serving their nation's learning needs – the necessary financing and infrastructure.