



A Study on E-Learning in Higher Education- Scenario

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Abstract

Education through internet is becoming one of the most domineering forms among all other forms of education. A lot of effort is being put in to improve the quality of learning and to improve the relationship among learners and their teachers. Advanced development in the field of virtual education relies on the technologies being used on the internet. The present study focus on the E-Learning in Higher Education which is an important issue as far as Indian Higher Education is concerned. A genuine effort has been made through the study to highlight on role of E-Learning in Higher Education (HE) in India, concepts, aspects, trends, issues, scope, challenges, advantages, disadvantages, future, etc. of 21st century E-Learning. Keywords: Curriculum, E-Learning, Higher Education, Issues, Technology, Trends.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) revolution has given a boom to ‘learning economy’ whereas the real strength of an individual or institution, region/a country is determined by the way it reacts to new knowledge and make the best use of it which increased the demand for E-Learning at the formal as well as informal sector of education. It supports use of ICT. It is based upon any where anytime learning content generated using videos, audio, text, animations and/or simulation to enrich the learning process and is defined as an acquisition of knowledge and skills using electronic technologies such as computer, internet based courseware and local and wide area network. It is a way of providing training and development to the employees through various electronic media such as internet, audio, video. In a society, the student generation has to realize the importance of technology and have to be well aware about how to teach the future leaders and the demand for higher education is growing globally and India is no exception to it. In fact, in India, the number of applicants is three to five times as against the number of seats in any institution of higher education. It can be also defined as a internet based training, resulted in digital online learning in HE system. It could have potentially major effects on the way higher education is designed, implemented and delivered. Higher education institutions must determine the most suitable environments and courses for its delivery. Though Indians have been traditionally inclined towards conventional classroom based academic programs, the government of India has been actively supporting the e-learning drive to overcome the various challenges and to strengthen accessibility. Technological advancements have made it possible to deliver digitized education through contemporary platforms in 4G environment. Digital devices like tablets, iPads and mobile phones are foreseen to be the classrooms of the future. The prospect of making education available to anyone, anytime, anywhere is becoming increasingly appealing to students, the corporate world and the populace at large. With online courses, students can take charge of their own learning. Anyone can choose from thousands of courses and further

their learning, often for free. Online education modernizes the learning experience to fit the needs of the young generation. Courses like MOOCS, MOODLE, etc. It gives people access to skill building opportunities on demand, exactly when they need it. Aspiring professionals can now earn certificates from online courses offered by the world's top institutions and it is necessary to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of online learning can be better prepared to face the challenges of working in the 21st century environment.

Objectives of the Study

- Understand the meaning of e-Learning
- Highlighting the usage of tools of e- Learning
- Discuss the trends and issues of E-Learning in Higher Education .

Methodology

The present study is mainly concentrated on textual approach, books, articles, papers written on various National and International Journals has been considered to do the framework of the study hence the secondary data has been used for the study titled —E-Learning in Higher Education

E-Learning: Concept and Importance

E-Learning is also known with a lot of other names depending upon the purpose for which it is being used, such as: Learning Support System (LSS), Learning Management System (LMS), Managed Learning Environment (MLE), Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Learning Platform (LP) and Course Management System (CMS). It is electronic learning, and typically this means using a computer to deliver part/all of a course whether it's in a school, college, part of training/a full distance learning course. It is a learning utilizing electronic technologies to access educational curriculum outside of a traditional classroom. In most cases, it refers to a course, program or degree delivered completely. In other words, e-learning can also be described as learning that is delivered online, via the internet, So e-learning can be defined as courses that are specifically delivered via the internet to somewhere other than the classroom where the professor is teaching. It is interactive learning in which learner can also communicate with teachers, professors or other students in the class. Sometimes it is delivered live; where one can —electronically raise hand and interact in real time and sometimes it is a lecture that has been pre recorded. Normally, there is a teacher interacting/communicating with learner and grading the participation, assignments and tests and it has been proven to be a successful method of training and education. It is becoming a way of life for many citizens in the country like farmers education, adult education, pre-primary, primary education, etc. as well as in higher education. There are basically to parts or phases of e-learning. In one phase e learning is used for educational purpose and at other level it is been used for training. The educational use is limited to secondary and higher secondary level and it is used to provide training to the employees and to upgrade their skills. It is growing at very low rate in India as compared to international market where it is been used at all levels. In India if we can be able to make it as a source of learning in rural areas then it is the easiest and fastest tool to educate people. If we consider the population in India it is hard to accommodate all the people in university/educational area to get the education and the percentage of literate population in the total population has increased in 2011, from 65% to 74%, similarly, the percentage of illiterate population has decreased from 35% to 26% in the span of a decade. Still the fact remains that 26% of India's total population is still illiterate and e-learning can prove helpful to reduce the illiteracy as the advancement in technology and communication has made teaching and training possible anywhere, anytime The Learner can learn anywhere; i.e. outside the boundaries of formal classroom. It will be very effective in case of adult education, training, etc. It is a very powerful medium for pre-primary and primary education as it is in audio visual form and can attract even the school dropouts and will be very effective in case of adult education and training.

E-Learning: Advantages

- Full time availability at any where anytime concept
- Each individual learner can learn at his/her convenient pace

- There is no need for this pace to static or constant which can also vary dynamically for each individual
- It saves money as well as time and helps in the development at individual levels through personal interactions with teachers/experts
- Students always have a number of alternative resources to satisfy their learning needs
- Better clarity of concepts due of the presence of additional resources in the form of videos, audios, animations, simulations, blogs, experts' help, etc.
- It provides a faster mechanism to the learners get their progress evaluated at different levels and by different set of teachers/experts
- The learners can get faster feedbacks and solutions to their queries .

E-Learning: Disadvantages

- The human touch is missing
- There is always a danger for de-motivated learners to be left behind
- The developing countries lack in proper infrastructural support like networks, cheaper bandwidth, availability of working infrastructures, power etc.
- The learners are bound to feel the absence of direct social interactions
- Interaction with teacher/instructor/expert may not always be possible
- The role of the teacher is being usurped by the trainers who may not be an expert in the area concerned
- The learning content is mostly the same for all the types of learners
- Unreliable internet connections are the biggest stumbling blocks
- Managing learning software can involve a learning curve
- It is really difficult to offer traditional courses through E-Learning mechanisms
- Not so much tech-savvy learners may feel initial hitches while starting the E-Learning process
- The developing and underdeveloped countries have a large segment of population that is not tech-savvy
- There are no national/international quality standards in place for the e-learning course material and/or their content
- The learners, at times, cannot afford the cost of quality e-learning courses
- Some other social issues such as lack of acceptability of e-learning courses in reference to employability, especially in Indian context may produce resistance to this type of learning .

E-Learning and Higher Education

According to a recent study in a global level online learning program, after the United States, India has been reported to have the second highest number of online course enrollments with more than over 1, 55,000 students from the country and a total of around 1.2 million students worldwide, 32% are from the U.S while 15% are from India. In higher education, there is a growing demand to create a virtual learning environment in which all aspects of a course are handled through a consistent user interface throughout the institution. Some of these programs are initiated in our country and students need to attend orientation sessions in colleges, but the course content is delivered online. Several universities do offer online student support services, such as online advice and registration, e-counselling, online textbook purchase and student newspapers. It has the potential to overcome the non-availability of adequately qualified teachers in rural India. Live online tutoring; streaming videos and virtual classrooms are some of the solutions that elearning can offer to these problems. While there is no substitute for effective and organized classroom teaching, e-learning's is the best option. School drop outs can be taught through elearning as they feel insulted to go to school again. Computerized Assessment of students' performance becomes easier to the teacher/professor, for the courses where the number of students is large. According to

GOI report, India's online education market size is set to grow to \$40 billion by 2017 from the current \$20 billion. It has been observed that a group of people who oppose to the concept of it saying that it is informative and does not impart the knowledge of the subject. On the other hand, some people oppose classroom learning saying that self-learning with the help computers and other e-material is always better than 21st century classroom learning as it does not motivate for self-learning.

Issues and Challenges in E-Learning Technological Challenges:

The E-Learning raises significant challenges in the technological research area. For development of e-learning resources that meet the users' requirement need to be addressed.

Development of New Forms of Learning community and Interactive Learning:

In E-Learning environments interaction, cooperation and community play an important role to support learning. The developments in the area of its environments provide new forms of interaction for learning experience. It generates new relationships between learner and computer and also forms a new learning community and the key issues are new forms of multimodal interface to support learning, new techniques to understand and support learning communities, the development of systems to support mobile communities of learners, personalization techniques that meet user personal needs and current activity, techniques to promote and support interaction, discovery of new learning communities, support for time to time assessment services, etc.

Developing New Knowledge Facilities for E-Learning:

E-Learning environment needs to support the rapid increase in the size and variety of data by appropriate semantic services. The semantic services generate a surrounding semantic context for learning support and needs to work on the development of learning and reasoning theories for uncertain and incomplete knowledge, support for the development of large-scale learning facilities, support for a dynamic learning process, supports for information sharing across different learning facilities and development of lightweight knowledge capture technique for promotion of lifelong learning.

Research Issues for E-Learning:

Current E-Learning research brings together pedagogical, technical and organizational concerns within a wider set of socio-cultural factors and factors influence the research agenda in e-learning system. Understanding these broader social and cultural issues is of significant importance to the research communities involved in it and will have a significant role in informing 21st century practices.

21st Century E-Learning in India

India has a major role to play in the international e-learning services industry, is already one of the leading IT service provider countries, and it is now aiming to achieve the same position in the IT enabled services. The presence of world-class educational infrastructure and training professionals enables it to be one of the leading E-Learning services providers in the world. On the domestic front, the government and private sectors have taken many of it initiatives. Though these initiatives have been met with a lot of enthusiasm and user acceptance, their commercial viability is still under consideration. The government has been taking some proactive measures in a regulatory and financial capacity to boost the e-learning environment in India. Funds have been invested in setting up Internet kiosks in rural areas for the purpose of communication, which can be used for it initiative as well and can help in providing informal and vocational training as well as formal education.

Conclusion, Discussion and Summary

The advancements in internet and organizational structures have made a great impact on the ways the knowledge is transferred and it is perceived and the high band width Internet of today supports everything ranging from information in textual form to streaming audios and videos and the simulations as well. E-Learning as a virtual learning environment depends heavily on this Internet. The developed countries have long been supporting online learning through e-learning has a bright future ahead. The developing countries like India have also of-late started to reap the benefits of e-learning. In anticipation of this growth, the governments, business companies and professional associations can start focusing on applications and the effective and efficient implementation of E-Learning. By recognizing that e-learning truly is a methodology, one can experience the greatest benefits that it has to offer now and in the future. In the end, the fact remains that, with respect to it, poor quality procurement practices are a barrier to growth and adoption. So it is necessary to make a thorough evaluation when it comes to choose its software for education in order to improve the knowledge of learners, the learning outcomes, the performance outcomes, and the business and policy impact and in order to value the money spent. It is increasing the percentage of literate population in the total population of India and it plays a vital role in educational development as a wheel of growth in education sector. It is expected that if India and developing countries proceed as joint venture and work mutually on the issue of it and will be beneficial for the development of educational sector and lot of opportunities can be captured and speedy development will possible. It is expected that India should work out on this issue for development and will be beneficial for educational as well as social sector in the 21st century.

Educational Implications and Suggestions

- Teachers can use multimedia like images and animations to explain concepts, and break down complex topics with videos and games.
- He/she can also share links to additional educational materials.
- Students who are self-motivated, independent, and have good self-organization and technological skills tend to perform better in online courses.
- Effective E-Learning involves defining, developing, delivering, and evaluating, includes having clear objectives, understanding the audience, and developing content.
- Staying organized with a project management tool can help improve e-learning.
- Having a content plan can help improve e-learning.
- Build a schedule can help improve E-Learning.
- Storyboarding ideas can help improve E-Learning.
- The NEP 2020 recommended greater autonomy for HE institutions enabling them to make decisions regarding curriculum, faculty recruitment and governance, while safeguarding appropriate regulatory mechanisms and accountability.

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