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THE CONCEPT OF E- LEARNING ON RISE IN INDIA

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Abstract

E-learning is a means of becoming literate involving new mechanism for communication such as computer networks, multimedia, content portals, search engines, digital libraries, distance learning, different wave based applications (i.e. email, video chatting through real time conference, skypee conference, webcam communications) and web based class room teaching.

This paper reflects the importance of e-learning in higher education with its extent and growth in India. Some of the major Indian Initiatives and the target segments covered by the online education have also been detailed by the authors. The need is to realize the importance of Information technology so that the future leaders are better equipped with it. The authors have given the future perspective of e-learning in India, where the situation for demand in higher education is not the different on form that of developed countries. E-learning has always been considered useful for only distance learning programs. But no one can deny the fact that e-learning is the most ground-breaking application of the Internet and it has made marvels globally and is now catching up in the regular pedagogy of education too.

Introduction:

Today in the modern era we are living in the age of Information and Communication Technologies, advancement of ICT's libraries are moving from conventional Library into electronic library/digital. Libraries are a place where we collect the knowledge/information in the form of books, journals, e-journals, e-books, educational CD's. Library serve their users, community for achieving a particular aim. With the gradual development of ICT's based learning technologies. The Traditional ways of teaching is change in to e-learning. E-learning to face a new concept in the form of virtual learning, virtual learning room, web based education leading to establishment of virtual university with a view to extend educational opportunities for all, anywhere and at any time. We are in the age of digital/electronic world of education. Today education is facing problem such as lack of trained and experienced teachers, lack of infrastructure increase of population, needs of quality education. E-learning has emerged as the most important method of education and brought new opportunities to education in all subject including Library and Information Science. E-learning is becoming an influential force in higher education today. The future education is totally based on e-learning and also integrated and collaborated.

Concept of E-Learning:

E-learning known as web-based learning or web based training is a type of technology supported education learning where the medium of instruction is through computer/technology particular involving listed technology. In e-learning education system there is no face to face interaction taking place. E-leaning means a learning technology in which user may utilize different technologies, like internet, computer technology and multimedia. New Zealand's Minister of Education defines e-learning as, Learning that is enabled or supported by the use of digital tools and content. It typically involves some form of interactivity, which may include online interaction between the learner and their teacher or peers. E-learning opportunities are usually accessed via the internet, though other technologies as CD-ROM are also used.

E-learning is described by European commission as- the use of new multimedia technologies and the internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchange and collaboration. Kaplan-Leiserson considered e-learning as a wide set of application and processes, such as web-based learning, computer based learning, virtual classroom and digital collaboration. It include the delivery of content via-internet, internet/extranet (LAN/WAN), audio and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV's and CD-ROM.

Characteristics of E-Learning:

E-learning has many characteristics; some of there are:-

- Any time learning facility: 24x7 learning system;
- Anywhere learning: E-learning allows learning activity from either office or home or any place it provides remote access facility;
- Remoter Learner Teacher: in the e-learning

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environment teacher and learner can be away form each other yet achieving the common goal of education by the means of ICT application;
- Learner centered: it is very much dependent on the learner's own choice, the learner choose his/her learning module;
- Lifelong learning: The learner will have the flexibility to learn and finish the programme at their own pace also;
- Multimedia Nature: The course contents are available in electronic format, such as it can be text, audio or video form.

Some Indian Initiatives:

Some of the Indian initiative taken by the Indian institutions towards e-learning are given below:-

In February 2009, India launched a National Mission on Education through ICT, which is a Billion Dollar enterprise. It will provide internet connection to about 20 thousand colleges and other educational Institutions. UNESCO is intended to pay a significant role as a global clearing house of ideas and to foster to growth of knowledge based societies. They wish to offer sharing the e-learning materials prepared by India under this national mission by Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs) so that all those around who wish to access quality knowledge can do so freely (Asvina, 2009).

EGyankosh, a National Digital Repository of learning resources, project was started by Indira Gandhi National Open University in 2006. the repository was developed using Dspace open source software, which ideates to store, preserve, distribute and share the digital learning resources of open and distance learning (ODL) institutions of the country. A support to a large aggregation and integration of learning resource in different formats such as self-instructional study material, audio-video programmes, and archives of radio and television-based live interactive session is supported by it (Sarma and Mahumder, 2008).

UGC has established a consortium for educational communication (CEC) in 1993 which is an inter-university centre for electronic media with the following laid down objectives:

- Close coordination, facilities, overall guidance and direction to the activities of the Media centres set up by the UGC in various universities.
- Dissemination of educational programme, through both the broadcast and no-broadcast modes.
- Production of educational programmes (especially video and audio) and related support material and setting up of appropriate facilities for this.
- Research related to optimizing the effectiveness of the programmes.
- Providing a forum for the active involvement of academic and other scholars in the creation of appropriate educational programme.
- Studying, promoting and experimenting with new techniques/technology that will increase the reach and/or effectiveness of educational communication.

Yet in an another initiative by government of India, a project undertaking by the apex organization NCERT in the form of NCERT online textbooks showed their e-learning can reach to maximum. NCERT published school textbooks and it has initiated a step towards making school textbooks freely available on the internet for students and teachers through its website. This portal provides easy navigation to textbooks chapters by title/subject of the book for a particular class. The textbooks available there are written in English, Hindi and a few in Urdu (Sarma and Majumder, 2008).

In July, 2005, the agreement signed between the US and India, six leading American Unviersities representing the US, ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) and DST (Department of Science and Technology) along with Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham representing India, will participate in a project designed to enhance higher education and research in India through a satellite e-learning network. The beneficiary institution are IITs, NITs, IIT, BIT Ranchi, and a few other prestigious Institution across the Country (Nikam, Gnash and Tamizhchelvan 2004).

Yet another project to provide web based training is the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), which is being funded by the Ministry of Human Research Development (MHRD). This was first conceived in 1999, to pave the way for introducing multimedia and web technology to enhance learning of basic science and engineering concepts, was launched in September 2006. Six major engineering disciplines have been covered in this project so far at the undergraduate (B.E./B.Tech) level. The educational goals set by the Ministry of Human Resource Development are:

- To make video lectures in a format appropriate for broadcasting that would provide quality content through the Technology channel named the Eklavya channel by the previous Honorable Minister for Human Resource Development in recognitions of the first student of distance education named in the great India epic Mahabharata thousands of year ago.
- To create web-based (e-learning) material and make it available in the form of portal/DVDs that would be tailored to meet the needs of engineering students across the country.
- To create a website for NPTEL activity.
- To make e-learning material available in the web for the video lectures to supplement class room teaching.
- To advise target institutions with regard to the software/hardware requirements for benefiting form the national project.

NPTEL has developed curriculum based video courses (110 new coursed and 109 exciting coursed encapsulated in digital video format) and web-based e-courses (129). This has been undertaken by IITs (Seven) and

IISc Bangalore as Partner Institutions (PI) and other selected premier institutions as Associate Partner Institution (API) through a collaborative effort.

In addition to this, a number of core curriculum coursed common to all engineering programmes such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, management, electronic, language etc. have also been included. The broad aim of the project NPTEL is to facilitate the competitiveness of Indian industry in the global markets through improving the quality and reach of engineering education. The operational objective of NPTEL is to make high quality learning material available to students of engineering institution across the country by exploiting the advance in information and communication technology. The target group for this project consists of students and faculty of Institutions offering undergraduate engineering programmes in India. A format Memorandum of understanding (MoU) between five IIMs and CMU established a Virtual Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning (VETEL). It was the first initiative in which all IITs and IIMs shared a common vision and proposed to work together to improve the quality of science, engineering and management education all across the country by offering coursed through VCTEL. This proposal was submitted to MHRD in 1999 and revised several timers (EGP-AICTE-NPTEL).

Future Of E-Learning In India:

Compared to an almost 80 percent literacy rate in urban India, that in rural areas in only 56 percent. Further, the average teacher: student ratio at primary level is 1:58 in rural regions (Choubey 2009). Perfection and improvement of connectivity is another area of concern. India needs to increase penetration in terms of PCs and communication lines for any e-learning project to be successful. The soaring cost of ownership, which proves to be a hurdle, needs to be lowered. Following steps could help in arresting the above problem.

- The service providers, including the Government need to cut the tariff levels. As the field becomes more and more competitive, this is bound to happen.
- The government needs to stimulate a learning culture and e-learning must become a policy issue. Government must distinguish the e-learning industry as a separate forum and not treat is as part of the IT enabled services (ITeS) or a sub sector of the IT Industry.
- Use of open source software will not only be cost effective but can also meet the localized demands for the vast linguistic diversity of India. Further, open source software can also be used on old hardware.

Conclusion:

E-learning is emerging as the future trend of learning in India would be dominant in the time ahead. E-learning has created new dimensions in education, both within and beyond the curriculum and is still looking at further opportunities of becoming more practical. A word of concern at this juncture would serve food. Through, e-learning seems to be a solution for an absent teacher, deploying such an atmosphere would be requiring much thought. Both the instructor and the learner need to shift their methods of teaching and learning. Educational Institutions need to have suitable strategies in place for successful deployment of the e-learning process. But, call it Web-based Training (WBT) or Border less Education; e-learning is here to stay. I strongly believe that e-learning will soon substitute classroom learning in India.

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