

‘E-LEARNING’- A BOON FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Abstract- The world is changing, some say faster than ever, some say irreversibly, and all argue about whether the change is for the better or for the worse. What is driving this change is the immersion of our society into a new way of communicating. Where we once had to wait days, weeks, or months to talk to distant friends and family, we now view a delay of a few seconds as an inconvenience. We can take our letter-writing devices, phones, photos, and music, among other things, with us wherever we go, and our modern lives revolve around this ability.

Educational systems are changing at great speed and the technology is changing rapidly. Older technology is replaced by new technological phenomena and the new ones are being adopted and these are affecting the educational systems. In many countries, many university systems have adopted distance education to solve their educational dilemmas. Although sometimes considered to be the poorer cousin of regular college programmes, distance learning comes as a blessing to students who want to study further while continuing with jobs or who might not be able to attend a full-time course for various reasons. The most frequent query from students is related to the confusion over the value of a distance learning programme.

The answer to this totally depends on the student. Some students can make the most out of a distance learning programme, but there are also others who are not comfortable with this pattern. What higher education systems can do for their societies are to improve and to reinforce the present educational systems, to utilize distance education in the most proper ways, to apply advanced communication technologies, and to use the experiences of the countries that have been successful in using distance education.

E-learning is a part of new dynamics that characterises the educational system. It has become an important part of the society, comprising an extensive array of digitalization approaches, components and delivery methods. The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for educational purpose has increased, & the spread of network technologies has caused e-learning practices to evolve significantly. The purposes of this research paper is to discuss the importance of e-learning and to draw a conclusion that distance education is a boon to many learners.

Key Words- communication, distance education, learner, learning, e-learning, media

I. INTRODUCTION

E-learning is a part of new dynamics that characterises the educational system. It has become an important part of the society, comprising an extensive array of digitalization approaches, components and delivery methods. The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for educational purpose has increased, & the spread of network technologies has caused e-learning practices to evolve significantly. Education through internet, network is E-Learning. It is the network based transfer of skills & knowledge.

E-learning refers to use of electronic applications and processes to learn. The e-learning applications and processes are the web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration. The contents are delivered through the internet, local intranet/extranet, audio or video tape, satellite TV & CD-ROM. E-learning is used by learners and educators in homes, schools, higher education, business and others. In the early days, e-learning received a bad impression, as many people thought bringing computers into the classroom would remove that human element that some learners need, but as time has progressed technology has developed, and now we embrace smartphones and tablets in the classroom and office, as well as using a wealth of interactive designs that makes e-learning not only

engaging for the users, but valuable as a lesson delivery medium. The use of e-learning is seen at all levels of educational system.

Defining E-Learning: Allison Rossett (2001) defines e-learning as: Web-based training (WBT), also known as e-learning and on-line learning, is training that resides on a server or host computer that is connected to the World Wide Web. Distance learning provides "access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both."

Distance education courses that require a physical on-site presence for any reason (including taking examinations) have been referred to as hybrid or blended courses of study. Distance education is defined by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology as: Institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources and instructors.

Distance education has two major components, distance teaching and distance learning. Distance teaching is the effort of an educational institution to design, develop and deliver instructional experiences to the distant student so that learning may occur. Education and distance education is comprised of

teaching and learning. This task force concentrated on distance teaching.

ASPECTS OF E-LEARNING

There is live instruction where specialized instructors can remain in their own/one locations and provide instructions to many students in other locations. Video content delivery where pre-recorded content is provided as material that can be viewed when needed.

Student to student interactions is an aspect where students learn as much from each other as they do from teachers. Up-to-date materials are provided through digital delivery for e-readers where textbooks are expensive to purchase, maintain and deliver. Another aspect is Self-learning which is common in higher education which is done by computer based training.

Table 1.The role of various electronic peripherals

Type	Characteristic	Notable Features
Videotape in DVD format	Visual and audio tool; the checkout approach with print materials is very popular in India	Multi-sensory tool with animation and graphics.
Laptop/computer	Versatile approach to providing a wide range of learning activities from skill and drill to simulations.	Hardware is expensive and being replaced by less expensive Internet delivery with a Wi-Fi connection. Online and offline mode can be used for learning.
Videoconference – Two way interactive video	Electronic communications among people at separate locations. Can be audio, audio graphic, video or computer based.	Often uses proprietary software and consequently expensive. Internet models and broadband communications are making it more affordable and accessible.
Email	Asynchronous text files and attachments.	Good tool to stimulate learning writing and communications skills
Internet	Instructionally delivery over the Internet, either learning modules or entire courses.	Improved broadband communications are enabling the effective use of video and synchronous communications. Chat and asynchronous communications facilitate links between the teacher and learner and among the learners.

STRENGTHS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The term open and distance learning and its definition are relatively new in the field of education, having gained prominence only in the past 15 to 20 years. The language and terms used to describe distance learning activities can still be confusing, and geographical differences in usage - for example, between North America and Europe - can add to the confusion. Among the more commonly used terms related to open and distance learning are the following: correspondence education, home study, independent study, external studies, continuing education, distance teaching, self-instruction, adult education, technology-based or mediated education, learner-centered education, open learning, open access, flexible learning and distributed learning. Therefore let us be aware the strengths of distance education, though the nomenclature are been used differently.

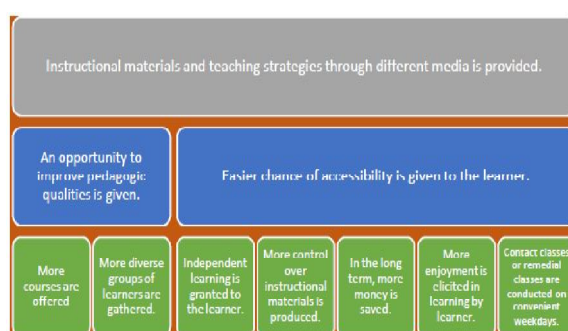


Fig. 1: Strengths of Distance Education System

E-LEARNING-A BOON TO DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The use of e-learning is seen at all levels of educational system. E-Learning is visualised as the India’s license for boosting up distance education system. The increasing fusion of the online education companies and organisations, it is strongly believed

that India shall finally cope with the lag in its higher education system. The only way to bridge the growing division in public and private education in India can be tackled by utilizing E-Learning and online learning. A website named Coursera, provides such online courses through collaborations with various well recognised and National level Universities and Institutes all across.

E-Learning/teaching covers a wide set of applications of Computer Assisted Instruction, Computer Based Learning, Web-based learning, Virtual Classroom and On-line Learning. E-Learning/teaching is an interactive learning experience with the access to online tutors which can be made available from any computer, once the user has the access through web browsers.

It permits the delivery of knowledge and information to learners at an accelerated pace, opening up new vistas of knowledge transfer. The biggest advantages of E-Learning/teaching lie in its ability to cover distances. It is self-paced, and learning is done at the learners' pace. E-Learning/teaching involves delivery of content and resources for teaching and learning via different communication protocols.

The one such very popular open online course in India is MOOCs which collaborates with National level Institutes as IITs and brings in these online courses. The courses are all free and provide free certificates of completion who are done and have completed all the quizzes and peer evaluation assignments in the respective courses. One can find online courses for various fields like Professional Marketing, Digital Pedagogies, International Business, Forensic Sciences and several MBA courses in the form of distance education. Moreover, even the state universities in India have started their wing of graduate and post-graduate programmes in the form of online education.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Although the expansion of the Internet blurs the boundaries, distance education technologies are divided into two modes of delivery namely synchronous learning and asynchronous learning.

In synchronous learning, all participants are present at the same time. In this regard, it resembles traditional classroom teaching methods despite the participants being located remotely. It needs a scheduled timetable

to be organized and displayed. Few examples of synchronous technology as Web conferencing, videoconferencing, educational television, instructional television are examples of, as internet radio, live streaming, telephone, and web-based.



Fig.2 Synchronous learning

In asynchronous learning, participants access course materials flexibly on their own schedule. Students are not required to be together at the same time. Mail correspondence, which is the oldest form of distance education, is an asynchronous delivery technology as are message board forums, e-mail, video and audio recordings, print materials, voicemail and fax.



Fig.3 Asynchronous learning

The two methods can be combined. Many courses offered by The Distance training use periodic sessions of residential or day teaching to supplement the remote teaching. The Distance Education System uses a blend of technologies and a blend of learning modalities like face-to-face, distance and mixed. Distance learning can use, online interactive faculty chat sessions (OFI), online virtual classes, quiz, and webinars.

CURRENT CAPABILITIES AND APPLICATIONS OF E-LEARNING

Subject	E-Learning
Place	lecture in classroom or internet labs
Pedagogical Change	More text- and graphics based instructions and lecture in classroom or in internet labs
Instructor to Student Communication	Time-delayed (students need to check e-mails or web sites, Asynchronous, Scheduled.
Student to Student Communication	Face to face, Audio, Teleconference, dedicated time for group meetings
Feed back to student	Mass/standardized instruction, Benchmark-based grading, Simulations & lab-based experiments, Paper and pen
Assignments & Tests	In-class or on computer, Dedicated time, Restricted amount of time, Observe and monitoring in lab.

CONCLUSION

E-Learning has become extremely popular. The rise in Internet users and the revolutionary changes that have happened in education have created a fertile environment for E-Learning to grow. The face of higher education has experienced a sea change over the decades. Once characterized by the traditional classroom model, higher education today has changed into learning that is instant, online, self-driven and on the go. The journey of higher education in India has been marked with innumerable milestones – most recently, E-Learning. The Government of India is strong supporter of E-learning and the Department of Electronics and Information Technology have been actively developing tools and technologies to promote it. These are content development, R&D technology initiatives, human resource development projects, and faculty training initiatives to improve through E-learning.

The only way to sustain a better future is by educating the younger generation with effective and efficient education methodologies. It optimistic to

expose students to the latest technology so that they are not left clueless while they reach the stage at which they will contribute to society. The study shows the positive effects of E-Learning for the higher education system in India. In the country like India it is very essential that the ELearning reaches the lowest sections of the society so that in the near future, we have strong and stable labour force in services and agriculture sector.

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