Impact of E-learning in Higher Education with Reference to Jammu & Kashmir State

Wasim Akram Zargar[1] and Jagbir Ahlawat[2]

[1,2]Department of Information Technology Shri Venkateshwara University, Rajabpur, Gajraula, U.P. India
E-mail: [1]vasuwasim786@gmail.com

Abstract—*This paper aims to discuss the role of E-Learning in the new Higher Educational Environment in the digital age which creates student-centered learning and educational practice, offering new more flexible learning methods. This review highlights some common themes and problems faced using e-learning and recommends implications for practice arising from these. E-learning developments based on changes to traditional pedagogy evoke the most inconsistencies in student perceptions and it is here that individual differences emerge as possible success factors. The study conducted revealed that their were different factors that influence the adoption of e-learning in higher educational institutions in J&K. The research findings confirm, Language barriers were found to be major barriers as well as deficient management awareness and support as the major obstruction. This study concludes that future research should investigate how students understanding of the teaching and learning process impacts on their study strategies and perceptions of online learning.*

Keywords: *E-Learning, Higher Education, Strategies and Jammu & Kashmir*

1. INTRODUCTION

E-learning is the use of electronic educational technology in learning and teaching. E-learning has emerged as a prerequisite to assemble the challenges posed by the improvement of information technology and its potential for greater access to knowledge [1]. E-learning was first introduced in developed countries; thus, the implementation and operation models developed there have been taken as benchmarks globally. Basically, the important factors and barriers to the implementation of e-learning within different societies and region may vary for those identified in developed regions, with varying degrees of intensity or importance [2]. Accordingly, the models available for implementation may not be applied across all steps and phases when utilized by different societies and countries. As such, influential factors and barriers to e-learning may vary between them.

The implementation of e-learning in the context of higher educational institutions has become the subject of much research and examination. The application of e-learning has traversed the boundaries of school and college education to permeate the entire learning spectrum, including internet-

based coaching for examinations. Realizing the potential and effectiveness of this platform, the corporate India is becoming progressively inclined towards utilizing e-learning for its employees. Importantly, regardless of the high standards of living within the country, With this noted, it is essential that organizations and the government work together in order to update and upgrade the skills of their subjects, whether employees, customers or students, and to further deliver on-going learning and training where e-learning is still to play a key role [3].Literacy rate in Jammu & Kashmir was just 68.7% in 2011 wherein about 78.3 males are literate, and only 58.0 out of 100 females are literate[4]. Jammu & Kashmir state is compounded by terrorism and militancy which has taken a heavy toll of life and public property besides throwing normal life out of gear. Education could not escape from this tragedy as most of the institutions in rural areas in the valley were destroyed and loss of schooling hours immensely affected the learning outcomes.

The aim of this research is to investigate and identify factors that will mostly influence the implementation of e-learning in J&K. In order to achieve this aim, our research was based on semi-structured interviews. The results of this study will help decision makers to gain a better understanding of the factors that determine and influence the adoption of e-learning in higher educational institutions in J&K.

2. ORIGIN

The origins of the term e-Learning is not certain, although it is suggested that the term most likely originated during the 1980's, within the similar time frame of another delivery mode online learning. [5] Nichols define e-Learning as strictly being accessible using technological tools that are either web-based, web-distributed, or web-capable. The belief that e-Learning not only covers content and instructional methods delivered via CD-ROM, the Internet or an Intranet [6] but also includes audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast and interactive TV is also the one.

Although technological characteristics are included in the definition of the term, Tavangaria[7] as well as Triacca[8] felt that the technology being used was insufficient as a descriptor. Tavangarian[7] included the constructivist theoretical model as a framework for their definition by stating that e -Learning is not only procedural but also shows some transformation of an individual's experience into the individual's knowledge through the knowledge construction process. Triacca [8]believed that some level of interactivity needs to be included to make the definition truly applicable in describing the learning experience, even though Triacca[8] added that e-Learning was a type of online learning.

As there is still the main struggle as to what technologies should be used so that the term can be referenced, some authors will provide either no clear definition or a very vague reference to other terms such as online course/learning, web-based learning, web-based training, learning objects or distance learning believing that the term can be used synonymously[9]. What is abundantly obvious is that there is some uncertainty as to what exactly are the characteristics of the term, but what is clear is that all forms of e-Learning, whether they be as applications, programs, objects, websites, etc., can eventually provide a learning opportunity for individuals.

The emergence of e-learning is arguably one of the most powerful tools available to the growing need for education. The need to improve access to education opportunities allowed students who desire to pursue their education but are constricted due to the distance of the institution to achieve education through "virtual connection" newly available to them. Online education is rapidly increasing and becoming as a viable alternative for traditional classrooms. According to a 2008 study conducted by the U.S Department of Education, back in 2006-2007 academic years, about 66% of postsecondary public and private schools began participating in student financial aid programs offered some distance learning courses, record shows only 77% of enrolment in for-credit courses being for those with an online component. These reflect the goals of the National Centre for E-learning and Distance Learning which are to achieve a number of key objectives, namely to:

- Organize e-learning applications in higher education institutions with high standards.
- Contribute to expanding the capacity of higher education institutions through the application of e-learning
- Distributeknowledge of technology and the culture of e-learning through information society
- Contribute to the evaluation of e-learning's projects and research.

- Develop excellence standards for the design production and distribution of digital learning materials advise in the areas of e-learning,
- Promotenovel projects in the areas of e-learning and distance learning in institutions of higher education.

3. E-LEARNING IN INDIA

Albert Einstein once stated that "education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." While Einstein's words may have been intended only in good humour, they aptly reflect the fact that effective education is, indeed, incessant, warrants constant learning, and is constantly evolving. In fact, the face of education has experienced a sea change of sorts over the decades. Once characterized by the traditional classroom model, education today has metamorphosed into learning that is instant, online, self-driven and on the go. The journey of education in India, too, has been dotted with innumerable milestones, and the most recent among these is e-learning.

The first IT-based teaching tool debuted in India in the 1980s through the advent of computer-based training, with study material being stored in CD-ROMs. However, it was the rapid emergence of the information and communication technology (ICT) market in the 1990s that gave significant and far-reaching impetus to the Indian e-learning market. Subsequently, the growing presence of the internet and increasing broadband connectivity gave rise to other web-based training models, thus giving further thrust to interactive online learning.

Further, organizations, using the public-private partnership (PPP) model have been setup, such as Centum Learning, a joint venture (JV) with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), which aims to train 12 million people by 2022. Similarly, Tata Interactive Systems, a Tata Group company, develops online course content for the pre-school and higher-education segments. Flexibility, cost effectiveness and enhanced accessibility - these are but a few of the primary drivers of online education, and are the forces encouraging working professionals and students to revisit education despite busy schedules, via the online education platform[10].

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is basically an analysis of the higher education with reference to developing a strategy for successful implementation of e-learning and e-education in J&K. In order to estimate the extent and trend of e-learning, primary data was collected from the students, teachers and the people belonging to rural areas of J&K. The method used was based on a questionnaire. The data thus collected was verified for any discrepancies and information mismatch or errors in various e-learning models and appropriate formulation has

been proposed. A statistical tool was used to analyze the data thus collected for meaningful interpretations. Barriers and challenges faced in implementing and adopting e- learning in the organization, focusing on identifying the most. In addition, secondary data was also collected for understanding the trends. The main sources of secondary data was obtained from government bulletins, reports of surveys conducted by various government and non-government organizations, research papers, periodicals, journals, authentic websites (official, private), published reports of internet, bank etc. The references were duly acknowledge and mentioned at the end of the work.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings offer insights into the main and influential factors that influence the adoption of e-learning in higher educational institutions in J&K. After summarizing the data collected and highlighting the main points, following results were drawn.

The major part of the study was to recognize the key factors influencing the organizations surveyed from building an environment supportive of e-learning. Majority of those questioned on the limitations of e-learning, it was found that 22 out of 30 respondents stated deficient management awareness and support as the major obstruction. Maximum respondents revealed that the strategy of the management in the organization was not as per the intention to build an e-learning culture. Management found that E-learning as a waste of time process and an unsuccessful opportunity for learning. Although most of the respondent thought that supportive management is a key factor for the acceptance of any new project including e-learning. However, the management will not support e-learning unless they are aware of the benefits it offers, and unfortunately our management is unaware of the benefits and strategic advantages of e-learning. This was more obvious in the replies of respondent working in public higher educational institutions in J&K. In such cases, the apex administration is more worried with their own profit, rather than the organization's picture. Whereas, in the private educational institutions, the management is more concerned with a return on investment and therefore adopting e-learning has a higher priority than in public organizations. Since the management was the source of resistance, the lower level employees did not sincerely buy into the e-learning projects. There was a —lack of understanding about e- learning", as many of the respondents mentioned in describing the institute situation. As a result, even when e- learning did deliver benefits, they were hampered by the inter- group conflict in the organizations. Many respondents stated that the management lacked the awareness of the strategic benefits of e-learning. Such a lack of awareness was felt through the absence of clear training and learning policies aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of their staff. Respondent mentioned that some managers and academics were computer illiterate; thus, they were afraid of the new technology and

more comfortable with traditional methods. Interestingly, an academic stated that the content development in the e-learning modules was very poor and there was a limited involvement in the contents development process. As a factor could cause unauthorized access to sensitive information and loss of users might hinder the adoption of e- learning. Surprisingly, one member of the top management was system integration where local systems are linked together and contain all different functions which would provide a full and real one stop shop. It is common for different departments to have different software and hardware that may not work together which may lead to e-learning implementation and adoption difficulties. The technological problems mentioned by the respondent were critical for the adoption of e-learning in J& K. Regardless of the fact that the necessary resources and equipment (personal computers in particular) for using e- learning were made available in most of the educational organizations surveyed, all respondent mentioned that there was plenty of room for improvement and the intensity of barriers was strong enough to wear away the positive effects obtained from e-learning. The implementation model of e-learning in J&K was not made up of the four usual stages but only one: integration, while there was not much concern consequence; many academics did not feel motivated to use the e-learning system and showed high levels of resistance and reluctance. Nevertheless, the key lesson which has been derived from this factor is that the problem is not one of structure but of processes. The difficulty consists in knowing the management processes that lead to a successful adoption of e-learning. The management in the surveyed educational organizations has failed to understand the strategic advantages of using e-learning as a means to improve the learning process.

It was found that 21 out of the 30 respondent Language barriers were found to be major barriers. Most of the e-learning contents used in the organizations were developed in English, and many of those organizations had a large number of employees who did not know the English language hence they were unwilling to use e-learning. Students in higher educational institutions in J&K also feel uncomfortable when using e-learning courses that were developed in English. It seemed that progress was still slow in content development and the organization environment still relied on contents and courses developed in English for e-learning. The fact that language is recognized as a significant barrier in J&K.

6. CONCLUSION

The study conducted revealed that their were different factors that influence the adoption of e-learning in higher educational institutions in J&K. The research findings confirm, Language barriers were found to be major barriers as well as deficient management awareness and support as the major obstruction.

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