

E-LEARNING IN RURAL AND UNDESERVED AREAS

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Abstract: Mobile phones, internet, tablets, iPads, their applications, social media even travelling, cooking, communication etc are part of our lives from the start till the end of the day. Technology is touching every aspect of society and changing it dramatically. But there is one very important and indispensable part of the society that has also been tapped by new innovations and discoveries and that is education with the concept of E learning. Like all other areas, in this case also urban areas are influenced to a greater extent than rural one. So much more could have been done to bring the revolution in learning process in rural areas of India. In this research paper development through Elearning in rural India is observed. If it planned properly then proper results will be affecting positively. In this research paper, we observed that E-learning is an effective tool for development of educational sector in India. E-learning is 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 online. The basic objective of this research paper is to understand concept of e-learning and to examine the type of e-learning. The research paper focused on classroom learning and e-learning in rural India.

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Introduction

India is a young country on the move. More than half of the country's population is under 25 years of age and every year 10 million people join the workforce. India already has one of the largest education systems in the world. The country has 1.4 million schools, 35,500 colleges, and 600 universities. Right to Education is the primary right of every citizen of India, whether a child resides in a high profile society or in a far away not so developed secluded village, according to the Article 45 of Indian Constitution the basic elementary education must be provided to all the children up to the age of fourteen years. Even after 68 years of independence some States in India are still struggling to achieve Universal enrolment, retention and quality education. There are more than one million rural schools among 6,38,000 villages in India. Schools in rural areas are promoted to raise the level of education and literacy in rural India. The main aim of running these types of schools in India is to increase the rate of literacy in rural areas. More than 30 percent of India's population is illiterate and cannot read or write. Schools in rural areas are inadequate and often equivalent to being non-existent. Thus, government's initiative to set up schools in rural areas came into picture. India's education sector is being revolutionised by rapid increases in Internet penetration and the availability of low-cost mobile devices. Technology has the potential to multiply reach. E-learning is a combination of learning services and technology to

provide high values. Internet plays a vital role in e-learning. E-learning is attaining significance in the world of internet. Due to the advantages of in internet, e-learning reached at anytime and anywhere. E-learning clearly has a role to play in resolving the problem. The sector is expected to grow rapidly at a CAGR of 17.4 per cent between 2013 and 2018. To put things in perspective the market in India is predicted to grow more than twice as fast as the global average of 7.9 per cent.

E-Learning has become a powerful tool in the field of education and technology, offering the ability to bridge educational gaps and support the overall growth of rural areas in India. This article examines the convergence of E-Learning and rural development, elucidating the difficulties encountered by rural areas and the potential advantages offered by digital education.

The existence of the digital divide has significantly impeded rural development, resulting in unequal access to high-quality education. E-Learning platforms possess the capacity to surmount geographical limitations and furnish instructional materials to distant regions, so enabling individuals in rural communities. This study analyzes the present status of E-Learning efforts in India, with a focus on their influence on skill acquisition, vocational education, and overall knowledge enrichment among rural communities. The study examines the impact of government policies, non-governmental organizations, and

collaborations with the corporate sector in advancing E-Learning as a catalyst for rural development. Furthermore, it examines the socio-economic consequences of incorporating technology into education, taking into account aspects such as heightened job prospects, advanced agriculture methods, and heightened healthcare knowledge.

Moreover, the research examines the difficulties linked to the implementation of E-Learning in rural India, encompassing constraints in infrastructure, disparities in digital literacy, and cultural subtleties. The document suggests methods for reducing these difficulties, including involving the community, creating tailored material, and designing user-friendly interfaces.

Review of Literature

According to Deepali Pande, et al (2016) with respect to e learning, poor quality procurement practices (in all sectors but especially in the public sector) are a barrier to growth and adoption. So it is necessary to make a thorough evaluation when it comes to choose an e learning software for education in order to improve the knowledge of learners, the learning outcomes, the performance outcomes, the business and policy impact and in order to value the money spent. Hardik Patel, et al (2014) Using E-Learning Tools you can tremendously improve learning process and earn learn in very easy hassles free environment. Another major benefit of the ELearning is that you can make learning always ON. ELearning is not restricted to any place and environment; you just need to connect with group or community, after you will receive all updates. Deep shikha Aggarwal (2009) The social implications of online learning center around one primary requirement that students need to feel a part of the class, regardless of where they are located physically or geographically. The —missing of connection to the other students in the class and with the institution can impact the success of an online student. Bottom line: the Indian market is still young, but it will continue to adopt the concept of elearning in order to meet its communication needs and seize business opportunities.

Current state of E-learning in India

Although the foundation of education is still reading, writing and arithmetic, today's students need broader education. Contemporary classroom, hence, needs to deliver live instruction, video content delivery, student to- student interactions via videoconferencing, remote test administration, up-to-date materials, self-learning etc. Digital India campaign is likely to benefit education by bringing many of these and other important elements together.

Even as the previous government tried to bridge the digital divide, Modi's masterstroke offers a lot of positivity for the Indian education market which is estimated to be worth Rs 5.9 trillion in 2014-15 against Rs. 3.33 trillion in 2011-12. With nearly half the population of India below the age of 25 and increasing penetration of Internet and mobile devices in this demography which is expected to reach 250 million soon, rivaling the US and second only to China, India's potential as a huge market for e-learning is enormous. Indian corporate sector having hold on tech world such as Intel, Qualcomm and Tata are also making strides in this direction. Intel recently launched 'Digital Skills for India' initiative under which it introduced Digital Skills Training Application that is comprised of modules on Digital Literacy, Financial Inclusion, Healthcare and Cleanliness in five Indian languages. Qualcomm has launched Play 'n' Learn program for school children ages 5-8. It is providing 3G tablets under the Qualcomm wireless Reach initiative. Similarly, Samsung recently started on a Smart Learning initiative to provide interactive study materials to students.

Likewise, Tata, Reliance and BSNL are among the prominent Indian names that are going big on this sector. While Tata is expanding its school education solution, 'Classedg', Reliance has picked up over 38.5 per cent stake in digital education company, Extra marks Education Private Limited, through its subsidiary, Infotel Broadband Services Limited. Government owned enterprise BSNL has tied up with Grey cell 18 Media Private Limited, to launch its online education service 'Topper Education'. Other noteworthy names in this segment include the likes of Data Wind, Merit nation, and Class teacher. Even some of the e-commerce players have expressed their willingness in this segment. Needless to say, if the e-learning/education market takes root in the country, it will definitely improve the education scenario which desperately needs a shakeup. Even the government is in strong supporter of elearning and the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (Deity) has been actively developing tools and technologies to promote it, what we need is more devices and an ecosystem. There is a need for a greater participation from the industry and stakeholders. For this to happen, the tech companies have to take the lead and help enable a strong ecosystem. We also need more applications and services to strengthen the ecosystem. The developers and content providers are going to be encouraged only when there is a plenty of devices, more importantly interest of tech companies.

Apparently, there is a huge opportunity yet to be tapped, even as infrastructure and regulation issues might be slowing down the otherwise accelerating education space in India. Digital India (DI) programme is a GoI initiative to electronically integrate the government departments and the people of India. This move aims at ensuring that government services are made available to citizens electronically. It also includes a massive plan to connect rural areas with high-speed internet networks. Digital India has three core components. These include: Digital infrastructure, Digital service delivery and Digital literacy. The project was officially launched on July 01, 2015 and is slated for completion by 2019. The scheme will be monitored and controlled by the Digital India Advisory group which will be chaired by the Ministry of Communications and IT. It will be an interministerial initiative where all ministries and departments shall offer their own services to the public Healthcare, Education, Judicial services etc. The initiative is commendable and demands full support and confidence of all stakeholders. However, it has scope for improvements regarding many crucial components like a legal framework, privacy and data protection laws, insecure Indian cyberspace, etc. So these issues will have to be managed simultaneously. But despite its shortcomings Digital India project is worth exploring and implementation and will raise India to newer heights on the international scene. The availability of high-speed internet to every citizen, easy access to government services through CSCs and allocation of private space on public cloud are some of the DI features that will revolutionize the lives of rural populations pan India. While the government's aggressive National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) is all set to be spine of the Digital India drive, spreading out of broadband connectivity is going to aid growth of e-learning. There are three components of technology-enabled modern education; Digital Content, Technology platform and delivery infrastructure, or say the Internet. But there is a scarcity of internet infrastructure. Availability of high quality wireless internet speed is still a challenge. Penetration is also an issue. A correct ecosystem can be created when we will be able to empower better quality mobile based Internet. Increasing internet footprint will also help to create the right ecosystem which can be easily achieved through 4G – LTE technology as it provides high speed data transfer, low power consumption, high security, low cost and High level of frequency re-use enabled. It can be used to meet communication needs of multiple customers within a small geographic region

can be satisfied thus making it useful to rural India where still there are issues of power supply, private telecom companies are reluctant to provide competitive services.

Why Online Education Matters in Rural Areas

Rural learners face many challenges. Online education offers simple and flexible options. It is helping students in villages take up studies at their own pace.

1. No Need to Relocate

Students do not need to leave their homes. They can complete full degrees from their place. **Parul University Online** offers many online UG and PG degree courses. These programs are UGC-approved. They hold the same value as regular degrees.

2. Study Anytime

Students choose their study hours. Some learn early in the day. Others study late at night. There is no fixed classroom time. Learning becomes part of their routine.

3. Lower Costs

Online degrees cost less. There is no travel. There is no need for hostel or food expenses. Students stay with their families and study. They save money and still get a good education.

4. Easy to Follow

Online learning platforms use simple tools. Students get recorded videos, short quizzes, and easy notes. They read and review lessons as often as they like.

5. Better Job Options

Online degrees are helping rural students get noticed. Employers are open to online graduates. Students with degrees like an **MBA** and a **BCA** get jobs in many industries. They also grow within their current roles.

Key Drivers of Online Education in Rural India

1. Government Initiatives

Programs like BharatNet aim to connect India's villages with high-speed internet, creating a robust digital infrastructure. Additionally, schemes like SWAYAM and DIKSHA provide free access to online courses and resources, empowering rural learners.

2. Affordable Technology

The proliferation of affordable smartphones and data plans has been a game-changer. Telecom companies like Jio have made high-speed internet accessible even in the remotest corners of India, enabling students

to connect to online learning platforms seamlessly.

3. Localized Content

Edtech platforms are increasingly offering courses in regional languages, catering to the diverse linguistic landscape of rural India. This localization ensures that language is no longer a barrier to quality education.

4. Public-Private Partnerships

Collaborations between government bodies and private edtech companies have further strengthened the digital learning ecosystem. Initiatives like BYJU'S partnership with the NITI Aayog to provide free tablets and learning resources to underserved students highlight the impact of such alliances.

Success Stories: Transforming Lives Through Online Education

1. Empowering Women Through Digital Literacy

In rural Bihar, initiatives like the 'Internet Saathi' program have equipped women with digital skills, enabling them to access online education. Many women have used these platforms to learn vocational skills, opening up new avenues for financial independence.

2. STEM Education in Remote Areas

Through platforms like Khan Academy and Vedantu, students in villages are now learning advanced subjects like coding, robotics, and AI. These opportunities prepare them for careers in STEM fields, breaking the cycle of limited job prospects.

3. Competitive Exam Preparation

Platforms like Unacademy and Gradeup are providing rural students with the resources to prepare for competitive exams like NEET, JEE, and UPSC. Success stories from these platforms underscore how online education is leveling the playing field for aspirants from all backgrounds.

Challenges

1. Lack of Infrastructure and hardware facilities which hamper reliability of e learning
2. Lack of policies, strategies, schemes, monitoring and control that ensure cross-sectoral and multi stakeholder involvement
3. Lack of awareness about E-learning material usage and services offered
4. Lack of citizen (user) focus in G2C2G initiatives. i.e. services which listen and change as per peoples

expectations. Products with a focus would develop a sense of "ownership" in local rural governance

5. Problem in finding willing skilled manpower to training illiterate rural areas of India.

6. No computer based courses/skills taught to students in primary schools to increase their knowledge about ICT importance in rural development

7. Lack of skills in trainer or kiosk operators

8. Community based participation (which fully understands and delivers the user needs) is not encouraged.

9. Content development is not relevant and participatory.

10. Services delivered to rural areas are not available using local language and this will affect their longterm sustenance due to low interest in their usage

11. Capabilities are not adequately transferred to end user. This prevents them from using the applications independently.

Conclusion

Development of any society depends on its access to information and the same is applicable to rural India too. E learning can work wonders in this direction and help the socially marginalized community to attain their entitlements. Launch of Digital India Programme is a welcome step in this direction. It is anticipated that with dedicated leadership, willpower and control and an integrated framework comprising of the government, technology industry and society, E-learning interventions in the rural areas will undoubtedly pave way towards sustainable growth.

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