

E-Learning: Challenges Faced by the E-Learners with Special Reference to Sibsagar District, Assam

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Abstract:

Learning is a lifelong process, and distance learning is a medium which helps in continuation of the learning process. In the past few years, E-Learning has emerged as a promising solution to distance learning and a great number of population are being benefited with it. The objectives of this study are to find out the challenges faced by the E-learners or distance learners of Sibsagar district of Assam. The survey was conducted 60 distance education learners were randomly selected from 2 distance study centres of Sibsagar district. The study shown that the distance or e-learners faced various problems such as lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate teacher or instructor, lack of digital classroom etc.

Keywords: Assam, Distance education, E-Learning, Learning, Sibsagar, Technology.

INTRODUCTION

E-Learning is Web centric education or Virtual learning. It is formed when Internet and Learning comes together. Here the pattern of learning is non-conventional where regular physical attendance and eye-to-eye contact with the instructors is not required. Learning is done at home or in workplace on learners own times a pace. In today's competitive world, people find themselves unsatisfied with their jobs and they wish for something better. Many of them wish that they could gain more job skills and make more money, but their scheduled time make this seem impossible. However, with the introduction of Distance learning, there is a shift in the learning process. Distance Learning Programme or continuing Education can bring them much relief. It includes all levels of educational acquisition and number of choices in subjects. The Internet has taken distance learning to a new level by enhancing fluency in communication and interaction between students and teachers. With the improvement in communication tools (telephone, videos, CDs,

email), the communication between teachers and students has also improved. As Internet has become

vital in every sphere of modern man's life, acquiring knowledge is much easier now than as before. Information is available on a mere 'click'. Internet is regarded as a tool which helps in exploring and finding more knowledge on any subjects. Distance learning became more famous and attractive and at reach through internet. Most of the colleges and universities have come up with online distance education. There are some schools, colleges and universities that already offer the full distance programs on the Internet. Since wide range of subjects is offered students have to choose that learning programs the one which suits them the best. With the help of this online facility classes are being conducted through online and students can submit their assignment and works through e-mails. There are five main reasons behind the growth in online learning: access, efficiency, stability, cost and technology. Rapid development of the Internet enables to introduce learning in virtual distance forms. Two types of online course access can be

identified: Open and Restricted. Open access allows virtually anyone with an Internet browser to view the course material. Restricted access is used to limit the class to registered students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objectives of the paper are.

- To find out the challenges faced by the E-learners or distance learners of Sibsagar district.
- To study personal issues of the distance learners in Sibsagar district.

METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on survey method. For the present study all the e-learners or distance learners

of IGNOU Study centre of Gargaon college and DDE Study centre under Dibrugarh university of Sibsagar district are selected for present study. The researcher selected 60 distance or E- learners as sample for data collection for this study. A structured questionnaire is constructed to collect data. The investigator personally visited the e-learning centres and meets the e-learners and gave them questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Statistical analysis techniques to be used to describe the quantitative data and tables can be used to visualize present raw data.

Table 1: The challenges faced by the e-learners

Sl.No	Queries	Response of the respondent			
		Frequencies		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Availability of the ICT infrastructure	10	50	16.67%	83.33%
2.	Adequacy of skilled instructors	8	52	13.33%	86.67%
3.	Availability of digital classroom	1	59	1.67%	98.33%
4	Use of digital library	10	50	16.67%	83.33%
5.	Availability of e-courses	20	40	33.33%	66.67%
6.	Free internet access	0	60-	0%	100%
7.	Application of blended learning/integrated learning	3	57	5%	95%
8.	Availability of incentives to use e-learning	10	50	16.67%	83.33%

Table 2: The personal issues of the e-learners

Sl. No	Queries	Responses of the respondent			
		Frequencies		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Knowledge of ICT skills	22	38	36.67%	63.33%
2.	Awareness on e-learning	25	35	41.67%	58.33
3.	Computer literacy level	22	38	36.67%	63.33%
4.	Availability of students own computers	30	30	50%	50%
5.	High cost of accessing internet	36	24	60%	40%
6.	English proficiency	20	40	33.33%	66.67%
7.	Self direction and internal motivation on e-learning	22	38	36.67%	63.33%
8.	Dependence on traditional mode of learning than e-learning	25	35	41.66%	58.33%

From the above table it is found that,

- 83.33% of the distance learner revealed that there is unavailability of ICT infrastructure and use of digital library in their study centre of Sibsagar district.
- 86.67% of the distance learners said that there are inadequate skilled instructors in the study centre.
- 98.3% of distance learners responded that there are not availability of digital classroom.
- 95% of the respondent responses that there are not facilities of free internet access.
- 33.33% of the distance learners gave positive responses on availability of e- courses and 66.67% gave negative responses.
- It is found that 36.67% of the distance learners have knowledge of ICT skills and respective 63.33% have not ICT skill.
- 36.67% of the distance learners are computer literate.
- 66.67% learners do not have proficiency in English.
- 66.67% of the learners do not have proficiency in the English language.
- 50% of the distance learners are self directed and internally motivated to e-learning.
- 58.33% of them have faith on or dependent on traditional mode of learning than e-learning.

SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the study, following suggestions are provided-

1. Undoubtedly, ICT are potentially useful both to enhance education at large and pedagogy in particular. The effectiveness integration of has multifaceted implications. It is an urgent need to train up faculty members regularly to make them compatible to the rapidly changing technology.
2. Awareness campaign on e-learning should be carried on.
3. The instructors should properly guide the e-learners to use e-library, e-courses etc.

CONCLUSION:

From this study, it is found that lack of ICT infrastructure, lack of inadequate skilled instructors, absence of digital classroom,, lack of incentives to use e-learning, high cost of accessing internet, lack of free internet access etc. are the challenges faced by the E-learners of Sibsagar district. Inclusion of learning materials in the Web has become important as the Internet and technology is taking a significant part in education in an individual's life. Numerous institutions are already active and even more are coming up yearning for a strong hold in the market. There is a rat race among institutions and each of them guarantees to provide the best programme and also promise for low cost and discount offers. One very important issue need to be pondered about in e-learning is the issue of trust, authorization, confidentially and individual responsibility. At last, we can say that, by trying to remove the challenges of e-learners we may achieve more success in regard to knowledge gaining. Students will be more motivated towards gaining knowledge through e-learning.

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