THE CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF MANAGEMENT, IT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT: IMPACT OF E-LEARNING ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract:
E-learning, one of the tools emerged from information technology, has been integrated in many university programs. The E-Learning market is still small, but rapidly growing in all segments and geographies if one trusts the forecasts. There are several factors that need to be considered while developing or implementing university curriculums that offer e-learning based courses. The educational market landscape has developed several models to produce and deliver educational products. Some have their roots in the academic sector, some in the business sector. There is a thin line between academic education and corporate training. There is a need to bridge the gap between the academic learning environment and the corporate training environment. The traditional universities are in the transformation process focusing on implementing the new learning paradigm and new ways of delivering education. The emerging universities are under the new banner like "virtual universities", corporate universities" creating a change in the education system. This paper aims at discussing the various aspects of change brought about by implementing e-learning strategy in Indian Universities. It focuses on the impact of e-learning in different perspectives i.e. the teachers' perspective, the learners' perspective and the university perspective.
Key Words: E-Learning, Information Technology, Corporate Training & Virtual Universities

1. Introduction:

Innovations in educational system include improvements in the quality of education and quality of graduates [1-2]. The quality of education can be improved by changing delivery methods and delivery channels depending on changes in students' perception and changes in technology respectively. Several studies on innovations and quality in higher education including Strategic Planning in Higher Education Institutions [3], Innovations and Best Practices can Transform Higher Education Institutions [4], quality in higher education [5-6], Internal Quality Assurance Cell and its Contribution [7], Enhancement of Graduate attributes in Higher Education Institutions through Stage Models [8], Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions [9], Effective Leadership and Governance [10], Strategy Development and Deployment in Higher Education Institutions [11], Faculty Empowerment Strategies in Higher Education Institutions [12], Unique & Successful Model in Integrated Development [13], Applying SWOC Analysis to an Institution of Higher Education [14], Techniques for Electric Energy Auditing in Education System [15], Societal Expectation And Institutional Accountability in Higher Education [16], Methods and Approaches for Employability Skill Generation in Higher Educational Institutions [17], Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions through Best Practices in Library [18], Analysis of Academic Administrative System Implemented in Higher educational institution [19], Learning through Team Centric Exercise & Key Point Pedagogy - An effective Learning Model for Slow Learners in Higher Education Training [20],

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Opportunities and Challenges for Private Universities [21], Innovations in Private Universities [22], Creating Innovators through setting up organizational Vision, Mission and Core Values : a Strategic Model in Higher Education [23], Comparative Study on MBA Programmes in Private & Public Universities [24], Impact of On-line Education on Higher Education System [25], Innovations in Higher Education - A new model implemented in MCA degree programme [26], Environmental Consciousness in Higher Educational Institutions [27], Analysis of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education [28], Innovations in Student Centric Learning – A Study of Top Business Schools [29], Innovations in Experimental Learning – A Study of World Top Business Schools [30], How to Increase Research Productivity in Higher Educational Institutions [31], Academic Support through Information System [32], and Quality Teaching and Learning as Practice Within Different Disciplinary Discourses [33], Innovative Education Model to realize Ideal Education System [34], ABCD analysis of Stage Model in Higher Education [35],) Analysis of NAAC Accreditation System using ABCD framework [36], Application of ABCD Analysis Framework on Private University System [37], The Study of New National Institutional Ranking System using ABCD Framework [38], Innovations in Experimental Learning – A Study of World Top Business Schools [39], Academic Support through Information System [40], Changing Approaches in Campus Placements - A new futuristic Model [41], Information Technology Innovations in Library Management [42], Teaching - Learning Process in Higher Education Institutions [43], Maintaining Teacher Quality in Higher Education Institutions [44], Student performance and Learning Outcomes in Higher Education Institutions [45], Catering Student Enrollment and Retaining Diversity in Higher Education Institutions [46], Student Evaluation and Reforms in Higher Education Institutions [47] are studied and published. Various learning procedures and channels are used to increase the effectiveness of learning. E-learning is one of such delivery channel which uses information communication technology as service medium.

E-leaning focuses on usage of technology in the field of education and learning. E learning refers to the use of advanced technology of information communication in the learning process where the advanced technology comprises of electronic media. Computers play a big role not only in learning but education as such. The role of computers in supporting the cause of education varies greatly. Information technology is used both as medium and tool in education. The tools that are used in e-learning can be categorized as follows:

- ✓ Problem solving tools
- ✓ Text processing tools
- ✓ Guided discovery tools
- ✓ Teaching and learning tools
- ✓ Tutorial software tools
- ✓ Drill and practice tools

2. Teachers' Perspective:

In the traditional teaching methods, it is a face-to-face session, through which the teacher delivers course material to students in the same place and at the same time. The learning method is teacher centred, where the teacher focuses on providing the learning information to the students. Assessments depend on study notes given to students by the teacher, limiting the learner's knowledge acquisition boundary. However, it is suggested that students must do more than just listen to what is said in class, such as read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems constructively.

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E-learning makes use of ICTs to support the process of learning. E-Learning can be defined as the acquisition and use of knowledge which is distributed and facilitated primarily by electronic means. Such electronic means may include internet, intranet, extranet, CD-ROM, video tape, DVD, TV, and personal organizers. E-Learning can be carried out in several ways which include computer based, asynchronous, and synchronous learning. This facilitates an environment where the learners take ownership of their learning.

Blended learning makes use of a combination of various learning methods that include face-to-face classroom activities, live e-Learning, and self-paced learning [48]. This learning method encompasses a variety of tools for simulating and maximizing the learner's learning potential. The blended learning process is equipped with a variety of methods, through which learners can acquire knowledge and improve their learning potentials. Hence, this has resulted in the adoption of this learning method in various higher education institutions of learning.

Mobile learning is defined as learning or delivery of content that is facilitated by the use of portable technologies such as mobile phone, PDAs, or iPods. The global penetration and the use of mobile technologies have created new avenues and enhancements in teaching and learning activities in higher education [49]. Currently, mobile learning presents vast benefits that facilitate and enhance e-Learning. The advancements in technology have led to a paradigm shift from traditional to personalized learning methods with varied implementation strategies and we will explore the e-Learning state-of-the-art over the past decade. The teachers should be well equipped to manage all the technology available to deliver the course content effectively to the learner.

3. Learners' Perspective:

In the current scenario, education is becoming increasingly vital in the knowledge society, resulting in new ideas within the area of learning and teaching. Furthermore, general developments in higher education, resulting from societal demands as well as an increased need for students to become autonomous, have increased the need for academics to understand the learning process [50].

There are basically two types of e-learning: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous, means "at the same time," involves interaction of participants with an instructor via the Web in real time. Asynchronous, which means "not at the same time," allows the participant to complete the Web Based Training (WBT) at his own pace, without live interaction with the instructor. A new form of learning known as blended learning is emerging. Blended learning combines e-learning tools with traditional classroom training to ensure maximum effectiveness. Students can prepare for, consolidate and recall classroom experiences online, while gaining the benefits of interaction with teachers and students via an actual or virtual classroom. Student learning and retention rates improve without sacrificing the convenience, cost-effectiveness and customization of self-paced Web-based coursework. Blended learning offers:

✓ Social benefits from classroom training, focusing on learning that gains the most from face-to-face interaction.
✓ Individualization benefits of self-paced, online learning for content that requires minimum interaction.
✓ Cost savings through minimizing the time away from the job and travel/classroom/instructor expenses.

It is apparent that the amount of knowledge learners possess has a substantial impact on their learning processes and learning styles. Students learn in different ways and the manner in which information is presented to them affects their ability to learn. Consequently, the learning style must be differentiated. In this regard, we can identify three learning styles to support students in their learning process:

- ✓ Visual learners learn best through seeing things such as images, demonstrations, facial expressions, and body language of the instructor to fully understand the content of the lesson
- ✓ Auditory learners learn best by hearing things through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say
- ✓ Tactile learners learn best through experiencing, reflecting, interacting, and doing things. These learners prefer to actively explore the physical world around them and would benefit from manipulating real objects and/or acting on them in a simulated environment.

However, learners need to utilize the different learning styles interchangeably during the learning process in order for them to have an effective learning experience.

4. University's Perspective:

E-learning has made significant changes in the higher education process. The structural changes in higher education institutions over the past decade have mainly been attributed to the introduction of technology initiatives. E-Learning has created flexible approaches to learning for learners who in the past lacked opportunities due to factors such as employment, families, lack of money, distance, and time. To this effect, technology in general has not only improved knowledge storing methods and learning techniques but has also acted as a catalyst to combat the barriers of inflexible organisational structures [51]. As a result, many higher education institutions have adopted e-Learning in their curricula.

E-Learning has transformed the traditional teaching and learning models and strategies. Inevitably, the competitiveness created by e-Learning within the higher education context implies that institutions that have not joined this education venture risk losing out [52]. The current transformations of the higher education processes have been mainly attributed to:

- ✓ The drive to join the knowledge society and knowledge based economy;
- ✓ The opportunities presented by the advances in ICTs to meet the increasing student needs at a reduced cost
- ✓ The growing demand for knowledgeable and skilled personnel in the labour market;
- ✓ Increasing numbers of on-campus students, off-campus students, and life-long learners and the "on-the-move" personnel who seek to continue with education in the workplace;
- ✓ The growing demand for alternative learning methods and availability of electronic learning resources;
- ✓ Collaborative research opportunities.

There is a paradigm shift of learning from teacher centeredness to learner centeredness that has greatly influenced the higher education learning process. Here, the teacher takes on a facilitator role while the students take ownership of their learning and personal development.

On the other hand, the adoption of e-Learning has created new educational issues for lecturers, such as the changing work patterns and in some cases the reluctant integration of technology [53]. This has been mainly attributed to the perceived

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increasing workload and the lack of skills to develop and manage an online course. Hence, teaching techniques used by lecturers in traditional courses may also have to be reviewed and modified, as they do not always prove to be effective or necessarily transferable into e-Learning environments.

5. E-Learning issues in the context of Indian Universities:

There are several issues that need to be addressed for successful implementation of e-Learning in higher education despite the advancements in technology. Some of the issues are

- ✓ Identify pedagogy for online courses – For successful implementation of e-Learning we need a two-tier training approach. The 'learning' which refers to pedagogical aspects, through which an individual learns, acquires and retains skills and information to facilitate knowledge development. The 'e' refers to technologies which communicates information to be learnt. This implies that the use of technology in itself does not cause or improve the quality of learning.
- ✓ Improve ICT skills for teachers and learners – The level of ICT skills for both teachers and learners affects the effective use of technology to support online instruction. The confidence and comfort of both the teacher and learner in using ICT reduces barriers to social interaction, administration, learner motivation, and time. Therefore, the lack of relevant skills interferes with the learning process and often causes problems for both teachers and learners.
- ✓ Use of technology – the arguments against online learning often focus on what is viewed as negative impacts from not having face-to-face contacts and anxiety caused by the nature and quantity of information transmitted through technology [54]. In this regard, reluctance of teachers in adopting e-Learning relates to their being too traditional in their teaching style, unwillingness to adopt change, or perceived increased teacher work load
- ✓ Support of Management – e-Learning initiatives require full commitment and support from management for their operation and sustainability. Successful transitions to more flexible modes of delivery require significant buy-in from senior management and a long-term commitment to support, foster, and monitor strategic change.

6. Conclusion:

There is a strong need for identifying suitable strategies for effective e-Learning implementation and a general overview of various theories for learning processes and methods were discussed here. Some recent e-Learning implementation trends and discussed e-Learning implementation aspects have been analysed. The impact of E-learning in three different viewpoints was discussed. From the emerging issues of e-Learning implementation within the higher education context, two problems emanate: 1) the limited uptake of technology as an instruction delivery method; and 2) the ineffective use of technology to support learning. In respect to this, future research should therefore seek to further investigate these aspects and to explore suitable approaches for effective implementation of e-Learning to support learning in Indian Universities.

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