E-learning and its Impact on Solapur District

Manisha Kishor Tank

Abstract

When in 1991 the World Wide Web was initiated, there was surge of interest in the possibilities of electronic learning (or e-learning). The use of the eeb as an educational medium made a large change in communities, organizations and markets. To define e-learning it is said that e-Learning is referred to as teaching and learning by using electronic media. This methodology supports the use of networking and communications technology in teaching and learning. e-Learning is generally meant for remote learning or distance learning, but can also be used in face-to-face mode. In this paper I had made study about the awareness and impact of e-Learning in Solapur district of Maharashtra which is a mainly rural area. An analysis on the collected data has been made to find the advantages of e-Learning resources and their affect on social-economic and mental development of the individuals belonging to rural areas.

Keywords: CD/DVD, e-learning, Electronic Resources, Internet, E-Learning Service Provider, Solapur

1. Introduction

E-Learning process includes computer-based, web-based, technology based learning and virtual education opportunities to distance learner. Like any learning process, e-learning depends on effective communication of human knowledge, whether this occurs in a face-to-face classroom education or across the Internet. Knowledge delivery or content delivery is with the help of Internet, intranet, audio or video tape, satellite TV, and CD-ROM, DVD and it includes media in the form of text, graphics, image, animation, video and audio. It permits us to learn at our own way or our own speed i.e. on our own time with a flexible, interactive and engaging online experience. In this process of communication, learning activities can be associated with networking and communications technology in online mode or in offline mode, synchronous as well as asynchronous, networked or standalone teaching and learning. As the use of Internet is growing day by day, E-Learning is also in growing interestingly faster. People have started using World Wide Web for accessing information via Internet. The distance education centers or private institution which were providing distance education has also started using online learning as an added activity in their distance education because E-Learning is a way of improving the accessibility of the study material, moreover, the cost of accessing information online is decreasing by the advancement in the field of information and communication technology. Students and teachers are increasingly using accessing information online to support their learning and teaching. Now a days, the trend is of composite learning, that is learning is a combination of traditional classroom learning as well as E-Learning is increased. Today single teaching learning method is not effective. The main feature of E-learning is that in E-learning the teaching learning process is student centered. In this process the learning is not take place at fixed time , in a fixed place, but can be initiated as per learners interest or at learners suitability. Thus this process provides an interest and an appropriate

environment to teaching learning process. The main feature of E-Learning is the flexibility of accessing information and resources. It refers to the access the use of information and resources at any time, at any place or at any pace according to individual's convenience. Learner is not bound with the constraints of attending the lectures on fixed time or fixed location which may be far off from his residence. Another feature is access of multimedia based resources; it means that different type of media like text, audio, video, animation, graphics, picture is supported by the network and communication technology, which makes possible the accessing of information by not only text or pictures but it also supports animations, videos, presentations, audio etc. which makes learning more interesting and effective. Moreover the information and communication technology provides us an opportunity to access, store, and distribute information in the form of text, pictures and illustrations which includes multimedia-based simulations of simple and complex processes which are cheaply and easily available. The effectiveness of e-learning also depends on establishing two-way communication between teachers and learners, and among learners themselves.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the necessity of E-learning.

2. To know the availability of E-learning service providers.

3. To know the subjects in which E-learning service is provided.

4. To find out its impact on the users.

3. Scope of the Study

The study is focused on the E-learning service providers in Solapur district of Maharashtra state.

4. The Sample Collection

For the purpose of sample collection for E-learning providers I have considered Solapur district of Maharashtra. A major district in south Maharashtra having mostly rural area. The district has eleven talukas. The information is collected from different sources available. There are maximum ten E-resource providers.

5. Methodology

A survey method is used to gather the data necessary. The received information is then tabulated and analyzed and interpreted.

6. Observations and Discussion

6.1 Necessity of E-learning

In this digital era students take formal education in the classroom but to cope with the pace with drastically changing educational this classroom type of education will not fulfill their requirement. So to bridge the gap between the changing technology and formal school or college education distance learning or E-learning plays a vital role. As in formal education the syllabus is designed by educationalist and is same for all students besides their capabilities and requirement. The framework in formal education is fixed; student

cannot take the subject as per his or her necessity or liking. Also the time and space is fixed; student should go to the classroom at a fixed time in a fixed place. But some learner finds it difficult. In this case E-learning plays a important role. Anybody at any age, at any time, at any place can study with E-learning resources. Thus time and space doesn't become a constraint.

6.2   E-learning Service Providers

In the information collection of E-learning providers the survey is carried out in all eleven talukas of Solapur district, the all eleven talukas are listed in table 1. The maximum number of E-learning providers are ten; ranging from 04 in Madha taluka to 10 in North Solapur. The surveyed providers identified include public bodies, private companies and NGO's. Overall the private sector dominates providing 78%, but this proportion differs from taluka to taluka.

Table.1 E-learning Providers

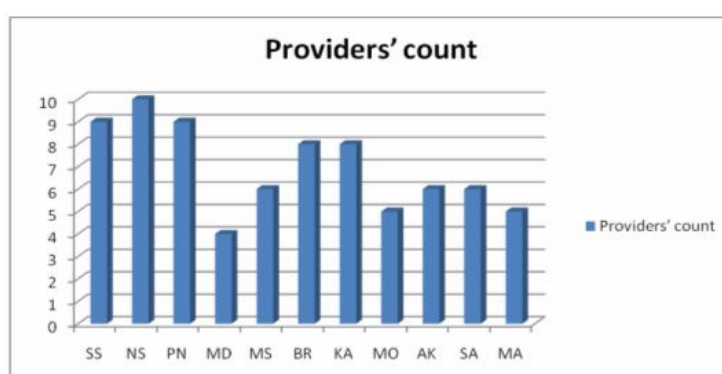| Sr. No.	Taluka name	Abbrevation	Providers' count
1.	South Solapur	SS	09
2.	North Solapur	NS	10
3.	Pandharpur	PN	09
4.	Madha	MD	04
5.	Malshiras	MS	06
6.	Barshi	BR	08
7.	Karmala	KA	08
8.	Mohol	MO	05
9.	Akkalkoat	AK	06
10.	Sangola	SA	06
11.	Mangalwedha	MA	05

Figure 1:The percentage of providers is shown in the

6.3 Organization of Service Providers

Most of the E-Learning providers (70 %) are new organizations, started before five years, there are seven service providers providing E-learning solutions to the community. Among these three E-learning providers are just started in the last year only. In terms of employment size of providers, as indicated by the number of faculties employed, the sample includes small, medium and large organizations, half of which employ 10 to 15 faculties and only one employ over 25 faculties, four providers employ 8 or less E-Learning faculties, The number of E-Learning students provides also an indication of the size of E-Learning activity of providers; e-students range up to 800, with a mean value of 520 and minimum of 120 students are acquiring E-learning. All providers are having minimum 120 students. The proportion of E-Learning faculties within the overall teaching staff provides an indication of the strength of the E-Learning activities in the organization. This, coupled with the proportion of the E-Learning packages offered within the overall education output of the organization underpins the specialization of the provider in E-Learning. The findings suggest that a relatively small proportion of the surveyed organizations are specialized E-Learning providers, delivering over 80% of their output wholly or partly through E-Learning. Specialized providers tend to be private organizations or NGOs that teaches large numbers of students with large student per teacher ratio.

As this is a very new concept in education, the major service providing companies are very young or recently established. When I studied their establishment date most of the E-learning providers are very young just as 71% established in last five years. Some service providers have started in last two years. As almost all service providers are private, also running government under taking and approved courses. Organizations are classified as per number of faculties employed in it as small, medium and large.

Table 2: Faculties in the Organization

Sr. No.	Type of Co.	No. of companies	No. of Faculties
1.	Small	2	6
2.	Medium	5	15
3.	Large	3	25

Thus small organizations have less than or equal to 06 employs, medium organizations have 6 to 15 faculties and large organizations have 25 faculties. There are two small organizations, five medium organizations and three large organizations.
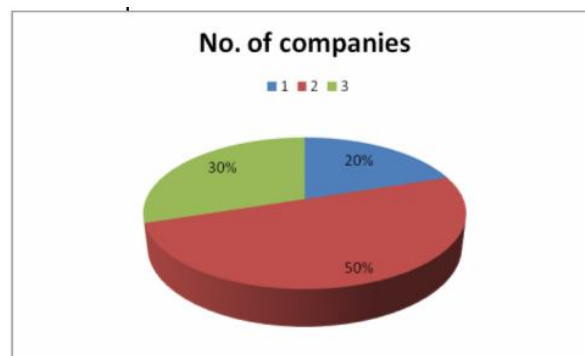

Figure 2: Faculties in Organization

6.4 Details of Services

Regarding content of E-Learning delivered by the service providers, use of IT and fundamentals of computer (Microsoft office), Languages, preparations of all kinds of competitive examinations and technical subjects are most popular. 100% organizations provides basic e-learning courses across all talukas, while technical subjects and expertise courses are offered by only 12% of providers, and as expected, these providers are amongst those with a stated orientation towards rural areas. Business management and services are also popular enough amongst providers, offered by 22-30% of the total sample. Overall, all types of subjects are covered in all talukas, offering a good measure of choice to progressive learners.

Table 3: Subjects Offered

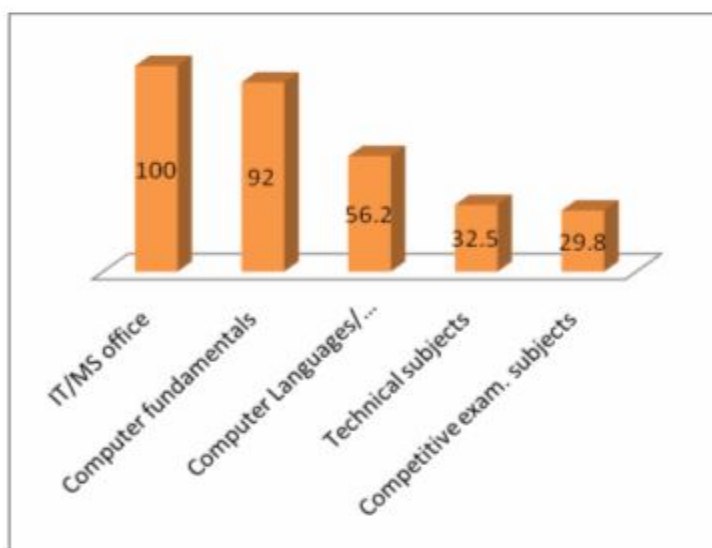| Sr.No.	Subjects offered	Percentage
1.	IT/MS office	100
2.	Computer fundamentals	92
3.	Computer Languages/ Softwares	56.2
4.	Technical subjects	32.5
5.	Competitive exam. subjects	29.8

Figure 3: Subjects Offered

6.5 Content Delivery Tools Used

The most popular delivery method is the E-Learning platform (88% of providers) followed by websites, DVDs, CDs and Video. Mobile phones, i-phones and tablets are used only by a very small minority of providers (55%). The learning tools used also show a preference for more conventional instruments, with very high proportions of providers using text reading and power-point presentations, followed by animated

content, videos and email attachments. Game based learning and role based learning are used only by around one in four providers or less.

Table 4: Content Delivery Tools

Sr.No.	Type	Delivery tool used	Percentage
1.	Website	88	41
2.	CD/ DVD	50	23
3.	Mobile phone, i-phone ,i-pad	55	25
4.	Game based learning	24	11

Figure 4: Content Delivery Tools

6.6   Age Group of Learners

As this is a very new technology, it is mainly used by new generation. Most of the students from age group up to 25 mainly uses E-learning as a tool for their study. In this survey I found that 33.8 % of the students upto age 15 years, that the school going student uses E-learning resources for their study. While 80% of the students perusing higher education having age group between 15-25 years uses E-learning. The 41 % persons between age group 25 to 40 uses E-learning. Also it is found only 8 % of users above 40 actually use E-learning resources.

Table 5: Age Group of using E-learning.

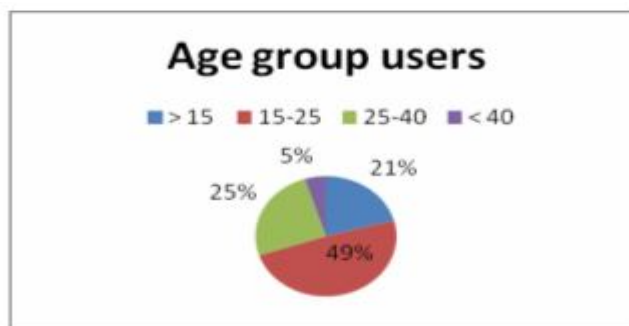| Sr.No.	Age group	% users
1.	> 15	33.8
2.	15-25	80
4.	25-40	41
5.	< 40	8

Figure 5: Age Group of using E-learning.

6.7 Gender Wise Analysis

In gender wise study it has been noted that the boys are most techno savvy than girls, as 68% of boys uses E-learning resources while only 32% of girls uses E-learning resources for their study.

Table.6 Gender Wise Analysis

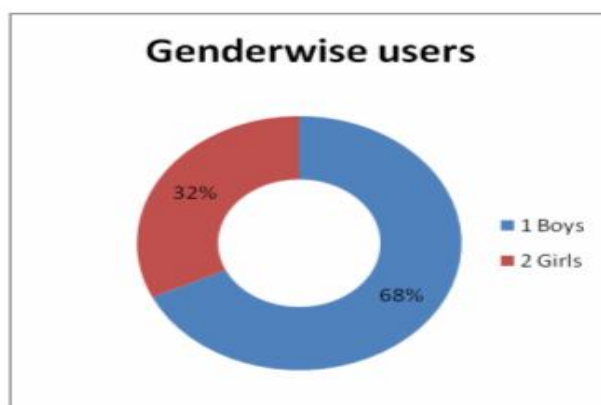| Sr. No.	Gender	% users
1.	Boys	68
2.	Girls	32

Figure 6: Gender Wise Analysis

7. Impact of E-learning

In near future application of E-learning is predominantly the application of educational techniques that we already know fairly well but must improve, adapt and exploit. This will give equitability of distribution of educational opportunity. As for every learner it is not possible to take formal education all the time, of all the subjects. Thus E-learning will provide an opportunity to every learner to take on his studies as per his requirement at any time at any place with his or her own pace.

8. Problems and Success Factor

Problem associated with delivering E-learning to the taluka levels of Solapur district observed by service providers are lack of infrastructure, lack of communication skill, hardware maintenance and fast and uninterrupted internet connectivity. The major problem besides this is lack of electricity supply.

To make the E-learning successful the critical factor is, development of required learning material as per the need of learner. The training of staff who design and develop the E-resources plays a vital role which affects the quality. The willing full and self confident learner is must for the success of the process. Due to the provision and availability E-learning the learner from these distant places can get good knowledge of computer literacy, be expert in communication skill and can have required expertise to become employable. It is found that after the induction of E-learning the employability is increased in this area.

9. Findings

In the survey the learners from different age and gender group, different socio-economical background, with different requirements are been studied. Finally it is been measured in terms of satisfaction about the types of services provided, benefits they get and their further expectations.

Overall 74.6% learner said that they learnt as per their requirement, while 25.4% doesn't satisfied as shown in figure 7.

Figure7: Satisfaction about E-learning

Overall, it is observed that E-Learning is considered by a large number of E-Learners as an investment for the future. Also, the fact that a large proportion of respondents, who have reported the development of a personal interest, as a real benefits is very encouraging for future. It is also interesting to compare the benefits achieved to the initial expectations of learners, before they started the training course, as reported by them. job-related expectations were much higher than the benefits achieved; while the cultivation of a personal interest featured a little higher in benefits as it did in expectations.

Expectations from Learning: However, despite the gap between the expectations and the achieved job-related benefits, an amazing 93% of E-Learners declared that they would be willing to participate again in E-

Learning in the future, implying that the experience of being E-Learners was a very positive one. The variation between the different talukas is minimal in this respect.

10.   Conclusion

E-Learning is found to be highly emerging knowledge tool today. It has wide scope in developed as well as in developing areas. The areas which are undeveloped and not so educated can get benefitted by E-Learning. E-Learning provides a method of delivering knowledgeable contents through CD, DVD, multimedia, internet and other tools. The main constraint identified in this process is availability of uninterrupted power supply, proper internet bandwidth, good communication skills and willingness of E-Learners. Overall, 74.6% providers found E-Learning is beneficial to rural learners for knowledge, better job opportunities, and promotions and to learn new developing technologies in the market. Specially focusing towards rural areas it helps in developing people's educational qualifications, social status and technical ability. Also some negative consequences are also observed in progression of E-Learning in rural areas because of lack of awareness, unwillingness, illiteracy and lack of proper infrastructure, yet it has a broad scope in near future and I believe that it will definitely help these beneficiaries to fill the gap between educated developed cities and rural undeveloped areas.

References

1.   Shiva Kanaujia, N R Satyanarayana,(2004) "E-Education in India: Pace of Learning on a Hi-Tech Path", 2nd International CALIBER, New Delhi, 11-13 February.

2.   Naidu, S. & Oliver, M. (v) Computer supported collaborative problem-based learning (CSC-PBL): Aninstructional design architecture for virtual learning in nursing education. Journal of Distance Education, XI(2), 1-22. Nilay M.Yajnik, "E-Learning Technologies for Rural India", http://www.cdac.ernet.in/html/pdf/ Session2.3.pdf

3.   Chen Xin,(2009) "E-Learning Applications and Challenges", IEEExplore, pp 580-583.

4.   Crane,Beverly E.(2009) "Using Web 2.0 Tools in the K-12 Classroom". Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.

5.   Manprit Kaur , "Using Online Forums in Language Learning and Education". StudentPulse.com. http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/414/using-online-forums-in-language-learning-and-education. Retrieved on 2012-08-22.

About Author

Mrs. Manisha Kishor Tank, Librarian, Laxmibai Bhaurao Patil Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Solapur
E-mail: manishatank11@gmail.com