

Chapter 23

Status and Quality of E-Learning in Context of Indian Universities: Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The educational system at all levels in India had been criticized for a long time for lagging behind modern and western education resulting in calls for improvement and transformation. The Internet applications such as E-learning are being considered by many educationists and experts as an opportunity knock at doors of Indian education system to leverage change and reform. Many Universities in India have adopted Learning Management System for E-learning purpose that has been identified as the most acceptable and a foreseen Tool present to tame various challenges in education. In this chapter, the status and quality of E-learning in Indian Universities has been discussed to fill the void in the literature on this particular topic. Therefore, the first objective of this study is to discuss the current Status and present an analytical overview of Learning Management System in Indian Universities. The second objective of this study is to evaluate Learning Management System by collecting facts about its diffusion, acceptance and its use in Indian Universities.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the printing press, the telephone, the radio, the television, the microchip marks the renaissance as far as communication of information is concerned. The world then and now is altogether different because of technological transformations. All around the Globe, the Internet (World Wide Web or WWW) is changing the way people used to do things and allowing them to do things they could not

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have imagined doing before. The Internet is transforming the way people access information, across physical distance with an immediacy and breadth that were impossible less than a generation ago. Due to the rapid extension of Internet technologies and its extensive variety of uses, its inclusion in education has become a viable and inexpensive option. Its impact can be seen on Indian education system also which is undergoing a transition from a conventional model to one where technology plays a vital role to advance higher education by using information technology efficiently and intelligently. During the last decade, Learning Management System has brought an unseen revolution in Universities all around the world. However, these learning technology tools have not yet transformed Indian education system, although many Institutions have put in place learning technology tools (LMS) for E-learning. But Indian educational system is still lagging behind in introducing technology LMS into the curriculum in order to reform and improve their educational set-up. The impact of information technology developments in Indian Universities is still not very well understood, because E-learning technology has run well, ahead of theory. As a result, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Worldwide Web presents a challenge to the conventional or formal system of education in India. Indian Educational system at all levels for a very long time has been criticized for lagging behind the western system of education ensuing in reform and improvement. Internet applications such as E-learning are considered as an opportunity for improvement that should be seized by Indian education sector to leverage change and reform. Internet applications are being viewed as the main catalyst for the transformations in society and are recognized for their far-reaching impact on all walks of life including education.

E-learning Strategy Task Force (2002) U.K. defines 'E-learning' as:

E-learning is relatively a new tool with the potential to radically improve participation and achievement rates in education. Benefits include; the ability to customize learning to the needs of an individual and the flexibility to permit the individual to learn at their own pace, in their own time frame and from their physical location that suits them best.

E-learning is basically a multifaceted phenomenon in which the Computer, the Internet, modern devices, electronic media, and other digital technologies are used to produce learning opportunities for educating people. It is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and educational technology tools like Learning Management System in education to access educational programs outside of a traditional classroom. E-learning may either be synchronous or asynchronous i.e. it can occur in or out of the classroom. E-learning can be self-paced (asynchronous learning) where there is no dependency among participants involvement at the same time or may be instructor-led (synchronous learning) in which learning occurs in real-time where all participants are present (Adzharuddin,2013, Wiki,2015). Courses in E-learning may be of different kinds:

- **Conventional Course with Integrated Technology:** Course will be traditional in nature along with the use of technology in terms of simulations, online testing, activities on the web, virtual labs, etc.
- **Online Courses:** For such courses, there is no need for Face-to-face communications and meetings between learner and instructor and majority of such courses will be taught online.
- **Hybrid Courses:** In such courses traditional as well as online elements are combined by the instructor and are also known as the blended mode of learning.

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