

Chapter 7

Opportunities and Challenges of E-Learning in South Asia: An Analytical Study of India as an Emerging Market

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ABSTRACT

Education in Asia has been considered as a source of utmost precedence and opportunity for socio-economic development in every stratum of society. The inexorable approach has given birth to an instructive plethora that is impracticable for the conventional system to cover. The initiation of education over the Internet appeared as an elucidation, but the same has been unable to completely eradicate the dual competencies of accentuating needs and quickly transforming didactic matter. The present technological advancement in terms of learning has made a huge impact on convenience, suitability, affordability, and profusion; however, it lacks in certain crucial areas. This study aims to contemplate about the prospects and obstacles faced by the South Asian countries with special reference to India. It also examines the relevance and expansion of e-learning during the moment of COVID-19 when physical interaction is strictly avoided.

INTRODUCTION

The progressive nations are having a tough time in manufacturing hardware, as it is now available at low-cost and an enormous amount of good quality computers that has advanced settings are imported to developing and underdeveloped countries and are sold at economical rates. Therefore, the accessibility of hardware is not considered as a big deal in the progressive world. Likewise, software is also obtainable not through customary medium but piracy and had led to the foundation of Web 2.0 and FOSS (Free and Open Source Software). It is increasingly getting excessively inexpensive for the growing nations to benefit from the cost-effective software that has an online availability and are appearing in an assort-

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ment to fulfill various principles of applications related to teaching, erudition and role of the government (Kundi & Nawaz, 2010). E-learning in Asia is at a vital juncture. It needs to shape itself either depending on the endowments of western culture that will necessitate augmented venture in e-learning process or it should contribute in exploring inventive approaches and interfaces that will be highly appropriate for the learners of a particular nation. Dependence on the e-learning plan is not seen to be suitable option for the Asian education system. Two of the most advanced nations, Korea and China, have consequently stated that the execution of education fueled by the Internet is overburdened with tribulations. For instance, scarcity of adequate course examination; feeble feedback system to students, inappropriate teaching structure, reduced training facilities for educators, shortage of indispensable technology; deficiency of Internet availability, dearth of online resources, increased costs and low reliability of online programs (Baggaley & Belawati, 2007).

Internet based learning is a method where knowledge inhalation or attainment of skills within the boundaries information communication technologies (ICTs) or digital media. There was a clear line of distinction between education and learning. According to Jarvis (2000) education is community-oriented and is offered in both public and private sectors, whereas learning is more customized and deals with individual orientation. Education is structured to cater to particular edification prospects and is institutionalized in governmental and private form. However, both personal and communal institutional settings focus on the skills that are required to battle with the societal needs and be effectual in the universal organizations and to remain spirited in world marketplace.

There has been an extensive elucidation of learning in a general way and it includes e-learning, particularly. There has been an intensive exploration of the function of culture in the ambience of online education and the concentration on its allusions of the global workplaces. The notion of embracing the learning process with the transforming technicalities in the rapidly changing political and financial market in the groundwork of laborers for corporate citizenship, with the tinge of individual and societal advancement is supportive and can be clinched upon the same. There is no end to e-learning without a deep analysis at the dimensions of education among which e-learning is going to take place (Tozer, Violas and Senese, 2004; Agnello and Deleon, 2003; Hargreaves, 2003).

If the so-called progressed nations situated in Asia are not capable enough to execute e-learning in different sectors, than there is very less expectations from the developing and under-developed ones. Some of the rising financial markets consider it a major discrepancy while some progressing countries treats Internet based learning as an inappropriate necessity, however, mobile learning techniques, particularly the ones that has the involvement of cell phones for both official and casual acquirement of skills, is an assuring approach for them. The specific technology is inexpensive and people can easily identify its operations. With adequate instructional intend, it assures intuitive prospects with an enlarged variance for students, fulfilling the hiatus of time and place constituent of e-learning for millions of apprentices (Motlik, 2008).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a chief contributor to the system of distance learning in Asia. Additionally, four Asian nations, namely China, Japan, India, and Korea are first among the top 10 countries to have the highest number of Internet users. With the advancement of ICT in the arena, distance learning in Asia has accepted the system to assist added approach of education and more significantly as mode of amending the services provided to learners and offering enhanced communication. The aforementioned statements protrudes that Open and Distance learning (ODL) organizations and traditional educational institutions have begun with complete Internet based courses and modern implicit universities operating through virtual means has been instituted.

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