



Researchers' Perspective on E-Learning in India: A Case Study on Churu

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Abstract

Technology is becoming an increasingly significant aspect of teaching-learning process all around the world. It is widely recognized that new technology is impacting students and researchers up to greater extent. Researchers, in particular, are using technology to develop their abilities and knowledge. E-learning is a platform where skills and knowledge are passed on through computers, laptops, mobiles and a network. At present, e-learning tools and procedures are helping a number of researchers to easily pursue their research work and to learn new things too. With the help of CD-ROM, DVD, a satellite TV set, and Internet, the researchers are getting contents easily. Thus, this particular work has following objectives: first, to critically scrutinize researchers' perspective on e-learning in India; to find out whether e-learning generate scope to learn new things at affordable price for everyone or not; to assess how e-learning aiding the researchers to easily conduct their research works; to find out whether they are aware of with the government initiatives for promoting e-learning or not. Therefore, to do so, the work has conducted a survey on researchers in the Churu district of Rajasthan, India. For conducting the study, quantitative method of research has been used which is analytical and exploratory in nature. The respondents were asked questions based on the questionnaire only which included both open- and closed- ended questions. The work found that majority of researchers support e-learning initiatives in India and agrees that e-learning is providing new dimensions for learning and making education easier, and affordable for everyone.

Keywords: *e-learning, government initiatives, research, researchers, technology.*

Introduction

Electronic learning is referred to as e-learning (Khanchandani, Kumar & Kumar 2015). At present, e-learning shows a dramatic shift in the way of human being's learning process from the



chalkboard system to its contemporary digital form([Horton 2000](#)).Now, electronic communications and the use of computers have lowered spatial and temporal boundaries, allowing information to be gathered and distributed whenever and wherever it is needed. The rise of e-learning demonstrates a novel trend in innovative and progressive education and its alteration([Gunasekaran et al. 2002](#)). Thus, e-learning that kind of education which is blended from of traditional classroom teaching-learning method with the use of electrical information resources. While education can take place in or outside of the classroom, e-learning is chiefly dependent on computers and internet. E-learning is an internet-based transmission of skills and expertise in which majority of people are educated at the same time or distinct periods. Earlier it was overlooked as it was assumed that this method missed the necessary human factor of education. But, at present, this perception has changed and now, e-learning has become a significant aspect of learning anything.

E-learning is providing various opportunities to many people to develop their abilities, and skills, and obtain degrees without even going to schools, colleges, or universities. It has been estimated that there are many students who have to drop out from schools and colleges because of their financial issues. In this scenario, E-learning provides them a platform through various online courses to pursue their studies and fulfil their dreams. For E-learning, financial weak students don't need to pay hefty tuition fee levied by schools, colleges, or universities (Taslimi 2015), they just need a speedy internet connection along with an account with a Learning Management System. After that they can access a number of life-changing courses as per their interests. And these online courses wouldn't take much time to transform an individual's living room into his/her classroom (*ibid*).

In India, open and distance learning dates back to mid-1960s(Kawatra & Singh 2006), when the University Grant Commission (UGC) was established in 1956. And since then, Indian Government is taking various measures and initiate plans to inculcate education to its people. For instance, Indira Gandhi Open University (IGNOU) was founded in the year 1985 to promote mass education. IGNOU started telecasting educational programs from 1991, for distance learners on Doordarshan(Vyas, Sharma, & Kumar 2002). After that in September 2004, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched a communication satellite, known as EDUSAT (GSAT-3), especially dedicated to education sector only. This satellite is primarily designed to meet the need of



country's distance learners(Khanchandar, Kumar, & Kumar 2015).Consortium for Education Commission (CEC) is one of the major primary users of EDUSAT(Gupta 2014).Further, in June 2005, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was founded to provide India a leading edge in education. Then after, the Government of India (GoI) announced the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT) in February 2009, to encourage technology-driven education, during its 11th Five Year Plan. Another initiative was undertaken by the GoI in 2014,with the announcement of National Mission on Libraries (NML)to carry out the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission(Khanchandani, Kumar, & Kumar 2015).Moreover, there are other major projects too like, IGNOU online, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL); Sakshat; e-PG Pathshala;Education Broadcast and Virtual Classrooms;Gyandarshan Educational Channel;SOL e-learning Gateways;Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC); Institute of Life Long Learning (ILLL); Vidya Mitra; SWAYAM and etc. (Jayaprakash & Venkatramana 2006).

Thus, this work deals with these research question: first, to critically analyse researchers' opinion on e-learning. Second,to find whether the researchers recognize the significance of e-learning or not. Third, to analyse how this process of learning helping them in conducting their research. And last, to find out whether they are aware of with the government initiatives for promoting e-learning or not?

Methodology

In this study the quantitative method of research has been used. The objective of adopting a quantitative method is to collect numerical data from respondents through questionnaire, based on their set of options. This method helps tounderstand researcher's perspective on e-learning in India.The constructed questionnaire includes both open- and closed ended questions, and is used to analyse respondents' understanding of e-learning and its significance for them. The first part of the questionnaire consists of respondents' personal queries. And the second part includes questions to make the respondents to open up about themselves and give more explanations and narratives about e-learning initiatives in India.The survey has total 100 respondents including researchers (both male and female)of colleges and universities of Churu. After collecting the entire data from

the questionnaire, it has been quantitatively analyzed, summarized, and then after shown in tables, lists, and graphs.

Result and Discussion

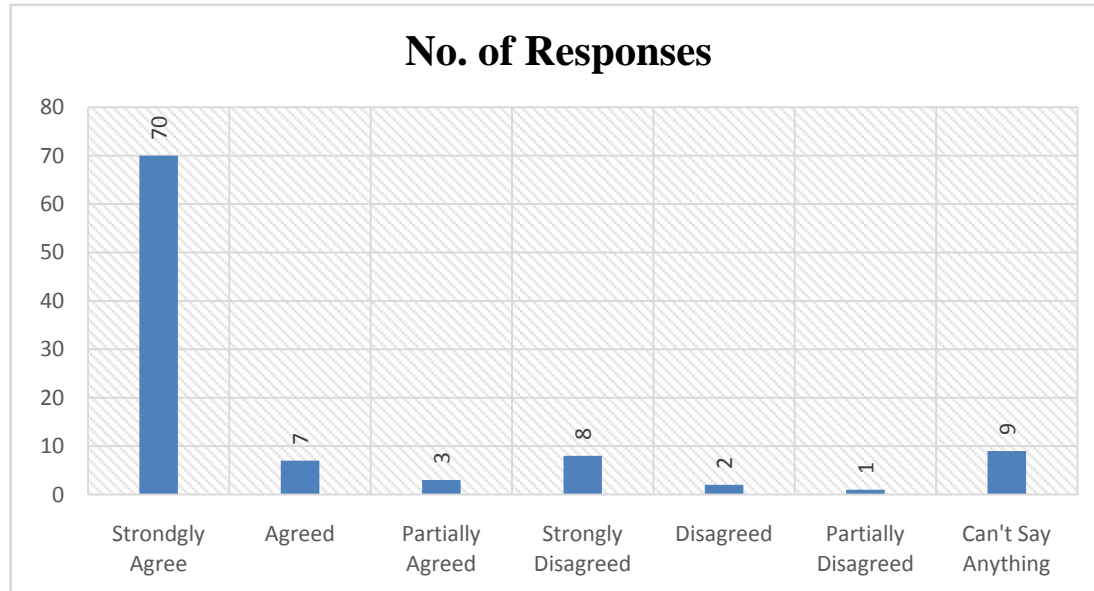
As per Table 1, the majority of respondents (92 out of 100) agrees that they are in favour of e-learning and they do recognize the significance of e-learning in today's digital world. Though the survey recorded 5 responses against the emergence of e-learning, whereas 3 respondents said that they can't anything on this.

Table 1: Responses of Researchers on the Emergence and Increasing Significance of E-learning

Response Question	Yes	No	Can't Say
Do you recognize the emergence and significance of e-learning?	92	5	3

When asked that whether e-learning is making their research work easier to pursue or not? The survey recorded majority of responses (70) for the option "strongly agreed", 7 for "agreed", 3 for "partially agreed". Whereas, the survey recorded 8 responses for "disagree", 2 for "partially disagree" and 10 responses for "can't say anything" (see Figure 1 for details).

Figure 1: Responses on E-learning making Researchers' Work Easier or Not



Moreover, when the respondents were asked whether they are aware of with the government initiatives for promoting e-learning or not? The survey found that maximum number of researchers(55) agreed that they know about Government of India initiatives but not all of them. Additionally, the survey recorded that only 13 respondents know about almost all government measures to promote e-learning. Moreover, 15 researchers agreed they don't really know about this. Further, the survey recorded 6 responses for no idea option and it found 11 blank responses (for details see Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2: Responses for GoI initiatives for promoting e-learning

Response Question	“Yes” (almost all)	(“Yes”, but not all)	“Not Really”	“No Idea”
Are you aware of with GoI initiatives for promoting e-learning?	13	55	15	6

Diagram 2: Diagrammatic Presentation of Table 2 (in percentage)

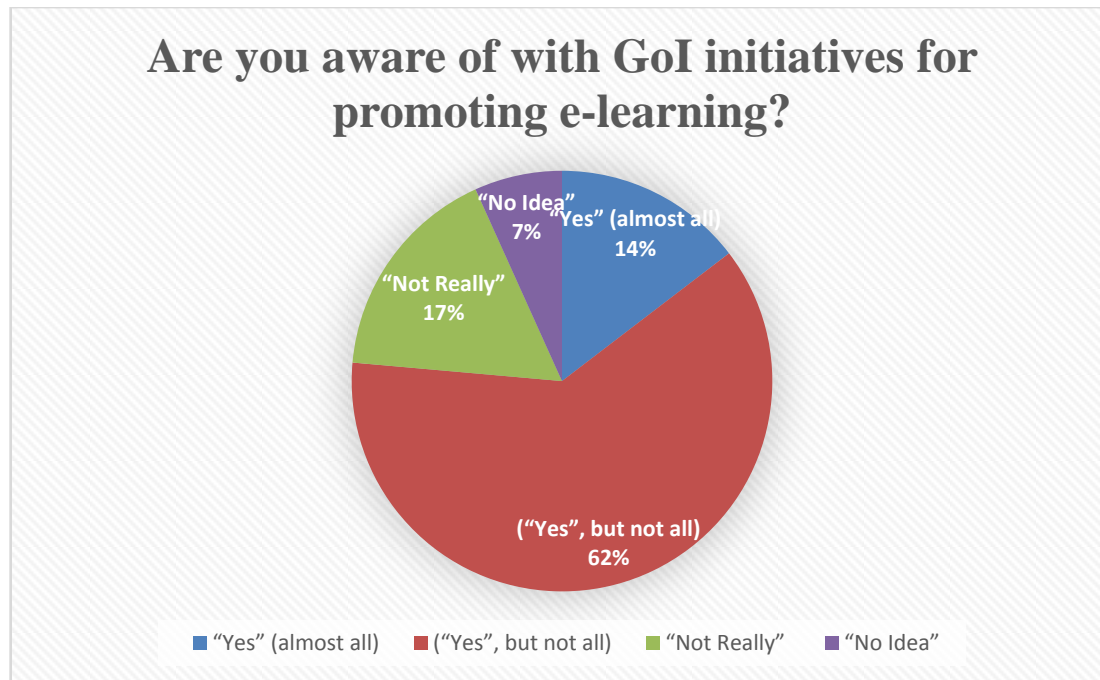
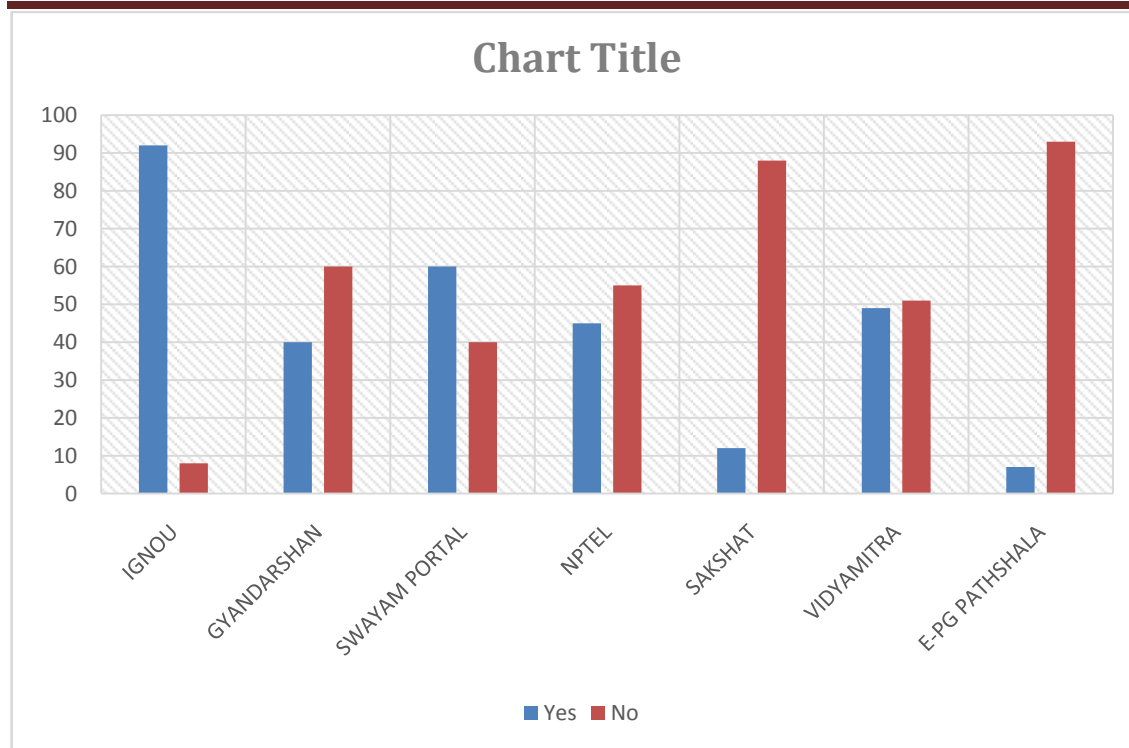


Figure 2 is a diagrammatic presentation of Table 2, which represents respondents' responses in percentage. The diagram demonstrates that the survey found only 14 percent of researchers who knows about almost all of the government measures to promote e-learning. Whereas, 62 respondents are a bit aware of with these initiative and 17 percent agreed that they not really aware of with these initiatives. Moreover, the survey recorded 7 percent responses for no idea and received 12 blank responses.

Moreover, when the respondents were asked to tick the educational portal, they are aware of, the survey recorded that maximum respondents know about IGNOU and SWYAM Portal only. The survey found that majority of them doesn't know anything about e-PG Pathshala and Sakshat (for details see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Responses for Awareness of Various Educational Portals



Conclusion

The findings of this work demonstrated that majority of researchers recognized the emergence and significance of e-learning in present scenario and they agreed that in the upcoming years e-learning is going to flourish more or more. This work found that majority of respondents agreed that they are finding it easier to pursue their research work with the help of e-learning. But simultaneously, the survey also found that there are still more efforts have to be taken from the government side to advertise their e-learning initiatives. Because majority of respondents only know about IGNOU, SWAYAM, and NPTEL educational portals. These findings show that there is no doubt that e-learning is aiding researchers for pursuing their research works in easier manner. But still, there is more measures need to be taken from the government side so that majority of mass can be aware of with government initiatives for stimulating e-learning.

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