THE ACCEPTANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH MOBILE LEARNING (M-LEARNING) IN MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to conduct an analytical research based on the fact and figures obtained from various authentic sources to find the importance, acceptance and effectiveness of Mobile-learning (M-learning) by the established and emerging educational institutions in Madhya Pradesh. The expected mutual benefit of this research could be the availability of students of remote and rural areas at large to the institutes and the availability of higher education to the students of rural and remote areas in their hands with greater flexibility of place and time for their learning.

KEYWORDS: M-learning, E-learning, Distance Learning, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile learning is the concept of education and training on PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants)/palmtops/handhelds, Smart phones, Tablets and mobile phones.

The justification of mobile learning comes from the 'law' of distance education research which states that, 'It is not technologies with inherent pedagogical qualities that are successful in distance education, but technologies that are generally available to citizens.'

– Desmond Keegan, Mobile Learning: A Practical Guide

"Clark Quinn, professor, author, and expert in computer-based education, defined mobile learning as the intersection of mobile computing (the application of small, portable, and wireless computing and communication devices) and e-learning (learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology). He predicted that mobile learning would one day provide learning that was truly independent of time and place and facilitated by portable computers capable of providing rich interactivity, total connectivity, and powerful processing."

Other modes of providing Education which most of the universities and institutions may adopt are as under;

- Formal Face-to-face- Education
- Distance Education or Distance Learning
- E-Learning

Face-to-face education is a method of teaching or instructing many learners together in a classroom by an individual teacher or instructor. This method is still being adopted as the standard method of teaching in most educational institutions. In this method, the instructor makes attempts to satisfy as many learners as possible in a

class. The levels of understanding and grasping may vary for different learners in a classroom. The effectiveness of teaching depends on the qualification and experience of individual teacher.

Distance education or **distance learning** is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom. It has been described as "a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both.

E-learning comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. The information and communication systems, serve as specific media to implement the learning process. The term refers to both out-of-classroom and in-classroom educational experiences using technology.

Facts and Figures

Mobile phones have become very commonly in used by almost 750 million Indian people today. Also, mobiles phones with advanced technology are available in the market and those are equipped with many features and applications. After using Computers, Laptops, Palmtops etc., now mobile phones are being used as a great tool for going online any time anywhere by applying wireless mobile technology. Anyone can access any information at any location anytime.

“India is expected to have close to 165 million mobile internet users by March 2015 (rpt), up from 87.1 million in December 2012 as more people are accessing the web through mobile devices and dongles, a report by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and IMRB(The Times of India 2 Jan 2013).”

The percentage of people who have mobile phones or telephones is 46% in India. Further analysis of the data suggests that 36.4% rural population have telephones while in the urban areas 73.9% population has access to it. The mobile phone users in Madhya Pradesh are 33,135,968 (figures till 2012).

In India and with special attention to Madhya Pradesh, A huge mass of rural children are still illiterate and uneducated because of unavailability of sufficient formal educational institutions. These rural children constitute around 30% of the population of young generation of M.P.

The literacy rate of Madhya Pradesh as per the 2011 Census is 70%. This is an urgent need to provide education to these 30% population of rural Madhya Pradesh so that the state can become a strong competitor to the states with higher percentage of education and literacy such as Kerala (Literacy rate 93.9%, 2011 Census) and Mizoram (Literacy rate 91.6%, 2011 Census), and subsequently can contribute to its best to the Indian Economy by producing more skilled and efficient man power in the country. Various researches have been conducted and several are going on to find out that how the technological advancements can be utilized in the field of education to make the education system more perfect and within the reach of every member of the society.

The Educational institutions of all kinds in Madhya Pradesh can adopt the M-Learning facilities to provide higher education at far-reaching rural areas where the formal or distance mode of learning is not available to the rural mass.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Technology

- Mobile phone/ Smart Phones
- Tablet PCs (Aakash)
- Pocket PC/ PDA
- Portable keyboard/ Mouse/ Printer
- Wireless Broadband
- Related Software

Observations: Both On-campus and Off-Campus observations have been conducted to identify and analyze the learning behavior of the target individuals. The learning people in rural areas of Madhya Pradesh are not getting sufficient availability of educational institutions to continue their higher education. Other reasons of disturbing nature for rural learning mass of individuals are their involvement in work for earning to fulfill the basic needs of their families and this earning is about 70% based on agriculture. The agriculture people hardly get time for study in formal mode.

M-learning is very convenient in terms of accessibility without any obstacle of place and time. The reducing cost of the mobile communication technology is comparatively a good motivational factor to adopt M-Learning instead of establishing new educational institutions of higher learning which requires a heavy financial investment for the development of their infrastructure and other requisites. The functionality and operations of the required and available mobile learning instruments is very easy to learn and it does not require a very sharp technical knowledge and skill to understand the way how these instruments work. Therefore, the learners of non-technical courses of study would also be very comfortable with a little effort to utilize them for their learning objectives. M-learning will also be able to provide the contents of syllabus for a particular course of study in electronic form which is easily accessible, available and manageable without being worried about the time and space.

CONCLUSION

The expected outcome of the research would be the ways of adopting and applying M-Learning technology and techniques to provide higher education to the rural mass of Madhya Pradesh along with some methods that how this technology would further be implemented in replacing the formal education system with the informal one. It’s a high time to think about taking the initiative for adopting the technology based education and learning system so that the ever challenging requirements of a huge group of learners of the remote areas in Madhya Pradesh can be met.

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