WORLD WIDE JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Krishna Kundu
Assistant Professor in
Education, Kalinagar
Mahavidyalaya
Kalinagar, North 24 Parganas,
West Bengal, India.

Dr. Kushal De
Assistant Professor in
Commerce, Dhruba Chand
Halder College
Dakshin Barasat, South 24
Parganas, West Bengal, India.

A Survey among College Teachers to assess their Perception towards E-learning

Krishna Kundu, Dr. Kushal De

Abstract
The study tries to assess the readiness and interest of in-service teachers of higher education in West Bengal on the issue of e-learning. The teachers employed in different government/ government aided colleges were selected as sample and the responses were collected through a close-ended questionnaire. The tabulated results show that most college teachers are ill equipped technologically as they lack the basic facilities at home or workplace and none have any formal training on taking e-classes. The teachers are also not very comfortable with the use of technology for teaching. The situation is dull especially in the rural colleges as few institutions have good technological support, digital classrooms, personal computers for teachers or good ICT support.

Keywords: e-learning, global education, online communication, ICT, teachers, students.

Introduction:
E-learning is computer based educational system that enables students to learn anywhere and at any time. In the present era e-learning is delivered through the internet. In twenty first century science and technology have advanced and geographical gap is bridged through technology that virtually makes students feel as if they are in classrooms. Electronic technology is used to access educational curriculum outside traditional classrooms. Sometimes it is delivered live through real time interaction and sometimes it is delivered through a prerecorded lecture. E-learning offers teachers the facility to share materials through videos, slideshows, word documents and PDF, conduct webinars (live online classes) and communicate with students through chat and message forums. E-learning provides the learners with flexibility of time to fit in with their lifestyle to build up their career and gain new qualifications. These days learners are using smart phones, internet and text messages to participate in an online class.

E-learning according to Seok (2008) is a new form of learning of 21st century. It can help students not only acquire knowledge but also enhance skills and attitude necessary for professional activity. The technology of e-learning is a powerful tool and according to Alismail (2015), it provides direct access to students to get information and knowledge by themselves. Teachers have the responsibility to guide students during their pursuit to obtain information in order to develop their skills. Shafieiosgouei et. al. (2018) stated that the interaction between technology and learning are inseparable in the 21st century. It is critical to understand the impact of technology in education which leads to interest in school attendance and subsequently to learning and creativity.

E-learning offers a faster, cheaper and better alternative to traditional learning which is comparatively expensive, lengthy and sometimes offers subjective results. In higher education its relevance becomes even more but it requires proper knowledge of ICT by organizations and individuals. Learning can be formal where record is kept for progress and evaluation of students; or can be informal where students are encouraged to view or track materials and classes but they are not tracked. The primary objectives are:

- To motivate to students to utilize technology to generate new knowledge and ideas
- To introduce global education
- To reduce-learning costs

Correspondence:
Krishna Kundu
Assistant Professor in
Education, Kalinagar
Mahavidyalaya
Kalinagar, North 24 Parganas,
West Bengal, India.

- To reduce time required for effective-learning
- To improve flexibility of study

E-learning offers a wide variety of advantages over traditional learning especially in cases of lockdowns or confinements as is experienced by the globe in 2020; besides rendering other advantages like cost curtailment, instruction from the best of teachers living, flexibility of timing of lecture, repetition of classes if needed, increase variety in knowledge base, savings in transportation costs of the students etc.

Under the above backdrop, the present paper tries to assess the readiness and interest among in service teachers of higher education in West Bengal on the issue of e-learning.

Data and Methodology

The survey was conducted by the researchers in the period of lockdown in March-April 2020. A self-designed close-ended questionnaire was used for the survey. 50 teachers employed in different government/ government aided colleges were selected as sample and the questionnaire was sent through email. The responses so obtained were plotted in excel sheet, analyzed and meaningful inferences were drawn.

Observations from the study

The teaching experience of the respondents' show that 56% of the sample had experience of more than 10 years, 26% had less than 5 years' experience and 18% had experience from 5 to 10 years. The questions were directed towards different aspects of e-learning. In this section the responses are depicted item wise.

Personal knowledge and infrastructure

Questions and Observations	Response Percentage
1. Do you have a personal computer at home?	Yes (desktop): 16% Yes (laptop): 24 % Yes (both): 10% No I don't: 50%
2. Have you heard of e-learning?	Yes: 70% No: 30%
3. Have you attended any training or course to develop your skills in using e-learning?	Yes: 0% No: 100%
4. How many years have you been using technology in teaching?	Never used: 52% Less than 10 years: 40% More than 10 Years: 8%
5. What best describes your experience in using technology for your own use?	Very uncomfortable: 10% Fairly uncomfortable: 50% Fairly comfortable: 30% Very comfortable: 10%

The Higher Education Department of West Bengal had requested teachers to take classes through online mode during lockdown but this survey shows that most college teachers are ill equipped. 50% of the sample did not have a computer at home and although 70% had heard of e-learning, none among the sample had any formal training to develop their skills. This became a major drawback in implementation of e-learning during lockdown period. More than half of the sample (52%) had never used technology for teaching. On further enquiry, it is seen that 60% of the sample are uncomfortable using technology even for their personal use.

Institutional support and infrastructure

1. Do you have own computer at your workplace?	Yes (desktop): 28% Yes (laptop): 18% Yes (both): 0% No I don't: 54%
2. Is there technological support available for faculty members for pedagogical use of ICT in your institution?	Yes: 40% No: 44% Do not know: 16%
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the online interaction you had with your fellow colleagues or seniors during the lockdown period?	Satisfied: 48% Neutral: 30% Dissatisfied: 8% No interaction: 14%
4. How would you rate the quality of technological support in your institution?	Good: 16% Average: 46% Poor: 38%
5. What best describes the level of technological experience in your classroom?	Very Comfortable: 4% Average: 26% Uncomfortable: 32% Very Uncomfortable: 38%
6. Is there support available for ICT class in your institution?	Yes: 36% No: 64%
7. How would you rate the quality of ICT classroom in your institution?	Very Good: 6% Good: 24% Poor: 32% Very Poor: 38%

Indian Prime Minister wished to make India digital but the situation is not promising in rural West Bengal. Most teachers (54%) do not have their own computer or laptop at their workplace. 40% of the sample admits that they get technological support in their institutions but only 16% feels that their institutional support is of good quality. 36% of the teachers have ICT classrooms but only 6% admits that the classrooms are of very good quality. Again only 4% admit that they have a very comfortable experience of technology in their classrooms.

Student response and connectivity during lockdown period

1. How many students are connected to you through e-learning?	No students: 48% Less than 10: 20% Between 11-20: 18% More than 20: 14%
2. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the online interaction you had with the students?	Satisfied: 0% Neutral: 40% Dissatisfied: 12% No online interaction: 48%
3. How do you plan to assist and supervise your students in the field of ICT?	I act as a role model: 0% I encourage students own initiative: 56% I provide digital learning resources: 24 % I prepare some lesson plan: 20%

The survey shows that most of the students did not communicate with teachers as they do not possess computer or laptop at their home or due to lack of proper

internet service in their locality. Most students have android phones but online classes are not possible without internet connection. The cost may also be an influencing factor for poor rural students. The classes have huge number of students but only 14% of the sample could conduct classes with more than 20 students. It is further noteworthy that none of the teachers were satisfied with the online interaction they had with their students. It is interesting to note that in case of assisting and supervision of students, most teachers prefer to encourage their students take personal initiative and 24% wish to provide digital resources.

Personal perceptions regarding E-learning

1. Which mode of instruction is preferred by you for interaction with students during lockdown?	Video conference: 28% Upload study material: 36% Instruction through e-mail or whatsapp: 36%
2. Will the importance of e-learning grow in the future in the context of educational system?	Yes: 78% No: 22%
3. Is e-learning more beneficial in higher education?	Yes: 72% No: 28%
4. Does the development of social media portals affect e-learning process in educational institutions?	Yes: 78% No: 22%
5. Can we ensure that online students work is originals and not that of an expert or paid tutor?	Yes: 0% No: 24% Don't know: 76%

Through this survey, it is found that teachers are more interested to upload study materials or deliver instructions through social media (72%) compared to direct interaction through video conference (28%). Most of the teachers realize that e-learning beneficial in higher education (72%) and also realize that the importance of e-learning will grow in the future in the context of educational system (78%). The sample pointed out that during the course of e-learning; it is difficult to ensure originality and genuineness of data submitted by students.

Future of E-learning

1. Can e-learning be a substitute for a teacher?	Yes: 8% No: 92%
2. Is e-learning an alternative choice for traditional education system?	Yes: 60% No: 40%
3. Can digital e-learning resource material affect the conventional library system?	Yes: 62% No: 38%
4. Is there any difficulty to implement the e-learning in rural areas?	Yes: 96% No: 4%
5. Is e-learning a new trend in education system?	Yes: 100% No: 0%
6. Do you have knowledge of classroom protocol specifically for online instructions?	Yes: 10% No: 90%

The entire sample admits that e-learning is a new trend in educational system. Today, students have easy access to e-resources through computer or mobile phone, so they can be taught about anything and at any time. More than half (60%) the sample believes that e-learning can be an alternative choice for traditional education system but 92% believe that the services of the teacher still would remain irreplaceable. 62% believe that the digital e-learning resources would affect the conventional library system. It is disappointing to notice that almost the entire sample (96%) feel that due to infrastructural hindrances it is difficult to implement e-learning in rural areas. Moreover, 90% of the sample surveyed does not have any knowledge of classroom protocols specifically required for online instructions.

Concluding Remarks

The importance of e-learning is felt by all teachers during the lockdown period but sadly few are equipped to address the issue. The teachers are unaware of the e-classrooms protocol and believe it difficult to be implemented in rural colleges. Most teachers lack the basic facilities at home or workplace and none have any formal training on taking e-classes. The teachers are also not very comfortable with the use of technology for teaching. The situation is dull especially in the rural colleges as few institutions have good technological support, digital classrooms, personal computers for teachers or good ICT support. The rural students were also unable to attend classes due to technological issues on their part and most teachers were satisfied by distributing materials. It can thus be concluded that although e-learning is recognized by all teachers, the rural colleges have a long journey to cover before it can be made feasible and attractive.

References
1. Alismail, H. A. (2015), 21st century Standards and Curriculum: Current Research and Practice, Journal of Education and Practice, 6 (6), pp. 150-155.
2. Dwyer, C. A. (1999), using emerging technologies to construct effective-learning environments, Educational Media International 36 (4), pp. 300-309.
3. Edmund, R. and Richardson, J. T. E. (2009), Conception of learning, approaches to study and personal development in U. K higher education, British journal of Educational Psychology 17 (2), pp. 295-309.
4. Seok, S. (2008).Teaching Aspects of E-learning. International Journal on E-learning, ERIC journal Number EJ810079, 7 (7), pp. 725-741, October.
5. Shafieiosgouei, S., Nourdad, N., Hassantofigji, R., and Shafieioskouei, S. (2018).The effect of E-learning on learning and Interest in School Attendance among Elementary school students, Proceeding of the RAIS conference.