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ASSESSING OF E-LEARNING IN AFGHANISTAN: BENEFITS, PROSPECTS, AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

E-learning is one of the latest approaches in the contemporary branch of knowledge science to read, teach and perform the study. E-learning is presumed to be fast, continuous, repeatable at any time and any place. Besides, it increases learning passion and motivation. Higher education in Afghanistan has been attempting to use this educational method successfully in recent years. Unfortunately, in the past, Afghanistan's education system has suffered from severe shortcomings, questions about insufficient infrastructure and educational services, and occasionally concerns about old pedagogical methodologies are discussed. This study addresses the concerns of students and the academic community. This research aims to recognize e-learning challenges. And suggest a possible suitable solution for Afghanistan's higher education system. In this research, many questions have been answered by university lecturers and students and collected data has been preprocessed. The final result shows that Afghanistan's higher education system is relatively decent, but not acceptable. There are still many challenges to the e-learning process in Afghanistan's higher education, and it seems very critical and fundamental. This study will advance the frontier of knowledge in the domain of the Afghanistan higher education system concerning invoke the eLearning method.

Key words: *E-Governance, Information and communication technology, and E-Learning*

Introduction

As we know that e-governance is one of the new systems of using technology in government so this paper is going to discuss e-governance in Afghanistan as the research focused on the potential for e-learning expansion to transform current public higher education access and quality in Afghanistan. In 2013, around 100,000 people were directly and indirectly employed in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector of Afghanistan. Both the public and private sectors were using ICT in sophisticated ways ranging from access to information, financial services, and the new markets (World Bank, 2013). The \$51 million Digital Central and South Asia project (Digital CASA Afghanistan), is funded by national and regional states, including the World Bank to build on successful implementation of the ICT sector of Afghanistan by increasing digital

connectivity through the provision of more affordable Internet services in the region (Cabral, 2017; Singh, 2019). The Digital CASA project which began in 2018 and will be completed by 2023 (Singh, 2019) also aims to integrate Afghanistan with the regional digital connectivity infrastructure (Cabral, 2017). Currently, there are over 62 national and international Internet service providers with over 5.3 million Internet subscriptions throughout Afghanistan (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), 2018). In the higher education sector, it is planned that by 2020, at least twelve public universities in Afghanistan will be equipped with ICT centers to facilitate access to contemporary contents and research for faculty members and students via e-learning (MoHE, 2019), although currently, the computer-to-student ratio is 1:45 (Peroz & Tippmann, 2016). Furthermore, the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) established the Information Technology Competence Center (ITCC), which integrates IT 2 systems to promote students' innovative projects and scientific research. The ITCC was implemented by the Technical University of Berlin, which started its operation in early 2016 (MoHE, 2019). Currently, more than 8,000 online journals and publications are available for faculty members in Afghanistan (Peroz & Tippmann, 2016). As per MoHE's approach, e-learning will be implemented and expanded in three phases, including enrichment, integration or blended learning, and virtual or fully online learning (MoHE, 2016; Peroz & Tippmann, 2016). In the enrichment phase, Afghan universities in cooperation with MoHE and international donors will develop their ICT infrastructure and facilities. In the integration stage, various online programs will be integrated with face-to-face classroom programs. While in the virtual phase, fully online classes and programs in various disciplines will be offered to Afghan students (MoHE, 2016). Recently, the MoHE announced the establishment of the academy of e-governance, including a master's program in e-governance at Kabul University (MoHE, 2019). It is argued that "higher education will inevitably be forced to recognize the revolutionary nature of learning technologies, and e-learning will be at the forefront" (Garrison & Anderson, 2003, p. 20). Due to the rapid development and access to technology, the future of higher education will be more reliant on the usage of ICT, specifically e-learning. Given that Afghan higher education has suffered severely over the past four decades due to war, e-learning could potentially play an important role in filling the gap of quality and access. Although there is no unified definition of e-learning among scholars, some argue that there is an overlap in the definition of this term, which encompasses technology-oriented learning, hybrid learning, distance learning, and online learning (Moore, Dickson- 3 Deane, & Galyen, 2011). The definition that best aligns with the current research is by Hrimiuc, Gagiuc, and Ciotirnae (2015) who defined e-learning as "anything delivered, enabled or mediated by electronic technology for the explicit purpose of learning. The term includes online learning, web-based learning, and computer-based training" (p. 158). E-learning need not be confined to the internet; Urdan and Weggen (2000) defined it from a broader perspective, stating that e-learning is "the delivery of content via all electronic media, including the Internet, intranets, extranets, satellite broadcast, audio/videotape, interactive TV, and CD-ROM" (p. 1).

The literature of Review

The Internet has become one of the critical means of communicating and collecting knowledge for both teachers and students to make accessible tools for study and learning (Richard and Haya 2009). Based on Technology "e-learning encompasses the use of the internet and other important technologies to produce learning materials, teach learners, and also regulate courses in an organization (Fry, 2001). There has been extensive debate about a common definition of the term e-learning. Existing definitions according to Dublin (2003) tend to reveal the specialization and interest of the researchers. E-learning as a concept covers a range of applications, learning methods, and processes" (Rossi, 2009).

A commonly accepted definition for the term e-learning is therefore difficult to find and, according To Bollinger and Hawkins (2005) and Dublin (2003), "there is even no common definition for the term. Holmes and Gardner (2006) also commented on these inconsistencies by saying that there may be as many definitions of the term e-learning as there are academic papers on the subject Dublin (2003) in trying to find a common meaning of the term eLearning went on to ask the following questions: Is e-learning online coursework for students at a distance? Does it mean using a virtual learning environment to support the provision of campus-based education? Does it refer to an online tool to enrich, extend and enhance collaboration? Or is it online learning or part of blended learning?" (Dublin, 2005).

Below is a review of some of the definitions of the term e-learning as given by various researchers and institutions. E-Learning includes more than just the provision of entirely online courses in some definitions. Bollinger and Hawkins (2005), for example, observed that “e-learning has transformed from a fully-online course to using technology to deliver part or all of a course independent of permanent time and place. Also, the European Commission (2001) describes, eLearning as the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to increase learning quality by easing access to facilities and services as well as distant exchanges and collaboration. The following are also different definitions of e-learning. E-learning refers to the use of information and communication technologies to enable access to online learning/teaching resources. In its broadest sense, Abbad et al (2009), defined ELearning to mean any learning that is enabled electronically. They however narrowed this definition down to mean learning that is empowered by the use of digital technologies. This definition is further narrowed by some researchers as any learning that is internet-enabled or web-based” (LaRose et al, 1998; Keller and Cornered, 2002). The term 'e-learning' is used in various perspectives, including distributed learning, online distance learning, as well as hybrid learning, according to Maltz et al (2005). According to the OECD (2005), e-learning is characterized as the use of information and communication technology in various educational processes to facilitate and enhance learning in higher education institutions and involves the use of information and communication technology as a complement to traditional classrooms. Learning the two modes online or combining them. The term e-learning also applies, according to Wentling et al (2000), to the achievement and use of information that is mainly facilitated and transmitted by electronic means. E-learning relies on computers and networks, so it is possible that systems consisting of a range of platforms, such as wireless and satellite, and technologies, such as cellular phones, would advance (Wentling et al., 2000).

Liu and Wang (2009) found in their literature review on concepts for e-learning that the characteristics of the e-learning process are mainly based on the internet; global sharing and learning resources; information transmission and knowledge flow through network courses; and finally, learning versatility is provided as a computer-generated learning environment to solve distance and timeliness problems. Perceived Ease of Use. “The degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would be free of physical and mental effort” (Davis, 1985, p. 82).

Perceived Usefulness. “The degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” (Davis, 1989, p. 82). Traditional Learning. The process in which “instruction is provided in a physical setting, where learners and Instructors engage in direct, face-to-face teaching and learning interaction” (Macon, 2012, p. 3).

The distinctions between traditional learning and e-education, e-learning, online learning, distance education, and distance learning have been blurred by electronic tools, especially Internet technologies. Three primary components present in each teaching and learning situation are popular among these terms: a teacher and a learner or learners, a communication method or mode as a learning mechanism, and material to be taught or learned. Information and communication technology are a fourth aspect that is becoming ubiquitous. E-learning or e-education is used interchangeably by the Afghan e-quality Alliances, described as e for effective teaching and learning in which students learn from conventional face-to-face interaction as well as global engagement; using both physical and digital content.

The definition that is closest to blended e-learning implies that: A mix of lecturers, tutors, facilitators, course coordinators, or other students; a pedagogy of teaching and learning that includes presentation, practice, evaluation, and review; along with a mix of learning tasks and interactive activities; a mix of content; and a mix of CDs, mobile phones, computers, and Internet technologies. E-learning builds on the concept of the linked education of Gilbert (2000) and will contribute to the objective of the Afghan e-Quality Alliances: fair access to quality Tools for schooling and e-education. The United States has reaffirmed and confirmed this term, which is based on practice.

Meta-analysis and study of online learning studies (Means et al, 2009) by the Department of Education. The study showed that learning outcomes surpassed those of students who received only face-to-face instruction or solely online instruction for students who participated in mixed learning or a combination of online and face-to-face instruction. The study also found that online learning appeared to be an effective option for undergraduates and graduate students as well as professionals. The study also found that online learning for undergraduates and graduate students as well as professionals seemed to be an efficient choice. The debate that follows is structured around the knowledge framework of technological pedagogical material (Mishra

and Joehler, 2006). The structure proposed analyzing three key components and interrelationships of learning environments: material, pedagogy, and technology. In Afghanistan, the content was required to fix outdated textbooks and textbooks and teaching materials; pedagogical training to address rote memorization, and access to content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to leapfrog technology.

Statement of the Problem

These kinds of challenges in Afghanistan have a historical background that “whenever Over the past four decades, Afghanistan’s formerly outstanding system of higher education has lost more than half of its professional faculty and staff members due to war” (Adkins, 2016; Babury & Hayward, 2014).

As a result of the conflict some were killed, others sought refuge abroad, and some retired from the field of education. To offer a 4 holistic picture of the recent history of Afghan higher education, “few educational systems throughout the world have experienced the severity of educational oppression seen in Afghanistan” (Adkins, 2016, p. 104). As a consequence of decades of war, the

Afghan higher education system dropped to the lowest quality and enrollment rates in the world (Hayward, 2008; Roof, 2014; Samady, 2001).

This system of higher education now requires improvement in terms of quality and accessibility such as replacing outdated materials, access for all students including men and women, and faculty development (MoHE, 2015).

The Afghan higher education system has been trying to increase the number of faculty members due to an increase in the number of students since 2001, yet there are still not enough faculty. It is worth noting that, on average, a professor receives approximately 20 years of education, from kindergarten to obtaining a doctorate (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008).

This means that in the coming five years, there will be close to 1,000,000 university students throughout Afghanistan. Given the drastic increase in student enrollment at public and private universities, the concomitant need for qualified instructors for these students, the limited resources in the higher education sector, and the emerging possibility of enhancing e-learning in Afghan higher education may be important issues in the coming years. The aforementioned problem of exceeding enrollment growth and a lack of faculty and space require resolution so that there will be an educated population to serve Afghanistan. The enrollment increase in higher education is not merely in male students; there is at least a 28% increase in women’s enrollment in Afghan higher education as well (Heyward & Karim, 2019).

On the other hand, since 2002 Afghan higher education has been seeking to produce graduates, by establishing new universities, initiating various programs, and recruiting new faculty members and staff, who can function effectively in the national development of Afghanistan, as well as compete in international markets, by providing access and improving the quality of higher education throughout the country (Babury & Hayward, 2013). Areas for Afghan higher education. In addition to improving the quality of learning and teaching, e-learning can pave the way for better access and flexibility in higher education (Foroughi, 2015). This is especially important for Afghan higher education, where a majority of students have limited or no access to qualified faculty members with advanced degrees who are equipped with contemporary teaching and research skills.

Objectives of Research

1-To know the e-learning initiative undertaken by the Afghan government

2-To highlight the benefit and prospects of e-learning

3-To discuss the challenges involved in the implementation of the e-learning project

4-To suggest majors for ensuring accessibility and affordability of e-learning in Afghanistan

Research Methodology

A descriptive-analytical approach using document analysis in the field of e-learning in Afghanistan is the tool used in this research. By using written documents such as books, statutes, rules, procedures, treatises, and scientific articles, the library method has been used to gather the relevant information. By using authoritative science websites, researchers have also attempted to use up-to-date legal and administrative literature and discourse.

Overview of ICT for education in Afghanistan

In a country, higher education plays a key role in the current century, leading nations to sustainable development and evaluating the speed of change. The shortage of higher-educated individuals in a country is an obstacle to the process of economic growth, social development, and nation-building. Higher education defines a society's characteristics and exposes a country to the world. Afghanistan is one of the countries facing three decades of conflict, resulting in a ruined education system. Institutions and. The new administration obtained significant foreign assistance after the overthrow of the Taliban in late 2001 to rebuild the education system. Approximately 900,000 male students attended schools without the participation of girls in 2002, according to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) study. Some 75 percent of Afghan students are happy with their regular education, according to studies from the Asia Foundation. Behavior and the availability of possibilities. The education system in Afghanistan, controlled by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), includes K-12, semi-higher education, and higher education.

Afghanistan's school level, divided into three tiers, comprises, primary schools covering 1-6 grades, (ii) 7-9 grade secondary schools, and (iii) 10-12 grade high schools. Students take the national university entrance test (Kankor) after graduation from high schools so that educational authorities can decide who is qualified to enter semi-higher and higher education institutions. For undergraduate and graduate students, Afghanistan's higher education institutions provide higher education. There are, however, still many problems about improving the overall standard of education in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is still ranked at the low level of the Human Development Index based on the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report in 2014. Similarly, the rate of adult literacy is 39% for males and 13% for females only. All these problems and human development indicators stem from the conflict, poverty, and education disparity between rich and poor people over the past three decades. In 2003, with the help and cooperation of the MoE, MoHE, and related agencies, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoCIT) agreed to take successful steps towards the introduction and launch of e-learning programs in Afghanistan. However, insufficient access and a lack of ability in educational institutions to deal with and communicate with ICTs is another major problem that remains unanswered.

Types of E-learning

Given the large area covered by e-learning and the use of different technologies and teaching methods, e-learning can be classified into several divisions, such as:

1. Learning via websites
2. Learning based on computers
3. Learning with digital devices like tablets, PCs, PDAs
4. Learning via cell phones

Online learning, however, has the following categories:

1. Person Analysis
2. Research of a Party
3. Classes online

Advantage of E-learning

The most significant benefits of eLearning for learners

The learners of today want content that is relevant, mobile, self-paced, and personalized. With the online mode of learning, this need is met; here, learners can learn at their convenience and demand. Let's have an analytical look at the benefits of learning online.

1. Online learning fits everybody's needs

The online learning approach is the most appropriate for all. This digital transition has led to major changes in the access, consumption, conversation, and distribution of information. Online training courses, at the right moment, can also be taken up by office goers and housewives. Many individuals choose to learn at weekends or evenings, depending on their availability and comfort.

2. Any number of occasions can be taken by lectures

Unlike classroom training, you can access the material an infinite amount of times through online learning. This is particularly needed when preparing for an exam at the time of revision. If you cannot attend the lecture in the conventional mode of learning, then you have to prepare for that subject on your own; you can easily attend the lectures in eLearning whenever you want.

3. Offers access to Content Updates

A prime advantage of online learning is that it ensures that you are in sync with modern learners. This allows the learner to access updated material anytime they want it.

4. Fast Lessons Delivery

E-learning is a way of delivering lessons with fast delivery. This mode has relatively fast delivery cycles compared to the conventional classroom teaching system. This indicates that the time needed to learn in traditional learning is reduced to 25 percent-60 percent of what is required. There are some of the reasons why eLearning reduces the learning period: Lessons begin quickly and are also finished in a single learning session. This makes it easier for training programs to roll out within a few weeks, or even days.

- Learners should determine their learning speed instead of following the speed of the entire group.
- Save time as a student would not need to fly to the training site. You will learn in the comfort of your own home.

Flexibility in its own time will access the material and analysis at its speed and location.

Low distribution costs: Once e-content has been created and posted as modified on the server: It helps all learners to quickly and frequently update the content and automatically access it.

Collaborative learning: E-learning facilitates collaborative learning so that learning experiences are more immersive and richer.

5. Scalability

In developing and sharing new training, policies, principles, and ideas, eLearning helps. E-learning is a very quick way of learning, whether it is for formal education or entertainment!

6. Coherence

E-learning helps educators to obtain a greater degree of coverage to convey the message to their target audience in a consistent manner. This means that this learning style provides all learners with the same type of instruction.

7. Costs Reduced

Compared to conventional learning modes, eLearning is cost-effective. The reasoning for this price reduction is that learning by this approach takes place rapidly and easily. Concerning coaches, transport, course supplies, and lodging, a lot of training time is reduced. This cost efficiency also tends to increase an organization's profitability. Often, you are relieved of paying for travel expenses (e.g. accommodation) when training takes place in another city/state and/or external learning materials when you are studying at your place.

8. Affectivity

E-learning has a positive impact on the sustainability of an enterprise. It makes it simple to understand and digest the content, this results in enhanced scores on certifications, examinations, or other forms of assessment. The higher number of learners who attain the degree of 'transfer' or mastery, increased ability to understand and incorporate new workplace procedures or skills. Assistance in preserving details for a longer period.

9. Less environmental effects

Since eLearning is a paperless learning process, it protects the environment to a great extent. According to a report on eLearning courses, distance-based learning programs have been found to use about 90 percent less energy and produce 85 percent less CO2 emissions compared to conventional campus-based educational courses. With eLearning, for paper acquisition, there is no need to cut trees. Therefore, eLearning is a highly eco-friendly learning process.

Implementing e-learning in Afghan universities

The first online education system is launched in Afghanistan

A spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education says that the online education system will soon be launched under the slogan "Science is Ability" under the name Afghan X. A spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education says that the online education system will soon be launched under the slogan "Science is Ability" under the name Afghan X.

According to Jomhor News Agency; "Afghanistan's first online education system (AfghanX) on the Internet with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)) under the e-learning program of the Ministry of Education," Faisal Amin, spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, told a news conference in Kabul on Monday. "Excellently prepared and practically put into operation."

Mr. Amin stated that by using this system, applicants can access the courses (MOOC) of prestigious universities in the country and the world through the Internet without any time and place restrictions anywhere and anytime with basic facilities such as mobile phones and laptops. Benefit from the promotion of their professional knowledge.

The spokesman of the Ministry of Higher Education for sending students abroad said that in 2018, four hundred and eighty-five undergraduate, 874 undergraduate, and 192 doctoral students were sent to universities in 41 foreign countries.

He stated that at the moment, 3875 people are studying for bachelor's degree, 2056 people in master's degree and another 358 people are studying in a doctoral degree in foreign countries.

Mr. Amin said that also, 43 masters and 3 doctoral programs have been established in public universities and 32 master's programs in private universities. The Ministry of Higher Education is working to establish 11 more master's programs with the help of the World Bank by 1402 in public universities.

He added that the Ministry of Higher Education has so far provided 16 private educational institutions including Salam, Karwan, Rena, Bakhtar, Katib, Arya, Bast, Hakim Sanai, Georgia, Ibn Sina, Al-Fallah, Jami, Khatam al-Nabiin, Donya, Tabesh, and Khorasan universities. He has distributed the diploma and the distribution of diplomas to other private institutions is underway.

According to the Ministry of Higher Education, more than 350,000 students are currently studying in public and private universities, with 27% of women attending. This statistic shows a significant increase compared to 2002 when the total number of students in universities reached 22,683. It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Higher Education, considering the National Strategic Plan, carries out various activities to develop and strengthen the higher quality system of higher education in Afghanistan following international standards that meet the needs of society.

The Ministry of Higher Education wants to introduce education in all public universities in the country by introducing the "EDX" electronic system. According to Afghan News: Najibullah Khawaja Omari, Minister of Higher Education, at a press conference in Kabul on "Implementing e-learning in Afghan universities" said that by providing facilities and informing the university professors to the IDEX system Education will be electronic for all university students in the country.

Mr. Khajeh Omari called the edx system a new distance learning program, saying that by using it, students will gain new learning opportunities and education.

He added that the program strengthens the ability of educators and researchers to think and reason, and creates an atmosphere of collaboration between students and faculty. The Minister of Higher Education noted that higher education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Technology and international partners, creates and strengthens information technology infrastructure in public universities. He stressed that the IDEX electronic system is funded by USAID and will be implemented in universities that have international accreditation and will start their activities, and universities that do not have international accreditation will implement and use this system. They will be deprived. He added that the ministry will start implementing the system from the four major central and provincial universities in the first instance.

Besides, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in his statement considered the implementation of this system important in the effectiveness and quality of students' education and said that with the implementation and use of this system, the quality and speed of students' education and teaching methods have increased. Masters will also be different.

Mr. Ghani emphasized that the Ministry of Technology and Telecommunications has been instructed to provide an internal Internet network for citizens, especially after the implementation and use of the IDEX electronic system, and to reduce the price of the Internet. A comprehensive five-year plan is to be prepared by the Ministry of Higher Education (ITCC) to implement these issues.

The major and main challenges to e-learning in Afghanistan:

Afghanistan is among the countries where the global crisis has had a comparatively greater impact, such as the coronavirus pandemic. Afghans were deprived of basic traditional education even before the pandemic, owing to decades of war and insecurity. Many villages and rural areas are currently deprived of a suitable educational environment and do not even have access to textbooks. Therefore, the Ministry of Education's slogan "We bring education to your home" is improbable.

War and instability have seriously impacted Afghanistan's education system and hindered its development. The coronavirus pandemic also disrupted the student learning process, resulting in the closing of educational institutions for months. As a result of the pandemic, before the inauguration of the academic year 1399, 18,000 schools were closed and 9 million students were deprived of education. Also, 169 institutions of higher education were closed, causing 388,191 students to be out of school. Consequently, to allow students to pursue their studies during the lockdown, educational institutions chose to provide remote learning services.

Many developed nations have replaced classroom learning with remote learning since the worldwide spread of the coronavirus. Following in the footsteps of developed countries, Afghanistan's academic institutions also presented the President's office with their distance learning plan. The proposal was, however, criticized by some members of parliament, lecturers, and experts and called "flawed" and "impracticable." The members of the parliament also criticized the fact that the Ministry of Education and an unsuccessful proposal for the presidential palace had been represented without knowing the conditions of society and consultation with the members of the parliament. According to the members of parliament, as most citizens in Afghanistan do not have access to electricity, the internet, and television, the proposal is not applicable.

Even though, some members of parliament claim that, while the proposal will not allow all students to use remote learning services due to poor economic conditions and lack of resources, it will at least provide those who have access to the internet and computers the opportunity to pursue studies. Educational method experts, on the other hand, consider the proposal to be flawed and assume that if the Ministry of Education sanctions the plan and chooses to take a remote there will be many issues with evaluating the educational system.

The President invited and sanctioned the cabinet with a contingency plan with the aid of the HELMS online system. The Ministry of Education will introduce the plan in collaboration with government and private TV networks, using three methods: self-study, distance learning, and small-group study taking into account the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Health. The president backed the education ministry's proposal and said, "We will not wait." It is time to transition towards digital learning and digital governance and to take advantage of new educational technologies.

The most powerful online learning system in the world is the Higher Education Learning Management System (HELMS). The framework uses open source code that is used by some of the most prominent research institutions and has over 90 million users worldwide. The scheme was not as successful, however, as it was supposed to be. This was not due to the flaws of the structure itself, but because of the country's poverty and other economic factors.

The system is simple to use and can also be used by students who have a relatively limited understanding of technology. It includes some 170 worldwide academic institutions. At present, 38 public universities, 11 private universities, and a total of 147,589 students have been registered with HELMS in Afghanistan.

A standard learning system has yet to be established for students in Afghanistan, despite excessive budgetary expenses. To pursue their studies, some schools and private colleges use Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and other online services, which is why they face different problems. Some renowned private colleges and institutions, on the other hand, have stepped up to address the problems of distance learning themselves. For example, within a limited timeframe, Salam University was able to create and initiate an electronic system called "SLMS." Compared with the Ministry of Higher Education system, in which the university was able to share its entire curriculum with its students, the system was more effective. Although the reopening of universities on 5 August 2020 gave a fresh breath to the half-dead vessel of Afghanistan's higher education system, public and

private schools remain closed until now the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic quickly moved Afghanistan's education system towards digitalization. In addition to people's lack of awareness of online learning, the lack of cooperation between the

'Da Breshna Sherkat' and the electricity supply education system, lack of access to high-speed internet, lack of access to gadgets such as computers and smartphones, poverty, and the country's weak economy have led to the failure and triggering of Discriminative approach toward poor and rich students.

Three methods of the online learning system have been implemented by the Ministry of Education to address barriers to some extent: first, science subjects will be taught via television networks or online platforms; second, social subjects via radio. And finally, by strictly following the guidelines of the Ministry of Public Health, small classrooms would be permitted for those students who have no access to the first two techniques.

Since a contingency plan for the education system was presented by the ministries of education and higher education during the lockdown, it failed for the above reasons. Subsequently, for the first time, under the Huge Open Online Courses network, a new online platform called 'AfghanX' online learning framework was created, which also had no successful results.

Given the world's day-to-day advancements and developments, the culture of online learning is spreading in developing countries and has recently attracted the attention of Afghanistan's academic institutions. However, considering its high sales costs, it is difficult to understand why the Ministry of Higher Education enforces the use of HELMS in both public and private universities. No other systems, except HELMS, are approved by the ministry.

Many problems have been created by disagreements between the private universities union and the higher education ministry over the price of the system. 11 private universities have agreed to buy HELMS from the ministry until 5 August 2020, despite its shortcomings and failed experiences.

Since Afghanistan's constitution allows the establishment of private institutions, it is also important to enable the creation of new learning methods. This will strengthen private institutions' creative approach to education, increase competitiveness and contribute to the development of more productive and successful learning systems. Since the policymakers of Afghanistan's education system have not been able to fill the gap created by the closure of educational institutions, it is easier to fill the gap. Include the private sector in the development of an efficient system for learning.

In summary, there are major obstacles to the development of e-learning in the country, which we will address below:

1. The biggest problem in e-learning is the lack of infrastructure, including 24-hour electricity and cheap and inclusive internet in Afghanistan. In the current situation, as soon as you go a few kilometers from the big cities, there are no effects of internet services and electricity facilities, and inside the cities, these facilities do not exist permanently and in a standard way.
2. The low economic level of the people and the lack of access to the Internet and the necessary electronic devices for all students can be mentioned as the second main factor. The young generation's e-literacy and lack of computer skills are largely due to the same problem. Of course, neglecting computer training in school has doubled the problem.
3. Low-speed internet lines and high costs of telecommunication companies cause limitations in the volume and quality of educational content. Most of Afghanistan's telecommunication systems are based on 2G technology and the new 3G generation is being tested, while the world has passed the 4G generation and is testing 5G.
4. The lack of a supportive role for the Ministry of Higher Education was another problem worth mentioning. Instead of supporting private universities in setting up an e-learning system, the ministry sought to raise money by selling its applications, which increased the distrust of private higher education institutions over the Ministry of Higher Education. The ministry does not encourage private sector initiatives.

5. Another barrier to e-learning is the lack of funding from the higher education ministry. The ministry aims to raise money and sell its application instead of helping private institutions to set up an electronic learning system, which has created mistrust between the ministry and higher education institutions. When it comes to creating an e-learning infrastructure, the ministry does not embolden private sector technologies and acts.
6. The use of electronic learning systems has also been influenced by the skepticism of students and families regarding e-learning caused by their limited knowledge of e-learning.
7. Students 'and families' distrust of e-learning due to their limited understanding of e-learning and its benefits.
8. Another main concern for students and teachers is the lack of electronic libraries, learning materials, audio, and visual services.
9. Another major problem is the lack of electronic libraries and the necessary teaching materials, especially audio and video, to be easily accessible to students and teachers.
10. Lack of regular government strategy and plan for the development of virtual education in the country is also one of the major problems.
11. The lack of a legal basis and the lack of government support in the field of distance education have also had negative effects.
12. The lack of an organized government strategy to improve e-learning is also considered a major barrier to e-learning. The lack of advocacy and government legal assistance has also harmed the system.

Conclusion

The general study of distance education in the country shows the fact that unfortunately Due to the lack of perspective and strategy necessary to provide distance education in the country and the lack of educational technology infrastructure on the one hand and unfamiliarity and lack of mental and physical readiness of educational institutions And education, especially teachers and students for this type of education, on the other hand, has made the use of this method of education in the critical situation of the outbreak of coronavirus in Afghanistan, is not effective. CSRS Center for Strategic and Regional Studies, after a thorough study of e-learning and the experiences of various third world countries, proposes the following to correct and develop distance learning policies and is ready for any Cooperation in this regard.

The concept of traditional education has changed fundamentally in the present age. Physical presence in the classroom is not the only learning option - at least with the advent of the Internet and new technologies today, you can access good quality education whenever and wherever you want. We are now entering a new era - the online education revolution. It is difficult to understand the concept of leaving the classroom, especially if you want to face the vast space called the Internet. Finally, we may conclude that the development of alternative teaching methods, such as distance education, whether in the form of radio and television programs or online education through the Internet, can provide some educational facilities to improve the learning level of students. However, the development of distance education can still be seen as an opportunity to complete the country's formal education programs, and its development can be seen as an indicator of the overall development of education in the country, especially in critical situations such as after The crisis of the corona epidemic occurred in the country or any emergency resulting from natural and unnatural disasters that disrupt the educational facilities and educational institutions of the country were used as an alternative. Information and communication technology and the move from traditional societies to information societies have affected all dimensions and human needs. Educational methods have also been subject to such changes.

Utilizing online education using new methods has made educational systems more efficient and effective in different countries. The use of such techniques makes it possible to increase the quality and productivity of education in all organizations. Despite

all the challenges in the field of internet and electricity in Afghanistan, despite the lack of facilities that several students face and even though online education is a new experience in Afghanistan; Again, it can be said that we are moving towards a digital revolution, which is our urgent need in the present age, in the country's education system.

Suggestions

However, the situation of Afghanistan is going to be better so the governments and Ministries of education and higher education need creative thinking, flexibility, changes in financial and administrative structure and methods, and practical and long-term strategic plans. The following suggestions for dealing with the current situation and long-term changes are weighed against the current situation in Afghanistan:

- Ministries of Education and Higher Education should make the necessary preparations for the transition from distance education to face-to-face education in an educational setting, taking into account health challenges.
- The government and the Ministry of Finance should review the national budget within a quad-'s radius and provide more funding to the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, and the Department of Technical and Vocational Education, or fund them with institutions. International donor assistance.
- The Ministry of Education should increase the registration and production capacity of the Department of Education and Training Radio and Television.
- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education will reach an agreement with the Afghan Film Institute, private film production companies, and private television stations to collaborate and produce digital educational programs.
- In the current curriculum (courses/courses) that is still underway (in progress), the Ministry of Education should include a new theme under the name of Information and Communication Technology in the curriculum of public education, public and private religious schools, and teacher training.

To transfer experience and create technical capacity for the production of digital educational films to educational institutions, studios for recording and production of digital educational materials should be considered in Kabul and large cities (provincial capitals).

- The Ministry of Education should encourage and appreciate those professors who have contributed to the production of digital educational materials, and increase their capacity to produce more educational materials.
- Given the current financial challenges, the government should review the laws on education and higher education and, by implementing a policy of decentralizing educational institutions, authorize the independent provider of financial resources to higher education institutions. Universities must play an active role in working together to generate knowledge and turn challenges into new opportunities.
- Digital education is an important element of educational programs today and tomorrow, the private sector can step in and invest in this sector.
- If Afghanistan's education system avoids falling into the trap of political strife, it is possible to hope for educational stability and to avoid the bitter experiences of two years. However, to achieve this goal, empathy and national educational solidarity, and resistance to current unprecedented challenges are essential.

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