

E-learning and PPP Model in Digital India

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Abstract: Digital technology in India has been evolving over the last few years, changing the way students learn concepts in school. The traditional chalk and talk method has paved the way for more interactive teaching methods as schools are increasingly adopting digital solutions to keep themselves abreast with the technological changes. As the current generation of students is well-versed with laptops, i-pads, and smartphones, these creative methods of teaching guarantee more participation from students. Under the digital India campaign, Country believes that it's not sole responsibility of Government to cater E-Digital needs of students and hence invites a lot of corporate. There are huge opportunities for corporates in a ways of PPPs for building school infrastructure, managing schools, and designing innovations in educational technology such as low-cost devices.

Section 1 of this paper deals with the E-Learning/E-Education concept in Digital India and it is transforming education system, Section 2 Practicality of this initiative, Section 3 working of Public Private Partnership model in E-Learning and Challenges faced in India. Section 4 makes concluding remark.

Key words: E-learning, Digital India, PPP Model, education.

Introduction

In today's world, educational technology has become an effective tool in the learning process. Electronic educational technology, also known as e-learning or distance learning has become an important part of the society. With the help of live lectures, people are consuming course content much in the same way as students in a regular classroom set-up. E-learning has been described in various ways as learning using a number of different technologies and methods for delivery e.g. Computer Based Training (CBT), Internet-based training (IBT), Web-based instruction (WBI), advanced distributed learning(ADL), distributed learning (DL), distance learning, online learning (OL), mobile learning (or m-learning) or remote learning and learning management systems (LMS).

This paper evaluated the contribution of Public private partnership (PPP)in E-learning techniques under digital India. PPPs have the opportunity to forge blueprints, policies, and practices that help create a Digital India (E-Learning). Governments alone do not have all the resources to provide the required infrastructure

and facilities. Private participation brings efficiency along with funding and through partnerships with the private sector, the government can bring in its resources and provide the much needed sustainability and scalability. Through PPPs the government gets access to ideas and technology, while the private sector tastes the benefits of the scale that only governments can provide.

Objective

The objective of the paper is to understand E-Learning theme of Digital India and how public private partnership is playing a key role in success of E-Learning.

Scope

The research paper covers E-Learning technique in education sector only and PPP Model supporting the E-Learning initiative.

Research Methodology

The research study is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data. The data are collected from various reports on E-Learning, Journals, articles and Digital India Portal

Discussion and Analysis

E-Learning and India

India is a growing market for education where traditional classrooms are being steadily replaced by interactive whiteboards with projectors and speakers all over the country. Various government initiatives are being adapted to boost the growth of distance education market, besides focusing on new education techniques, such as E-learning and M-learning. India holds an important place in the global education industry and has become the second largest market for e-learning after the US. Various public and private sector players are now looking to transform education with e-learning and free schools from their rigid teaching methodologies. They are also ensuring that students from even the most remote pockets of the country have access to stellar 21st century education.

Digital India and E-Learning

Digital India programme covers almost each sectors of India. Directly or indirectly each sector is associated with mass education. The scenario of education sector is changing rapidly in India. With the rapid growth of

the digital world education is no longer confined within the four walls. Virtual classrooms and mobile learning is the new concept which makes learning attainable every time, everywhere. Students are now engaged in group learning and collaborative learning. The digital India programme aims how students can learn and teachers can teach better. The digital India Visions to provide broadband connectivity to a quarter of a million rural villages by 2019 and making wifi connections available in every school. So, it's certainly going to provide a positive thrust to the future of India's e-learning. Through online and multimedia tools, students of all ages can learn what when and how they want. Common chalkboard classroom is a backdated concept which is replaced by whiteboards, projectors, speakers and other multimedia tools. Learning is now joyful and lively. There are no longer rigid methodologies, rather smart learn classes with the most student centric approach with more positive outcomes. Digital pedagogy is recent concerning factor of education system. So this Digital India campaign is going to change the education horizon of India which will facilitate not only us but also the generations to come. D'source which is a project under e-Kalpa is running successfully in India. Courses for students and enrolment of students are growing rapidly in the programme. Digital India is offering cloud services to the private sector providers. CSC 2.0 aims to cover 2.5 lakhs gram panchayat to enhance services. Some major steps of digital literacy environment in India are Eparticipation, E-bhasha, digital locker, E-Sign, Mobile Based Digital Identity, E-Taal, E-Sampark, National Digital Literacy Mission, and National Optical Fibre Network etc.

Digital Education initiative

The Central Government is going to launch four major initiatives to push e- learning in higher education on 9th July 2017. All these digital initiatives are operational under Union Ministry of Human Resource and Development.

- Swayam: It an indigenously designed massive open online course (MOOC), It will host all the courses, taught in classrooms from 9th class till post-graduation and can be accessed by anyone, anywhere at any time. It aims to bridge the digital divide for students in e-education.
- Swayam Prabha: It will provide high quality educational contents, developed by experts, through 32 DTH (direct to home) Television Channels with an aim to bring uniformity in standards of education. It will cover diverse disciplines of all levels of education in various languages. It will be available to all and will be having new content of 4 hours to be telecasted 6 times a day.
- National Academic Depository: It is a digital depository of academic awards for authenticating all certificates issued by institutions. NAD will directly integrate with Boards/Universities which issue Certificates which will be verified, authenticated, accessed and retrieved in a digit depository for purpose of employment, higher education, and loans.

- National Digital Library: It is a large online library containing 6.5 million books. It provides free access to many books in English and the Indian language.

Budget 2018 on E-Learning

Budget highlights Digital learning infrastructure development in rural as well in urban area to strengthen digital study interfaces. Below are some points noted in Union Budget 2018 on E-Learning:

- Students will be provided affordable laptops and tablets for easy access to e-tutorials and online interaction with teachers.
- Digital teaching modules can help in creating online student forums and virtual classrooms creating a conducive environment for subject discussion and easy reference material.
- Use of tools like audio and video conferencing can also go a long way in the dissemination of academic courses to student communities. In order to create a tech-savvy student fraternity, proper training will have to be imparted to teachers to adapt to digital technologies and develop key learning skills.
- The government will push for creating tailored teacher training programs through online training modules.
- E-learning kendras should be set up in the nooks and corners of rural India which will help teachers gain increased access to advanced teaching technologies. This will improve the technological proficiencies of teachers, simplifying the process of imparting of knowledge through digital tools and creating a harmonious student-teacher relationship.
- Rs 2,059 crore: Budget expenditure in 2016-17 toward Digital India, eLearning, ePanchayat and Land records modernisation.

Advantages of e-learning

- E-learning ensures a consistent, high-quality academic delivery that is not dependent on the availability of teachers or their skill set.
- With e-learning, even the most difficult-to-explain concepts can be converted into digital format. Children remember videos more than they would remember a chalk-and-talk session. Moreover, teachers will get free time to explain the finer points when the basic concepts are explained with the help of digital modules.
- Students in remote areas, who otherwise would not have any access to high-calibre specialist teaching, now have access to pre-recorded lectures, documentaries and other video content that can be viewed when needed.

- Computer-based self-paced learning is a necessary tool that students need for higher studies. Individualized learning enables everyone to learn and excel at their own pace.
- Even though basics seldom change, textbooks have to be constantly updated to stay in tune with changing times, latest developments and new discoveries. Textbooks are expensive to purchase, maintain and deliver. Digital delivery ensures that content is always updated.
- E-learning can reduce the cost of education by reducing the cost of infrastructure. E-learning costs are split over a large number of students over a large number of years.
- Remote test administration for students and applicants is now feasible with e-learning. Standardised tests can now be delivered securely and on time to meet testing schedules.
- With e-learning proving its mettle in terms of cutting down costs and adding value to the lives of students, the Government of India has been taking some proactive measures in a regulatory and financial capacity to give impetus to the growth of e-learning.
- Funds have been invested to set up Internet kiosks in rural areas for the purpose of communication, which can also be used for the e-learning initiative.
- The Government is also looking at public-private sector partnerships to facilitate learning to rural and remote areas of India. Using the public-private partnership (PPP) model, several organisations have been set up to facilitate learning.
- In various states in the country, the Government is investing in e-learning programs for center and state-run schools. These innovative modern classrooms will enable lakhs of young Indian students with higher technical skills to deal with the 21st century world.

Public Private Partnership

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have generated a lot of interest from governments around the world for leveraging private sector involvement in developing and sustaining public infrastructure and services. Initially, PPPs were favored by transport, energy, and other large infrastructure-intensive sectors. More recently, the concept has been expanded to include social sectors such as education. In the education sector, PPPs have been used for building school infrastructure, managing schools, and designing innovations in educational technology such as low-cost devices. While the PPP models adopted for these education projects differ from the models that have been used for large infrastructure projects, the underlying principles have been retained. Innovations in information and communication technology (ICT) are recognized as an important option for increasing access to education and for providing high-quality learning materials and experiences

PPPs for education (E-Learning)

The following E-Learning services have been identified as lending themselves to a PPP approach:

- Providing connectivity to the education sector to enable effective use of online educational services and web-based applications to assist teachers in customizing the student learning experience to achieve greater learning outcomes;
- Providing centrally managed, e-learning based transversal systems (such as education management information systems, human resource planning and development systems, or financial management systems) that facilitate the collection of, and access to, management information across all levels of the education system;
- Providing fit-for-purpose online communication systems to all relevant personnel and learners;
- Providing ICT hardware and software to enable educators and administrators to use ICT-based, time-saving administrative and curriculum/educational tools;
- Managing online professional development systems for educators and administrators;
- Offering pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities to educators; school, college, or university managers and administrators; and support personnel who focus on effective use of e-Learning;
- Establishing and managing online communities of practice;
- Providing learners with access to repositories of digital knowledge and other resources;
- Making educational resources, tools, and information electronically accessible for learners and educators to use and adapt; and
- Providing learners with access to online, distance learning courses to help them complete subjects, courses, or programs and to meet the growing demand for education.

Successful examples of PPP in E-Learning

E-Learning at Elementary Level under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

Government of India proposed utilisation of PPP arrangement to various state governments for promoting E-Learning in various schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The objective of launching E-learning is to impart interesting and joyful learning through contents with multimedia effect. Local school or state government would act as public sector partner whereas private and public computer firms would act as private sector partner in the said PPP arrangement. As far as computer aided learning projects are concerned, effective utilisation of PPP arrangements can be widely seen in three states i.e. Gujarat,

Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Assam. Few popular examples of PPP in the field of E-learning project are as follows:

- The Vidyateerth PPP programme is a part of the Gujarat government's effort to provide urban amenities in rural areas. The PPP will consolidate smaller schools to provide high quality education in rural areas close to urban areas. This peri-greenfield model of PPP implementation will be a tri-partite agreement between the state government, public sector utilities and private operators. The programme will eventually cover 255 locations. As of now, 35 partners have come on board and agreements for 20 locations have been completed. The government will be responsible for providing the teachers. The private operators will be responsible for providing curriculum expertise and training. The PSUs will play the role of the monitoring partner on the project. Schools will follow the state board curriculum. The government will reimburse approximately ₹11,000 on a per student basis, while the PSUs will be responsible for providing infrastructure and other costs. The release of government funding would be triggered by schools meeting performance standards for students' learning.
- Tamilnadu State Government: State government of Tamilnadu introduced this programme for Upper Primary level from class VI to class VIII. It entered into a contract with over 200 firms, which includes supply of hardware, software, training, operations, and maintenance. Each firm has been allocated an area of operation, allocating particular geographical area and a number of schools.
- PPP between Azim Premji Foundation (APF) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Karnataka: This project has been implemented in Karnataka in 135 schools. The Azim Premji Foundation has developed e-learning material on CDs in different languages including English, Kannada, Hindi and Telugu. The foundation has also made available solar panels for running of computers in areas without electricity. Rooms and computer hardwares have been made available by Karnataka government through SSA funds.
- PPP between EDUCOMP and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Assam: Educomp has launched an e-learning project for SSA Assam in 500 schools on BOOT (Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer) basis. Computer aided learning systems through BOOT arrangement provides for an integrated package of hardware, customized software and training of teachers. Educomp developed e-learning material in three different local languages of Assam to facilitate learning in different mediums of instructions in the state.

Challenges and Practicality of E-Learning

The two types of challenges faced by PPP Model: implementation challenges and environmental challenges.

Type of Challenge	Details
Implementation Challenges	Insufficient and delayed reimbursements by the government
	Capacity bottlenecks in hiring and training principals and teachers
Ecosystem Challenges	Shortage of quality operators
	Limited and inconducive PPP policies
	Perception management of different stakeholders
	Absence of ecosystem enabler to facilitate implementation

Source: PPP in school education by Central Square Foundation (March 2014)

Implementation challenges

PPP policies will be ineffective if they face significant implementation challenges such as insufficient and delayed financial reimbursements and capacity bottlenecks of the provider to train or hire high quality teachers and school principals. The school management model of PPP implementation specifically faces the risk of opposition from teacher unions when it takes over a government school. In addition, the school adoption model faces the challenge of limited autonomy in introducing innovations in the school.

- **Insufficient and delayed reimbursements by the government**

Government reimbursement on a per student basis is a significant source of financial funding for providers. Therefore, it is vital that this reimbursement is disbursed regularly without delays and is sufficient to cover the expenditure incurred by school providers to turnaround the school.

- **Capacity bottlenecks in hiring and training quality principals and teachers**

In PPPs, high quality principals and teachers are vital agents who introduce innovations and facilitate the school turnaround. However, private operators face the challenge of hiring and training an adequate number of high quality principals and teachers. This limits their ability to achieve scale.

- **Risk of opposition from teacher unions**

This challenge applies specifically to the school management model of PPP implementation. The providers face the risk of opposition from teacher unions when they introduce pedagogical, management and governance changes.

- **Limited autonomy**

This challenge is specific to the implementation of the school adoption model, wherein the private operator has limited autonomy over the hiring, firing and daily management of teachers. As a result of this, the private operator has limited levers with which to hold teachers accountable for student learning.

Ecosystem Challenges

PPP models face several system-level challenges that hamper successful implementation.

- **Shortage of quality operators**

Quality private operators who can facilitate outcomes at scale find it difficult to participate in PPPs because of the viability gap funding, which impacts their sustainability and scalability.

- **Limited and in conducive PPP policies**

It is important to create policies with a clear value-proposition for both the government and private operators. A well-defined PPP policy would clearly outline processes of selection and evaluation of private operators with an aim to ensure that only high quality providers enter a PPP contract. Further, these policies would have accountability measures to assess progress toward predetermined performance standards.

- **Perception management of different stakeholders**

Operators seeking to implement PPP schools face multiple challenges in managing expectations with government, parents and the broader education ecosystem. With the government, they have to allay concerns that they have a profit motive in running these schools. With parents and families, they have to overcome the perception of low quality in government schools and persuade them to re-enter the system. Finally, they have to manage ecosystem expectations that PPPs are a silver bullet to solving education problems.

- **Absence of ecosystem enabler to facilitate implementation**

Presence of education PPPs, there is the need for a catalytic agent that can help shape policies and bring together governments, private players and donors. For instance, the US-based NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) is a catalyst that helps seed new operators and brings different stakeholders on a common platform.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Encourage the Development of Regulatory Frameworks a robust regulatory framework is often the crucial precondition for successful PPP development. Such frameworks can help negotiate product positioning by

large Information Technology companies, CSR initiatives, and demand-driven PPPs. A government regulatory framework and policies underpinning good governance can provide the necessary foundation for the implementation of sound e-learning partnerships. From the above study, the success of PPP model depends on the creation of a sound PPP framework, Autonomy and financial incentives for private companies to demonstrate proof-of concept models with a potential to scale and last but not the least ecosystem conditions that can aid the successful implementation of whole school PPPs model. In spite of various challenges and hindrances in E-Learning initiative, Government and Private Firms are making it big and future ready.

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