

# Challenges of Corporate E-learning in India

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**ABSTRACT:** *E-learning in an organization can be defined as a kind of training delivered via computer that meets individual learning as well as organizational goals. The key to success of E-learning is to achieve the organizations strategic goals through reliable learning. In order to do so, companies need to deliver high-quality training programs that potentially can offer good returns to corporations within their current training plans.*

*Training being a crucial part for efficient operative functioning of employees, corporate E-learning programs often end up in disappointment. This paper discusses the challenges faced by employees and companies in applying E-learning approach of training and development. It also identifies the factors that hinder the growth of e-programs in organizations. The findings are supported by conducting an online survey on power sector in India.*

**KEYWORDS:** E-learning, training and development, Corporate learning, E-learning challenges

## I INTRODUCTION

Until about 20 years ago, training was not done in front of a computer, but in the classroom with a qualified trainer. Due to technological advancement, organizations have started using computer based training and the field of E-learning began to take shape. In the early 1990s, many organizations provided videotape-based training to their employees.

The initiative of delivering training on video was not the perfect solution, hence a new form of training evolved, i.e., CBT or Computer based Training. Although, CBT proved more effective but it was unable to measure employee performance in a central database and was also not easy to upgrade. As a result E-learning emerged into. (Clark, 2002)

The term "E-learning" came into existence in the year 1999, the word was initially used at a CBT systems seminar. Other words also began to get noticed in search of an exact description such as "online learning" and "virtual learning". In 2000s, enterprises started adopting E-learning to train their employees. New and experienced workers were having opportunity to advance their industry knowledge base and broaden their skill sets. It allowed individuals at home to access programs that enabled them to earn online degrees and enrich them

through extended knowledge.

E-learning is relevant across all areas of employee training including: career development training; new employees' orientation; information on new services or products or just sharing and enhancing work knowledge, competencies, and skills (Harun 2002). In order to respond quickly to persistently changing learning needs, E-learning has emerged as the best and most viable option for corporations. Technological breakthrough and the skills needed to fully exploit and manage it have escalated the demand for organization wide E-learning solutions. There are a variety of E-learning products and services available to meet majority of the organizational training needs.

## II RATIONALE FOR E-LEARNING

Teaching and training in their traditional senses are ways of delivering knowledge, just like a proverbial one-way street. E-learning ensures the possibility of better interaction and direct engagement, thus offers real chances to improve information standards and learner's morale.

The justification for adopting E-learning can be understood as:

- There is no need to engage all employees for training at the same time. They can choose their own respective time and place of learning as per their convenience.
- It is self-paced and if required, the content is recorded and provided as and when needed by the employee.
- No time limitations. It can be delivered in parts or all at once wholly as per the learner's requirements instead of the trainer's comfort.
- A variety of courses can be conducted and managed through suitable LMS (Learning Management Systems) by a small number of experienced training administrators. LMS can also maintain records of participation in number of courses, test scores, time taken, etc for each learner which can provide intelligent data to enhance employee's skills.
- Measurement of learning becomes possible as performance of each participant can be measured with the help of various ways like score tracking, progress tracking and time tracking. In earlier days this was typically not possible with traditional training practices.

## III REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section gives description of the perspective of E-learning potential in training and development, and some of the challenges and benefits of E-learning and how the E-learning courses allow participants to pick their own time and place for training. Review the literature was also done on employee attitudes regarding E-learning. The study reveals that while 84 per cent companies consider E-learning an efficient and cost effective tool for organizational learning, only 27 per cent use it as a Learning & Development tool.

**Naresh B, Dr. Bhanu Sree Reddy (June 2015)**, in the paper titled “Challenges and Opportunity of E-Learning in Developed and Developing Countries-A Review” compares the E-learning environment and its difference between the developing countries. This paper identifies the problems faced by those countries. The developing

country faces more challenges like lack of infrastructure, trained instructors, lack of financial support, Government policies and less student readiness. But E-learning provides more opportunity since it is in developing stage. The things that are to be learned from developed countries are support from the government, proper training regarding technology and awareness of E-learning and user's readiness to learn new technology. If the developing countries could adopt the success factors of developed countries in terms of E-learning implementation, there is a huge potential for the growth of E-learning in developing countries since it has a large population and huge difference in student and faculty enrollment ratio. In developed countries, government provides financial support for developing E-learning with clear action plans for future proceedings. They have uninterrupted electricity supply and internet facility. Even though developed countries are strong in infrastructure, the challenges faced are found related to student engagement, student motivation, and high student drop out ratio. Opportunity for the developed countries is to implement successful E-learning models, which in turn improves the economic growth of the country. They increase productivity to maximum level with minimum effect by using ICT through which knowledge can be shared across the world. If proper steps are taken, challenges and the differences between the developed and developing countries can be minimized to a greater extent by implementing E-learning in higher education. Developing countries like India the premium institution (IIT's) taking some initiation towards implementing E-learning in an Indian context. NPTEL is the portal created by IIT's and they have started offering online courses across the world.

**Anand Rimmi, Saxena Sharad, Saxena Shilpi (June 2012)** in their research paper titled "E-Learning and its impact on rural areas" study about the awareness and impact of E-learning in selected rural areas in India. The result indicates that E-learning is found to be highly emerging knowledge tool today. In developed as well as in developing countries E-learning can bring lot of benefits. E-learning has much wider scope in the areas which are undeveloped and are not so educated. E-learning provides knowledgeable contents through CD, DVD, multimedia and other tools. The main limitation of this method is the availability of proper bandwidth, readiness of E-learners and a set of skills to deliver the content to learners. Overall, almost 48 per cent providers reported that E-learning is beneficial to rural gentry for advance knowledge, promotions and better job opportunities, and to learn new developing technologies in the market.

This study is aimed to determine challenges pertaining to training and development through E-learning. It also identifies the factors that hinder the growth of e-programs in organizations. This study is an attempt to overcome the concerns and fears that exist in the adoption of E-learning initiatives across power sector organizations. The main objective of this study is to explore and overcome the current work environment and difficulties in implementation of E-learning in Power sector.

- Taking into account the challenges faced by employees in E-learning program and to determine effectiveness of E-learning program in selected organizations, the respondents were asked to share their experiences they had with E-learning practices being followed in their organizations and to extend suggestions. The variables which have been identified in this study include E-learning, employee satisfaction, employee commitment, and job performance and organizational competitiveness. A random sample of 150 employees working in selected Indian power and energy companies was collected. Stratified Sampling Method was used to

represent the population and strata were made on the basis of different managerial levels and functional areas. Data collection was carried out by contacting the employees one to one to get the responses. A web based link was sent to sample of employees in participating organizations. Various statistical techniques were employed to examine the data such as Five-point Likert type numerical scales ranging from Highly Agree to No Idea and No influence to very significant influence were used.

The study is based on primary and secondary data taken from designed questionnaires and published annual reports of the covered organizations.

#### **IV E-LEARNING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

E-learning despite predictions, cannot kill traditional training and education. Many senior executives hesitate to adopt E-learning as a mode to train their employees. Some of the reasons that pose resistance in using it are its novelty, lack of knowledge, insufficient budget, lack of IT infrastructure, and employee resistance to the idea (Ettingeretal.2006a).

E-learning too requires time for attending sessions and completing assignments like any traditional learning course. For implementing a successful E-learning program, companies need to understand its limitations and develop a well thought out plan to implement it in order to succeed. In addition to the lack of understanding, budget limitations, technology infrastructure, and reactions of employees, E-learning standards are posing challenges. The limitations of these standards include the portability of content from one system to another that can create trouble.

E-learning is considered by organizations as a new training possibility and as a prospect to economize time and money. Nevertheless, quite often, poor quality learning experiences and a high percentage of losses are observed.

- Lack of learners' motivation. It is one of the most common E-learning challenges that E-learning professionals must overcome. Learners often have this set belief that conventional training programs are more effective because they believe they can be more fruitful in a familiar environment.
- Busy learner schedule. Many employees resist taking an E-learning course because they suppose that they won't be able to go at their own pace or that it will require a great deal of their time. Also, trying to keep track of learners' progress can be the most difficult challenge to address.
- The belief that E-learning environment offers no support. It is a general misconception and drawback that E-learning courses are isolated and offer no support for their learners. Also, virtual environment is not enough to sustain learner interest.

#### **Challenges being experienced pertaining to T&D through E-learning**

In an online survey done on Indian power and energy companies respondents were asked to rank the challenges being experienced by the employer in implementing E-learning practice in their organization. A statistical significant difference was found among average ranks of challenges being experienced pertaining to T&D

through E-learning at workplace. It was found that Employee Resistance to E-learning got the highest importance whereas Inappropriate Learning Culture was given the least importance.

## V FINDINGS

Although approachable, employees and companies are reluctant to accept this approach of training due to cost, expertise, and reliability issues.

Some common challenges and obstacles faced by organization implementing an E-learning solution are:

- **Budget**

Initial investment requirement for E-learning solution is larger due to content and program development costs. Budgets and cash flows are needed to be negotiated.

- **Technology and security related issues**

Technology related issues like whether the existing hardware and software setup can help to achieve the training goals or additional technological expenditures will be required and whether all software and hardware setups are compatible.

- **Limited in scope**

Improper content of E-learning may pose a challenge in view of some experts, though they are limited in number.

- **Organization's Culture**

Organization's Culture can be an issue where learner's demographics and psychographics may influence them against using computerization for E-learning programs.

- **People resistance**

Employees are naturally resistant to change. It may be difficult to convince management to make the investment and the employees to enroll for E-learning program. Employees may find themselves falling behind or moving at a slower pace in the enrolled programs.

## VI FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

These research findings have implications for human resource managers and employee training investment decisions. The importance of E-learning cannot be exaggerated. With at least 84% of survey respondents using E-learning at work, employers and human resource managers should think strategically before investing in the training delivery method that is most effective for their organization. E-learning topics must be aligned with the company's strategic goals.

## VII CONCLUSION

As per the analysis it could be concluded that E-learning can provide flexible learning options for employees and allow them to up-skill more rapidly. E-learning in the workplace can decrease the costs of training workforce through reducing travel and employee time away from work. E-learning is particularly useful for a

geographically dispersed workforce because it can deliver a consistent training experience. E-learning provides consistency in training, increased convenience and control of learning for learners, improved monitoring capabilities for employers, and reduced costs by decreasing travel costs and employee absenteeism. However, it has some drawbacks but if managed systematically, offers better results. Employee motivation and ability to use technologies are important factors in E-learning participation, along with how the organization supports their employees to conduct E-learning as part of their daily routine. Some employees also believed that their company leaders continued to invest in E-learning and that eLearning is an effective tool for training and development. However, employees continue to face difficulties when using eLearning.

Attitude of an individual play an extremely important role in his performance. Thus, in spite of the availability of the best of knowledge and skill, the ability to provide the desired services may still be found wanting in individuals if they are not imbued with appropriate attitudes. The only challenge here is to encourage and keep the spirit of learning high among the employees so that they themselves want to invest the time and efforts both. At the same time, without motivation from top management, it is difficult to implement corporate E-learning strategy. There was a significant and positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Top & Gider, 2013). Therefore, management should consider these two factors carefully so that the full benefits of E-learning are realized.

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