

Study on Assessing E- learning initiatives in secondary schools

Background & Rational of the Study

'E-Learning' is a buzz word in the world education platform in 21st century. In the field of education the last decade is characterized by a growing interest in e-learning (Alam, Kabir & Elizabeth, 2000). But in recent time, Govt. of People's Republic of Bangladesh government has taken an initiative to introducing e-learning idea in our education systems particularly at secondary level.

Primarily, the concept of e-Learning is based on the delivery of learning by using technology. According to Allen (2003), E-learning is a way of purposeful use of electronic systems or computer in support of the learning process. This definition means that e-learning depends on computer in short sense, but in broad are it depends on Information and communication technology. Furthermore, E-Learning is an umbrella term that describes learning done at a computer, usually connected to a network, giving us the opportunity to learn almost anytime, anywhere (Mishu, Khairullah & Roy, 2007). Finally, E-learning refers to the use of electronic media and information and communication technologies (ICT) in education. But, some modern terms used as explain E-learning such as online learning, online education, distance education, distance learning, technology-based training, web-based training, computer-based training etc. (Mishu, Khairullah, et al. 2007).

The history of e-learning is not so far. E-learning was first introduced in Bangladesh in 1956 by a radio broadcasting program, and later expanded much by the establishment of BOU in 1992 (Mishu, et al. 2007). The present situation is totally different because of huge usage of technology. 'Digital Bangladesh' is a vision of our ruling government. They have taken a vision named 'vision-2021'. For this reason, they have taken some initiatives to develop our education system. For example, the Education Policy 2010 has given more importance on E-learning particularly in information technology education. They have chosen two main objectives in that section. They said that, to produce competent manpower of international standard, trained and educated in information technology to perform efficiently in relevant fields. They also said that Information technology will not be limited to computer science only, rather mobile phones, radio, television data collection and processing of information are also to be included and emphasis will be given on its multi-angular necessity (Education policy, 2010). For this reason E-learning is more important for secondary level student.

Therefore, it is important to explore the readiness of secondary level education for introducing E-learning. In this connection, this study focuses on identifying the feasibility of introducing e-learning at secondary level in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to identify the introducing feasibility of e-learning in secondary level in Bangladesh. The following research questions have addressed throughout the study to achieve the stated aim:

1. What is the present situation of E-learning at secondary level in Bangladesh?
2. How students and teachers will be benefited from E-learning in secondary level?
3. How does E-learning can be introduced at secondary level in Bangladesh?
4. What are the challenges to introduce E-learning at secondary level?

Major Findings

Based on the analyses of the collected data the following major findings have been identified considering the stated objectives of this study. The major findings are:

- The Head teachers and assistant teachers had good experiences in teaching at Secondary level. Majority of the assistant teachers are of at least 5 years of teaching experiences whereas majority Head teachers had at least 10 years of experiences at Secondary schools.
- Majority of the assistant teachers had Bachelor degree as academic qualification. On the other hand, majority of the head teachers had Masters Degree in different areas. Majority of the secondary level school assistant teachers and head teachers had B.Ed. related professional training. Aside from B.Ed. as professional degree/training few of them had M.Ed. or others professional training.
- Almost all the secondary schools had computers and maximum school had more than 2 computers. Majority of the school computers were assembled in computers' laboratories. The schools computers were also placed at head teachers' room or at office room. Most of the computers were used in office purposes, head teachers purposes, computer teachers' activities and students' purposes.
- All the assistant teachers received training on ICT but very few of them got training on E-learning. Training on ICT and E-learning were rarely found for the Head teachers. Those trainings were mainly provided by the government authorities or departments.
- The teachers were familiar with the computer operating systems especially with the basic computer software such as MS Word, MS Power Point, MS Excel and E-mail.
- Almost all the respondents thought that use ICT and E-learning can enhance the effectiveness of teaching learning activities. They also thought that ICT and E-learning based classroom will make the students attentive in learning, learning will be easy and interesting, and student will learn in creative ways.

- All the schools had limited facilities and opportunities regarding E-learning environment. The schools mainly have white/Black board, electricity and internet facility. However, smart board, electronic white board, alternative of electricity, over head projector, and multimedia projector were found insufficient.
- Implication of E-learning demands to offer continuous training for the teachers, infrastructural development, increasing of internet and digital opportunity in the Secondary schools as well as in the classrooms.
- The Secondary schools are not ready to start E-learning at this moment in most of the cases. Schools' position is seemed average considering the present situation. Several supports and facilities are needed to initiate E-learning at Secondary schools such as continuous electricity supply, ICT facility with internet connection, sufficient physical facility and necessary training for the teachers.
- Lack of training, lack of ICT infrastructure, teachers' lack of skills and interest, lack of using opportunities for teachers, lack of facility for the students and digital contestants are the main challenges to start E- learning at secondary level schools.

Recommendations

This study has been identified some recommendations to ensure the feasibility of introducing E-learning at Secondary schools considering the present perspectives.

- Government, NGOs and individuals should come ahead to increase the number of computers in the secondary schools and the ratio of computer should be in terms of the students.
- Foundation training on ICT/E-learning for teachers should be provided to all schools and then refreshers training on the respective issues should be arranged twice in a year.
- IT organizations and Educational institutes should have a collaborative relationship to train up the teachers and others education officials who are monitoring and supervising the educational institutes. To build up the collaborative relationship, the government can initiate a policy.
- E-learning related all the material should be available at schools and must be cost effective so that schools can use the supplied materials and buy the required materials from available sources. Besides, all the teachers should have sufficient knowledge to run these materials and skilled persons should take the responsibility to provide knowledge related to E-learning and the head of institute should monitor and supervise the activities for the effectiveness of E-learning.

- The government should have especial budget for the ICT/E-learning for every year. The budget might be large and after that there should be a logical budget to ensure the E-learning facilities for the educational institution.
- To overcome the challenges of secondary level schools, at first infrastructural development, continuous power supply and environment of E-learning should be ensured at school level.