

A STUDY ON THE USE OF ICT TOOLS IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract – This paper focuses on the use of ICT and modern technologies in various educational institutions. In the fast moving world, new technology is accessible and easily available for all age groups of people. Higher educational institutions are trying to cope up with these technological changes. The faculty members also need to be tech-savvy in order to reach out to a large number of students coming from varied background. Users are reluctant to learn and also change their old ways of teaching. Resistance to adapting new means of teaching is always observed in the teaching-learning environment. Even though institutions are willing to invest huge amount of money the users are reluctant to learn and use the technologies. At times even institutions are reluctant to invest money as they are not sure about the usage of the new technology. In the process of introducing technological changes the employees need to be trained and the institutions need to take onus for the same. However teachers also need to take interest and learn new ways of teaching like students.

Key Words: ICT modern technology, Higher education, teaching-learning environment, tech-savvy, student background, employees training, etc.

1 INTRODUCTION

A few decades ago people worked manually using paper, files, typewriter, and so on to collate data. Earlier data was only stored as hard-copies and in files occupying a lot of storage space. The use of computer was minimal and considered a luxury. However with the progress of societies and improvement in technology, computers have become a necessity. With technology now at the figure-tip access to information and expansion of business has become easy and convenient. Technological expansion has led to space and time shrinking. The technology that is available is accessible for people of all age groups, cultures across countries and at any time. The changing scenario in

the field of technology has changed the way education is being provided to students.

The providers of private education are forced to provide students with the best available technologies. In educational institutions, staff members are trained to use various software's to manage student and employee data. Institutions choose to use modern technology because it is the need of the time, along with meeting customer demands. Educational institutions need to service all the stakeholders and maintain good customer service. Along with providing good quality education the need is also to provide for a sophisticated and convenient environment for the students. Hence if educational institutions need to sustain they need to provide good quality infrastructure, commitment to learn and most importantly the need to adapt to the changing time. In the pursuit to sustain and survive in these changing times, educational institutions have to use modern technology. With rapid changes in technology, employees are also forced to use new technologies even though they may initially not be very comfortable with these new systems. At times the employees are reluctant to adapt to the new changes (Manual on Librarians in Higher Education, 2002).

In a scenario where changes is inevitable and yet resisted, a perfect harmony needs to be maintained where new technology is adapted and the stakeholders benefit from the technological advancement. This paper studies how private educational institutions invest in modern technology and how faculty members strive to cope with the new changes at the workplace

2 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Some of the literature available in this field of study had been reviewed in the course of this paper. The researcher has reviewed some articles and books from various sources to facilitate a better understanding for the topic under study. Rajen, H. (2004) speaks of the movement where the world will become one whole unit with consciousness of the people (Rajen, 2004). Rajen accepts Malcolm Water's view on globalisation where social and cultural boundaries are reducing irrespective of their geographical limits along with growing people's consciousness. The author also speaks of the growing need for modernisation and technology. The author points out that there is a free passage for goods, ideas, technology, information, values and also people as a result of globalisation. In another book the author's views globalisation as a complex process that connects the world through Economics, Politics and Culture (Jogdand & Michael, 2003). The interaction between these factors

further intensifies with growing communication and faster travel. This leads to an increase in the amalgamation of various cultures. The incorporation of culture leads to an easy increase in technology, modernisation and breaking down of cross cultural boundaries. In the article the author speaks about how globalisation has impacted the field of education as well (Poisson, 1998). The author speaks of how globalisation has revolutionised education. Due to the globalisation there is an expansion of markets beyond limits. The need of the hour is to withstand these changes in a multifaceted environment.

In another article the author (Kumar, 2008) speaks about how information management systems are important in educational institutions. Educational institutions are growing in size as the numbers of students enrolling in these institutions are increasing. Hence it becomes important to have an information system to manage all the staff and student details. Institutions that use advanced technologies standards are more preferred by students. The major challenge for educational institutions are retaining students. Students come to educational institutions with an expectation that the administrative systems will be up-to-date with the market system.

Another article speaks of how the 2/3rd of the teachers belong to the developing countries (Grauwe, 1998). This article speaks of how teachers are important to share the information to the world and carry on the legacy of teaching history to the world. On the other hand when individuals are not able to find jobs the people in the teaching profession are blamed on account of not having proper standards of education. The author also speaks of how with the growth in multiple choices to learn and technological advancement, teachers have become an additional source of information givers and not the sole source of information transmission.

Devi S, Rizwaan M & Subhash C (2012) share the importance of ICT in educational institutions. They discuss how there is a growing need to provide quality education. In order to cater to the growing demands on improving the standard of education the importance of training teachers to be updated with the various ICT tools becomes crucial. As advancement of technology leads to satisfying all the stakeholders involved with the educational institutions. Roy Neeti and Jain Yogendra also has mentioned the importance of ICT in the field of education. In the article the authors have mentioned that in the changing times the need to be update with the technology. The article speaks of how the use of ICT has revolutionised the field of education. Madhu R. Sekhar, writing 'India on the Launching Pad' in Yojana, October 2005, speaks about how India is the favourite destination for most IT companies due to the availability of skilled manpower. She speaks about how India and Ireland are leading destinations for available and economically viable talent in the global market. India is the chosen destination for most multinational companies due to cheap skilled

manpower. Capable and efficient manpower is a major attraction for multinationals to invest in India.

All these article has spoken about shrinking the geographical limits, increasing challenges for the people at work, and how the onus of maintaining students in the educational institution lies with the use of ICT tools. The teaching community plays a crucial role as the interact with the students and impart education. This paper also focuses on how the faculty in educational institutions are coping with this global trend and are also learning to adapt to the new technologies

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is carried out in a few private institutions in the city of bangalore. The reason to select a few educational institutions in bangalore is because bangalore is known as the 'IT Hub of India'. Another reason to select educational institutions in the city is that these institutions have an influx of students from affluent backgrounds and these students have access to the latest technologies available in the market.

The study is a qualitative study and has used the case study method to collate data. The data was collected using a semi-structured interview schedule. The specific private institutions were chosen based on their capacity of intake of students.

The objectives of the paper are:

- To study the impact of technology on teachers
- To access whether educational institutions are willing to spend money on new available technologies

The data was collected from private insitutions in Bangalore. The names of the institutions and respondents have not been mentioned due to the issues anomy. The insitutions selected were categorised based on the student capacity. The size of the institution was based on its student intake i.e. either 5,000, 10,000 and 12,000 students. The data is collected at two levels, one at the level of the institutions and the other at the level of the faculty members.Refer Table 1.1 for sample details;

Type of Sample	Details
Institutional Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Educational Institutions • The size of the institution was based on its student intake i.e. either 5,000, 10,000 and 12,000 students
Employees Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Faculty • Department of Humanities and Social Science across all institutions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees in the age group of 20 to 35 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees in the age group of 35 to 50 years teaching faculty • Employees above the age of 50

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis can be classified in two levels:-

1) Institutional level:

- a. The management spends a lot of money on technology which includes cost of new infrastructure, training people to use the technology and the amount of time spent in the entire process.
- b. The outdated gadgets, equipments and redundant technology is used the other branches of the institutions. Institutions invest a lot of money in implementing new technology and further invest in training the users to use these technology.

The data collated indicated that inspite of the opposition or resistance from the faculties, the institutions were willing to invest in technology that would enhance their brand image and make them even more competitive in the market.

2) Faculty level: Refer Table 1.1

Faculty Level Data

Table 1.1

Categories	Respondents above the age of 50	Respondents between the age group of 35 to 50 years	Respondents between the age group of 20 to 35 years
Age & Designation	Employees in above the age of 50, working as Associate Professor	Employees between the age group of 35 to 50 years, working as Assistant Professors some as Associate Professors	Employees between the age group of 25 to 35 years, working as Assistant Professors
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have been observing lot of changes in academic field in the aspects of technology • They felt that the learners are confident and seemed to know everything and even if they don't know they have the confidence that they will find the details they need on their finger tips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group of employees are willing to change with time • They are not technologically empowered • They are willing to change and learn and not rigid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel that the students are also tech-savvy and very advanced in handling the modern technologies <p>The students today are able to cross-check what is taught in class and also to have access to a world of knowledge anywhere and anytime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These faculties feel that this has made classroom discussions more lively, interesting and interactive • The teacher is no more a instructor but a facilitator • The academic environment has become even more challenging.
Adjustment and Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advancement in technology forces the faculty members to learn the new ways of teaching and adapt to new technologies and unlearn the old ways of teaching • They mentioned that, it is difficult to keep pace with the changing technologies. For example today the students are very comfortable using the latest phones and electronic gadgets, while these faculty members are still trying to operate these electronic gadgets as to how to switch on or off these phones • These employees have to be additionally prepared to handle classes as the students now are informed individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are willing to take additional assistance to learn new things • They mention that change is inevitable and hence they are willing to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These employees feel confident themselves to handle modern technology • They are able to adapt to the changing technology with some amount of training.
Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These faculty members also mentioned that they find it difficult to keep pace with the changing technology • They feel there is no need to learn new things when it is almost time to retire and hence they were not keen to spend time on learning new technologies. • The other concerns was that, students spend less time reading and going to the library to study, while they spend more time with electronic gadgets • Faculty members were reluctant to accept change. It required a lot of coaxing and compulsion for faculty members to actually agree to use the technology at work. This in turn leads to a hesitation on the part of the institutions sometimes to invest in new technologies immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They find it difficult to keep pace with the younger generation • They like to challenge themselves and change with time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group of respondents did not have any concerns to share • They felt that the academic environment has become even more challenging. •

4 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Below listed are some of the suggestions: -

1. Educational institutions are hesitant to invest money to immediately change and modify technologies available in these institutions due to the high-cost involved. This is also because institutions need to find alternatives to use the already existing technology. Along with the cost of the technology, the infrastructure also needs to be modified for example the use of LCDs in all classes, the required cable and electrical connections are required, along with giving basic training to use the instrument.
2. In spite of the high-cost involved, even when the institutions do invest in modern technologies the users are reluctant to use these technologies. Change is not accepted immediately. Change is always frowned on. Most common phrase is that we will be spending more time learning to use the new technologies, instead we can be reading and preparing better for class.
3. In the process of introducing technological changes in educational institutions, the onus to train the employees also lies with the institutions. The cost involved to train faculties is huge. This is amount that is not taken from the faculties. For teachers this is like sitting in class similar to students without taking interest to actually learn, but an opportunity to be more critical of the training program.
4. The employees need to work over their inhibitions and take an initiative to learn the new technologies. Employees need to have an urge to learn and experiment. The teachers also need to have an inquisitive mind along with technical skills.
5. In the process of keeping pace with the technological advancement of students the need of the hour is that employees need to adapt to new technological aids of teaching. The employees need to learn to use modern technology to meet global standards.

Especially, the employees in the age-group of 50 years and above need to be given special training sessions and coaching to help them be up-beat with the younger employees at work. Older faculty members need more time to adapt to changes in technologies. Being patient with these employees can be a fruitful exercise because these employees also show some eagerness to learn. The use of ICT in teaching has changed the way of teaching and learning. The implementation and use of advanced technology has improved the teaching-learning environment (Kumar, 2016). Change is the most difficult thing for most human beings. Most people are comfortable with their own position and are unwilling to adapt to new ways of life. In a pursuit to survive it is mandatory for both

institutions and faculty members to learn to adapt to modernising global world.

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