



E-SKILLS: THE NEW HORIZON FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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SRJIS IMPACT FACTOR SJIF 2016: 6.177

Date of Issue Release: 04/05/2017,

Volume: SRJIS, Mar-Apr, 2017, 4/31



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1. Introduction :

Knowledge is the base of learning. Knowledge is useful to apply it to solve the problems. Skill is one of the ways to use the knowledge. Most of the educational researches in India, focus on achievement of knowledge by learner. The paradigm of the research should be shifted to the application level of learner. Worldwide research work is going on skills. The government of India started skill education too.

ICT is one of the growing fields of education. ICT is an operational subject where user needs to work on computers. There should be more focused on practical than knowledge in case of ICT. Skills should be the area of research in case of ICT. There are many researches done on achievement of knowledge regarding ICT. The new horizon of the education research can be e-skills. If someone wants to make research on eskills, one should know the worldwide scenario in e-skills.

2. Organization for Economic – Co operation and Development (OECD)

OECD countries are facing a growing gap between the supply and demand gap for ICT skills. OECD working for the development of eskills among users. These countries are interested to make support for e-skill development.

OECD countries started their work in the field of e-skill education prominently in 2004. They published a report 'New Perspectives on ICT skills and employment' in 2004. They categorized the e-skills competencies in to three categories.

1. **ICT specialist** – Ability to develop operate and maintain ICT system.
2. **Advanced user** – Advance users of advanced and often sector specific software tools.
3. **Basic user** – Basic users of generic tools need for information society, e-government and working life.

In the **OECD report 2012** the expectation about ICT skills development is expressed in following words.

Governments have focused on programme to equip schools with computers and to promote ICT in higher education. But for more efforts are needed to ensure that schools and teachers can use ICT effectively, to provide the right high end skills and to address new digital divides. As ICT is both a subject in itself and a promising tool to support learning across other subject, it requires innovative approaches to embed ICT as an integral part of skills development.

According to the OECD's teaching one in four teachers that they would like to have more training in ICT teaching skill'. Higher education should play important role to develop various levels of skills through special degrees.

OECD skill strategy sets out a coherent framework to develop e-skills which is based on three basics i.e. developing relevant skills, activating the supply of skills and the effective use of skills.

OECD published a report in 2012 entitled, ICT skills and employment new competencies and jobs for greener and smarter economy? In the statistics of various countries about ICT skills jobs are mentioned, few success stories are described too.

According to the said report education can play most important role in inculcation of e-skills and it should started from primary education. Few examples from various countries are shared as follows:

- The i-Japan strategy 2015 was developed in Japan.
- Italy's e-gov 2012 strategy which will invest EUR 241 million between 2009-2012 to increase digital innovation in schools.
- Spain's internet in classroom programme invested EUR 450 Million between 2006 to 2009 to make avail of broadband internet connection in educational institutions. Agrega, a national repository with downloadable educational resource developed for teachers.
- The German federal ministry of Education and research is promoting internet access and use in education institutions.
- Portugals education Technological plan is promoting ICT in Education by the series of projects e.e.g internet dealtavelocidade in which all primary and secondary schools have been equipped with broadband connectivity.
- The Norwegian government promotes ICT in higher education as a part of its national 'Strategy for joint promotion of Mathematic, science and Technology (MST)
- The Australian Government invested AUD 45 billion over 2008-13 for infrastructural improvement along with education and research capacity in educational investment under. Education investment fund scheme for higher education.

- In Korea, innovation in higher education and research institutions regarding ICT has been promoted. Korea's Ministry of knowledge Economy (MKE) is supporting universities to develop e-skills under Nurturing excellent Engineers in information and Technology (NEXT) Programme.

3. European e-skills forum (European Union)

European e-skill forum published a report in May, 2004. In the report the projection and prediction of e-skill development is described. The classification is of e-skill given in following way :

- **ICT Practitioner skills** : The capabilities required for designing, developing, installing, operation, supporting maintaining and managing ICT system. For the benefits of others.
- **ICT users skills** : The capabilities requires for effective use by the individual of ICT system for whatever purpose. ICT users make use of the system as tools in support of their own work. Users skills cover, basic digital literacy, the use of common software tools used in an office environment and specialized tools supporting major business functions within many types of work.
- **E-business skills** : The capabilities needed to exploit the business opportunities provided by ICT, to explore possibilities for new ways of conducting the business, perhaps even to established new business.

In above mentioned categories of e-skills, ICT user skills are required for teacher. So these kind OF e-skills should be included in teacher education. Because in education teachers are expected to make use of e-tools effectively rather than creating tools.

The report gives recommendation by European Commission to its countries that e-skill development programs should be introduced in schools, colleges and universities. E-skills should be a part of curricula. The expectation of research e-skill should be promoted.

The report strongly supports PPPs in the delivery of e-skill content which will change traditional education structure and will develop an alternative education and traditional channel.

European e-skills forum organized a conference from 20-21 Sept 2004 at Thessalonica, Greece. The theme was to make effective use of e-skills, e-knowledge and e-competencies for industry and business. It was common agreement on need of efforts to be made to increase investment in education and training, improve the cooperation between public and private sectors.

The report of the conference published entitled 'e-skills for Europe. Towards 2010 and beyond.' There were many recommendations were made to European Union Countries and some are related to education. One of the important recommendations was to design innovative learning solutions with help of policy makers and other stake holders. The research should be carried out to assess e-skills on various levels at formal and non formal education.

The report analyzed European situation in e-skill. Three types of e-skills deficiencies were considered.

- 1) *Shortage* : A insufficient number of skilled people in market.
- 2) *Gap* : A competence shortfall between the current and needed competencies level individuals.
- 3) *Mismatch* : A mismatch between the competences of the trainee or graduating student / learner and the expected competence needs of the employer. Mismatch is assumed to arise from curricula, misalignment.

In India we find all three kinds of deficiencies in education. Because of shortage, there is need to provide in service training courses for teachers. GAP is not main issue in ICT skills. Because the e-skills training just started 10/15 years back in teacher education and education. So teachers who got e-skill training that is useful now days even. Even mismatch is not deficiency in teacher education in India.

4. Conclusion :

There are following areas can be researched:

- The integrative e-skills needed for the ICT professional of the future.
- The role of ICT and learning in primary and secondary education to achieve wider interest and motivation for eskills.
- The development of the eskills among teachers on various levels.
- New partnership models between industry and academic institution to faster student involvement in ICT based innovation and entrepreneurial learning.

All over world, first importance is given to investment in ICT to develop e-skills. Even in India the commission established to develop skills including e-skills name "National Skills Development Commission" it has declares National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) which is targeted towards skill development. So there is huge scope to make research in e-skill.

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