

Educational Web Portals of Higher Education and Their Problems

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Abstract Web-based Education is becoming very popular in India at every level of education, which can be attained through online websites or Educational Web Portals. Educational Web Portals provide a variety of eBooks, articles, journals, research papers, online courses, and other educational resources. In this paper, we will discuss the utilities of Educational Web Portals in higher education and evaluate a different type of web portals that provide different options of learning in the Higher education field. This study is based on the experiences students and scholars who are the part of a Facebook page community from all over India and they are engaged in Web-Based Learning and help each other through online communication. The experience for English speaking scholars is different from non-English speaking scholars. The scholar coming from a non-English speaking background does not get the same quality of online resources as English Speaking Scholar has. This is a challenging problem and the researcher dwelled deeper for the solution. The researcher will discuss possible solutions to overcome this problem. She will suggest creating a glocal web portal which can be a bridge between the content creator and a learner in their local language. Such Glocal Educational web portals will help the non-English speaking scholars and will enhance researches at the local level.

Keywords Online Education, Web-based Education, Educational Web Portals, Non-english Speaking Scholar

1. Introduction

Web-based education is the emerging trend of education, and it is affecting every level of education, such as Pre-Primary Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Adult Education, Distance Education. Web-based Education is a significant

service provided in the hand of a learner. If a learner has an internet connection and internet-capable device, then he can quickly get quality Education irrespective of time, place, age. Web-based Education has terrific tools such as share options, online discussion, forums, Self-assessment quizzes, surveys, which create an inviting environment for a learner.

Web-based education in higher education India was started in the '90s. IGNOU, CEC, UGC, NPTEL, and IITs played a vital role in the contribution of web-based learning in Higher education. With the help of Web 2.0 tools, users can make contributions to the internet easily. An Educational content creator can easily upload web-based learning material on the internet without knowing HTML or any other programming language and a learner can smoothly access that information. In India, a learner has the free and quality e-content and e-learning materials developed by resource persons of renowned Institutes and Universities, which are uploaded on different websites having Search Engines from where a learner can search desirable learning materials. These materials are self-oriented, web-based, and self-paced. It is easy to find any web-based learning material on websites through search engines.

1.1. Web Portals and Search Engines

Web Portals are the websites which bring much software under one umbrella such as search engines, emails, forums and provide an excellent user interface, which helps internet user to get high quality and time-efficient experience. The type of web portals that are mentioned here is Indian Educational web portals for higher education, which have search engines where the user can access learning material.

The search engine is the software which enables the user to search the websites or keyword in the site and present result in a systemic way. A few examples are Google, Bing, Wiki, CC search, Slide share, and many

more.

1.2. Background of the Study

For this paper, the researcher collected experiences of users from a Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/UgcNetShikshaShastra>, who engages themselves in the discussion of Higher education exams for Education discipline. That page is for students who are in their post-graduation course (mostly M.A. education or M.ED.) or who had completed their post-graduation course and research scholars who want Junior Research fellowship (JRF) for their research. Students and scholars from all over India joined this platform where they do discussions and share the problems of their subject. This Facebook page is an online platform, so most of the learning materials exchanged between users are web-based. All users here are self-driven and self-disciplined. Their main aim to join this platform is to get help from their peer groups in qualifying the Higher Education Exams. The researcher is the administrator (Admin) of this Facebook page and successfully running this page since 2013. The researcher found that most of the users when they joined this page, had little knowledge about their subjects and frequently asked the Admin from where they must study so that they can get a detailed understanding of concepts. At this step, the researcher provides them with the information on several educational web portals of India from where they can search the relevant material. These portals are free and contain the standard quality of e-content materials, which was created by esteem teachers of our country. These portals help a user attaining knowledge. Users admire these websites as they get lectures and learning materials from the finest institutes of India. The researcher wants to notify some of these educational web portal websites here-

1. **INDCAT (Indian Catalogues)** <https://indcat.inflibnet.ac.in/> On this web portal, a learner can get Union Databases of many Libraries of India. We can access information about serials, thesis, books, monographs, and all other educational materials. It is powered by **INFILIBNET (Information and Library Network)**, which focused on modernizing University libraries and connecting them through a nationwide high-speed data network. (INDICATE, n.d.)
2. **CEC (Consortium for Educational Communication)** <http://cec.nic.in/Pages/Home.aspx> It has a Digital Media Library that has educational videos, e-learning material, and learning object repository (LOR). (CEC, 2012)
3. **IGNOU Online** <http://www.ignouonline.ac.in/> On this web portal, a learner can get EGYankosh and Webcast information.
- 1) **eGyanKosh** is a digital repository to store, index, distribute, preserve, and share digital learning resources for all disciplines.
- 2) **Webcast-** A learner can see schedules of videos and audios on all whose topic which telecasted on GyanDarshan Channel 1 and 2 and GyanDhara FM Channel. (IGNOU, n.d.)
4. **NPTEL (National Project on Technology Enhanced Learning)** <https://nptel.ac.in/> It provides web-based training to the students, especially engineering students. Here a learner can find courses in a different discipline. Courses contain series of videos, assignments and text files. NPTEL offers courses with certificates from the IITs/IISc for those who completed the courses successfully. (NEPTL, n.d.)
5. **VYAS channel** <http://www.webcast.gov.in/vyaslive/> it is a satellite channel of MHRD for higher education. Its main aim to supplements classroom teaching and make quality educative available for everybody. A website, VYAS LIVE launched, on which quality education is accessible by webcasting. (CEC, n.d.)
6. **SAKSHAT** <http://www.sakshat.ac.in> Major institutes of India, such as UGC, AICTE, IGNOU, NCERT, KVS, NVS, CBSE, IITs and IIMs have developed e-content for this portal to promote lifelong learning for all disciplines and subjects. The portal provides E-books, blogs, WebCast, Online chat, discussion forum, E-journals, digital library, and digital repository. (Mahat & Jamsandewkar, 2013)
7. **Shodhganga** <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/> on this portal, Indian Electronic Theses and Dissertations are available. It also helps in raising the standard and quality of the research by checking plagiarism. (Shodhganga, 2011)
8. **Shodhgangotri** <https://shodhgangotri.inflibnet.ac.in> This is a repository of electronic Synopsis and research proposal which are submitted to different Universities of India for PhD courses. (ShodhGangotri, n.d.)
9. **Eppgpathsala** <https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/> It is a platform to All Post Graduate Courses. It aims to provide high quality, curriculum-based, interactive e-content in 77 disciplines that have been developed by the subject experts of Indian universities and other research and development institutes of India. (ePGpathshala, n.d.)
10. **Vidhya Mitra** <http://vidyamitra.inflibnet.ac.in/> On this portal, a learner can access materials according to his educational use. The available content is in the form of Audio, Video, Text, Multimedia- enriched materials. (Vidya-Mitra, n.d.)
11. **eShodhSindhu** <https://www.inflibnet.ac.in/ess/> It is run by three consortia UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, NLIST, and INDEST-AICTE

Consortium which provide current as well as archival access to journals, bibliographic, citation and factual databases in different disciplines. (eShodhSindhu, n.d.)

12. **NDLI (National Digital library of India)** <https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/> It aims to integrate National and International Digital Libraries in one web-portal. It provides access to many eBooks, Thesis, Audio lectures, Video Lectures, Articles, Manuscripts, Question papers, Web Course, Reports, Monogram, Manuals, Law judgments, Albums, and many more other features. (NDLI, n.d.)
13. **Bharatavani** <http://bharatavani.in/> Its objective is to deliver knowledge in and about all the languages in India using a variety of media such as text, audio, video, images. Here a learner can get a dictionary, Bhashakosh, Janakosh, Multimedia Kosh, in a very Indian language. (Bharatavani, n.d.)
14. **SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds)** <https://swayam.gov.in/> A Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) web-portal, which provides high-quality education. The courses have eBooks, eNotes, Lecture series, online discussion forums, Self-assessment quizzes. UGC allows up to 20 % credit transfer into the academic record if a student is taking a course on the SWAYAM portal. (PIB, 2018)
15. **SWAYAM Prabha** <https://www.swayamprabha.gov.in/> SWAYAM Prabha program launched 32 DTH. It airs high-quality distance education, especially for the students of the remote area. These channels are also available as a webcast on swayamprabha.gov.in. (PIB, 2018)
16. **VIDWAN** <https://vidwan.inflibnet.ac.in/> This portal brings all experts, researchers, awardees, and resource persons under one roof. Here scholars and experts can upload their papers, add expertise, add Scopus and orchid IDs, can search and get connected with other experts.

2. Boon of the Educational Web Portals

All these above-mentioned portals are usually discussed on the Facebook page. The first reaction of most of the users from the Facebook Page when they find out this information was so much web-based content was available, and they were unknown to it. Indeed, excellent services provided by our esteem teachers, professors, Institutes and Government of India. From the experience of many users, researchers came to know that most of the time, the students in college did rote learning from low-quality guidebooks that were available in the market. They completed their academic exams and had their

degrees, but they did not perceive the concepts of their subject. When they start preparing for any competitive exam (like NET & JRF), then they realized their mistake. To excel in their careers, they do self-studies to clear their concepts. The educational web portals give these students a second chance and promote lifelong learning. SWAYAM, CEC, and NEPTL provide full series of online videos on many topics. Such smooth and free facilities let students engage more in their studies and impart quality education in every corner of the country. If a Student in self-disciplined and focused, then he can easily attain knowledge from the web-based learning material provided by renowned experts of our country.

3. Problems with Indian Educational Web Portals

The researcher wants to share some experience of users which they usually discussed on the Facebook page. These users are basically from non-English medium background and completed their entire education in non-English medium (i.e. in either of 22 Scheduled languages medium: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Santali, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. These are local languages of India and used in particular regions). One of the users who is studying at Guwahati University, Assam, in M.A. Education second semester, when he came to know about these Web portals, he said that he did not find anything relevant in the Assamese. Though he got great material in English, he would be more comfortable if he found something in the Assamese. The second user who passed M.A. Education from CSJM University, U.P., finds very little web-based learning material available in Hindi. For more investigation, the researcher met some research scholars of some Universities who had a non-English background. They also said that most research papers that are available on the internet are in English. A research scholar from a non-English background faces many difficulties in finding relevant topics for his research.

Moreover, Professors of Universities recommend Books of writers in the English language. Usually, Professors do not write their research papers or books in local languages, and even they do so, this information is limited to the students of their college. Other local students cannot able to access that professor's works. So, it is a difficult situation for a student from a non-English background to connect with updated knowledge in his local languages. For such students, it is challenging to digest English learning content.

We could suggest these students learn the English language or use translating software such as Google translator. Yes, these are possible solutions, but both

suggestions could not solve the problems from which these entire non-English speaking scholars and users are going through. So, the researcher finds here a significant gap in the process of achieving knowledge.

The researcher also talked to senior research fellow of non-English background and tried to investigate the solution to the problem. They said that they also went through the same situations and gradually learned English. Now they can read and write research papers and books in English.

According to the findings of UNESCO in 1956-

“It is through his mother tongue that every human being first learns to formulate and express his ideas about himself and about the world in which he lives.”

In 1956 UNESCO told the world about the importance of native language, but in India, we are still struggling in

giving importance to education in the native language (Saba, 2011), which persists at every level of education even in Web-based learning.

The researcher does believe that English is essential for a student if he wants to go for higher studies. However, being a country, which has so many diversities in cultures and languages, this monotonic solution of knowing the English language does not seem the right solution. India has such talented academicians; it is hard to believe that they are not contributing to their native languages. Although Researcher finds Many Universities has provided Self-learning Materials (SLM) in native languages for the students on their official Websites, these SLMs are limited to text files only; these are not as multimedia-rich as the English language Self Learning Materials are. Some advantages and disadvantages of educational web portals are-

Comparative discussion on Web-based Portals

S.No.	Name of educational Web Portal	Advantages	Disadvantages
	Consortium of Educational Communication (CEC)	Live lectures on different discipline.	Most of the lectures are in English language only.
	EGyankosh	Mostly have Text files	Files are mainly in the English language and some files are in the Hindi language.
	Vidwan	Can view the subject expert qualification	Connection with a local expert is difficult. To mean of communication like email, the messenger is absent
	Swayam Prabha	32 DTH channel which telecast educational content 24 hours.	Most of the episodes are in English. Few are in other languages like Hindi, Urdu
	Swayam	MOOC platform for higher education	Most of the Courses are in English. Few are in other languages like Hindi, Urdu
	Bharatvani	Knowledge portal for all 22 Scheduled languages (Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Santali, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu) of India.	Board spectrum of information, not much to do for teachers and students
	National Digital Library of India	Multimedia content from all over the country is available mainly in 8 languages i.e. English, Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi, Oriya, Kannada, Tamil	Though it provides content in many languages, it is overcrowded with English content.
	NPTEL	Courses for engineering students. Provide special English language bridge course for the students coming from the non-English background	Courses are mainly in English
	ePGpathshala	Content of all postgraduate courses	Mostly English has been used

4. Possible Solution and Proposals

After studying the above situations, the Researcher finds that Educational Web portals that are already present are providing their services very well, but still, these Web Portals are not able to solve problems of a learner from the non-English background. Thus, we need a clear perspective to encourage web-based education at the local level in local languages. The scholar from non-English background must have all the privileges as a scholar from English background have.

The researcher wants to draw two proposals. The first one is for content creators such as Research scholars, teachers, professors and Experts of higher education. They can write at least one research paper out of five in their local language or create e-content or OER with enriching multimedia in the local language. The second proposal is for IT department is to construct an educational web portal for both educator and learner which strictly search learning materials in the language of a local area, where the educator can provide research papers, books, journals and other web-based contents in the native language and a learner can easily access this information. Such web portals must launch for every area and in every language of our country. The uploading of contents in the English language must be restricted on such a web portal because English content will overcrowd the portal, and the utility of the web portal will be lost, but it could have the option of translators where English content will translate to the native language and vice versa. This portal will serve the local audience but can be accessed globally, so the researcher wants to term such a portal as a *GLOCAL Education web portal*.

5. Benefits of GLOCAL Educational Web Portals

- These portals will help a researcher to find relevant research papers in his local languages, and he will build better insight into his research. He will think and write more efficiently and can connect with the experts in his locality.
- If Research, books, e-contents will available for the local audience, then the content developer will get better feedback for the local education system and will connect to the grassroots problems of his society.
- It will help all those students who will have the potential to become a competent scholar and researcher.
- It will also help those students who dropped out of their higher studies. These portals will provide them with quality self-learning content and promote lifelong learning.

6. Conclusions

In present scenario India, learners have many web portals for higher education studies, but English medium Web-Based Learning Materials always overcrowd these portals. A student from a non-English background found it challenging to search for any relevant content in his native language. Thus, we need new Glocal Educational Web Portals, which specifically address problems of such students. The content creator, such as research scholars and teachers, must focus in this area, and the technology department must provide them with a web portal where they can upload their high-quality information, research papers, e-learning materials, video, audios. This project can be started for a small area and further propagate for the whole country.

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