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CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF E-LEARNING FOR SOUTH ASIA

By

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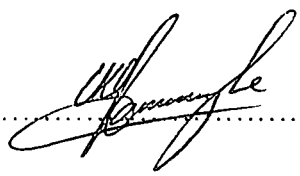
Student Declaration

I hereby declare that the submitted work has been completed by me, the undersigned. I have not used any other than permitted reference sources or materials nor engaged in any plagiarism. All references and other sources used by me have been appropriately acknowledged in the work. I further declare that the work included in the dissertation in part of whole, has not been submitted to any other academic qualification at any institute.



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Date: 16-01-2006

Abstract

With the boom of computers and the Internet, the growth of e-learning too has increased along with it. The advantages of e-learning are many. The flexibility of time, pace, and location makes e-learning both attractive and popular.

This new trend of learning is seen across the globe but with the exception in developing countries in South Asia and Latin America. According to the Economists Intelligent Unit e-Learning Readiness Rankings of 2003, countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan are ranked 55 and 59 respectively, while most European countries are ranked among the top. The ranking is done based on connectivity, capability, content, and culture.

This paper focuses on the cultural dimensions, and attempts to identify which cultural factors cause the failure of e-learning in South Asia. The reasons are identified by the Cultural Framework developed by Terpstra & Sarathy. Among these reasons, the main reasons can be identified as language, education, and technology and material culture.

Interviews were conducted with the problem owners to find out what cultural factors exist as barriers to e-learning and what solutions have been proposed or implemented to address these. Several cultural factors were identified and recommended solutions are proposed to overcome these problems.

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List of Abbreviations

BIT – Bachelors in Information Technology

CBT – Computer Based Training

DEMP – Distance Learning Modernization Project

DLC – Distance Learning Centre

GDLN - Global Development of Learning Network

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

ICTA - Information and Communication Technology Agency

LAN – Local Area Network

LMS – Learning Management System

UCSC – University of Colombo School of Computing

WAN – Wide Area Network

WBT – Web Based Training

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