CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review (Chapter 2) deals with the contents and role of contextual factors in the development and use of e-Learning facilities in HEIs of the world. Several researchers have underlined the challenges associated with the context of e-Learning. The central theme of all these contextual contents is that e-Learning tools and techniques can only be used effectively if their use is compatible with the all the contextual elements at the workplace where users practically use the technologies. This concern is very well supported by this research as almost all the statistical analysis on the relationships between different factors of e-Learning use reveal that the interdependencies are networked.

7.2 FINDINGS

The findings listed below are deduced from the data the researcher collected and analyzed. These findings are in addition to those got from hypothesis testing. Relevant literature review is also stated wherever, it applies.

A. Findings related to technological factors influencing adoption of E-learning(Objective -1)

Given the global availability of educational technologies, researchers are reporting that instructional technologies have staged a platform of opportunities for all the HEIs in the world and these are more profitable for the developing countries in terms of solving their long standing education issues along with other economic and political problems. For example, online education facilities are helping the developing nations to solve their problems of accessing masses for execution, which has not been possible through providing physical education facilities at that large scale. Similarly, ICTs are helping less advanced countries to reduce their sense of isolation in the world by connecting the world community online through internet facilities to learn, enjoy and do business and politics

In the developing states, educational technologies are not the problem in themselves rather their
availability and then their taming for the individual and organizational requirements is a challenge for the users. The biggest technological issue for the countries like India is the creation of country wide digital infrastructure, facilities and services at every HEI level. At the institutional level, the widely reported technological problems relate to the existence and support of technical unit in the institute. Users need continuous and timely help from the technical department, which is reportedly mostly unavailable. Thus the dependence on the technical department and staff is a big issue for the e-Learning users.

B. Findings related to the behavioral factors influencing adoption of e-learning among students – (Objective -2)

Due to the demographic disparities, users hold different conceptions of ICTs and e-Learning therefore express varying attitudes in the development and use of these tools. Given that the perceptions of every user of ICTs vary there is a multiplicity of user-theories forming a continuum of approaches about the nature and role of ICTs and attitudes about the extent of change required

Literature review suggests that at the broader level of perceptions, individual-users are dispersed across the continuum of Instrumental vs. Substantive/Liberal views of ICTs. One group of users considers ICTs as simply the tools for doing teaching, learning and administration more efficiently and effectively with high speed, big volume, increased accuracy, greater confidence and least dependence on the human beings. While a contrary group gives greater role to the ICTs in all the aspects of HEIs, It expects the digital impacts through and across the objectives, structures, operations and culture of the institution and communities. However, within these two extremes there are moderate users who actually outnumber the extremists who accept both the instrumental and liberal roles of ICTs but within conditions. Both the uses are beneficial, if the situation requires. For example, digitization can not be started from substantive role at the practical level however, at theoretical and policy level this is possible and visible in most of the policies of states and institutes. Substantive implementation is possible when basic infrastructure and user-understanding and command is there.
When viewed from organizational/institutional level, the theories or paradigms are similar to the individual theories with technocrats (instrumental) and holists (substantive) on the two extremes and reformist are those who believe in behaving moderately and according to the situation. They emphasize research and constructivist approaches to integrate technologies in the business of education. Those technocrats who are extremely instrumental with ICTs are also highly conservative in adopting the technologies and changing individual and group practices. The extreme liberals may however, support extreme radical changes in the individual, group and organizational practices.

C. Findings related to need of educating and training the population of India to materialize demographic dividend – (objective -3)

Effective and efficient implementation of e-Learning technologies represents new, and difficult challenges to practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Due to the growing use of new ICTs, the existing methods of knowledge processing need to be revised to take into account the present market situation and the increasing global competitiveness for higher education. Within the university, the challenge is to link the teaching, research and community service roles by internal mechanisms of funding, staff development, incentives and communications and within the region to engage the university with technological development and innovation, cultural awareness. There can be no doubt that effective use of ICTs is critical to this process

For developing countries, it is not possible to create digital infrastructures according to their requirements because this is expensive and high-tec. However, due to the creation of Global-Village the countries around the world are entering into Partnerships for different economic, technological, and educational purposes. Thus governments need to work on creating more powerful Partnerships within the country (public-private) and outside (international partners) to effectively use ICTs for development.
D. Findings related to opportunities of e-learning in education and training institutes in India(objective -4)

Opportunities are the user-perceived benefits in ICTs while Prospects refer to the perceived future of ICTs or e-Learning tools. The opportunities and particularly prospects are very highly scored around the world. Teachers, students and administrators are very positive about the existing opportunities provided by the ICTs and the future of these technologies in higher education. Even when many problems are reported by the respondents with regard to the installation and use of e-Learning systems, they score high the opportunities and prospects showing that despite the problems, ICTs have the future. It also shows that users believe in the opportunities conceived in these technologies but there are problems in their management and use.

The current trend in e-Learning ventures is collaborative development and operation. The researchers have documented volumes of research suggesting that if e-Learning is build more according to the contextual demands, there are brighter chances of a successful effort. Traditionally one-for-all model has prevailed, which did not appear as a good option in many situations thereby opening research about the contextual determinants of e-Learning projects. Researcher has confirmed that compatibility of new tools with user-demographics and environmental dimensions are the only criteria for future eProjects of e-Learning in HEIs
7.3 CONCLUSION

It is widely reported at the global level that there is a gap between the expression about information society and knowledge economy on the one hand, and the practical approach to ICT and its implementation at institutional level on the other hand. There are several gaps between whatever is presented in theory and what happens in reality and this is evident at all levels of governments, institutions, groups and individuals in the e-Learning environments of developed and developing countries including the HEIs of India.

The main reason for the gap between theory and practice is the Lack of Research about the domestic environment to record the local context, user views and requirements and thereby plan accordingly. The issue of lack of research in India is frequently discussed in academic institutions with lack of funding and facilities are presented as the major reasons for the problem. Whatever the reason, it is not possible to harness new ICTs without first measuring the pulse of local context. The researchers report over and over that technology integration in any context depends on how the technology fits into the existing social purposes and practices of a community.

Due to unavailability of details studies, domestic models do not exists as such of the self solution to be borrowed. The research shows that de-contextualized E-Learning projects have always underperformed and ultimately failed to produce any added value for the teaching, learning and administrative purposes in HEIs. In developing countries, there is a common trend to follow the tracks of development in the developed world. This is great and nee to be encouraged. However, copying also requires some intellectual considerations relating to what should be copied, what should be modified and what should be self-generated? It has been well documented that approach of industrialized countries may not be feasible to adopted to developing countries.
As research suggests, the biggest hurdle in contextualizing the E-Learning environments is the lack of participation in the development. The projects mismatch the context because the users are not contacted thoroughly to explain different aspects of their context before the developers who can then embed these user requirements into the new digital systems.

The gap between user and ICTs is possible if user-training is not undertaken effectively. Almost every research recording the perceptions and attitudes of E-Learning-users reports the dissatisfaction from the training facilities, contents and duration with regard to E-Learning tools for teaching, learning and administrative purposes. Change of perceptions and attitudes to E-Learning depends on the type and quality of training extended to the users.

It is widely argued that E-Learning offers a complete information technology support to these innovations in teaching and learning. Similarly, as explained across the thesis that ICTs are different from all the essential e-learning technologies as they are integrative in their nature. For example, TV, Telephone, Fax technologies did not connect with each other until the computer and networking sciences came out. Today one can telephone, send a message in multimedia, fax or watch a movie all through a single PC on network. However, the key element in all of this is not access to infrastructure only rather the access should help users in getting knowledge, skills, and consistent support of organizational structures to achieve social and community objectives.

The digital divide in higher education refers to the division of knowledge, expectations, and needs that, in turn, influences the access to information about what technology works, what technology is needed, and how such technology should be integrated in the classroom. A commonsense approach to overcoming this gap is to develop sustaining partnerships among students, faculty, academic computing staff, and administrators.

Connected with the preceding point of digital divide, we are still stuck with the old methods of teaching, learning and educational management. Our teaching is still teacher-centered and student-centric pedagogy is yet in the documents and is not yet appropriately implemented. The market is changing fast but our education system, particularly higher education is not catching up with the emerging demands of information society. It is noted that in India the distance
between the new economy and the traditional education institutions is widening in the sense that HEIs are not producing what is required by the market. A possible reason to this, in the view of a researcher, is that the traditional institutions are obviously not in a position to cope with this growing demand in any systematic way.