



E-LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: A STUDY

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Abstract:

Indigenous Peoples' are the most marginalized social groups and are often at the periphery of national policy making processes. Most of these communities live in hard to reach areas due to inadequate infrastructure development due to improper communication and lack of adequate education system. E-learning has the potential to include Indigenous Peoples' in learning processes that address skills, knowledge and qualification gaps that exist and are needed to gain successful employment outcomes. E-learning is a broad term used to describe the use of any electronic technologies to acquire and develop knowledge that contributes to attitude and behavior change. It encompasses several teaching methodologies and approaches. E-learning allows for learners to learn from anywhere and at any time as long as the learner has access to the equipment required for the learning process to take place in educational aspects. Education has become one of the most essential requirements or it is one of the important backbones for the development of Indigenous people. Indigenous Peoples have leveraged the availability of etechnology to address issues of human rights, access to education, sharing culture, cultural inclusivity and political activism. E-learning is one of the modes of delivering distance education. This makes mainstream education inaccessible to many of the Indigenous People. E-learning provides a new set of tools that can add value to all the traditional learning modes.

Index Terms: E-Learning, Indigenous People, Development & Education

1. Introduction:

Indigenous Peoples are those communities, peoples, and nations having historical continuity with the pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories and that consider themselves different from the societies now predominant in those territories. Cobo describes Indigenous Peoples as non-dominant communities seeking to preserve, develop, and transmit their ancestral territories and ethnic identity in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems (Jose Martinez Cobo, 1986).

At least 370 million people worldwide are considered to be indigenous. Most of them live in remote areas of the world. Indigenous peoples are divided into at least 5000 peoples ranging from the forest peoples of the Amazon to the tribal peoples of India and from the Inuit of the Arctic to the Aborigines in Australia. Indigenous peoples do not necessarily claim to be the only people native to their countries, but in many cases indigenous peoples are indeed "aboriginal" or "native" to the lands they live in, being descendants of those peoples that inhabited a territory prior to colonization or formation of the present state. Indigenous peoples have their own distinct languages, cultures, and social and political institutions that are very different from those of mainstream society. While indigenous peoples face the same experience of discrimination and marginalization as other ethnic minorities, there are very important differences in terms of their rights and identity (World Bank Report, 2008).

Indigenous peoples may be identified as "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems"(Jose Martinez Cobo's Report,1986). People are considered indigenous either: because they are descendants of those who lived in the area before colonization; or because they have maintained their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions since colonization and the establishment of new states (ILO convention no.169).

E-Learning is the use of electronic technologies to acquire and develop knowledge that contributes to attitude and behavior change (Koissaba). E-learning is the ability to learn from any part and at any point of time. It leads to increase the access to educational resources through the use of Information Communication Technology or ICT. An E-learning approach benefits Indigenous individuals by helping them cultivate the skills and concepts necessary in order to connect to mainstream educational opportunities, enhancing their participation in the wider global discussion, and improving their ability to shape the course of their own lives through education in order to achieve broader social outcomes.

Koissaba points to the use of ICTs and E-learning in this way as creating a gateway to knowledge and skill-sharing between both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. He also asserts that cyberspace can serve as a platform for the fair and equal exchange of Indigenous people's perspectives, and that E-learning can be used as a counter against Eurocentric educational policy that encourages assimilation over transmission of traditional cultural knowledge and skills.

2. Indigenous Peoples and Education: Constraints and Concerns:

The education gap between indigenous peoples and mainstream populations remains critical from very past to present concern: rates of enrollment retention, completion of and performance at primary school level and above are significantly lower and gender disparities are often pronounced and common. Indigenous educational deficits range from generalized exclusion to limited access to the upper levels of primary and secondary education, with admittance to higher education still being the exception. Indigenous peoples' acute educational marginalization is closely connected to a number of interlinking factors, such as poverty (child labour), ethnicity (social stigma and institutionalized discrimination), language barriers, gender-based discrimination, traditional practices (including early marriage), and a lack of access to basic services due to their geographical isolation (Summery by UNESCO).

3. The Major Drawback is that Formal Education Systems Rarely Reflect the Realities of Indigenous Livelihoods or Traditional Educational Systems:

- ✓ Lack of cultural training and understanding of indigenous peoples' values and ways of life by most non-indigenous teachers who are not prepared and lack of interest to teach in indigenous communities.
- ✓ Most national curricula tend to ignore indigenous peoples' history, cultures and languages; textbooks and other educational materials reflect the values, norms and traditions of mainstream society and neglected on own field.
- ✓ Formal school education and higher learning is provided in the national language, and the languages of indigenous peoples - as well as their traditional knowledge and skills - are ignored or devalued.
- ✓ School terms and daily schedules do not take into consideration indigenous peoples' livelihood. The methods for imparting instruction and class discipline clash with those commonly practiced in the students' home or community, which leads disinterest on education.
- ✓ Non involvement of Elders and community members in setting the direction or educational goals of the school.

4. Negative Factors Affecting Indigenous People to Access Formal Education:

- ✓ Scarcity or deficient school infrastructure in the areas where they live or surrounding to them; Lack or deficiency of mobile schools and/or culturally-adequate boarding facilities for nomadic and semi-nomadic indigenous children;
- ✓ Formal education gives chance to financial burden imposed by tuition fees and the indirect costs of education and related to it (materials, uniforms, school meals, transport); E-learning can overcome such issues.
- ✓ Lack and inefficiency of qualified bilingual teachers and learning materials written in the learners' mother-tongue;
- ✓ Poor learning conditions like shortage of desks and chairs poorly lit and ventilated classrooms and unsafe school environments like discrimination, physical abuse, gender violence, harassment etc common in formal education system which may lead less interest in formal education for this E-learning is best option..
- ✓ Certain parts of the indigenous territories is Militarization which disturbing the daily cycle and the instilling fear affecting children's education including the use of community schools/education as military detachments, E-learning plays a vital role on such situations.

Indigenous peoples worldwide share traumatic school experiences. like being separated from their families and living far away in unfriendly and unsafe boarding schools; being socially stigmatized and abused by fellow pupils; learning foreign systems of knowledge in a language other than their own; and being taught by teachers from cultures that are different from, and dominant to, their own. These outcomes have negative impacts and many effects on Indigenous peoples to access education.

Many indigenous peoples have come to see formal education system as a way of assimilating them into main-stream society and eradicating their cultures, languages and also ways of life. This often causes cultural and generational conflicts between youths and elders, and threatens the social cohesion in indigenous communities. Many indigenous youths also experience the loss of an important part of their identity in their dealings with mainstream values and norms, while not fully becoming a part of the dominant national society. Research shows that the loss of cultural identity and school maladjustment are important factors in the high rates of substance abuse and suicide among indigenous youths (Talia Nelson).

5. The Indigenous Path towards an Appropriate and Relevant Education:

Long before State-sponsored education systems were introduced, indigenous peoples had their own systems for managing their knowledge and educating their children. These systems, which are rooted in specific

cultural contexts, have allowed them to survive as unique peoples. It is on this basis that indigenous peoples advocate for their right to control their own education systems.

As described by the EMRIP, 2007: "To provide and receive education through their traditional methods of teaching and learning, and the right to integrate their own perspectives, cultures, beliefs, values and languages in mainstream education systems and institutions. As concluded in EMRIP, the right to education for indigenous peoples is a holistic concept incorporating mental, physical, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions."

6. Expert Mechanism Studies:

The Expert Mechanism completed its first study on indigenous peoples' right to education in 2009, along with Advice – including recommendations – about how an indigenous peoples' right to education might be realised. Its second study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making was completed in September 2011, which consists of a progress report and a final report, including Advice. In September 2012, the Expert Mechanism submitted the reports to the Human Rights Council that study on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples, a report on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making with a focus on extractive industries and a report on its questionnaire for states on best practices regarding possible appropriate measures and implementation strategies in order to attain the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP, 2007).

The Human Rights Council requested the Expert Mechanism to study access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in 2012. The final study will be presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2013.

Although many indigenous peoples live in geographically-isolated, self-sustaining communities, many now also live in villages and towns alongside and among majority populations. This poses mutual challenges, and there is thus a growing recognition of the need for an intercultural bilingual education rooted in one's own culture, language, values, worldview and system of knowledge but which, at the same time, is receptive, open to and appreciative of other knowledge, values, cultures and languages. It also entails learning the majority language and thereby gaining the opportunity to participate in public life, access higher education, influence political decisions and embrace economic opportunities.

A flexible, inclusive and culturally-relevant educational system based on interculturalism and bilingualism will provide indigenous children with the knowledge and skills necessary to function fully as an effective member of both their own community and mainstream society. If properly implemented, it will contribute to achieving individual and community empowerment with respect to E-learning education.

7. Indigenous Peoples' Right to Quality Education- A Legal Stand:

Education was established as a fundamental human right in 1948 by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, the international community has reiterated its commitment to providing quality education to all children, youth and adults in numerous declarations and documents.

Indigenous peoples' specific educational rights, including their right to establish and control their own education systems and to provide education in their own languages, have been stipulated by, for instance, ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2007), and confirmed, among others, by the Fourth World Congress of Education International (2004), the Preparatory meeting for the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples (Alta outcome document) (2013) and the Lima Declaration of the World Conference of Indigenous Women (2013).

Article 11: We commit ourselves to ensuring equal access to high -quality education that recognizes the diversity of the culture of indigenous peoples and to health, housing, water, sanitation and other economic and social programmes to improve well-being, including through initiatives, policies and the provision of resource (UNDRIP, 2014). As well as UNDRIP supported the empowerment and capacity –building of indigenous youth, including their full and effective participation in decision-making processes in matters that affect them and it is committed to developing, in consultation with indigenous peoples, policies, programmes and resources, where relevant, that target the well-being of indigenous youth, in particular in the areas of health, education, employment and the transmission of traditional knowledge, languages and practices, and to taking measures to promote awareness and understanding of their rights.

8. Conclusion:

Indigenous Peoples have a unique difference when it comes to participating fully in the development of educational processes. Koissaba advocates for the creation and distribution and of E-learning techniques and materials in order to better serve the needs of Indigenous communities. Technology-based learning may help alleviate common problems such as teacher shortages, infrastructure and a dearth of physical learning materials while also fostering valuable skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The establishment and integration of Indigenous Peoples' learning centers, distance education programs, and online forums will contribute to the self-determination and global presence of Indigenous communities and help to facilitate

Indigenous Peoples' access to educational and achievement opportunities in overall field to overcome any conflicts relating to them.

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