



USE OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING PROGRAM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of information technology in the field of education has brought about a revolution in the field of teaching – learning process. The computers have become more accessible in the schools. The introduction of computers has changed the definition of classroom instruction. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has implemented the CAL (Computer Assisted Learning) program in elementary schools of Solapur District Maharashtra state.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

As part of SSA initiative, in Solapur district of Maharashtra State, totally 32 primary schools were equipped with computers. 24 schools were benefited since the year 2003-04 and 8 schools since the year 2004-05. SSA also has the monitoring system and evaluation program for measuring the outcomes and effectiveness of the program. But that is the formal way and therefore one can not see the real picture of the whole phenomenon. With this point of view, the researchers thought of surveying the reflections about the CAL Program of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (S.S.A.) in elementary schools. The present paper is a small attempt in this direction.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the opinions of the students of elementary school about the CAL program.
2. To study the reflections of the elementary school teachers about the CAL program.
3. To study the reflections of the CRCCs about the CAL program.

METHOD

This study comes under descriptive research and therefore, survey method has been employed.

Tools

1. Observations;

2. Documents –Checklist, the CDs, the hard copy;
3. The opinionnaire for studying the responses of the teachers and students
4. Interview schedules for teachers and CRCCs (Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators).



Sample

The sample for the present study was selected from the elementary schools of Solapur district, having CAL programme. The students (1000) and teachers(699) were selected randomly while the CRCCs were selected as per their availability.

Collection of Data

The data for the present study were collected from the Z.P.

Primary schools of Solapur District . The researcher took the permission of the District Project Officer and related CRCCs. The documents related to the program were collected from the district office and studied thoroughly. Researcher visited the schools on working days and observed the teaching learning process related to the program. The opinionnaire was administered on students. The responses of teachers on opinionnaire were collected on the days of their regular meetings. Interviews with the teachers and the CRCCs were arranged on working days as well as on holidays.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The opinionnaire had 25 statements having responses on three points - agree, neutral and disagree. Frequency of the responses of the students and teachers were found for each statement. The data so gathered were analyzed using X^2 - test. Teachers were not satisfied with the facilities of electricity, while students did not have any significant opinion on this statement. The opinions of students and teachers about the furniture facility were significantly satisfactory. They agreed that there was no separate provision for CAL in the time table, but the time allotted was sufficient. There was a demand for increase in number of periods. The teachers and students were satisfied about the teachers' presence and their guidance about the program. Students were unable to operate computer individually because of overcrowded classes. The students were positive about this program being helpful in answering in examinations. Students were not sure about the effect of this program on memory. The opinions of students and teachers regarding the effect of this program on learning of Mathematics, Science and English were significantly positive. In case of learning of Geography, students were not sure while teachers were positive. In case of Marathi language grammar, students felt the necessity of this program, while teachers had the negative opinion. Students agreed that the teachers were more engaged in learning / using computers, whereas the teachers disagreed with this. Due to power cuts, the program could not run on most of the days in classroom.

The CRCCs and teachers showed a positive attitude for their cluster and schools being selected for the project. Teachers got the training for 10 days at nearby places and the CDs and introductory book were provided. During and after the training, the teachers realized the amount of responsibility they had to carry on their shoulders. 22% of the trained teachers accepted the necessity of the CAL program and had started taking up the responsibilities. 80% of the teachers felt that the training period was very short and complained of shortage of time for practice. The power supply was not regular. There was electricity supply problem in rural areas for which computer could not be used at the scheduled time. Computers in 60 % schools had some technical problems regarding clarity and quality of volume which created difficulties in learning. Computers had UPS, but the backup was less, 15-20 minutes only. Computer efficiency was damaged because of irregular power supply and power fluctuations.

CONCLUSION

The success of a program can be gauged by the impact it could make on the system. The survey of above responses reveals on the whole a satisfactory picture. The CAL program has been warmly received by the schools. The schools have developed a new approach towards learning. The teachers have become conscious. They are now aware of the progress being made in the field of knowledge acquisition. They are unhappy by the degree of training provided and the related facilities. Increase in time allotted for CAL needs to be considered.

SUGGESTIONS

More schools should be covered under this program. LCD projectors should be provided to the CRCs. Basic facilities like furniture and fans and lights should be provided to schools. Teachers should be given an intensive training for not only operating computers but also for preparing instructional material. Students of fifth standard can be given training for operating computers so that they can be self-learners in future. A teacher in each school should be free from other responsibilities and administrative works to manage the program effectively. There should be proper power supply and better service facilities for the maintenance of computers.

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