

“A critical reflection on digital initiation by G.O.I. (Government of India) for H.E (Higher Education)”.

Muntajeeb Ali Baig, Marathwada College of Education, Aurangabad. M.S.

Introduction

As cited by K. Srinivas, “*The key to successful use of technology, in 21st-century classroom teaching, learning and assessment lie not in hardware and software but in the empowerment of teachers*” (personal communication, November 28, 2018).

In his lecture on “Digital initiatives of (G.O.I.) The government of India for (H.E.) Higher Education”, K. Srinivas, explains about digital initiatives taken by the government of India for higher education, further he mentioned about Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), such as SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds), which provides online courses from primary to higher education. This programme is designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of education policy viz, access, equity, and quality (SWAYAM, 2016). SWAYAM platform is indigenously developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with the help of Microsoft. SWAYAM (<https://swayam.gov.in>) is providing a large number of courses from covering school, undergraduate, post-graduate, engineering, law, and other professional courses.

As cited by (Chauhan, 2014), MOOCs, are becoming popular and attractive in India due to an increase in literacy and digitization initiatives taken by the government of India. MOOCs courses are in demand because it is free of cost, flexible and provides a large number of courses to the learners. MOOCs courses are cost effective and affordable because it is based on the free and open source software, such as MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) and content available are mostly license free such as creative commons and royalty free. Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), offers a large number of courses for the learners perusing higher education through Non-Formal as well as Informal education system, thus India has the largest enrolment in the world in the courses offered by the MOOCs. International leading universities are also providing MOOCs courses which provide myriads of courses in different disciplines, some of the major MOOCs providers are Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org>), Udacity (<https://www.udacity.com>), and edX (<https://www.edx.org>), and Udemy (www.udemy.com), (Chauhan, 2014). This article analyzes the impact of MOOCs in Higher Education in India through reviewing literature.

What is MOOC?

Acronym MOOCs stand for Massive Open Online Courses, and it was coined for the first time by the Canadian academician David Cornier (Arya, 2017). According to (Arya, 2017), the first MOOC was conducted by George Siemens and Stephen Downes in the University of Manitoba, Canada where online teaching was conducted online to teach 1500 students. MOOC is developed on the concept of active engagement of thousands of students who are self-organize their participation according to learning goals, prior knowledge and skills, and common interests. MOOCs courses are usually free and it requires an only Internet connection and Computer or Mobile for accessing course, there is no formal accreditation required for participation in the courses (Mcauley, Stewart, Siemens, & Cormier, 2010).

Types of MOOC

As cited in (Series, 1865), MOOC has been taught and distinction has been made according to the principles and theories of pedagogy, these theoretical distinctions models are made by Siemens and Downes, they have coined the terms cMOOC (connectivist) and xMOOC (traditional), cMOOC is exemplified by the original MOOC that was run in 2008; a cMOOC is taught according to connectivist principles, combining open learning with distributed content (Series, 1865).

1) MOOC: The traditional MOOCs, are a form of xMOOCs, these are MOOCs that follow a more traditional structure and delivery approach, are probably offered by a recognized academic institution, and are where the course is highly structured and with clear expectations for how the student will engage with the course (Series, 1865).

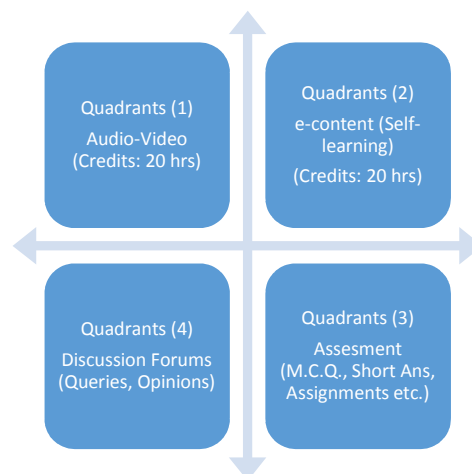
2) C-MOOC: As cited in (Editor & Rud, n.d.), George Siemens drew a very sharp line between c-MOOCs and x-MOOCs. According to George Siemens, the cMOOC model emphasizes creation, creativity, autonomy, and social networking learning, whereas the x-MOOC model emphasizes 'a more traditional learning approach through video presentations and short quizzes and testing. Put another way, cMOOCs focus on knowledge creation and generation whereas an x-MOOCs focus on knowledge duplication' (Editor & Rud, n.d.).

Literature Review

In their findings (Li, Zhang, Bonk, & Guo, 2015), conclude that the course designed should be based on comprehensive learner analysis and learner-centered. In a flipped classroom learners have more autonomy with their own pace of learning, in the flipped classroom, the instructor should have more attention to interaction design, including the type and forms of face to face and online interaction. In their report on "ELI Focus session", (Diaz, Brown, & Pelletier, 2013), says that, MOOCs may serve as a rich source of content as a sort of open textbook offering a variety of media: text, video, simulations, and discussions, all excellent supports for active learning. In some of findings issues emerged regarding the MOOC, (Brown, Busby, Kline, & Clark, 2013) observe that, initially MOOCs, were offered with no fees, credits were not allowed and had no prerequisite or admission requirements, students were enrolled according to their interest and enrichment or professional development, but it was observed that most of the students who enrolled did not complete their courses, within the "no credit context", as cited in (Brown et al., 2013), the course completions are estimated to be less than 10%, though it is a significant number since enrollment is in lakhs (Brown et al., 2013).

The government of India also started SWAYAM PRABHA, which is a group of 32 Direct to Home (DTH) channels, these channels are telecasting high-quality educational programs on myriads of disciplines, 24X7 basis using the GSAT-15 satellite (K. Srinivas, personal communication, November 28, 2018). SWAYAM PRABHA, telecast four hours content every day, these programs are repeated 5 more times in a day, allowing the students to choose the time of their convenience. The contents are provided by NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC, IGNOU, NCERT and NIOS. The INFLIBNET Centre maintains the web portal (Inflibnet, n.d.). Beside this Digital Object Repositories were also provided through the National Academic Depositories, this depository has audio, video, text, images, e-books and documents which can be accessed and used by the learners free of cost and under G.N.U., Licensed. A large number of e-books has been provided by N.D.C., which can be accessed at anytime and anyplace (K. Srinivas, personal communication, November 28, 2018). K. Srinivas stressed presenting content courses on four quadrants as shown in figure 1, (personal communication, November 28, 2018).

Figure 1 QUADRANTS



(K. Srinivas, personal communication, November 28, 2018), has given 5 stages for creating, disseminating and developing effective and efficient MOOC courses, these stages are as follows;

- a) Content Writing: In the knowledge society quality content is very important, the main challenge in creating MOOC courses is creating creative e-content in the form of animation, simulations, virtual labs, videos, audios, and e-books according to the needs of the learners.
- b) Content Delivering: Higher education in India is expanding through Formal and Non Formal education, thus there is a need to disseminate mass content to masses, through MOOC courses and SWAYAM Prabha(SWAYAM, 2017).
- c) Content Transactions: Transaction of MOOC courses are done through a Learning Management System, such as MOODLE, A-Tutor, Eliademy, Forma LMS, Dokeos, Opigno, and OpenOLAT.
- d) Motivating Learners: Motivation of a learner is important in the completion of the courses, thus the design of a course, quality of e-content, and effectiveness of tools and plugins are very important in developing MOOC courses.
- e) Engaging learners for the completing of the courses: In Online courses drop-out rates are higher, thus engaging learners in a course is very important. In their research (Shannon A Riggs, 2009), observed that a well-designed and student-centered course based on active learning is as effective as face-to-face instructions.

As cited in the study, (Devgun, 2013) concludes that Indian students can have an edge in the global market by enrolling in the courses provided by the MOOC. Further, (Devgun, 2013) elaborates that Indian students can leverage MOOC to stay competitive. In their findings, (Jain, 2014), concluded that in implementing MOOC in higher education the stakeholders face many challenges, and it requires significant policy measures to make them mainstream, especially in the formal sector where credits are the currency.

As cited in, (Brown et al., 2013), learners are motivated in the online learning through rewards in the forms of badges called as a 'Digital badges', these validate learners learning whether it occurs inside or outside the academy (Brown et al., 2013). In their research (Kop, 2011), showed that MOOCs provide 'connectivist environment' where learners get encouragement through the "social presence" of the teacher and learner and they feel the sense the belongingness and built confidence through the active participants. In their study, (Abeer & Miri, 2014), concluded that five learning competencies that may affect students participation, persistence and continuity in learning a MOOC: linguistic competence in English, prior knowledge in the subject matter, broad-mindedness, self-regulation and self-efficacy, and communication skills.

Conclusion

MOOCs promise to open up higher education by providing accessible, flexible, affordable and fast-track completion of universities courses for free or at a low cost for learners who are interested in learning. The popularity of MOOCs has attracted a great deal of attention from Higher Education (H.E.), institutions and private investors around the world seeking to build their brands and to enter the education market. Institutions will need to look more closely at and learn from the different initiatives outside traditional institutions that are developing new business, financial and revenue models to meet the different needs of new groups of learners in an open HE marketplace. Open education brings new opportunities for innovation in higher education that will allow institutions and academics to explore new online learning models and innovative practices in teaching and learning. At a national and international level, new frameworks for HE funding structures, quality insurance, and accreditation to support different approaches and models for delivering higher education will be required. Policy makers will need to embrace openness and make education more affordable and accessible for all and at the same time be profitable for the institutions in an open higher education ecosystem.

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