IMPACT OF MOOCS ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS CHALLENGES IN KASHMIR VALLEY

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Abstract

In recent years, the enrolment in Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) has increased tremendously**.** India after US is dominating the global growth in enrolments. Seeing the growth of enrolment from the country and satisfy their need of education, India has started various projects for offering MOOC courses. Currently, NPTEL, mooKIT, IITBX, and SWAYAM are the platforms used in India for offering courses. The borders of the classroom are expanding with the help of online education. The traditional classroom teaching method, as well as the requirement to enrol in only one course, are now outmoded.MOOCs provide a new way of learning, which is open, participatory, distributed and lifelong. Various premier universities of the world are now offering courses in the form of MOOCs. The MHRD, Government of India has also started a MOOCs platform called SWAYAM. Different MOOC platforms being used for e-learning i.e. edX, Coursera, SWAYAM, Udacity.There are some challenges that are faced in implementing MOOC in India. With time and place flexibility, MOOCs gathers scholars and 'like-minded fellow learners around the globe'. Although it has a great prominence in its implementation, there is a lack of research studies and critical papers examining its current situation around the world.

Introduction

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have recently received a great deal of attention from the media, entrepreneurial vendors, education professionals and technologically literate sections of the public. The promise of MOOCs is that they will provide free access, cutting edge courses that could drive down the cost of university-level education and potentiallydisrupt the existing models of higher education (HE). With the help of online education the boundaries of the classrooms are extending. The traditional type of classroom teaching and to enrol only in a specific course isobsolete now. With the help of Open Educational Resources and MOOCs, the student as well as teachers enrolled in his/her home state university and can also be a part of the other course running online by a world class

university, for multiple purposes or based on interest in the specific skills. But due to this, the classroom size has grown beyond the horizons, which poses a number of challenges for the instructors to handle the class. Wasilik and Bolliger (2009) found that more satisfied online instructors had a high level of interaction with online students compared to less satisfied instructors. Khalil & Ebner, (2014) explained the interaction between students and experts, which create an environment that encourages students to understand the content better. The process of designing, developing, and teaching in MOOC is time consuming (Kolowich, 2013) A professor spent over 100 hours on his MOOC before starting a course recording online lecture videos and doing other preparation (Kolowich, 2013).Students with high level of interaction with the online course instructor and other students reported greater level of learning than their peers who had lower level of interaction (Wuensch, Aziz, Ozan, Kishore, & Tabrizi, 2008).

Some instructors refused or prefer not to interact with students (as cited in Hew & Cheung, 2014), while some other instructors rarely interacted with or had a minimal level of interact with students (as cited in Hew& Cheung, 2014). Many instructors interact through forum by posting once or twice a week (Kolowich, 2013). On the other hand, some instructors set up online office hours to address student questions (Martin, 2012; Rodriguez, 2012), or used live video chatting applications to live exchanges with students (Duneier, 2012). The review of the MOOC literature showed mix result regarding the instructor's willingness to interact with students. A survey conducted in (2009) shows that 10,700 faculty from 69 colleges and universities across the country, over one-third (34.4%) of them have taught online, indicated increasing of workload in online education. Nearly 64%f faculty said it takes "somewhat more" or "a lot more" effort to teach.

MOOCs, which are one of the subset of e-Learning.The use of Internet and related technologies for development distribution and enhancement of learning resource called e-Learning. Web-based learning is sub-set of e-learning associated with learning materials delivered in a web browser, including when the materials are packaged on CD-ROM or other media disk in distance education Universities it is defined as a planned teaching/learning experience that uses a wide spectrum of technologies mainly Internet to reach learners at a distance. Lately in most Universities, e-learning is used to define a specific mode to attend a course or programs of study where the students rarely, if ever, attend face-to-face or for on-campus access to educational facilities, because they study

on-line.Assignments are given to be solved using the collaborative learning. The students take up exam at the end and are given certificate.

MOOCs provide a new way of learning, which is open, participatory, distributed and lifelong. Various premier universities of the world are now offering courses in the form of MOOCs. The MHRD, Government of India has also started a MOOCs platform called SWAYAM. Different MOOC platforms being used for e-learning i.e.edX, Coursera, SWAYAM, Udacity.These courses are fully online and delivered through internet. These courses are highly multimedia enriched interactive online courses which offer a unique opportunity to the learners to learn these courses as per their convenience. The basic philosophy of MOOCs is 3A's i.e., Anytime, Anyone, Anywhere. These days' learners are well versed in the use of smartphones, text messaging and using the internet so participating in and running an online course has become a simple affair.

It was not until 2011 that MOOCs would make a name for themselves in the media. Sebastien Thrun and Peter Norvig, respectively Professor at Stanford University and Research Director at Google, announced that one of their courses would be given for free on the internet. In just a few weeks, "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence" had over 160,000 enrolees ready to follow the first lessons. The size and media impact of the course makes it one of the most memorable in the short history of Moocs. The project significantly contributed to the development of MOOCs and the first American online education platforms including Coursera, Udacity, and EdX.

Characteristics of MOOCs

- Using Web Formats. MOOCs heavily rely on different web formats.
- Collaborative Learning. One key aspect of MOOCs is their collaborative component. .
- Assessing Knowledge.
- Time Limits.

MOOCs are available online, free of charge, and provided by recognizable institutions. These online courses have some important characteristics which are as under: the use of web formats, collaborative learning, contain evaluation modules, and limited in time.

1. Using Web Formats

MOOCs heavily rely on different web formats. Consequently, the large majority of courses consist of pre-recorded videos that are flooded by users. To create content tools like

YouTube or Vimeo are commonly used. MOOCs can also use live-streams to create a virtual classroom environment. Occasionally, teachers also organize live sessions with their students using tools like Hangouts. This is a unique opportunity for students to get in touch with the trainer directly and ask questions. MOOCs also offer meetups and in-person get together. Meetups are generally organized by MOOC participants who want to meet up with other course participants in their area. They have an opportunity to discuss course topics but also work on group projects.

2. Collaborative Learning

One of the important aspects of MOOCs is collaborative learning. During a MOOC, everything possible is done to recreate the in-class experience, including the use of collaborative tools. Rather than a vertical distribution of knowledge, MOOCs allow for the emergence of learning communities where the input of each participant enriches the course. Social Q&A Forums (advanced forums with voting functionalities), Facebook groups, meetups, or peer corrections are used to encourage and develop collaboration. MOOCs are a highly effective and valuable tool in the context of life-long learning. Many learning theories propagate the benefits of collaborative learning. According to recent research, deep learning and the development of critical and higher order thinking skills only occur through interaction and collaboration.

3. Assessing Knowledge

In addition to content designed to convey knowledge, MOOCs offer tools to assess the transfer and retention of this knowledge. These modules help make courses more dynamic and interactive and generally take the form of multiple-choice exams, programmed tests, or essay questions that are corrected automatically, by teachers or by classmates. Additionally, MOOCs can offer certificates to those who have completed the course.

4. Time Limits

The final characteristic of MOOCs is the notion of time limitations. MOOCs have specified start and end dates. Course content (documents, videos, exercises, etc.) is delivered sequentially, each week. For the learner, coursework is spread over time. Temporally structuring course content helps make it seem like a series of mini events and allows for the creation of an efficient communication strategy including teasers, email

updates, etc. It is also an effective means to ensure that the MOOC mimics a traditional attended course with weekly classes.

All of these criteria combined create MOOCs. All of these elements were used simultaneously in a single course format.

SWAYAM is a web platform on which MOOCs are hosted (www.swayam.gov). These MOOCs have teacher-student groups where the MOOC coordinator/tutor/teacher interacts with the learner. SWAYAM has helped students to attend the courses taught by the best faculty; have access to high quality reading resources virtually, participate in discussion forums; take tests and earn academic grades. There are Refresher Courses for teachers (ARPIT) also under National Mission for Teacher Training (NMTT), on the SWAYAM portal. The National Education Policy 2020, has stressed on the consequent shift to the Online Mode of teaching-learning, thus reflecting the growing importance of online education in India. Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access to DIVYANG students and streamlining educational planning and management have also been emphasized in NEP 2020. For improving the quality of teachers and teaching learner centered pedagogy and blended approach has also been emphasised.

Challenges in MOOCs

Life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back. Electronic learning is the latest wave of education, is already having a fair show despite posing challenges for both instructors and students. While instructors need to put in intensive work and time to design the instruction, students need to equip themselves with technical proficiency to decode the course material. Challenges are faced by students in eLearning classes and which they need to be solved through proper initiatives for the students' future benefits:

Adaptability Struggle

It is entirely different experience when a teacher and students switch from traditional classroom or face to face instructor training to computer-based training .Their resistance to change doesn't allow them to adapt to the online learning environment, whereas it takes time for them to get familiar to Course Management Systems (CMS) and the methods of

computer-based education. Students with a "traditional" mind-set find it difficult to adapt; however, they need to accept the new learning circumstances with an open mind and heart. Understanding the benefits of eLearning and even discussing them with their peers may change this mind-set and better prepare students for online classes.

Technical Issues

High speed internet connection is required for accessing the content delivered in the courses of MOOC. Limited availability of requisite infrastructure to access MOOCs has confined the extensive spread ofMOOCs. Their weak internet facility makes it hard to follow the Course Management System and their learning experience becomes problematic. Jammu and Kashmir students are facing number of challenges in the e learning or MOOC learning because most of the time internet remains suspended especially from 2010. In 2016 internet facility was snatched and remains suspended for more than one year.

Computer Literacy

Lack of computer literacy is a major issue among students today. Many of them cannot operate basic programs such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint and therefore are not able to handle their files. Furthermore, many students find fixing basic computer problems troublesome, as they have no knowledge in this area. However, technological proficiency is a must for following online courses, as it enables students to manage their assignments and courseware in an organized manner without struggling.

Time Management

Time management is a difficult task for e-Learners, as online courses require a lot of time and intensive work. Furthermore, whereas it is mostly adults who prefer web-based learning programs for their place and time flexibility, they rarely have the time to take the courses due to their various everyday commitments. A regular schedule planner would be a significant help to these learners, as they could even set reminders for their courses and assignments.

Self-Motivation

Self-motivation is avery important; however, many online learners lack it. Many students after enrolling in distance learning nurture the idea of giving up, because they face difficulties in handling technological medium. Students need to find the motivation to

follow the new educational trends and also properly equip themselves for future challenges in their education and careers. Only a positive attitude will help them overcome the challenges in eLearning; E-Learning in its initial stage it poses certain threats to students. Attitude change and technological literacy would help them gain confidence in order to succeed in their courses with a positive vibe.

Many scientific studies reveal that MOOCs are overwhelmed by criticism and raises questions on their quality, evaluation methods, credibility, and lack of interaction, motivation and feedback. It is not possible for two, five or more tutors due to the mass nature of MOOCs to attend hundreds and even thousands of students,

Drop-out Rate:

Evidently the principal problem faced by MOOCs is the high drop-out rate of students before course completion. The results shows that very few percentage of students complete the MOOC course (Jordan et al., 2013. Lack of interaction between students and students and teachers is one of the problems which students face in these courses. Some students do not receive in clarifying the doubts or questions put forward in discussion forums; the students feeling abandoned in this brutalizing education process.

Finance problem:

Offering the MOOC is a costly affair that includes the cost of infrastructure, platforms,content creation, human resources and many more. In India, the institutions do not havemany capitals to invest in such event so it is not easy for an individual institution to offersuch services. There is need of involvement from some authorities, who can invest inthe process to support the education. Even Indian government needs to liberalizeconventional regulations and restrictions and encourage public private partnership forcreating MOOCs in this country.

Diversified Needs

India is a widely diversified country having multicultural societies and different languagesspoken. For acceptance of MOOC among the huge domain of audience, they need toagree upon a common language of speaking. English as this language accepted globally,again throws away a considerable amount of audience who do not possess theknowledge or adequate fluency in English. So, a switch over to mostly English basedcourses as offered via current MOOCs often discourages learner to continue their

courses.The courses should also be offered in some regional languages, which may be a tedioustask and prone to loss of uniformity and quality. Therefore, language is one of thebarriers for learners from Indian origin that need to be addressed by the MOOCproviders in a more realistic way. Moreover, the challenge is to deliver the lecture,designing of the course material, and the platform itself, in a way that can be understoodby all. Hence forth, the main motive should be to work in the direction which can minimizethe existing differences amongst the learners.

Quality

For delivering the quality content in MOOC, quality of teachers and technical staff isrequired. Initiatives have been taken internationally and nationally towards offering quality educational by providingtheir content as open resources. India should also need to influence these initiatives as areadily available, economically feasible source of quality content or adoption. Also, anational quality assessment framework to assess the quality and adoption of new approacheslike, credit transfer, MOOC, integrated courses etc., should be adopted along withteacher training, their performance related appraisal and midterm re-evaluation. Thus acomplete revamp is needed to meet the present demand and address the challenges thatIndia is facing in offering MOOCs.

Conclusions

MOOCs originated as a result of technological advancements, with the goal of offering broad access to knowledge and feeding the expanding demand for higher education, an ideal that has yet to be fully realised. Regardless of their flaws, MOOCs offer an alternative to higher education. As a result, MOOCs must be rethought from a pedagogical, technological, and organisational standpoint. MOOCs can give Indian students the competitive edge they need to compete in the global market. It can be seen as helping to democratise Higher Education, not only locally or regionally, but globally as well. Students can now enrol in full courses provided by colleges around the world, which was previously unavailable. MOOCs increase access to an unprecedented number of courses offered by world-renowned universities and teachers, thanks to the availability of affordable technologies. MOOCs may be introduced as an alternate for lowering the dropout rate in higher education in India. As a result, all stakeholders in higher education must be very adaptable and cooperative in order to make MOOCs accessible to everybody.

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