Chapter 4
Massive Open Online Courses and MOOCs–SWAYAM:
An Assessment of Acceptance

Jyotshna Sahoo
Sambalpur University, India

Lipsha Ratha
Sambalpur University, India

Basudev Mohanty
Institute of Physics Bhubaneswar, India & Homi Bhabha National Institute, India

Anupama Meher
Sambalpur University, India

Jayanta Kumar Sahu
Sambalpur University, India

ABSTRACT

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are relatively new models for imparting high quality online education not only on different platforms but also multi-learners can simultaneously access from different geographical regions. Within a very short span these courses have gain momentum across the globe through prominent academic and research bodies by investing considerable efforts in developing, promoting and in delivering such courses. While MOOC courses are being imparted through popular global platforms like Coursera, Udacity, edx, Future Learn etc. by a number of top ranked Universities, SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Mind) is an Indian platform launched involving development of MOOCs e-contents. In this paper, attempts have been made to provide a state-of- the art of the growing popularity of MOOCs courses from several dimensions with specific emphasis on SWAYAM and its usage pattern. To carry out the present work requisite data has been collected from various sources like web portals, reports, SCOPUS database and Similar-Web's analytics tools.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are the recent developments and relatively a new model for imparting online education. The term MOOC was coined in 2008 by Dave Cormier, an educational activist, researcher and advocate of online community from the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada. Within a few years of its development MOOC, emerged as a popular mode of learning to such a level that The New York Times dubbed 2012 as "The Year of the MOOC" (modern learners. com). The most important feature of MOOC is that, at a time thousands of learners can access the courses available under different platforms and participants are not limited by any geographical boundary. The basic philosophy of MOOCs is 3A's i.e., Anytime, Anyone, Anywhere. The high quality of contents produced by prestigious academics, in conjunction with open access, flexibility in admission process, no or little financial implication and larger number of enrollment. MOOC courses have received wide publicity and many institutions have invested considerable efforts in developing, promoting and in delivering such courses. While MOOC courses are being imparted through popular global platforms like Coursera, Udacity, edx, Future Learn etc. by a number of reputed universities, MOOC (SWAYAM) is an Indian platform for providing online education.

MOOC (SWAYAM) is a novel endeavour of government of India. In order to provide quality education, government of India through its higher education department has explored the potential of ICT in teaching and learning. As a result, Ministry of Human Resource Development is administering the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) Scheme to leverage the potential of ICT in teaching and learning process for the benefit of all the learners in Higher education institutions in anytime anywhere mode. Providing high quality e-content free of cost to all learners in the country is one of the components and primary objectives of the NME-ICT Scheme. With a view to provide access to the best quality learning resources across the country, the project "Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Mind" (SWAYAM) has been started. SWAYAM provides an integrated platform and portal for online courses, using information and communication technology. SWAYAM involves development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) e-contents (video and text) and building a robust IT platform. MOOC(SWAYAM) is a one-stop web and mobile based interactive e-content for all courses from High School to University level with four quadrant approach and made available on the SWAYAM platform of Government of India (www.swayam.gov.in). In the given context the present paper aims to provide a state-of- the art of the growing popularity of MOOCs courses from several dimensions with specific emphasis on MOOC (SWAYAM).

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