

MOOC: A BOON FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN EDUCATION; A BRIEF REVIEW:

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***Abstract**

The demand for quality education always creates new inventions and Massive Open Online Courses is one of that which is an online course with no limit of class size and provides free education via the web (Kaplan et. al. 2016). It was firstly introduced in 2008 and it appeared as admired methodology of learning in 2012. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in MOOCs as it provides a platform to large number of learners where they can attend free online courses in addition to traditional courses. It enhanced the quality of education by including blended learning. The speedy progress of technology makes it essential for students and teachers to integrate the several offerings in their learning process. Thus it helps them to raise their socio economic status. This article highlights the contribution of MOOC in various aspects of education and how it is proved to be a boon for both learners and educators. Several research papers, journals, articles were reviewed about MOOCs. On the basis of this review, MOOCs are defined and how it has ameliorated education outcomes is also accounted.

***Keywords:** *Online Teaching and Learning, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)*

INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning, traditional education has been the way of education. But due to lack of time and need to earn, it is not possible for every learner to continue with formal education. With the new inventions and development of internet, technology provided a new platform to such learners in the form of online learning as Massive Open Online Course. It has brought big revolutionary changes in distance learning of the educational system in all around the world (Hooda, 2019). Initially, the term MOOC was originated by Dave Cormier and Bryan Alexander (2008), to describe an open online course named Connectivism and Connective Knowledge (Bovern, 2013; Daniel, 2012) and further led by George Siemens and Stephen Downes, consisted of twenty five (25) tuition paying students at the University of

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Manitoba and twenty two hundred (2200) online students who paid nothing (Daniel, 2012; deWaard, 2011; Siemens, 2013). In India, University Grant Commission (UGC) along with Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India launched MOOC program for Higher Education through indigenously developed digital platform named SWAYAM “Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds” which is World’s biggest online free e-learning platform. It was introduced with the aim of providing easy access, equity and quality education to all (Rupali Ambadker, 2020). According to AICTE (India), “the target of SWAYAM is to achieve the vision of hosting 10,000 online Courses for 30 million learners/students”.

It provides opportunity to assign with an increasingly complex and connected world. It has widened the scope of learning so it has become an attractive platform for learners. MOOCs are free web based classes which are designed for massive interaction with unlimited participation of learners. It connects the straggling regions with the world and it requires minimal participation of teachers as students as to take part in these classes and complete the assignments, students just need to watch videos. MOOCs are defined by Oxford Dictionary as “A course of study made available over the internet without charge to a very large number of people.”

DEFINITIONS OF MOOC

According to Prof. A.K. Bakshi, “these online courses (MOOC and SWAYAM) have been developed by a team of senior academicians and are expected to enhance the gross enrolment ratio in higher education without compromising with the quality. These courses will also help in bridging the digital divide in the country” (MANAS DAS, 2018).

Brooker, A. et. al. (2018) defined Massive open online courses (MOOCs), “it offers people the opportunity to study a variety of courses for a variety of reasons, including personal interest, professional development, and social networking”.

According to Deng, et. al. (2019), “MOOCs are open, large-scale web-based courses designed and delivered by accredited higher education institutions and organizations in which anyone with a smart device and internet connection can participate, regardless of age, gender, geographic location, or education background.”

MAIN FEATURES OF MOOC

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- ❖ **Massive:** It means its ability to cover a huge number of learners all around the world irrespective of their geographical location. It covers a huge variety of courses from lower classes to post graduation for free or a minimum cost. It has unlimited number of seats.
- ❖ **Open:** It is accessible for everyone irrespective of age, language, culture, region, religion etc. Without any pre requirement.
- ❖ **Online:** The course is delivered through digital platforms via internet. It eliminates the barrier of time and distance and offers flexibility to its learners.
- ❖ **Course:** MOOC also provides courses which has commercial values and helps learners get job after completing it. Learners gets a certificate or credits transferred to their courses which help in developing their professional skills.



Fig: Massive Open Online Course

SIGNIFICANCE OF MOOCS IN PRESENT ERA

The importance of MOOCs in education solicits the need of it in education. It has specific feature that fulfill the expectation of the students (Gulatee and Nilsook, 2016). The main significance of MOOC is that they offer the practice of open-ended online courses by which participants can join the programs and courses provided by international universities and can be benefited. It can bring knowledge to those students who cannot afford the cost of education. In some developing countries, a large scale of population lives in remote areas

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where traditional classroom teaching/learning is not possible, in that area MOOC can prove to be a real changer. Well structured MOOC by skilled person can be as valuable as traditional lecture (Seimens, Gasevic & Dawson, 2015). Due to its low cost effectiveness way of learning, it can be a bright medium of learning in those countries where government does not have much money to spend on the construction of schools and colleges (Madhuri Hooda, 2019). Its flexibility, no age limit restrictions and lifelong learning opportunity boost the urge of MOOC in education.

MOOCS AS A BOON TO THE EDUCATORS

A teacher is the strong wheel of learning even though technology keeps going on with vital influence in the field of education. With the advancement of technologically based education, specialization of a teacher in one subject is not enough; he should be multi faceted (Arto Vihavainen et. al., 2012). Now, the role of the teacher has been elevated to that of a guide and a promoter. So today, it becomes indispensable for teachers to be congenial with technology and to keep renewing their knowledge (Earley & Bubb, 2004). MOOCs are not just for teaching students, they are also being used to help the teachers to enhance their knowledge, to learn something new, to help in their field of expertise, to enhance skills, to improve ability and also provide them information on the use of online labs. All these help them to enhance their achievement. MOOCs are thoughtful for teachers who want to boost their teaching practice for their professional development (Schlager, Fusco, Barab, Kling & Gray, 2004). It improves teachers Teaching and ICT skills (Urrutia, 2016; Liu et al. 2014) The teachers can also come up with their own video recording lectures, quizzes, assignments, exams etc. in order to complete their course and thus they can make remarkable contribution to the society. It proposes the platform for educators to connect with online teacher community for receiving and providing guidance on the several topics.

MOOCS AS A BOON TO THE LEARNERS

MOOC is not less than a boon for those learners who are unable to get the guidance of a teacher in physical classroom (Pandit, 2016). It works as a substitution in this situation as it is free from the physical boundaries. Learners need not to spend money on travelling as they

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can get knowledge at their desired place. MOOCs provided courses in many languages and a learner can choose the language for his course. MOOCs will be proven beneficial for the students preparing for competitive exams. MOOCs platform like SWAYAM is working for the development of the students. 34 SWAYAM PRABHA DTH Channel have launched along SWAYAM portal to help the students living in those areas where connectivity to IT service is poor. It is also providing best faculty for students across the country with ICT solutions. This program provides quality teachers to students to fill the gap between urban and rural education. MOOCs are structured to prominent students' involvement so that their outcomes can be improved. Thus it helps to enhance their learning outcomes and in their development (Malca, 2015). It is also helpful for students who having hesitation in formal learning environment as it is works in completely informal environment where they can share their thoughts and opinion freely and can feel ease (Docq and Ella., 2015), . Students can adopt any course of their own choice and also can communicate with their peers in different parts of world. This helps them to connect with world and made them more socialize.

CHALLENGES OF MOOC

Despite of trend of MOOC in education it has also some challenges to overcome and to contemplate on. Firstly, MOOC face is high dropout rate (Hooda, 2018; Ho, Chuang, Mitros, and Pritchard, 2015; Koller, Ng, Do, & Chen, 2013). Content delivery is excellent in MOOC but lack of interaction between teachers and students (Hone and el Said, 2016). Sometimes make it boring for both learners and educators and because of not to manage their time many learners drop out of these courses. MOOCs are totally dependent on the use of technology to ascertain of reach ability of information and knowledge. For this, it is necessary to be skilled in digital literacy to make the use of online materials. It needs high speed internet connection which is still a big problem in remote areas. In MOOC, most of the courses are in English language (Shah,2014) so many students who cannot handle English language, are deprived of the benefits of it. MOOC is a costly affair so in many developing countries like in India institutions do not have much money to invest in these courses.

CONCLUSION

MOOCs have great potential to reach out to a very large number of learners not only at local or regional level but at global level. It is an efficient mode of education which provides free education, creative learning and also accessible for anyone, anytime. They are

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seen as the finest way promotes to make sure quality in education and vocational training. Courses provided by top universities in the world give great display to the students who are unable to get admission in these universities. It makes them self motivated to self learn by providing them substitution resources like video clips & animations. Learners can interact, collaborate and communicate with their peers thus it helps them to exchange their knowledge by connecting with social networks. MOOCs can also be seen as a strong weapon to help teachers to gain the knowledge, proficiency and skills which are required to participate successfully within various social, economic, culture and political regions of society. Through MOOCs, they can learn from the different teaching styles of other educators and can gain experience which makes their teaching more effective. MOOCs can be the thoughtful platform to overcome the challenges of drop-out in education so they can be the brightest way to raise literacy level. Thus, they seem to be a boon for both learners & educators and can be called the future of education.

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