SWAYAM- A Way of Learning

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Abstract

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 and would be ultimately capable of hosting 2000 courses and 80000 hours of learning: covering school, under-graduate, post-graduate, engineering, law and other professional courses.University Grants Commission (UGC) has vided Gazette Notification dated 19 th July, 2016, notified Regulation, 2016 regarding 'Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM'. SWAYAM has been developed under a four-quadrant approachs: (1) video lecture, (2) specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed (3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and (4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts.SWAYAM is an indigenous (Made in India) IT Platform for hosting the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).The sociological, geographical and political barriers in education can be overlooked by making MOOCs as parallel to regular school education. To encourage teacher and learner to MOOCs should be motivated by proper planning like promotion for in-service teachers and jobs, admission to higher classes by learners.

Key Words: Self learning, Swayam, on line learning, MOOC,

Introduction

The format of conventional education has clearly not kept pace with the pace of advancement in today's modern society. The old-fashioned teaching methods, which have changed little during the last century, have helped maintain the myth that a normal "education" that ends at nearly age 22 prepares a person for a lifetime of the output in the skill in which they have majored.Today, the volatile growth in technology renders nearly obsolete those skills which may have been on the cutting edge just a few years before. Therefore, it is required that one keeps studying/ learning throughout by himself to keep up with the pace.Self-Study is defined as something studied by oneself without any kind of help or supervision of a teacher or a professor, although; the person studying can refer to some external sources like books, tutorials, and encyclopedia, etc. Therefore, it won't be wrong to say that it is a kind of study where the student himself is responsible to a large extent for his own instruction and is himself his trainer or teacher. There is no one to tell him or guide him to do something. This may also be defined as "learning on your own" or "by yourself" or being your own teacher.

What is SWAYAM?

Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), is a Web portal where Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs) are available on all kinds of subjects. SWAYAM is the Indian electronic e-education platform which proposes to offer courses from the high school stage to Post-Graduate stage in an interactive electronic platform. The IT platform for SWAYAM is built and is expected to be operationalized with a capacity to host nearly 2,000 courses. This would provide the best quality education to more than three crore students across the country. The system would allow 10 lakh students using the system concurrently. Once it becomes operational, students from the backward rural areas can access teaching from the best institutes in the country electronically, thereby, raising the overall standards of higher education in the country.

SWAYAM-MOOCs project is intended to address the needs of school level 9-12 to Under Graduate and Post Graduate students, covering all disciplines. Launch of the Credit framework for Skills and Education as per

the National Skills Qualification framework paving the way for certification of skills through the formal system and allowing for multiple exits and entrance into the education system with scope for vertical and lateral mobility. The CBCS will enable students to take courses of their choice, learn at their own pace, undergo additional courses and acquire more than the required credits, and adopt an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Approval by UGC of the Guidelines for Choice Based Credit Framework, provides for more choices for students to opt for employable courses through a system of flexible credits for foundational, elective and core courses.

Kanjilal, U., &Kaul, P. (2016) wrote that SWAYAM is an indigenous (Made in India) IT Platform for hosting the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). To improve Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), from 20% at present to 30% by 2020 SWAYAM promises to be a possible solution with a capacity to revolutionized the education system in India.

- For creation of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), 8 National MOOCs Coordinators (NMCs) have been appointed with the responsibility to identify the best teachers for preparation of the material for the MOOCs.
- These include National Mission in Education Through ICT, NPTEL (a group of 7 IITs and IISc), Consortium for Educational Communication, Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Council for Educational Research and Training and National Institute of Open Schooling.
- Total 262 Online Courses has been repurposed in SWAYAM format by NMCs.
- University Grants Commission (UGC) has vided Gazette Notification dated 19 th July, 2016, notified Regulation, 2016 regarding 'Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM'.
- Accordingly, a student studying at a recognized institute anywhere in the country and having cleared the Online Course through SWAYAM, shall be awarded Credits and the credits earned by such a student shall be transferred from the Host Institute to the Parent Institute where the student is studying. However at present, such students through online learning delivered on SWAYAM platform can earn the Credits only up to 20% of the total courses in a Semester.
- This would allow any student in the country to take the courses offered by the best teachers on SWAYAM, thereby bridging the academic deficit experienced in the backward areas thereby, raising the overall standards of higher education in the country. **(http://mhrd.gov.in)**

What's unique about the courses on SWAYAM

The SWAYAM portal will host MOOCs which are highly interactive and can be accessed on computers/laptops or even smartphones. "MOOCs have e-content, activities and assessment spread across weeks as per different credits along with other features such as introductory videos. For example, for all our 42 ePGPathshala MOOCs, the learner will be completing the course in 15 weeks, out of which there are two weeks (8th and 15th week) for revision and assessment. The MOOC coordinator along with teaching assistants will facilitate the discussion forums and answer learner queries. For students seeking credits, online assignments submitted by them will also be graded by the teaching assistants with an appropriate feedback mechanism,"

For the e-content developed for these MOOCs, a blend of various technical tools have been used keeping in mind the subject and topic requirements. The ultimate aim is to present difficult concepts in a simpler way for the learners. SWAYAM has been developed under a four-quadrant approachs:(1) video lecture, (2) specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed (3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and (4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts.. It includes curriculum-based courses covering diverse disciplines such as arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medicine and agriculture. Learners from conventional universities can earn credits for up to 20% of their courses through these MOOCs. For remaining courses, they can use it as supplementary material. Teachers can also benefit a lot as they can enrol and can access all the e-content.

However, the biggest challenge in the development of e-content is to enrich static content through multimedia. The static content needs to be enriched with videos, audios, animations, simulations and graphics to make self-learning of a virtual reader a great learning experience.

Assessment and evaluation

The parent institution will give the equivalent credit weightage to the students. The host institution and the parent institution will be responsible for evaluating the students registered for their MOOCs courses.The evaluation will be based on predefined norms and parameters. A comprehensive evaluation throughout the length and breadth of the course will be done through specified instruments like discussions, forums, quizzes, assignments, session examinations and final examination.The exam can be conducted in online or offline mode. The final marks/grade will be communicated to the students and his or her parent institution (where he or she is enrolled as a regular or part-time) within four weeks after the end of final exam. For Education,course is Design and Facilitation of E-Learning Courses, it has 33 - tutorials 1 -tests 1-assignment.

Advantages

Supplementary support to both learner and teacher: MOOCs will provide resource support to teacher in addition to text book and to learner also if teacher is not available or learner missed the class. • Engagement of learner and Mentor: MOOCs encourage both teacher and learner in many ways. Through chat, hangout, telephonically and discussion over the web. • Wide coverage: The best thing about offering MOOCs is it reaches a wider audience, especially those which are out of reach. For those who can't take up a full time course can go for these online courses.

- Language support: As India is multilingual country, MOOCs provide an opportunity to create and disseminate the courses in as many as language. A learner can take the course of its choice of language and the same resource can be translated in different language.
- Accessible beyond the physical boundaries: MOOCs can be accessible by any one from any place. There is no need together at one place.
- MOOC encourages flipping the classroom: Teacher-student contact time usually used for lectures could be used differently, e.g. for discussions, experiments, project and group-work, working with peers etc. Students watch lectures online at home and interact with faculty regarding their doubts while in class.
- To help to prepare for entrance exam: MOOCs will be proven beneficial for the preparation of competitive exams as they provide concept based support.
- Instant progress: Learner can instantly see his/ her progress during the course.
- Multimedia digital resources: Multimedia resources in various formats are available in the courses for better understanding of a concept, which is normally, cannot be easily understood from textbooks. Thus, in countries like India where most of the schools are running with few teacher MOOCs will be advantageous to provide quality education. However, with advantages, challenges do come that make it more difficult for MOOCs to reach their target audience. But it depends on institutes as to how they overcome these challenges and make it prominent.

Challenges

The ever biggest challenge of organizing MOOCs in India for school education will be the infrastructural problem. Some of the other challenges are given below:

- MOOCs demand digital literacy: To train the instructor will be the biggest challenge.
- Certification: Certification will also be the other challenge. Weather the learner is able to get admission or job on the basis of such certifications.
- Real time answering during lecture: Real time answering the questions is also not possible during the lecture session as these will be pre recorded.

- Different Role of Instructor: Another major challenge is the different roles of instructor. Having a large number of participants also poses hurdle in communication between instructor and students.
- Relying on Multimedia Content: This is yet another problem which the user faces. As the entire course is offered online, both faculty and students have to rely on multimedia content. The course contains presentations, audio lectures, etc, all these through online medium. Not every student has the access to such multimedia and engages to it entirely.
- Examination/Assessment: Currently Multiple choice based questions are the only possible way to assess the progress of learner.

Conclusion

MOOCs will provide a way forward for quality education in India, where good teacher in government sector is a matter of concern. Still many students don't have access to schools, especially girls and those having access, crying for good education. We are struggling to reform the teacher education system, who we believe to enhance education scenario, and reform the whole education system is a like a mirage. The blended mode of teaching would help the teachers and students to have access to large number of good educational resources and will provide good opportunity to access the education from eminent teachers with affordability. The sociological, geographical and political barriers in education can be overlooked by making MOOCs as parallel to regular school education. To encourage teacher and learner to MOOCs should be motivated by proper planning like promotion for in-service teachers and jobs, admission to higher classes by learners.

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