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Assessing The Accessibility of SWAYAM MOOCs: Learners' Perspectives and Challenges

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Abstract: Blended teaching-learning is the core medium to impart education and emerges as an adaptive reform in educational reforms. Higher education institutions are using different platforms for providing both online education with offline education. SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) -MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) is one of the most widely used platforms in higher education institutions. The researcher intends to assess the perspective and challenges of learners towards MOOCs. Researchers interviewed 50 B.Ed. students to assess their perspective and challenges of learners while doing SWAYAM-MOOCs by using a qualitative methodology. The finding aims to assist the developers of SWAYAM portals and concerned stakeholders in improving inclusivity and learner support.

Keywords: SWAYAM, MOOCs, Blended teaching-learning, educational reforms, Higher education institutions.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A blended teaching-learning environment is being adopted by educational institutions after COVID. The integration of Massive Open Online Courses into a blended learning environment emerges as an effective adoption in modern education in India. Different higher educational institutions in India are enhancing the learning experiences of learners through a blended learning approach. To promote inclusivity and quality in education, this integration of MOOCs with a blended-learning environment can create a healthy and effective teaching-learning environment in educational institutions that promote technical and professional proficiency among learners.

MOOCs are characterized by their openness, accessibility, and scalability. With their free or inexpensive courses available all over the world, providers like Coursera, edX, SWAYAM, and Future Learn have democratized education. An educational strategy known as blended learning combines conventional classroom techniques with digital media that may be accessed online.

It guarantees that students participate actively in class discussions and practical exercises in addition to being passive consumers of online content.

2.1 Review of Literature

Accessibility of SWAYAM MOOCs is rapidly growing, but there is concern about the completion of MOOCs by learners. The researcher reported that MOOCs suffer from a low completion rate that is often tied to poor accessibility (Reich & Ruieperes-Valiente, 2019).

Accessibility specialists can assist in creating the educational content for MOOCs or be involved in platform development. Accessibility managers and inclusion designers are part of this position (Slater et al., 2015). Yuan and Powell (2013) characterize MOOCs as significant instruments for lifelong learning, providing broad access to information.

Conversely, Jordan (2015) observed that the completion rates for MOOCs frequently fall below 15%, highlighting difficulties related to learner engagement and the design of courses.

3.1 Significance of the study

This paper addresses the accessibility of MOOCs in teacher educational institutions and challenges faced by B.Ed. Students, while doing MOOCs. It signifies the MOOC developers and experts, where the requirement for improvement is needed in developing an effective MOOC course.

4.1 Objectives

1. To assess the learner's perspective on the accessibility to MOOCs in teacher education institutions.
2. To explore the challenges faced by learners in accessing MOOCs in teacher education institutions.

5.1 Methodology

The research study comprised a qualitative methodology involving an open-ended questionnaire circulated to the population of 70 B.Ed. Students who had experience with MOOCs. The researcher received 50 responses from them. Therefore, the researcher had a sample of 50 respondents for the analysis. The Google form contains two open-ended questionnaires with two and five items, respectively, to assess the learner's perspective on the accessibility to MOOCs in teacher education institutions and explore the challenges faced by learners in accessing MOOCs in teacher education institutions.

6.1 Findings of the study

The researcher analysed both objectives one by one in ascending order to get a precise view of the learner's perspective regarding the accessibility of MOOCs in teacher education institutions and challenges faced by them in accessing them. The researcher analyzed two open-ended questionnaires in this regard.

6.1.1 Accessibility to MOOCs in teacher education institutions

Researcher found that B.Ed. Colleges of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University are adopting MOOCs in their academic curriculum for B.Ed. Students. More than fifty percent B.Ed. Students perceived that MOOCs are the best instance for open educational access due to their reach in remote areas. Therefore, the introduction of MOOCs in their curriculum enhances their digital skills in their academic growth. Further, the researcher found that above average B.Ed. Students, MOOCs encourage blended learning and self-paced learning, respectively.

6.1.2 Challenges faced by learners in accessing MOOCs in teacher education institutions

•Slow working of the SWAYAM website while enrolling MOOC course

The researcher analysed the objective of the study and found that 30 % of B.ED. students experienced that the website of the SWAYAM portal was working slowly while enrolling in the course. Therefore, there is a need to work on the website of SWAYAM-MOOC. There is a need for upgradation of server capacity and the initiation load balancing mechanism.

•Lack of interpersonal interaction

The researcher stated from their analysis that B.Ed. students would not be able to interact with the subject expert effectively to overcome their doubts while doing the MOOCs. More than fifty percent of respondents stated that discussion forums don't give full liberty to get proper answers or solutions to their doubts. Therefore, there is a need for improvement in discussion forums where learners can raise doubts and get the proper answers effectively, as there is a lack of interpersonal interaction.

•Difficulty in doing assignments

The researcher found that thirty percent of the total respondents felt that they faced difficulty in doing assignments given by the course expert. Therefore, there is also a need for improvisation.

•Lack of technical proficiency

Thirty percent of total respondents agree that they have less technical proficiency for taking a course on MOOCs. Therefore, there is a need to teach technical skills to learners who have less technical proficiency.

•Delayed in Results

More than fifty percent of the total respondents said that the results of MOOC courses come late, due to which their final academic result did not come at time. This leads delay in the further procedure of getting an academic degree from the university. This is a major concern for improvements in MOOCs, in delaying results have been delayed so far.

7.1 Conclusion

The research highlights that access to SWAYAM is not consistent. Students encounter a mix of technological, teaching, and infrastructure challenges. By implementing focused enhancements—technical, educational, and organizational—SWAYAM can more effectively achieve its goal of providing inclusive educational access.

8.1 References

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