

# MOOCs in India: An Overview

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**Abstract:** *Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are one of the latest trends of learning in higher education in recent years. A massive open online course (MOOC) is a model for delivering and learning content online to anyone who wants to take a course, with no limit on attendance with usually free of cost. Conventional online courses require tuition fee to learn, carry credit and limit enrolment to a few dozens to ensure interaction with interaction, on the other hand, massive open online courses are available to any person is usually free, credit less and massive too. The paper discussed major players of MOOC, the list of MOOCs offered in library and information science and what are the challenges while learning.*

**Keywords:** MOOCs, online learning, free learning, MOOCs providers

## 1. Introduction

A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is a web - based platform which provides unlimited number of students worldwide with a chance of distance education with the best institutes in the world. It was established back in 2008 and gained momentum in 2012 as a popular learning tool. Many MOOCs have communities that have interactive sessions and forums between the student, professors and Teaching Assistants (TAs) along with the study/course material and video lectures. So, if there is a particular course you want to pursue but cannot, you have an option of considering a MOOC for your chosen higher education path.

The word MOOC is 'Massive Open Online Course'. An online course which is Massive i. e. available to many, it is Open, implying it is free of cost, it also implies there is no pre - requisite qualifications or level of performance to join the course and participants can join anytime and leave anytime. The term 'Online' means the course is available digitally and that is why participants can access it from anywhere. The term 'Course' indicates it has a structure, a syllabus, a design. It provides participants an opportunity to join learning community. The term MOOC has all these characteristics. MOOC's aims at a large - scale interactive participation of users with the help of web. Various features of MOOC are like videos, study materials, quizzes and online exams. and trying to make it more efficient than traditional education system. The basic philosophy of MOOCs is 3A's i. e., Anytime, Anyone, Anywhere. MOOC has no barriers of economic, geographic, academic, age, and gender. The major English medium MOOC platform providers are Coursera, edX, Canvas and Future Learn;

### How does it work?

Think of it like an online platform where students and teachers come together and form an online pool of resources, which are readily available for you to utilize. You have the option of listening to lectures, downloading notes, contributing your own, and most importantly, sharing your point of view by communicating with your peers. Networking makes the process seem like a virtual online classroom.

## Characteristics of MOOCs

The Key Characteristics of a MOOC are

- Liberty of choice: MOOCs allow learners to choose where, when, how, with whom and even what to learn;
- Diversity: MOOCs get variety of learners from all corners of the world and promote to diverse thinking & readings;
- Connectedness: Through MOOCs, people are constantly interact with each other and tried to knowledge building;
- Self - paced: MOOC's provide the Autonomy to Learners to decide how and when they like to learn the MOOC's contain documents;
- Lifelong Learning: Learners improve their lifelong learning skills, as participating in a MOOC;
- Recognitions and Certificates: Most MOOCs award some kind of recognition for successful completion of a course, based on a final computer - marked assessment;

## Types of MOOCs

MOOCs Categorized into 2 Major Type

**cMOOC:** In a cMOOC environment the participants in the course act as both teachers and students, sharing information and engaging in a joint teaching and learning experience through intense interaction facilitated by technology. cMOOCs are not prescriptive, and participants set their own learning goals and type of engagement. cMOOC focuses on co - creation, autonomy, creativity and networked learning.

**xMOOC:** xMOOC is allowing learners to carry out learning at his/her pace. They focus on concise, targeted video content – with short videos rather than full - length lectures to wade through – and use automated testing to check students' understanding as they work through the content. xMOOCs focus on imparting learning through use of traditional learning tools in structured manner able it at a scale which makes the course accessible to almost everyone connected to internet. xMOOCs are imparting the existing knowledge to larger audience who could possibly not have easy and cheap access to the same earlier.

## MOOCs platforms in India

Many initiatives have been taken by the Indian government to provide and support concept of open education. Initially, the objective was to provide open resources in terms of repositories, libraries, educational media files, e - books, etc.

These were made accessible for everybody. Some of the efforts in this direction started as National Digital Repository of IGNOU, Sakshat providing e - content, Shishya for XI - XII Standards by CBSE Board, and VidyaVahini integrating IT into the curriculum of rural schools by providing interactive training and developmental communication. Most of these initiatives started with establishing dedicated department to make education reachable to many learners as much as possible. Some of the common names in this path are, Education and Research Network (ERNET) connecting various colleges and schools by providing network connectivity; EDUSAT, a satellite launched for education in India, Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), use the power of television to act as means of educational knowledge dissemination; Information and Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET) autonomous Inter - University Centre for connecting university libraries, also it has started several other programs. These all are the initiatives towards open education and education with Information technology still MOOC was out of their reach.

There are various notable institutions, both non - profit and commercial, that offer these courses in India with the help of MOOC providers. A few of these are listed below,

**NPTEL:** NPTEL stands for National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning. It is a project funded by MHRD, initiated in 2003. It is a joint initiative of seven Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) for offering courses on engineering and science, initially. Now, NPTEL has started online course in computer science; electrical, mechanical, and ocean engineering; management; humanities, music etc. It offers free course with nominal fees for certification. Anybody from anywhere can join their course.

**MooKIT:** MooKIT is a lightweight MOOC management system built entirely using open - source technologies by Indian Institute of Kanpur (IITK), in 2014. It is a powerful system that can be used to offer online courses at any scale, from micro to massive. It is designed to offer cMOOC (connectivist MOOC). It has been used in 15 courses with about 100, 000 registered learners.

**IITBombayX:** IITBombayX is a non - profit MOOC platform developed by IIT Bombay using the open - source platform Open edX, in 2014. It was created with funding from National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NME - ICT), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. Currently, it is offering 63 courses on different subjects from multiple disciplines.

**SWAYAM:** SWAYAM stands for "Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds". It is a MOOC platform MOOC launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), government of India, to bind online and offline education together. It is started with an expectation of launching 2, 000 courses, to make it largest course catalogue, among all provided so far. For SWAYAM an independent platform is developed.

## MOOCS in Library and Information Science

Here is an indicative list, though not exhaustive, of MOOCs in library and information science

- MOOC on New Librarianship –master class has been offered by school of information studies –Syracuse university (USA), during July 8 –August 4, 2013
- Hyperlinked library MOOC has been offered by school of library and information science, San Jose State University during September 3 - November 23, 2013.
- MOOC on information theory is being offered by Chinese University of Hong Kong, during Jan 6 - April 27, 2013.
- MOOC on social Network Analysis has been offered by University of Michigan, during Oct 7 - Dec 14, 2013

## Importance and Advantages of MOOCS

- a) Learner can use any online tool which are relevant for them
- b) Learning takes place in a more informal setting and it can be organized easily
- c) The content to be shared can be easily modified based on the context of the target audience
- d) Learner can connect across disciplines and corporate/institutional walls. Actually, learners will improve their lifelong learning skills, as participating in MOOCs
- e) Learner adds to learners' personal learning environment and/or network by participating in a MOOC
- f) Learner doesn't need a degree to follow the MOOCs, only the willingness to learn
- g) There is no age bar. MOOC is an open course allowing individuals of any age group to join the course.
- h) MOOC also provides opportunities to many people who could not continue education due to lack of money. Most of the MOOC courses are either free or have nominal costs
- i) Enrolment of MOOCs is open to anybody in the World, no fee, no age bar, no credentials needed; j) MOOC can be organised in any language depending on the main language of the target audience within any Country / State;
- j) MOOCs are also being used for learning technical subjects (such as Robotics, Programming, etc.)
- k) MOOC saves on space and costs. Accommodating large number of students in schools and colleges is not feasible

## Challenges of MOOCS

MOOCs have been faced following New Challenges:

- a) Access to Internet & Computer Literacy for MOOCs
- b) Accreditation of MOOCs
- c) Credibility in assessment of MOOCs
- d) Self - Regulation and Motivation for MOOCs
- e) High Dropout Rate in MOOCs
- f) Maintain Standards and Quality of MOOCs
- g) Grading System of MOOCs
- h) Plagiarism free MOOCs
- i) They are not an educational panacea
- j) Assessment tends to consist of Multiple choice questions
- k) It is difficult for participants to build relationship with Prof.

## 2. Conclusion

MOOCs bring to people interest in the learning. it provides freely accessible online resources of study material. Massive open online courses are available online often free of charge and provided by recognizable institutions. Participation in MOOCs is completely dependent on interested individual. Higher education and multitude of opportunities for everybody to access good education. Tremendous challenges to education system in under process of reforms. MOOCs (Massive open online courses) are welcome step which come with immense advantages of the society.

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