

Massive Open Online Courses: - Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Education**Dr.S.B.Desai**

Principal

STES,Smt.Kashibainavale College of Education & Training (B.Ed),

KusagonBK,Lonavala

Abstract:-

Teacher Education TE (TE) or teacher training refers to the policies, procedures and provision designed to equip (prospective) teacher with the knowledge, attitudes behaviors and skills they require performing their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community. The professionals who engage in training the prospective teachers are called teacher educators. E-learning is an innovative approach to utilize Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to provide learning opportunities to a wide audience. It allows interaction between learners and teachers. In recent years, in order to adapt to the changing role of the teachers to accommodate 21st century learning practices, E-learning has changed teaching-learning in the higher education system of India. The Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) is one of the gateways of E-learning system for in-service teachers of college and universities in India. Academic libraries also play vital role in the changing method of teaching and learning process for MOOCs development.

The purpose of this paper is to present changes in the use of the technology in online learning and universal access to knowledge through 'Swayam' the platform for offering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in India. The findings revealed that the online refresher course has different parameters or factors which provide information about distinct aspects of MOOCs for professional development and engagement of in-service teachers. In this paper includes MOOC concept, Elements of MOOC, Challenges and Opportunities in teacher Education etc.

Keywords:- MOOC concept, Elements of MOOC, MOOC in India,

Introduction:-

A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials, such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets many MOOCs provide interactive course with user forums or social media discussions to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants as well as immediate feedback to quick quizzes and assignments. MOOCs are a widely researched development in distance education first introduced in 2008 that emerged as a popular mode of learning in 2012.

Early MOOCs often emphasized open-access features, such as open licensing of content, structure and learning goals, to promote the reuse and remixing of resources. Some later MOOCs use closed licenses for their course materials while maintaining free access for students. The first MOOCs emerged from the open education resources (OER) movement, which was sparked by MIT open

courseware project. The OER movement was motivated from work by researchers who pointed out that class size and learning outcomes had no established connection, with Barwick's work being the most often-cited example within the OER movement, the Wikiversity was founded in 2006 and the first open course on the platform was organized in 2007. The term MOOC was coined in 2008 by Dave Cormier of the University of Prince Edward Island in response to a course called Connectives and Connective Knowledge (also known as CCK08). CCK08, which was led by George Siemens of Athabasca University and Stephen Downes of the National Research Council consisted of 25 tuition-paying students in Extended Education at the University of Manitoba as well as over 2200 online students from the general public who paid nothing. All course content was available through RSS feeds, and online students could participate through collaborative tools, including blog posts, threaded discussions in Moodle and second life meetings. Stephen Downes considers these so-called MOOCs to be more "creative and dynamic" than the current MOOCs, which he

believes "resemble television shows or digital textbooks."

Massive Online Open Courses popularly as MOOCs have recently emerged as vital mechanism for learning over a period of time. Coined by Dave Cormie in 2008, the journey of the concept has received wide attention throughout the world. It is defined as online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via web.

Teacher education is regarded as an indispensable concept for the teachers at all levels of education. These are pre-primary, primary, elementary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary. The system of education is different at all levels. The main focus of teacher education is based upon the levels of education. On the other hand, the needs and requirements of the students also vary at each level. The teacher education need to take into consideration the needs and requirements of the students. Therefore, level and stage-specific teacher preparation is essential. Teacher education renders a significant contribution in the development of teaching skills among the students. The teachers, employed in professional institutions are informative in terms of practical and theoretical knowledge regarding their respective subjects. It is essential for them to make use of specialized teacher training inputs with the purpose of training the students, who are making an entry into their professions. In the area of teacher education, special education and physical education are also emphasized upon. The knowledge base is adequately specialized and diversified across different levels of education. It has the main objective of preparing the teachers to perform their job duties in an appropriate manner.

• MOOCs have the Following Elements:-

Massive: designed for, in theory, an unlimited number of participants. This means that the course is designed such that the effort required providing all services does not increase significantly as the number of participant's increases.

Open: Access to the course is free, and there are no entry qualifications.

Online: The full course is available through the internet i.e., it's online.

Course: the offering is a course, meaning that it offers complete learning experiences- i.e., it is supported with course materials, assessment tools

such as quizzes, feedback, an examination and a certificate of completion.



• How do they Work?

MOOCs use Web-based tools and environments referred to as platforms- to deliver education without regard for geographic boundaries and time zones and too much larger audiences- in fact, thousands of students. MOOCs are offered by providers like Coursera, Udacity or ed X that have their own online virtual platform that enables the best institution to offer their education to the rest of the world.

• MOOC in India:-

As a part of Providing quality and affordable education to its students, Indian government has recently launched an Indian focused MOOC platform for all. This MOOC platform is termed as Swayam Study Webs of Active- learning for young Aspiring Minds. SWAYAM is a programme initiated by Government of India and designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of education Policy viz., access, equity and quality. Seven National coordinators have been appointed to ensure best quality content i.e. NPTEL for engineering, UGC for post graduate, CEC for undergraduate education, NCERT NIOS for school education, IGNOU for out of the school and IIMB for management studies.

SWAYAM platform is indigenously developed by MHRD and AICTE with the help of Microsoft and would be ultimately capable of hosting 2000 courses and 80000 hours of learning. The UGC has already provided the credit Framework for online learning courses through SWAYAM by a regulation in 2016, advising the Universities to identify courses where credits can be

transferred on to the academic record of the students for course done on SWAYAM.

In developing countries like India, MOOCs can create opportunities to strengthen their education system and enhances access to higher education to that section of the society who cannot afford to pay hefty fees. However, there is need to take into consideration the constraints being faced by the developing world including financial constraints, lack of capacity, national priorities and the digital divide.

• Challenges of MOOCs:-

Along with positive features, there are also some concerns around MOOCs.

Creed-Dikeogu and Clark state that:

- They are not an educational panacea.
- They are not yet evolved enough to provide thorough peer assessment methodology, robust business revenue models, stabilized retention rates, successful pedagogical design, or resolution for cheating and plagiarism.
- There are frequent concerns with the actual platforms on which the MOOCs are delivered on experiencing technical difficulties.
- Assessment tends to consist of multiple choice questions.
- Those enrolled rarely or never have the opportunity to write a research paper
- It is difficult for participants to build relationship with professor
- It often replicates the sage on the stage scenario as MOOCs often lack effective instructional design.
- The authors also emphasize that Instructional design best practices need to be followed.
- Relying on user-generated content can create a chaotic learning environment.
- Digital literacy is necessary to make use of the online materials.
- The time and effort required from participants may exceed what students are willing to commit to a free online course.
- Once the course is released, content will be reshaped and reinterpreted by the massive

student body, making the course trajectory difficult for instructors to control.

- Participants must self-regulate and set their own goals.
- Language and translation barriers.
- Accessibility barriers for differently-abled users
- Access barriers for people from low socio-economic neighbor hoods and countries with very little internet access

Today, with the rapid development of network information, MOOC plays a very important role in college education because MOOC is different from the traditional classroom, not only can go out of the classroom and schools but also can reach every corner of the world through the Internet.

•Teaching Mode and Teaching Content-

In the traditional teaching mode of college English, the traditional teaching theory advocates the “three central theory”. That is teacher center, book center, classroom center. Teachers are still dominant in the classroom, and students are the recipients of knowledge; teaching revolves around text books and pays attention to the teaching of knowledge points and the training of students’ skills in class, which has restrained the students’ thinking, affecting train students’ divergent thinking and creative thinking. For traditional teaching content, college English teaching revolves around text books and the main task of teaching is to explain the text.

The basic part of teaching is text introduction, text structure analysis, vocabulary explanation, difficult sentence explanation, writing method appreciation and so on. Teachers explain the text with a small amount of oral practice which is mainly based on the word and sentence level, students rarely have opportunities to communicate in English.

Role of Teachers-

In the traditional teaching theory, the relationship between teachers and students is that teachers are the main body of teaching and students are the object of teaching, emphasizing on teachers’ authority, teachers play a leading role in teaching. As Comenius Johann Amos put it, “The teacher’s mouth is the source of knowledge, the stream of

knowledge flows out of the teacher's mouth and the students have to accept the pour of knowledge like a trough. Students have to obey the teacher's teaching; their main task is to learn knowledge. Its essence is teacher determinism, ignoring the creativity of students."

Opportunities in MOOC:-

MOOCs offer many opportunities once developed and delivered it is less labor intensive approach in higher education.

Front End Services for Students & Teachers

MOOCs provide front end services to the students and teachers including proctored examination, certification, career guidance and direct tutoring.

Back End Services to the Third Parties which includes employers for recruiting analytics, design consultancy, recruitment services and advertising.

Education Services

MOOCs provide educational services to higher education institutions including license of courses and to training providers and workplace development programs.

Expansion

MOOCs have the potential to bring higher education and generate revenue from millions of students who don't have access to today.

Tutoring

Data and analytics constitute another promising source of revenue. For example, students might pay for advanced learning.

Improving the Professional Quality of Foreign Language Teachers-

With the arrival of MOOC, the teacher's level of information technology is very important. The reality is that many teachers have very low level of information technology. After the busy education and teaching work, teachers devote less time to information technology learning. Teachers should set up a scientific and modern teaching concept of keeping pace with the times. Teachers should apply the new technology brought by MOOC, so that students can learn knowledge without the limitation of time and space. Students can enjoy the best educational resources in the world free of charge according to their own conditions and interests. This puts higher demands for the teachers. Teachers should improve the teaching cognitive ability,

teaching operation ability and teaching monitoring ability. Meanwhile, teachers should flexibly use all kinds of modern teaching methods to adapt to the rapid development of MOOC.

Conclusion:-

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are being used globally at a large scale. MOOCs in India are in primitive stage. UGC has released guidelines for blending MOOCs with face to face education system, According to which "An institution can only allow up to 20% of the total courses being offered in a particular programme in a semester through the online learning courses provided through SWAYAM portal." UGC has also rolled out the norms for full online programmes. There is a need to motivate established institutions to convert their existing certificate and diploma programmes in to online courses as well as incentivize the efforts of your faculty members of university departments and colleges. Though, UGC has specified some provisions for it in new norms for carrier advancement and promotion.

All over India, universities should be asked to organize workshops for developing MOOCs. Faculty may be familiar with MOOCs, but still the awareness for MOOCs is very less. Required ICT skills are to be developed among faculty members, for this short-term training programmes can be organized. It will be better if some MOOC courses can be developed for sensitizing and training of faculty members on SWAAM Platform first, it may serve dual purpose.

To make them aware of the initiative as well can give them a real feel about practices and procedures of MOOC development. The implications and practices of MOOCs in education and training must be seriously addressed and there is need of well equipped institutional infrastructure to implement and to use the MOOCs at large scale.

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