Massive Online Courses, Clouds and Mobiles: Perspectives to Indian higher education

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Abstract:

Since independence of India in 1947 it is education landscape has improved considerably. However still it much behind the developed and also developing countries even after opening private educational institutions and opening e-learning as a new tool for growth of education specially in higher education. For achieving gross enrolment ratio (GER) to 30% by 2020, targeted by government of India, from present GER 19% (2013), multifarious steps have been planned and initiated actions towards for achieving the goal through increasing educational institutes, teachers, teacher's training, distance education, e-learning, expansion of information and communication technology (ICT), internet access, mobile use, privatising of higher education and so on. Based on the latest ICT tools, Massive Online Course, generally also called Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) though not necessarily an open, has been initiated largely in 2011 as a new way of learning – where students can well access the course offered by the university of one's choice through internet in the form of audio, video, text and interactions. MOOC is enabled by 'cloud' which houses all the course materials, lecture classes for learner's access through internet on desktop, laptop. Many courses are now available on tablets and smart mobile largely on android/iPhone and with rapid growth of mobile user a boost the growth of MOOC through mobile popularly known as MobiMOOC is expanding. Some of the higher educational institutions in India has started MOOC, as has been initiated by MIT, Harvard, University of California, Barkley and many others from USA and other countries with learning access to almost all over the world. India is the second after USA in enrolment to these courses with male & female about 80% & 20 % respectively with mean students age 23 years (lowest in the world). Again out of the enrolled students completing the course only around 10%. The courses are provided free or on nominal charge through major cloud service providers edX, Coursera, Udacity and many more. Though India is third largest country in number of higher educational institutions/universities quality of the institutions/universities are remarkably behind the others. None of the Indian higher educational institutes has got place within 200 of QS 2014 world ranking of the universities. Presently only a few of Indian top ranking institutions that too mainly technological institutions are offering a few courses for global or their own students however none yet offers any bachelor's/master's degree though some US universities have started recently. About 65% of Indian MOOC students are with Bachelor's or higher university degree holder. Sixty-two percent students are employed. Leaving aside a very small fragment, the major portion of the entire students are backed by curiosity & acquiring specific job skill motivations. With business as usual scenario in India MOOC is therefore appears to marginally contribute in boosting growth of higher education and quality of education rather its contribution is significantly affecting in elevating growth of skill and

diversified specialisations of Indian professionals serving in India and around the globe. Indian universities are in short of teacher consistently for decades and so student to teacher ratio is very high (24:1) compared to many other countries. MOOC provide a very big relief to India as here student teacher ratio can be even 1,00,000:1. Georgia Tech of USA offers Bachelor's courses through MOOC. European Erasmus program is a proven reality of joint Master's program by collaborating universities. India has highest growth rate in internet use and it is about to take second place after China. Smart phone, mainly on Android & iPhone, use in India is also expanding exponentially and now placed second after China. Considering present rate of ICT growth and drive taken by Indian government for accelerating its growth further and extension of its services to Indian higher educational/universities are potential to expand MOOC coherently adding more participation of universities, launching comprehensive bachelor's/master's courses in wide spectrum of subjects, drawing further talents from underprivileged communities, rural & female sections and reform Indian higher education significantly. Consequently it is likely to out-of-the-box contribute to enhancing GER towards target of 30% by 2020.