

Education at the Door Steps!

An Overview of Evolution of Online Learning in India

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Abstract- Education industry has undergone a sea of change as new tools and technologies have been implemented to achieve the educational efficiency frontier. Online learning has become the integral part of this change and has acquired many learners to get benefitted. This informative article intends to analyse the evolution of online learning programs and how does it support the learners in not only acquiring knowledge but also in enhancing their career. The information portrayed in this article is based on the deep evaluation of insights from web sources and researched contents.

Keywords -- Online Learning, online platforms, online courses, NPTEL, edX, Coursera

I. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization has paved the way for all sectors to elevate the outcome efficiency. It is evident that modern world is witnessing the exploration of innovative mobile apps and websites for various purposes. The face of education has experienced a sea change over the decades. Beginning from the traditional classroom model, education has transmuted into learning that is online and self-driven. The Indian education's journey has now come out with online learning which is evolving every day. Government, educational institutions and organizations have taken greater initiatives for providing the world class education to the learners. The recent changes in education industry sought that e- learning has taken up a great boom. Government of India has also initiated various facilitated online learning platforms.

II. MODERN EDUCATION

Research has intensified education into broader fields. India has been seeing the new fields of education emerging with its own opportunities. Modern education is not only innovative but also requires ever learning readiness. The Indian institutions are strategizing education by initiating online flexible learning opportunities for learners across India and even to learners of foreign origin.

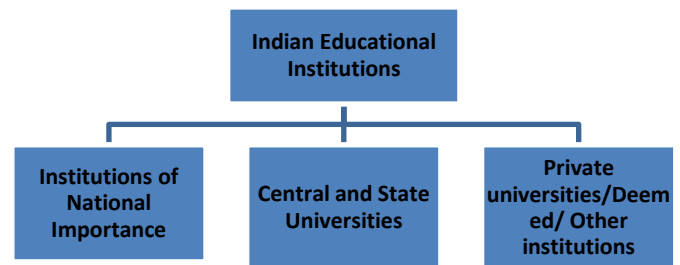


Fig.1 Indian Educational Institutions

Institutions of National Importance such as Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, National Institutes of Technology, and other institutions. Every state has a Central university whereas states Universities are of departments, affiliated colleges and schools. Private Institutions which includes Universities which are deemed to be universities and Private institutions. These institutions are governed by Government norms and regulation and its services are distinct according to its repute. The estimated values of these institutions are ranked on various parameters. Learners opt for different level of courses in these institutions according to their requirements, opportunities and economic ability. Online learning has intruded in all these category of institutions at various levels.

III. E-LEARNING / ONLINE LEARNING

E-learning can also be called as Online learning in which the meaning remains idle. To acquire the e-learning experience, one needs a digital gadget such as Mobile phone, Tab, Laptop or other electronic communication devices with internet connectivity. Online education elevates the standard of education and up scales the economy. This advancement has led many learners to acquire wider knowledge which enriches their employability. Online learning escalates the learning efficiency of learners where technical education is expensive, opportunities are limited. The accelerated surge in internet connections is a predominant factor for the growth of e

learning. Even Indian companies mandate e-learning as continuous employee learning. Students of distinct fields of study and specialization opt for online courses as to imbibe knowledge, explore new domain of specialization and for other reasons. Online learning is categorized as Primary and Secondary supplementary education, Higher Education, Test Preparation, Reskilling and Certification and casual learning. According to a survey by KPMG India's Research and Analysis 2017 report, reskilling and certification courses is the largest category in Indian Online Education industry, driven by IT professionals. The ultimate aim of these learners is to enhance their skill development. Learners take up the courses at different stages of their life for acquiring different needs. Many institutions in India mandate the students to undergo online certificate programs to fulfil their degrees. Some institution partner with the online course providers such as Institutions ties up with NPTEL as local chapters.

IV. UNIQUE FEATURES OF E-LEARNING

Online learning is unlikely costly and flexible in terms of time, place and convenience. Indian Online students perceive convenience, flexibility with commencement and variety of study materials are the key motivational factors to adopt online learning. The features of online learning are as follows.

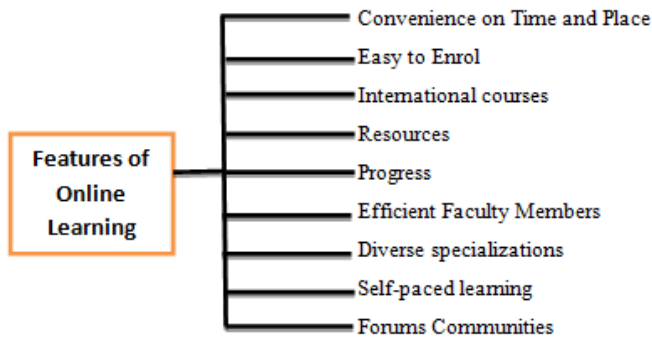


Fig.2 Unique Features of Online Learning

V. ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

Online platforms play vital role in Indian Education System. Initially, platforms served as the intermediary between students and contents. Later, it has been established as the knowledge providers. Some of the acclaimed e-learning platforms are as follows.

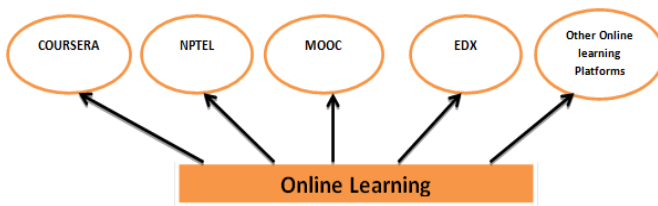


Fig.3 depicting the well-known online learning Platforms

- *NPTEL- National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning*

NPTEL is a joint initiative of IITs and IISc which offers free Online courses and leading to certification in various disciplines and topics. The courses are fully online and charge a nominal fee for final exam. The ultimate eligibility is the interest and enthusiasm to learn. It offers four, eight and twelve week courses and video contents are available for viewing at any time at any place. Assignments are provided for weekly modules and evaluated by the faculty members of courses conducted by IITs and IISc.

- *MOOC- Massive Open Online Courses*

MOOC is an open platform for online learning. It contains the course materials, filmed lectures, readings and problem sets. It also intends on community interaction through forums where Professors, students and Teaching Assistants engage in communication. MOOC has become the emerged popular mode of learning and many universities of India and abroad offer distinct field of courses. Premier institutions such as Indian Institute of Management Bangalore conducts MOOC courses and even Faculty Development Programs are also conducted. Many workshops and training sessions are conducted by the institutes which offer MOOC.

- *COURSERA*

Coursera was founded in 2012 by two Stanford Computer Science Professors. This platform offers world class courses from the universities across Globe. It has been built in an educational perspective so that people across the world could study on courses anywhere at anytime and earn credentials from world's top universities and education providers. Coursera includes recorded video lectures, auto graded and peer reviewed assignments and community discussion forums. The courses are distinct in field of study and duration of weeks and months. Both electronic and hard copy certificates are provided at successful completion of courses.

- *EDX (edX)*

Edx was founded by Harvard University and MIT in 2012. EDX is an online learning destination and MOOC provider, offering high-quality courses from the world's best universities and institutions to learners everywhere. It has more than 90 Global partners where world's leading universities and institutions are members. EDX is an open-source platform which offers free online courses and leading to certification at nominal fee. The educators,

technologies, learning tools and assessments enhance the learners across the globe.

- **Other Online Learning Platforms**

Many universities offer online certificate, diploma and degree programs through interactive online mode of education. The courses provided by the institution substitutes the classroom education and intend learner to learn at their convenience and comfort. Some online learning platforms are Academic Earth, Internet Achieve, Big Think, Bright Storm, Cosmolearning, Future Channel, How caste and Khan Academy etc.,

VI. OUTCOMES OF ONLINE LEARNING

The certificates provided by these institutions are valued by the entities as recognized qualifications. Employers appreciate and motivate their employees to learn online and provide necessary facilities to acquire more skills and explore new domain. Institutions motivate students to study courses which are not covered by their curriculum but supports for their learning and employability. Business professionals do opt for online learning so as to understand, learn and implement change. The outcome of online learning is not limited to the betterment and gaining certification. Apart from the primary outcome, online learning has in roared learners to continue learning courses after courses. As a common saying “learning never ends”, anyone who has the interest to explore new knowledge would not be restricted in online learning. Many courses are open to those who are interested in domain which they are not open to basic of the particular domain. Online learning platforms do provide contents, case studies, reading materials and informative documents to faculty members and researchers. The videos and texts available are of world class standards prepared by the academicians across the world. Thereby globalizing the knowledge also matter as the factor of online learning. The communities are framed through the forums where learners are combined together and share necessary thoughts and information. Participation of faculty members, industrial professionals and students resembles a triangle of communication mediated by online learning platforms. Progresses through assessments at rigorous levels indicate the learners to enrich their knowledge and learning effectiveness. Since, online courses are convenient and lucrative to accumulate education and learning experience there is no decline in the rate of enrolments. Statistically, it has been found that Coursera has witnessed 25 million learners and more than 2000 courses offered by 149 Universities across the Globe. A survey on working professionals and career builders by coursera, it has been found that 89% of learners in India reported career benefits compared to 84% globally. From the same survey it has been found that the educational outcome seekers, 98% of respondents have agreed that they gained from the course which is more than the global average of 93%.

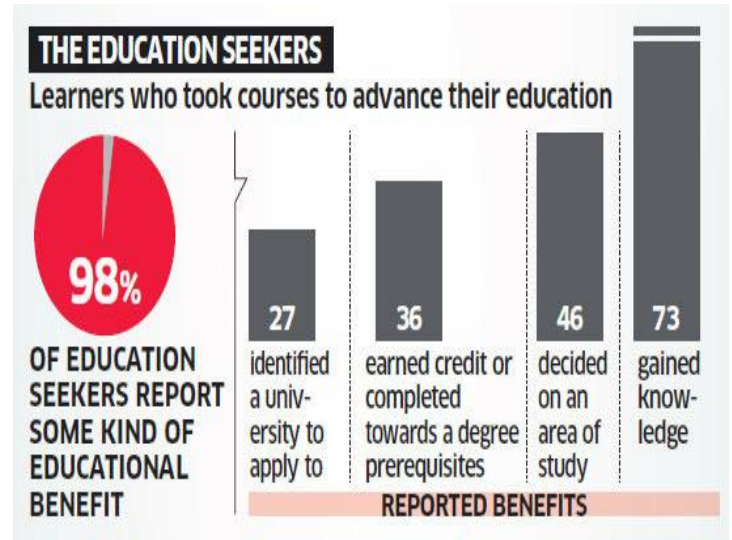


Fig.4 Education Seekers through Online Learning (Source: Coursera survey)

From the Fig.4, gaining knowledge scores the highest benefit for Education seekers. The certificate courses also act as the degree prerequisites.

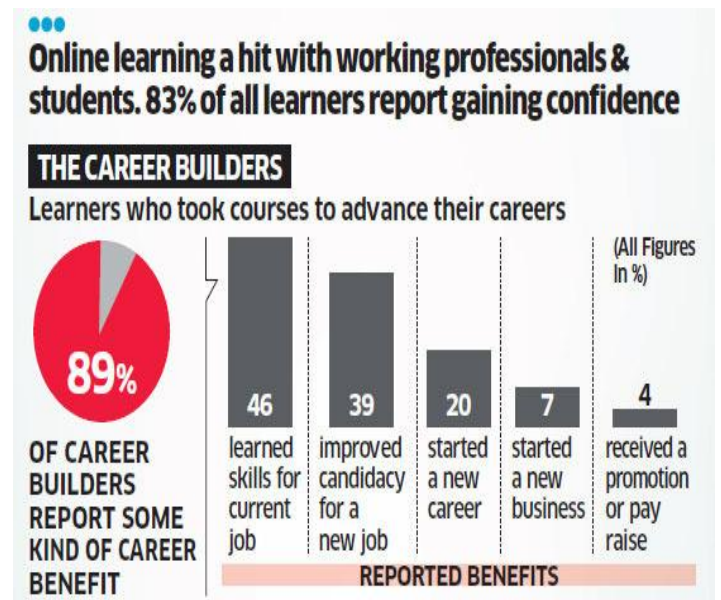


Fig.5 Career builders through Online Learning (Source: Coursera survey)

From the Fig.5 it has been found that 46% percentage of career builders learned skills for current jobs and 39 % improved the candidacy for new jobs.

As far as NPTEL is considered, there were more than 5 lakh subscribers and 171 million views. In 2016, it has offered more than 994 courses aggregate in various disciplines. It conducts basic courses, core subjects, job oriented courses, internship & placement and Up skilling & reskilling courses.

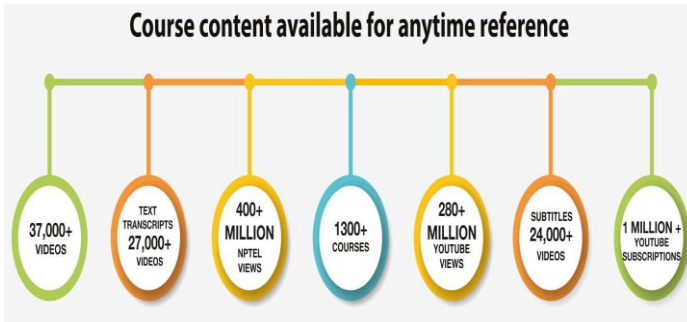


Fig.6NPTEL Overview (Source: NPTEL website)

Fig.6 represents the overview of NPTEL. It shows that there are more than 37000 videos available with more than 1300 courses.



Fig.7NPTEL Overview (Source: NPTEL website)

From the fig.7, it has been found that there is an increase in the enrolment of NPTEL courses every year. Among the total enrolments, 77% are students where as 15% and 8% are faculty members and industry professionals respectively.

EDX provides more than 1000 courses catering the learners market across the world. The courses are flexible, cost effective and possess world class content materials. The following figures show the basic statistics of edX. The data has been taken from the edX website.

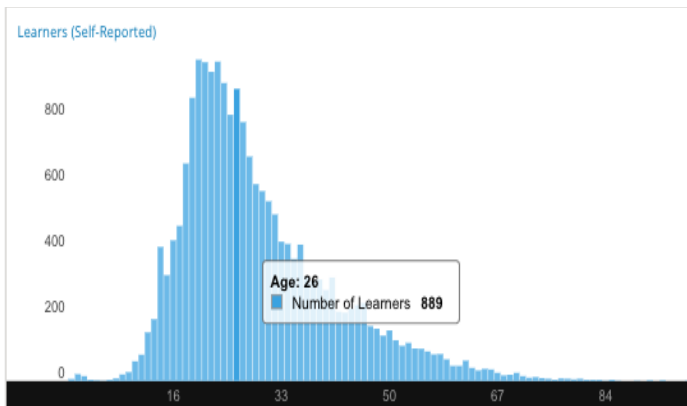


Fig.8edX learners' age category (Source: edX website)

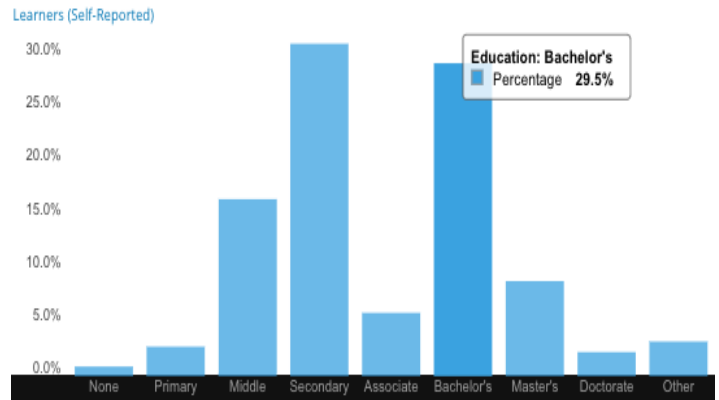


Fig. 9edX learner's education profile (Source: edX website)

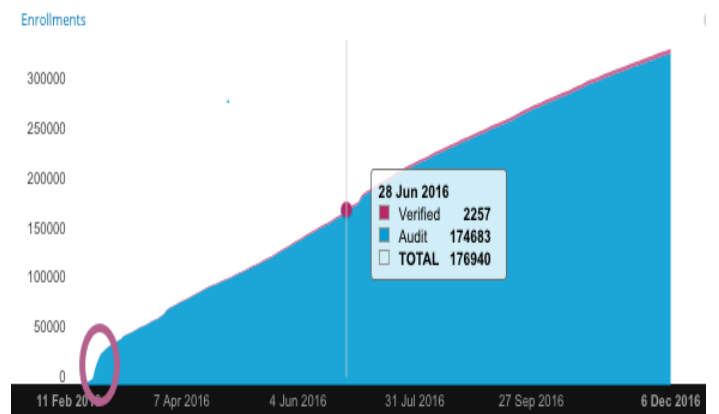


Fig.10edX learner's enrolments (Source: edX website)

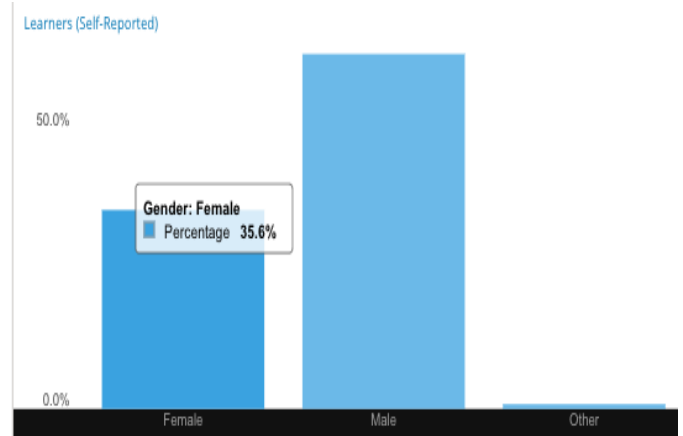


Fig.11. edX learner's gender profile (Source: edX website)

From the figures taken from edX website, it shows that the highest percentages of learners are male and the total enrolments are 176940 in the year 2017.

VII. CONCLUSION

As a developing Nation, India is seeing a dramatic evitable and innovative change in Education industry. Universities, institutions and organizations intend to elevate the education

standards by imbibing the world class knowledge. Online learning is an integral part of this growth yet reaching all individual in India is still an arduous task. Despite Government initiatives, many non-profit organizations and institutions trigger to increase the literacy rate of India but the efforts don't reach as how it has been executed. Generally, Education has to be at the door steps to people of the nation, no cost education does not comprehensively increase the literacy and escalate efficiency rather education has to be accessible to all. These online courses benefit students, working professionals and career builders, casual learners and even unemployed. It enhances the employability for professionals and deliver knowledgeable insights to education seekers and jobs to those who are faculty members and technicians. It would be highly acknowledged if a student of down earth institutions gets the world class education through the online learning platforms. The influence of Government would result in initiation and development of new modes of education and so as nation's growth.

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