SWAYAM: AN INNOVATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR SELF-LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF MANGALORE UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) finds a wide range of application in numerous fields playing a key role in the sphere of education by facilitating the large section of students to fulfill their dreams of learning effortlessly with the reduced cost instead of relying on formal education at classrooms. The digitalization in higher education sector has paved the way for the introduction of open access to free education through electronic mode at the convenience of learners, based on their interest and heed in a specified subject\ area. In light of this, an initiative had been taken up by the **'Ministry**

of Human Resource Development' (MHRD) to introduce 'MOOC' program in India through 'SWAYAM' portal, which is a web based free learning platform available to all irrespective of caste, creed, gender and financial status etc., broadly aims at educating the desirous pupils all across the world. SWAYAM which stands for 'Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' provides an ample opportunity to the learners to study the required courses effectively without much difficulty from their home itself. It offers a wide variety of courses in different streams of education.

The present study aims to analyze the **Perception** and **Awareness** on 'SWAYAM' among the **students and teaching faculty (U. G and P. G)** of Mangalore University. An empirical survey has been conducted based on primary data collected from **50 teaching faculty (respondents)** working under the various colleges affiliated to Mangalore University and from **30 students (respondents)** studying in different colleges of the university through online questionnaire method and telephonic interview method.

Keywords: Digital platform, MOOC, Online Education, SWAYAM, Students, Teaching Faculty,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The tremendous development of modern technology has created a revolutionary trend in several areas across the globe specifically having a remarkable impact in the field of education. The innovation and advancement of **ICT (Information and Communication Technology)** in higher education has led to the launch of **MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)** through electronic means to enable the desirous learners to access learning of their interested subject at free of cost. **SWAYAM** is an **Indian** version of **MOOC** started on **9th July 2017 by MHRD** which forms the splendid instrument for independent learning tool among the wide group of students scattered all over India. With the help of **ICT**, **SWAYAM** provides an integrated gateway for online courses involving the targeted group from schooling, class 9-12, Undergraduates, Post graduates and professionals in all subjects. Currently more than **2,000 courses** are uploaded on **SWAYAM** website well designed by the expert faculty and teachers all across the country.

Over the recent years, **MOOC** has achieved a rapid growth by enabling the huge number of students to enroll for the informative courses and thereby, helped in meeting the diversity of educational needs. With the help of **MOOC** or **SWAYAM,** the learners could able to study any number of courses from a certain place without visiting the campus to undergo traditional on-campus education. Besides it has helped the poor background students to gain expertise and

knowledge in advanced subjects with minimum cost advantages. The **MOOC** gives an equal opportunity to all and removes the gap between developed and underdeveloped country with regard to **educational standards and quality.**

2.0 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The attention and prominence towards **SWAYAM** course have increased on a greater scale in the past few years on account of innovation in the area of education. **SWAYAM** has become a real time necessity for the learners to update their current knowledge and to acquire new knowledge on interested matters. Through provision of financial resources, **UGC** is motivating and directing the educational institutions of the country to embark some courses on **SWAYAM** portal but, yet many of them have not shown keen interest in launching the teaching programs through **MOOC**.

Hence the government needs to take some more advisory measures to influence the universities to host the courses through **SWAYAM.**

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

The Empirical Survey has been undertaken for the purpose of collecting data for interpretation. Following are the aspects covered under Research Design:

3.1 OBJECTIVES

- To study the **perception, attitude** and **awareness** on UGC's SWAYAM scheme among the **teaching fraternity** and the **student learners.**
- To examine the relevance and usefulness of **SWAYAM** attributed to the growth of **Higher Education sector.**
- To assess the factor determinants influencing the Teachers and the student learners to opt courses under **SWAYAM** program and to offer suggestions for the improvement in the concept of **SWAYAM.**

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Self- designed **online questionnaire** was prepared and forwarded to the **Teaching Professionals** working under the various colleges affiliated to Mangalore University. Sample considered was **50** for which **random sampling** techniques has been used. As far as student learners are concerned, the **telephonic interview** method has been adopted for the collection of data. The secondary data was collected from several research articles of different journals, related websites etc.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

The **sample size** determined for the empirical survey has been confined to the respondents (Teaching fraternity and the students) of affiliated colleges of Mangalore University and hence the inferences/results of the study wouldn't be applicable to other regions of the country. Though structured questionnaire was distributed among the teaching faculty but received few numbers of responses yet.

4.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

The tabular and the diagrammatical representation of the responses have been depicted below.

1. Demographic profile of the respondents (Teaching Faculty):

Table no.1: Personal details of the respondents

Particulars	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
A. Gender		
Male	26	52
Female	24	48
Total	**50**	**100**
B. Age		
Up to 25 years	11	22
26-35 years	19	38
36-45 years	10	20
46-55 years	06	12
Above 55 years	04	08
Total	**50**	**100**
C. Marital Status		
Married	31	62
Unmarried	19	38
Total	**50**	**100**
D. Educational Qualification		
Post-Graduation only	19	38
Post-Graduation with NET/SLET	16	32
Post-Graduation with PhD.	10	20
Post-Graduation with M.Phil.	05	10
Total	**50**	**100**
E. Teaching Experience		
0-5 years	08	16
6-10 years	11	22
11-15 years	14	28
16-20 years	09	18
Above 20 years	08	16
Total	**50**	**100**
F. Designation		
Professor	04	08
Associate Professor	13	26
Assistant Professor	17	34
Lecturer/ Guest Faculty	16	32
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

The above table shows that among the 50 respondents, 52% are males, majority 38% of the respondents are from the age group of 26-35 years, 62% of the respondents are married, 32% of the respondents are the post graduates having an additional qualification of NET/SLET, 16% of them are having teaching experience of more than 20 years and 26% of the respondents hold the Designation of Associate Professor.
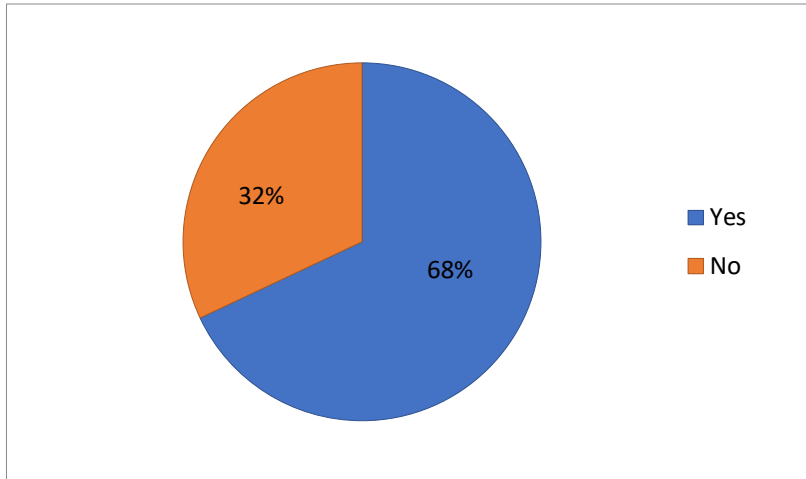
2.   Knowledge and awareness on UGC's SWAYAM online courses:

Table no.2: Awareness about MOOC courses.

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	34	68
No	16	32
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Figure No.1

Source: Survey Data, 2024

The above table and the figure depict that out of the total 50 respondents, 34 are aware about the **SWAYAM** courses and only 16 of them are not aware of this program.
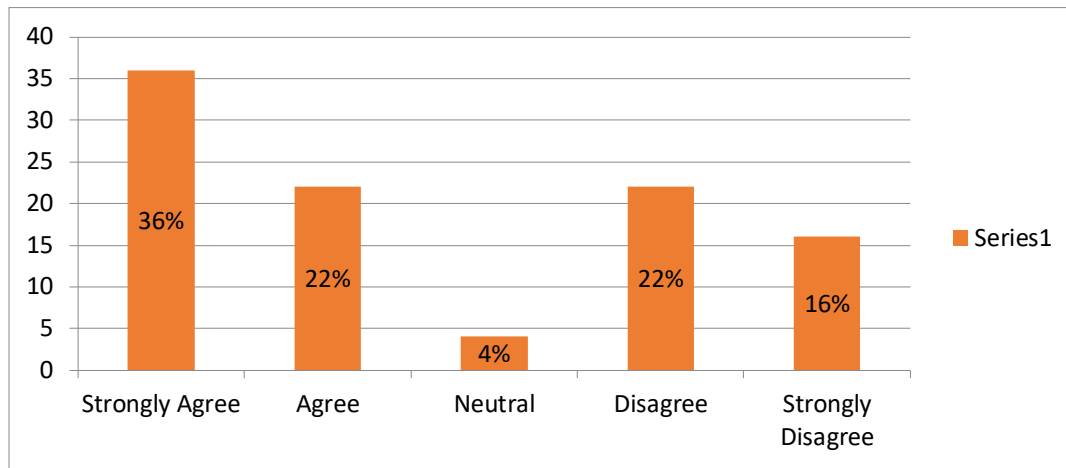
3.   The most effective and innovative technique for learning than traditional formal education at classroom.

Table no.3: The most effective learning technique than traditional form of education.

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	18	36
Agree	11	22
Neutral	02	04
Disagree	11	22
Strongly Disagree	08	16
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Figure No.2:

Source: Survey Data, 2024

The table no-3 and the diagram show that among the 50 respondents, 18 of them strongly agree and 11 of them agree that **SWAYAM** is the most effective and innovative technique for learning than traditional way of education, 11 of the respondents disagreed and 8 of them strongly disagreed with this opinion, 2 of them say that they are neutral in this regard.
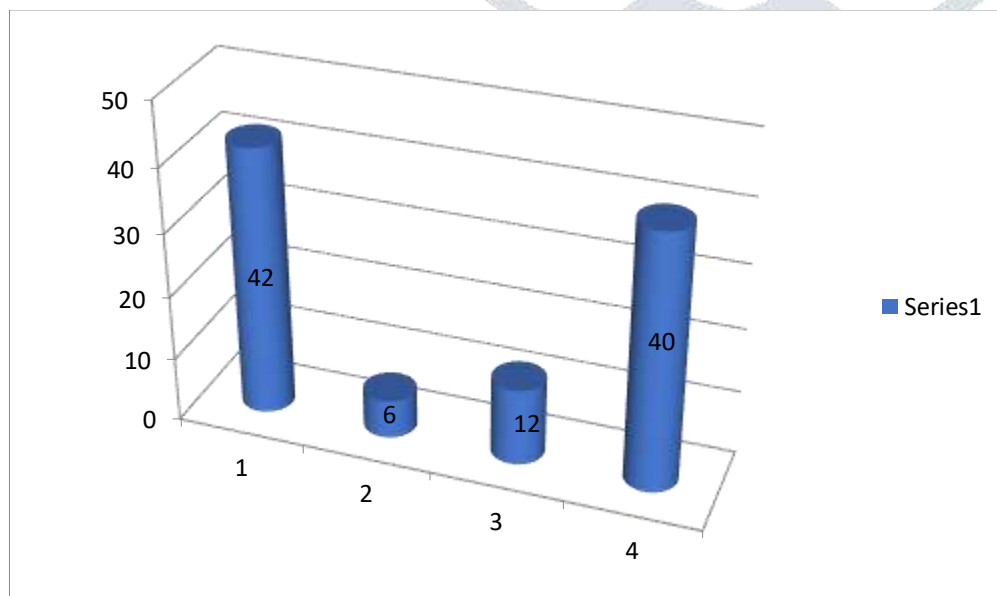
4.   Type of MOOC courses opted by the respondents.

Table no.4: Form of MOOC courses chosen

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Under Graduate \ Post graduate level courses	21	42
Diploma courses	03	06
Certificate courses	06	12
None	20	40
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Figure No. 3:

Source: Survey Data, 2024

This table and picture represent the type of MOOC courses opted by the respondents. From the analysis of the data stated above, 42% of the aggregate respondents have chosen UG/PG level courses and only 6% of them selected Diploma courses under SWAYAM scheme.
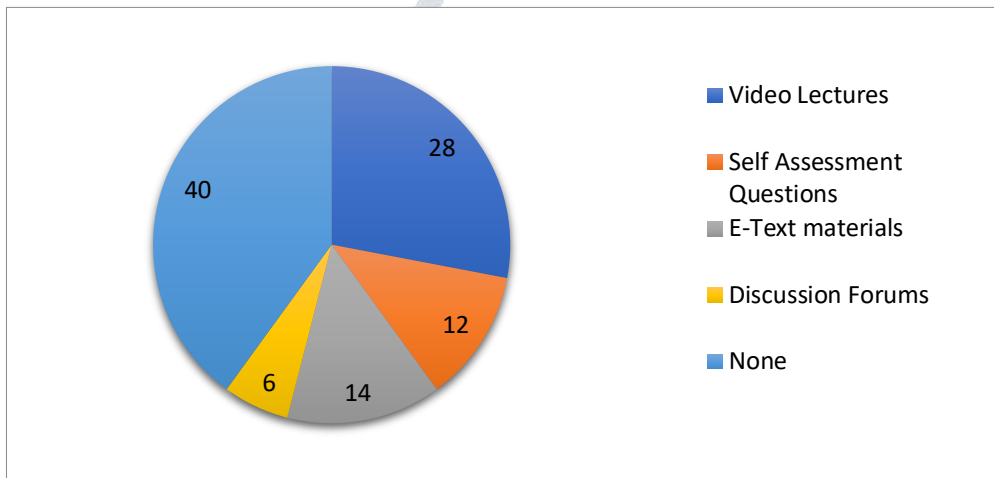
5. The most beneficial mode of learning under SWAYAM online portal.

Table no.5: The most useful method of learning on SWAYAM

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Video Lectures	14	28
Self- Assessment Questions	06	12
E-Text materials	07	14
Discussion Forums	03	06
None	20	40
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Figure No. 4:

Source: Survey Data, 2024

The table no-5 and the respective figure indicate the most beneficial mode of learning on **SWAYAM**. Among the 50 respondents, majority 40% doesn't like any of the learning methods introduced on **SWAYAM**, 28% of them wish to follow the video lectures, 12 % are willing to check their knowledge by attempting the self-assessment tests and 14% of the respondents want to study from the E-Text materials uploaded on the **SWAYAM** website.
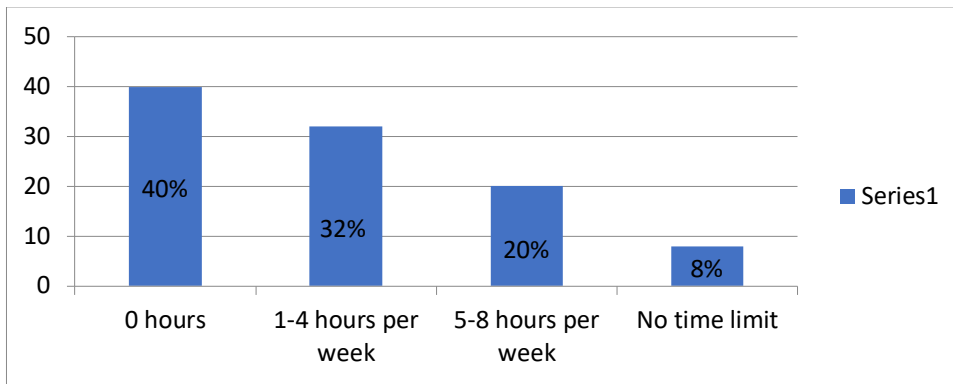
6. The average time spent on E-Learning of SWAYAM courses

Table No.6: Time spent on learning MOOC subjects in a week

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
0 hours	20	40
1-4 hours per week	16	32
5-8 hours per week	10	20
No time limit	04	08
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Figure No.5:

Source: Survey Data, 2024

From the above table and graph, it is clear that 20 respondents do not spend any time in online learning of courses, 16 of them spend nearly 1-4 hours, 10 of them use 5-8 hours in a week and 4 of the respondents do not follow specific time limit for learning the courses under SWAYAM.
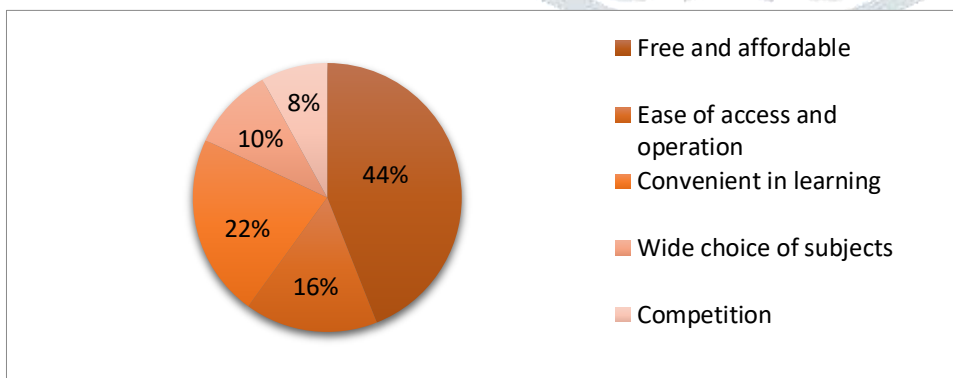
7. Factors influencing the Teaching faculty to undertake online courses

Table no.7: Factors affecting the educators in opting Digital courses.

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Free and affordable	22	44
Ease of access and operation	08	16
Convenient in learning	11	22
Wide choice of subjects	05	10
Competition	04	08
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Survey Data, 2024

Figure No.6:

Source: Survey Data, 2024

As far as the factors affecting the Teachers to opt digital course is concerned, the survey part clearly reveals that, 44% of the total respondents say that it is available free of cost and very affordable one. 22% of them opine that it is convenient in learning process, 16% of them use **SWAYAM** due to ease of access and operation and 10% of them have opted on account of wide choice of courses hosted on **SWAYAM**.
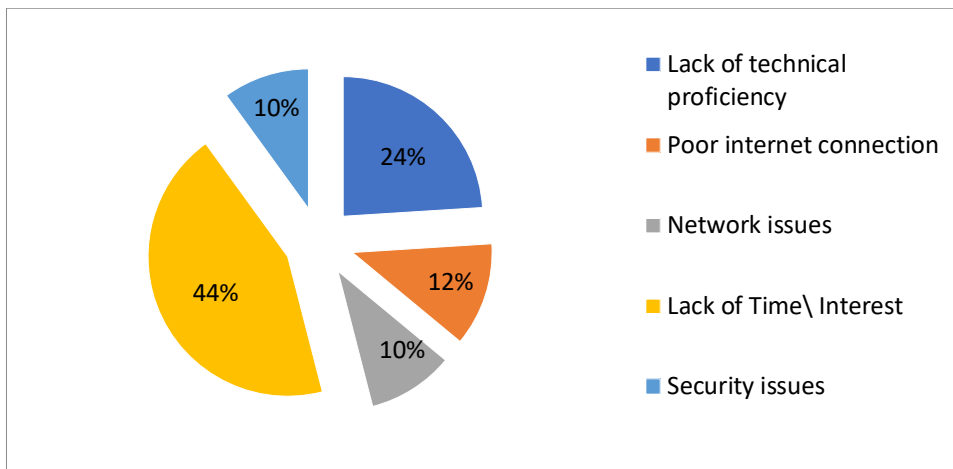
8.   The Obstacles associated with online education

Table no.8: The Problems connected with digital learning

Scale	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of technical proficiency	12	24
Poor internet connection	06	12
Network issues	05	10
Lack of Time\ Interest	22	44
Security issues	05	10
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: **Survey Data, 2024**

Figure No.7:

Source: **Survey Data, 2024**

Table No-8 and the pictorial representation shows the obstacles associated with online education through **SWAYAM.** As per the survey, it is clear that 06 respondents of the total, face the problem of poor internet connection, 05 of the respondents face the hindrance of inadequate availability network facility to access the internet, 12 of them lack technical knowledge in respect of using the website and the majority 22 of them lack sufficient time\ interest to be involved in the online education.

4.1 STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT INDIAN MOOC COURSES

The telephonic responses gathered from the student respondents clearly reveals the fact that majority of them have exhibited an optimistic desire and attitude in pursuing online education through **SWAYAM** especially during the time of **COVID-19 lockdown** and in post pandemic era. As the colleges have been shut down until uncertain period, the **digital educational resources** are tempting them to undertake online studies at their convenient places without physical difficulties\ efforts. As the different courses are made available to the needy learners at free of cost, the students were motivated to opt one or some subjects which they found very essential for their individual growth and future career.

The **UGC guidelines** and the **official notification** from the **Mangalore University** have immensely impacted the students to make optimum use of leisure time contributed by **Corona outbreak** in the society. Although the students belonging to rural areas had faced several issues in respect of accessing internet and smartphones, network problems etc., they too had inherent aspiration to learn the free courses electronically. The study part also highlighted that few of the

students lack technical proficiency in terms of operating the digital gadgets whom should be educated adequately by the Professionals to make proper use of online platforms in the age of epidemic outburst.

5.0 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF FACULTY

- Out of the total 50 faculty respondents, majority 38% of them belong to the age category of 26-35 years.
- Most of the respondents are married i.e., 62%.
- The faculty members relating to the **Commerce and Management depart**ment responded more to the study than others.
- Among the 50 respondents, 10 of them possess qualification of Post-Graduation with PhD.
- The outcome of the study revealed that, about 42% of the respondents have opted **UG/PG level** courses to undertake studies from **SWAYAM.**
- It is identified that, majority 68% of the respondents are completely aware of **UGC's MOOC** courses.
- It is found that, 28% of the total respondents like to watch video lectures uploaded on **SWAYAM** web page.
- It has been observed that, 22 of the total 50 respondents use **SWAYAM** because it can be accessed free of cost and it is affordable to all the sections of the society.

5.1 OBSERVATIONS OF THE STUDY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF STUDENT LEARNERS

- As far as enrolment to the online courses is concerned, majority of the student respondents have registered under **MOOC.**
- It has been observed that few of the respondents have faced the issues of poor internet connection and network availability in their areas to pursue free virtual education.
- From the survey part it is evident that, majority of the respondents have shown keen interest in learning **MOOC** courses as it is available free of cost and very affordable.
- It has been observed that most of the respondents would like to follow the video contents uploaded on the course section rather than other forms of learning.

6.0 SUGGESTIONS

- There is a need to provide more details regarding **SWAYAM** to all the educational institutions to create some awareness among the Teachers and the Students.
- Government should extend the hands of financial aid to various Indian universities to introduce their courses on **SWAYAM portal**.
- Government also needs to advertise on social media like TV, radio etc. about **SWAYAM** to educate the youth sections of the society.
- The colleges have to conduct **ICT** based training programs to enable those teaching faculty and the students who lack technical knowledge in pursuing **MOOC** courses.
- The web portal of **SWAYAM** should be designed and configured in the simplest form as to make it very user-friendly and convenient in operation.

7.0 CONCLUSION

SWAYAM plays a key role in meeting the expectations of **Digital India Initiatives** of the Government. The success of **SWAYAM** initiative is not only depending on **Government\ UGC**, the **students** and the **university** too have an equal contribution in this regard. In light of this, the colleges and the universities should motivate the large number of students and teachers to make maximum use of this opportunity to gain/ expand the subject knowledge. The detailed information about the various courses would help the students to register themselves into **SWAYAM** program to learn their interested discipline.

From the study part, it is revealed that the awareness on **MOOC** is inadequate among some of the educators and students and hence the concerned authority has to give attention regarding this matter. However, once they became aware of it, they tend to make use of these resources for their **self-growth** and **knowledge earning** purpose. Further, some sort of awareness should be generated in the country about this free online opportunity which can be easily accessible by all sections of the targeted group irrespective of their caste, gender, financial background etc.

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