



# REDEFINING GLOBAL LEARNING: TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF MOOCs AND OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

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**Abstract:** In the 21st century, technology has influenced our education system in multifaceted ways. Alongside traditional education, non-formal and informal modes of learning have advanced significantly. The two primary pillars supporting this non-formal and informal education are MOOCs and OERs. The objective of this research is to provide a conceptual analysis of MOOCs and OERs, to examine the impact of these platforms on the development of modern educational frameworks, and to shed light on the challenges encountered and their potential solutions regarding their implementation across all levels of education. Employing descriptive and analytical methodologies, this paper offers a comprehensive analysis of every aspect of MOOCs and OERs, while simultaneously exploring strategies to ensure structural development, methodological reform, open access, and inclusivity. This study is grounded entirely in a qualitative approach, placing particular emphasis on the utilization of both primary and secondary data. In conclusion, should the proper and meaningful application of MOOCs and OERs be successfully realized, it would usher in an educational renaissance, one that fosters balanced implementation, innovation, policy-driven initiatives, and well-planned, inclusive action strategies within the education sector.

**Keywords:** Massive Open Online Courses, Open Educational Resources, Educational Technology, Innovation in Education, Lifelong Learning, Inclusive Education, Transformative Role, Challenges and Strategies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, in the era of global development, in this era of technological development, education has been reflected as an effective part of our society. With the development of technology, various aspects of our social system have improved. Technology has not only limited itself to the development of knowledge and skills, but has also taken important steps to bring education to the people. Education is a significant tool in the successful implementation of a developing social system. MOOCs and open educational resources have played a significant role in the transformational change in education worldwide. They have made human resource participation far-reaching and democratizing, overcoming various socio-geographic and economic barriers in the global social system. In ancient times, education was limited to traditional rules and regulations, and the content of the educational system was confined within the four walls of the school. From the teacher-centered education of ancient times, there has been a far-reaching change in education today. MOOCs and open educational resources have played an effective role in overcoming high costs, limited infrastructure, scarce human resources, geographical and social limitations.

Education stands as one of the most fundamental and primary instruments within our social framework. This instrument is effective not only in shaping the lives of students but also and above all, in facilitating societal transformation, ensuring social stability, and fostering the progress of a nation. Furthermore, the role of technology is undeniable in elevating this educational system to the pinnacle of excellence on the global stage (Emanuel, 2013). MOOCs and OERs represent a system operating outside the confines of traditional education, offering students the opportunity to pursue their studies at any time and from any location, tailored to their individual needs. In contexts where the educational system is plagued by inequality, economic disparity, a dearth of vocational training, a lack of leadership, infrastructural deficits, and numerous other internal challenges, MOOCs and OERs serve as vital tools for modernizing our educational landscape (Whitehall et al., 2015). MOOCs and OERs are internet-driven online resources that are open, easily accessible, and free from usage restrictions. Both play a crucial role in fostering lifelong learning and promoting inclusive, international education for students. However, an increasing body of research indicates that MOOC courses frequently encounter various pedagogical challenges. In this environment, instructors are tasked with educating thousands of students whose backgrounds and levels of preparedness are highly diverse and often unknown (Breslow, 2013). To analyze the various successes and challenges associated with MOOCs moving from anecdotal observations to empirical research, numerous studies have been conducted over time focusing specifically on the instructors who deliver these courses (Rogers, 2010).

When combined, they serve as potent tools for encouraging inclusion international educational substitution, and lifelong learning. By examining their conceptual frameworks, goals, relevance, important issues, and future consequences, this term paper seeks to critically analyze how MOOCs and OERs have shaped global learning platforms.

## 2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study is providing a comprehensive understanding of how MOOCs and open educational resources reshape global education making learning more accessible, affordable, innovative and equitable. By exploring MOOCs and open educational resources the study show how these platforms support inclusivity, skill updates and lifelong education enabling both student and professionals. This study will highlight how various educational institutions can make various aspects of their education system and curriculum more enriching, flexible, accessible and acceptable, as well as shed light on various methodological aspects of education, such as flipped classrooms, blended learning and peer-supported learning communities and collaborative knowledge creation.

## 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To explore the Conceptual Foundations of MOOCs and OERs.
2. To examine the role of MOOCs and OERs in the present educational context.
3. To determine the obstacles related to the integration of MOOCs and OER in different higher institutions of learning.
4. To suggest the same effective strategies to overcome the obstacles related to the integration of MOOCs and OERs in higher institutions.

## 4. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Daniel, J. (2012)** Examined that, Making Sense of MOOCs: Musings in a Maze of Myth, Paradox and Possibility. This study highlighted various aspects of the revolutionary reforms introduced by MOOCs within the field of higher education. It fostered a movement that is both time- and cost-efficient, thereby ensuring the participation of a large number of students. Furthermore, through the application of technology, it transformed the education system into a modern and effective one. The research primarily focused on secondary data, placing emphasis on interviews, document analysis, content analysis, and similar methods. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that—since MOOCs content is delivered entirely via the internet—opportunities for collaborative work among students both domestically and abroad have significantly increased; moreover, MOOCs have gained recognition as a leading pioneer in the realms of distance and open education.

**Patel, J. Kamleshkumar., Prakash, K., & Parekh, R. Y. (June 2021)** stated that, OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES: AN OVERVIEW. The primary objective of this research paper was to discuss the historical concepts, origins, evolution, and various benefits associated with Open Educational Resources (OERs). Particular emphasis was placed on providing detailed information regarding specific OER platforms (such as NPTEL, SWAYAM, SWAYAM PRABHA, and SHODHGANGA). This study is primarily descriptive and review-based in nature; that is, it relied heavily on secondary data and document analysis. The research findings successfully provided comprehensive insights into the democratization of education, lifelong learning, flexibility, learner-centric approaches, and integration. Future research in this domain requires more in-depth and evidence-based analysis concerning learner experiences, practical impact, and learning outcomes.

**Zhu, M., Bonk, C.J., & Sari, A.R. (2018)** explored that, Instructor Experiences Designing MOOCs in Higher Education: Pedagogical, Resource, and Logistical Considerations and Challenges. The objective of this study was to analyze the considerations and challenges faced by instructors in designing MOOCs. An exploratory mixed-methods approach was employed for this purpose. Interviews and course analyses were conducted involving 143 MOOC instructors. The study shed light on key aspects such as the determination of learning objectives, selection of instructional methods, content structuring, and the utilization of intellectual and hardware resources. Furthermore, the research identified several challenges—specifically those related to pedagogical, logistical, infrastructural, and resource-related issues. The anticipated findings of this study are expected to be particularly effective in enhancing MOOC design, strategic improvement, learner engagement, interaction, and resource quality.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The present study is completely qualitative research based on the officials' documents and secondary data gathered from different sources such as government reports, books, magazines, journals, websites, research articles, etc.

## 6. ANALYSIS

### 6.1. Objectives-1: To explore the conceptual foundations of MOOCs and OERs.

In the context of the current education system, MOOCs and OERs are playing significant roles. The various aspects of MOOCs and OERs are

#### ❖ MOOCs

MOOCs mean Massive Open Online Course. The term 'Massive' signifies large-scale participation; 'Open' implies open accessibility, with no restrictions regarding degrees or age; 'Online' means that the entire educational process is conducted via the internet; and 'Course' indicates that the entire learning process is guided by a specific and well-planned curriculum.

#### ❖ Types

MOOCs are primarily of two types:

XMOOCs (Structure and Expertise)- This is the most well-known and prevalent type. It places primary emphasis on the delivery of structured subject matter and content. Notable examples include Coursera, edX, and Udacity.

CMOOCs (Network-based and Collaborative)- Through this approach, learners can expand their knowledge by exchanging ideas and collaborating within a network-based framework. Here, students are able to pursue their education with a high degree of autonomy.

#### ❖ Feature

Some key aspects of MOOCs are outlined below:

- A. Being open in nature, they allow a vast number of students to connect simultaneously.
- B. The course fees are affordable, thereby making education more accessible.
- C. Through the use of the internet, students can participate from any location—a significant step towards inclusivity.

D. Students can complete courses at their own pace and on their own schedule, thereby overcoming the limitations inherent in traditional education systems.

E. It encourages students to engage with international education, enabling them to compare their own country's educational standards with those of other nations—a process that ultimately enhances their future prospects.

#### ❖ **OERs**

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are “Teaching, learning and research materials in any medium digital or otherwise that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others.” (UNESCO 2019) Research, teaching, and learning resources in all forms that are available under an umbrella license or belong to the public domain. This includes openly licensed MOOCs, simulations, syllabi, lecture notes, and open textbooks, including multimedia. Open Educational Resources, or OER, like films, textbooks, and other learning materials, are more affordable than traditional resources and could lessen the expenditure on education. They also encourage everyone, regardless of locality or economic standing, to have access to excellent instructional materials. OER is a useful resource for a variety of learners because it can be customized to suit particular educational goals. Although OER seeks to be freely accessible, problems with accessibility and material integrity may limit its usefulness. Copyright issues and the possibility of material misuse or misrepresentation are also brought up because of OER's open nature. Furthermore, it can be difficult to bring OER into present educational institutions and ensure their quality.

David Wiley, a proponent of OERs, outlined the "5 Rs" to explain their operational framework. These principles form the foundation upon which OERs are structured:

1. **Retain:** Make and own copies.
2. **Reuse:** Use in a wide range of ways.
3. **Revise:** Adapt, modify, and improve.
4. **Remix:** Combine two or more resources.
5. **Redistribute:** Share with others.

Additionally, several **key aspects** of OERs include:

- A. They place a strong emphasis on global inclusivity.
- B. Educational materials can be reused repeatedly, making the learning process more practical and efficient.
- C. Learners have the ability to modify and adapt content to suit their specific needs, thereby fostering the development of their own independent thinking.
- D. OERs operate entirely under the Creative Commons framework, which strengthens their ethical and legal standing.
- E. Furthermore, they encourage lifelong learning—a crucial factor in helping learners establish themselves successfully in their future lives.

### **6.2. Objectives-2: To examine the role of MOOCs and OERs in the present educational context.**

The significant roles of MOOCs and OERs are discussed below:

❖ **Cost-effective Learning-** Through MOOCs and OERs, students are able to achieve maximum educational outcomes at minimal cost. Consequently, alongside providing quality education, this approach reduces the financial burden associated with higher education. This mode of learning emphasizes peer-to-peer learning as well as the comprehensive and active participation of both teachers and students. It facilitates the delivery of effective and high-quality education to a larger number of students, even with limited financial resources, time, and assets.

❖ **Increasing Educational Equity-** The Right to Education Act ensures free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14 years. Therefore, the role of MOOCs and OERs in enhancing equal opportunities in education is far-reaching. This is particularly effective for students in remote areas and

for working professionals. Through these platforms, anyone can pursue an education from any location, thereby ensuring the democratization of education.

❖ **Enhancing Digital Skills-** Moving beyond traditional education, the use of online courses enables students to become proficient in information technology skills an indispensable aspect of the 21st century. By utilizing various digital tools, students can access and leverage global repositories of information for their own purposes. Furthermore, through animations and simulations, they can easily grasp and master complex subject matter. Digital literacy entails more than just operating a computer; it involves utilizing technology effectively to make one's life easier, more meaningful, and self-reliant.

❖ **Encouraging Lifelong Learning-** In the current era of information technology, it is crucial for every student to keep themselves updated. Students can learn at their own pace, which, in turn, accelerates a personalized approach to education. This life-oriented education helps shape students into thoughtful, responsible, talented, and compassionate individuals.

❖ **Innovation-** Beyond making curricula modern and relevant, these initiatives encourage teachers and educational institutions to adopt new pedagogical methods. Thanks to MOOCs and OERs, students can access world-class education from the comfort of their homes via various online platforms an achievement made possible solely through technological advancement.

❖ **Relevance to Policy-** Quality education does not merely teach one how to earn a livelihood; it also teaches how to lead a fulfilling and beautiful life. It teaches students to be respectful of honesty, justice, and rights values that are instrumental in building a peaceful society.

❖ **Improve Professional Growth-** MOOCs and OERs are not limited merely to the conferral of degrees; they are also effective tools for fostering the professional development of both students and educators. The skills acquired through online education directly enhance job prospects and increase earning potential. Consequently, in addition to helping to eliminate socio-economic disparities, individuals can accelerate their own economic advancement as well as that of their local communities.

❖ **Enhance Inclusivity-** In accordance with constitutional mandates, education must be ensured for all. The term "inclusive" signifies "Education for All," and education plays a pivotal role in the full realization of this objective. By overcoming the limitations inherent in traditional education, various MOOC and OER platforms have brought learning directly to people's doorsteps. To support students with disabilities, MOOCs frequently incorporate accessibility features, such as transcripts and subtitles.

❖ **Universal Collaboration-** A crucial aspect of education is mutual interaction. MOOCs and OERs have made this interaction both accessible and effective within the educational landscape. Through these platforms, students gain access to various opportunities for international collaboration. This encourages international intellectual exchange, promotes the adoption of comparative perspectives in education, and fosters the creation of a global academic community.

❖ **Reform Evaluation Systems-** MOOCs and OERs have played a significant role in modernizing educational assessment systems. Tools such as online examinations, quizzes, online assignment submissions, e-portfolios, online presentations, and video conferencing have effectively mitigated the limitations associated with traditional educational evaluation processes. Through these methods, examination results can be published with great speed, benefiting both teachers and students alike. Thus, the role of various MOOC and OER platforms in the present and future landscape of education is undeniable.

### 6.3. Objectives-3: To determine the obstacles related to the integration of MOOCs and OER in different institutions of learning.

Although various benefits are associated with MOOCs and OERs globally, they also entail certain disadvantages. These are discussed below:

- ❖ **Digital Divide-** MOOCs and OERs serve as two crucial pillars of the online education system. The "digital divide" refers to a scenario where one segment of the population or a specific group possesses access to and the benefits of technology, while another segment remains deprived of such opportunities. The root causes of this deprivation—including infrastructural weaknesses, various economic and geographical disparities, technological illiteracy, a lack of necessary digital skills, a scarcity of high-quality content, and a lack of practical interest—create a divide that hinders the advancement of digital education.
- ❖ **Lack of Quality-** Quality and quantity are two significant aspects of any educational system. While one ensures the equitable distribution of educational opportunities, the other aims to provide education tailored to individual needs. However, issues often arise due to the nature of digital pedagogy, online methodologies, the sheer volume of student participation, and inconsistencies in internet service quality. Furthermore, the instruction provided across these platforms is not always of high standard or up-to-date; it often fails to effectively stimulate student interest and attention, and frequently suffers from deficiencies in both practical and social relevance. Thus, although technology opens up new avenues of possibility within the education system, a lack of proper planning often results in the neglect of qualitative standards.
- ❖ **Engagement and Completion-** This constitutes a major obstacle in the realm of MOOCs and OERs. Although a vast number of students enroll in these platforms, only a very small fraction manages to complete the entire course. Many are compelled to withdraw midway due to various difficulties. Frequently, a lack of adequate communication, insufficient self-discipline, and a lack of necessary peer support create barriers to maintaining educational continuity. Consequently, dropout rates rise, and the educational process fails to achieve its ultimate objectives.
- ❖ **Geographical Location-** India is a developing nation. Consequently, despite the strong emphasis placed on digital education, it has not yet been possible to extend the benefits of this form of learning to every corner of the country. In particular, various socio-economic challenges prevalent in rural areas often disrupt the continuity of students' learning processes. Moreover, since the various platforms associated with MOOCs and OERs are entirely dependent on the internet, they are unable to guarantee maximum student participation across all regions.
- ❖ **Linguistic Barriers-** On various MOOC and OER platforms, the English language is given predominant importance. This creates an obstacle to the universalization of education. For those whose mother tongue is not English, translating and comprehending the course content becomes a arduous task. Consequently, subject-specific vocabulary diminishes, the depth of knowledge is compromised, and students acquire a narrow scope of learning rather than achieving deep conceptual engagement. Furthermore, instead of playing a constructive role in students' lives, this form of education often becomes a burden to them.
- ❖ **Recognition Difficulties-** Although MOOCs and OERs serve as vital tools in the modern educational system, a lack of recognition is frequently observed across various academic domains. In many instances, certificates obtained after completing courses on MOOC and OER platforms are not accorded the same status or significance as those issued by traditional universities. While conventional educational institutions operate under specific regulatory bodies, these online platforms often suffer from a lack of formal accreditation. As a result, students facing a lack of proper recognition express reluctance toward these courses and eventually lose interest in pursuing them.

❖ **Insufficient Infrastructure-** The core principle of MOOCs and OERs lies in "massive enrollment." However, this high volume of enrollment often leads to significantly increased operational costs. Although many courses on these platforms are offered at minimal fees or entirely free of charge, various infrastructural deficiencies such as technological limitations, a lack of suitable devices, network constraints, server and platform instability, a shortage of technical expertise, and weak administrative management create significant hurdles in the smooth and effective delivery of educational programs.

❖ **Pedagogical Limitations-** In the delivery of MOOC and OER courses, there is typically minimal classroom interaction, limited feedback, and virtually no emotional support factors that are essential for fostering the holistic development of a student. These platforms often adopt a "one-size-fits-all" pedagogical model, which proves ineffective for many learners. This is because not all students are self-directed learners; moreover, students with special educational needs require specialized curricula a requirement that is rarely, if ever, specifically addressed or prioritized on the various MOOC and OER platforms.

#### **6.4. Objectives-4: To suggest the same effective strategies to overcome the obstacles related to MOOCs and OERs.**

If the aforementioned issues are addressed effectively, it is possible to make MOOC and OER platforms even more advanced, influential, and effective. Some key aspects regarding this are discussed below:

❖ **Infrastructure Development-** MOOCs and OERs play a pivotal role in the current educational landscape. By offering open access, multimedia-rich content, interactivity, and flexibility, they introduce a new dimension to global education. Consequently, it is imperative to ensure the proper enhancement of technological infrastructure, data security, and quality assurance mechanisms, as well as to take measures to reduce student dropout rates. Therefore, to render education both effective and accessible, a strong emphasis on advanced technological and digital infrastructure is essential.

❖ **Increasing Student Engagement-** To ensure that digital education is far-reaching, effective, and capable of achieving broader objectives, it is necessary to significantly increase student participation. This, in turn, fosters the development of a democratic mindset within education. Through broad-based inclusion, students are empowered to enhance their interpersonal interactions, analytical perspectives, and collaborative attitudes, while simultaneously honing their practical skills in utilizing technological advancements. High levels of participation also serve to validate and bolster the credibility and acceptance of various educational courses. Thus, to ensure the ultimate success of education facilitated by MOOCs and OERs, active student engagement is an absolute prerequisite.

❖ **Training and Employment of Teachers-** The role of teachers is paramount in any educational system. The utilization of digital tools and platforms serves a dual purpose: on one hand, it facilitates the practical implementation of technology-enhanced instruction within the classroom; on the other, it enables the effective application of innovative teaching methodologies such as smart classes, e-learning, and blended learning to enrich the overall learning process. Trained teachers are instrumental in properly managing various MOOC and OER courses, ensuring they are delivered with the appropriate scope and depth, upholding quality standards, and making the educational content relevant to real-life applications. Therefore, to effectively cultivate the next generation of educators, the development of teachers' technological proficiency is of utmost importance.

❖ **Linguistic Enrichment-** Linguistic enrichment constitutes a critical prerequisite for the comprehensive democratization of education. The provision of multilingual content, adherence to high-quality standards and appropriate guidelines, international collaboration, and continuous assessment are all instrumental in overcoming linguistic barriers. When educational courses are made available in multiple languages, students gain the opportunity to acquire knowledge in their native tongue; this not only deepens their conceptual understanding but also significantly boosts their active participation in the

learning process. Therefore, linguistic development is absolutely essential, as it significantly enhances global participation.

❖ **Policy Reforms-** The formulation of appropriate policies within the education sector—along with their proper implementation serves as the backbone of the educational system. Consequently, in the context of MOOCs and OERs, the enactment of suitable policies facilitates improved access, inclusivity, enhanced educational quality, and the development of digital infrastructure. Thus, the introduction of appropriate and sound policies plays a supportive role in fostering the growth of this form of education alongside traditional schooling; for these are not merely regulations, but rather a blueprint for ensuring high-quality education and making it accessible to all.

❖ **Content Development-** Educational content constitutes the programs or plans designed to guide a curriculum toward achieving its specific objectives. Therefore, having up-to-date content is absolutely critical in technology-driven education. This not only helps maintain educational standards but also enhances the credibility and acceptability of the subject matter. Ultimately, this serves to heighten students' interest in and attention toward the content. Many educational institutions utilize various multimedia elements, quizzes, and interactive features to make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable.

❖ **Collaborative Learning-** In the 21st century, global collaboration has emerged as an indispensable element. This mode of education fosters the development of an international perspective among students, cultivates an active and participatory mindset, and enhances cross-cultural interaction, cooperation, and interpersonal relationships within the educational sphere. Consequently, this approach to learning stimulates the development of students' innovative thinking and helps improve real-world skills among students, teachers, and peers alike.

❖ **Monitoring-** Continuous and consistent monitoring helps propel educational outcomes toward achieving more far-reaching objectives. Effective management of the various courses offered through MOOCs and OERs necessitates continuous oversight. A robust monitoring system enables the identification of errors and ensures that appropriate standards of development are consistently upheld. This process contributes to enhancing both the transparency and the effectiveness of courses administered via MOOCs and OERs. Therefore, it is essential to further strengthen and refine these monitoring mechanisms.

## 7.CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that the role of MOOCs and OERs in the 21st century is both profoundly significant and effective. By transcending various socioeconomic and geographical barriers, these platforms have paved a new path toward the democratization of education. Moving beyond the limitations of traditional educational institutions, MOOCs and OERs are advancing through the implementation of key initiatives and strategies aimed at making education more effective, practical, life-oriented, and skill-based while also prioritizing inclusivity. Despite facing various economic, infrastructural, social, and contemporary challenges, these initiatives have successfully overcome all adversities through public-private collaboration, thereby establishing global standards of excellence. They have rendered education more accessible, flexible, and open. Thus, it can be asserted that with appropriate planning and institutional support MOOCs and OERs will continue to strengthen education in the future, making it more robust, acceptable, and effective, while simultaneously ensuring significant contributions toward fostering an inclusive outlook and equal opportunities. In doing so, they will emerge as pivotal instruments in the global transformation of education. In conclusion, if we are to overcome various obstacles and ensure that education becomes even more effective and socially beneficial in the future, it is imperative to prioritize the development of technological infrastructure, the training of educators, the revision and refinement of curricula, linguistic considerations, and a steadfast focus on inclusivity.

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