

MOOCs & Cooperatives : A Review

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Abstract

MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) are achieving recognition in the era of millennials. MOOCs provide skilled, semi-skilled, and generic courses in every sector. Cooperatives are people-centric social-economic enterprises operating in many sectors of the economy. This article intends to review MOOCs from the perspective of cooperatives. It assesses the availability of courses on cooperatives in different MOOCs providers and the significance of MOOCs as change agents for cooperatives.

Key Words : *MOOCs, Cooperative*

1. Introduction To MOOCs & Cooperatives

Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) are a learning ecosystem to gain skills. Since 2012 MOOCs has been recognized as another massive advancement in the rapidly emerging field of educational technology (Demystifying the MOOCs, 2014). However, throughout the past few years, MOOCs have been one of the best platforms to complete formal or non-formal education due to the pandemic. Private companies and cooperative societies are using MOOCs and getting positive outcomes (Mc Namara Valdes et al., 2020). MOOCs have several revenue models in the market (Reich & Ruipérez-Valiente, 2019) and short-term to long-term, like 1-hour to degree courses. However, MOOCs are very cost-effective and save time. The popularity of MOOCs has been gradually increasing from 2012 up to 2021 (figure 1). Around 220 million (excluding China) users are enrolled in approximately 3100 courses (Shah, 2020).

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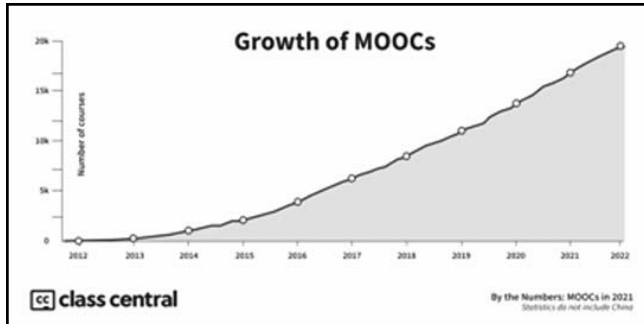


Figure 1 Growth of MOOCs (source - class central)

The course contents provided in MOOCs are not located in one place rather, they are spread all over the world wide web, and so are participants of such courses. These courses are called massive because several thousand participants can be engaged in a course at the same time. As the name suggests, these courses are mostly free, and participants can remix and reform the contents of the course.

Cooperative societies are social and economic enterprises in different sectors, i.e., livelihood, agriculture, horticulture, livestock, dairy, health, education, transportation, and others. These are people-centric and differ substantially from public-owned companies regarding their purpose, values, ownership structure, governance model, and ethical stance. In a general perspective, private companies are also a kind of cooperative or cooperation. Knowledge of the cooperative ecosystem is essential for collective success and organizational values. Education always leads to attitude and behavior. Educating cooperative members, staff, shareholders, millennials, and other community members will enhance the cooperative ecosystem. MOOCs are one of the finest options to provide a customized solution at the doorstep. There were a few examples when cooperatives utilized MOOCs courses. A cooperative society in Mexico City, running bicitaxis for transportation. They conducted a course on MOOCs for 20 people on safe transportation and found that the awareness and knowledge enhanced after the course (Mc Namara Valdes et al., 2020).

2. An Analysis of MOOCs

The hype around MOOCs Movement: Since the ‘Year of MOOCs’ in 2012, the MOOCs movement has grown enormously, with current learners (excluding China) crossing 180 million (Shah, 2021). The recent hype around MOOCs is due to its unique features, which have many inherent advantages over conventional educational pedagogy. The MOOCs platform offers immense

content freely available to the users for absorption at their own pace. MOOCs have completely revolutionized online education as they tremendously impact online digitalized learning. Online learning has been prevalent for many decades, but the emergence of MOOCs has dramatically changed how the online learning world works. The fact is that MOOCs are free online courses available for anyone to enroll. MOOCs are affordable, easiest, and most accessible to learn new skills for advancing in a career, or higher education, leading to supplemental or even lifelong learning. MOOCs providers like edX, Coursera, Udemy, Udacity, Khan Academy, and many more develop innovative programs.

2.1 Review of MOOCs Providers and Courses for Cooperatives

This article intends to review the availability of courses in different MOOCs providers through the lens of cooperative societies. Many big MOOCs players, like Coursera, Udacity, Udemy, edX, and others, provide several skilled, semi- skilled, and university-linked courses. They offer two types of enrolment in their courses: free auditing, which allows access to their content for free, and paid enrolment, which provides paywalled elements like a ‘certificate of completion’ and access to all the content. Table 1 provides a brief review of MOOCs providers.

Table 1 MOOCs Sites and Direct Courses on Cooperative

S.N.	MOOCs site	Website Link (Source)	Few Courses (includes topic “cooperative” / “cooperation”)
1	Coursera	https://www.coursera.org	Financial Markets (Yale University)
2	SWAYAM	https://onlinecourses.swayam2.ac.in/nou21_ag13/preview https://onlinecourses.swayam2.ac.in/nou22_ag03/preview https://onlinecourses.swayam2.ac.in/arp19_ap64/preview	Cooperatives and Producer Companies – (IIMB) Cooperatives and Farmers’ Organizations (MNRE015) - (IGNOU) Module on Cooperative Business Model (ARPIT), National Resource Centre, SRCC, University of Delhi

S.N.	MOOCs site	Website Link (Source)	Few Courses (includes topic “cooperative” / “cooperation”)
3	edX	https://www.edx.org	Cooperatives and Producer Companies (IIMB) Economic Democracy : The Cooperative Alternative (The University of Edinburgh)
4	Alison	https://alison.com/	Diploma in Community Development (Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition) Introduction to Community Development (Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition) Community Development - Planning Promotional Programs and Seeking Funding (Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition)
5	Class Central	https://www.classcentral.com	Cooperatives and Producer Companies – (IIMB) Cooperatives and Farmers’ Organizations (MNRE015)-(IGNOU) Economic Democracy: The Cooperative Alternative (The University of Edinburgh)
6	Cognitive Class	https://cognitiveclass.ai/	No course available
7	Future Learn	https://www.futurelearn.com/	No course available
8	Canvas Network	https://www.canvas.net/	No course available
9	Iversity	https://iversity.org/en	No course available
10	Kadenze	https://www.kadenze.com/	No course available
11	Khan Academy	https://www.khanacademy.org/	No course available

S.N.	MOOCs site	Website Link (Source)	Few Courses (includes topic “cooperative” / “cooperation”)
12	Udacity	https://www.udacity.com/	No course available
13	Udemy	https://www.udemy.com/	Cooperative Entrepreneurship Program Constitution of India
14	LinkedIn Learning	https://www.linkedin.com/	No course available
15	MIT	https://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm	Community-Owned Enterprise and Civic Participation
16	mooKIT	https://courses.mookit.in/	Cooperative Learning Pedagogy
17	P2PU	https://www.p2pu.org/	No course available
18	IGNOU	http://egyankosh.ac.in/	Certificate in Cooperation, Cooperative Law, and Business Law (CCLBL)

The table indicates that only a few MOOCs providers included courses directly related to the cooperatives or based on the cooperative. However, there are several reasons for less number of courses. MOOCs generally has less interaction and is popular among the millennial generation. MOOCs have been limited in the ability to develop high-level intellectual skills, which is essential for a knowledge-based society (Bates, 2019). Providing personalized courseware which directly covers the cooperative ecosystem is expensive. Few courses are based on the credit-earning mechanism of Universities (Advantages & Disadvantages of MOOCs for Learning, 2022).

Using the MOOCs platform SWAYAM, the Ministry of Education’s (earlier MHRD) unique initiative since 2018 is the AICTE-approved FDP course named Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching - ARPIT (ARPIT, 2018). The Shri Ram College of Commerce ran a module on the Cooperative Business Model for online professional development of higher education faculty (Sharma, 2019). The School of Law, IGNOU, runs a specific course on the legal aspects of the cooperative system. The course covers the basic of cooperatives and related business laws (CCLBL, 2018).

1. Challenges & Opportunities for Cooperatives Through MOOCs

1.1 Challenges:

Most often, MOOCs do not require prerequisites and are freely and openly available critiques raise some concerns about the effectiveness of this learning platform. Could the vast penetration of free online MOOCs in the field of education compromise the quality of education and student experience? Though MOOCs implies a spirit of open learning in collaboration with internet technology and has reached millions of learners, one stark reality is that most universities do not recognize a successful MOOCs completion as a formal credit.

A further challenge in determining MOOC's effectiveness as a learning tool is that even though millions of users enroll for MOOCs courses every year, the dropout and completion rate is one of the challenges.

According to "Cooperatives and Employment Second Global Report," around 279.4 million employment opportunities globally can be fulfilled within cooperatives' scope (Cooperatives and Employment: Second Global Report, 2017). The statistics indicate different avenues for youths and MOOCs providers. According to the "Youth and Cooperative in America, report" there are several challenges in educating youths about cooperatives, like traditional training, low priorities of education institutions, less number of teachers, and less education in cooperativism (Youth and Cooperatives in the Americas, 2020). The MOOCs providers can tap these opportunities.

1.2 Opportunities :

A huge number of courses related to agriculture, arts and crafts, business, health, child care, banking, and other areas linked with the cooperative ecosystem could be run by MOOCs. MOOCs service providers can tie up with the existing universities and institutions that are pioneers in the cooperative sector. It will increase the course contents and new business avenues for MOOCs. Cooperatives societies can encourage their staff and shareholders to benefit from relative courses on MOOCs, which will benefit their cooperative and themselves. Cooperative societies can utilize the latest skills and technology through MOOCs. Cooperative education and training developed an ecosystem of inclusive and equitable opportunities for all, which is a more stable and resilient socio-economic development (Yadav, 2022). Hence the significance of MOOCs for all stakeholders related to Cooperatives lies in improving or acquiring new professional skills, learning at any time, anywhere, by taking courses delivered by the best universities and schools. There are immense opportunities that cooperatives and educational institutions can offer to each other. Hence, enhancing the collaboration between

educational institutions and cooperative organizations for offline and online interaction through MOOCs is recommended.

MOOCs service providers can tie up with cooperatives like National Yuva Cooperative Society Ltd. (NYCS) to provide skills for youths. NYCS is a multistate, multipurpose youth cooperative society (Mapping: Key Figure National Report: India, 2021). Youth unemployment is the most critical challenge in the world, and cooperatives can play an important role through entrepreneurship and start-ups (Dongre et al., 2020). Such type of opportunities not only benefits MOOCs service providers but also positively impact the cooperative ecosystem and youths.

Several research studies, case studies, and business use cases exist in the cooperatives ecosystem. The availability of specialized courses on MOOCs will increase the research as well as use cases.

2. Conclusion

The article reviews the existing MOOCs platform and cooperative ecosystem. Several MOOCs are purely revenue-based models; however, plenty of educational institutions run social development programs, and they need to tie up with cooperative societies and institutions and conduct customized short-term courses with experience sharing or live examples.

To create demand for cooperative ecosystem in the education curriculum, awareness programs among youth, students, and educational institutions would create win-win situations for MOOCs providers, education institutions, and cooperatives. The need of the hour for educational institutions and cooperatives is to tap the potential of MOOCs to be the change agents for boosting cooperative education, connecting youth, academia, and entrepreneurs with cooperatives.

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