MOOCs
A Disruptive Model for the Indian Education Landscape
About the Outlook

Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, have today become a buzzword and there are different views on their future and possible utility. We believe that MOOCs should be seen as a small part of a larger revolution, viz. the Internet. We also believe that we are today at the very beginning of a transformation which is impacting the entire education delivery model. In the years to come, MOOCs will be redefined and reshaped into a more effective model for learning than current ones. In this Outlook, we have taken up the arduous task of attempting to visualize possible areas where MOOCs can be leveraged, across the Indian Education landscape.

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- Financial and Operational Modeling
- Marketing Strategy
- Innovation Strategy

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- Support for setting up Infrastructure
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- Support in Hiring Leadership Team

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- Negotiations for JVs and Management Contracts

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- Fundraising

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- Assessment of Schemes and Policies
- Audit of Projects
- Advisory on course to meet objectives
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Authors:
Aurobindo Saxena | Associate Director
Abhik Chopra | Senior Consultant
Riddhi Ahuja | Associate Consultant

Design & Development:
Arvind Sundriyal | Manager-Design
Sonali Rawat Sharma | Graphic Designer

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This 21st century world is characterized by continuing economic uncertainty, with intense competition and enormous political, technological, environmental, and business-related challenges, as well as the knowledge revolution and the rise of disruptive innovations. The only way to thrive in these unusual times is to adapt collectively to the ever-changing demands of the industry and economy. For countries to keep pace with the changing times and stay competitive globally, it becomes imperative to engage the masses by making them employable and employed. Thus, skills are the only seemingly global currency in this century.

The capacity of nations today is linked to how rapidly and effectively they can skill their people. The 20th century was marked with the setting up of brick-and-mortar universities and colleges for this purpose. However, it is clearly evident that these institutions alone will not be sufficient to address the vast need-gaps and ever changing requirements of the 21st century. Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, present a unique opportunity to address all these challenges.

About MOOCs

In 2011, the academic world experienced a revolution in content distribution and teaching methodology when MOOCs emerged as the next big thing in distance education. Although the concept of online education has been around since the advent of the Internet, MOOCs attracted a larger audience due to their interactive content, global access, and, most importantly, free quality education. In a world where Ivy League education is considered the panacea for an ailing global economy, MOOCs made it possible to receive such an education in the comfort of your home.
MOOCs can be categorized as connectivist MOOCs, or cMOOCs, or xMOOCs, where cMOOCs can be defined as a network of individuals sharing knowledge on a common topic. The prime objective of cMOOCs is to facilitate communication between users and thus tends to be dynamic in nature. Using digital media, enrolled participants interact with their peers to clarify doubts, complete assignments, and share knowledge. xMOOCs, on the other hand, tend to be the extensions of certain courses or concepts. Generally offered by universities as an introduction to a particular course or topic, xMOOCs familiarize its users with the fundamentals by using lecture videos and course content.

In 2002, following the concept of Open Educational Resources (OERs), MIT launched its OpenCourseWare (OCW) project which was followed by similar projects at other elite American Universities. With over 125 million visitors and online materials corresponding to over 2,150 courses, the OCW project can be considered hugely successful and a pioneer for MOOCs. Salman Khan, an MIT and Harvard alumnus, launched Khan Academy in 2006 which featured Internet-hosted videos on various subjects like mathematics, history, healthcare, medicine, finance, and biology and garnered more than 440 million views.

These concepts are widely regarded as the precursor for the MOOCs movement. Since 2012, several educational organizations started offering online courses on a plethora of topics. Several other universities also started offering their content online in order to reach a wider audience. Despite the ever increasing number of players in the MOOCs space, three are considered the most important actors, viz. Coursera, Udacity, and edX.

**Key MOOCs Players**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Coursera</th>
<th>edX</th>
<th>Udacity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Launched in April 2012, Coursera is a for-profit company co-founded by two Stanford professors</td>
<td>Launched in May 2012, edX is a not-for-profit company co-founded by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University</td>
<td>Launched in February 2012, Udacity is a for-profit company</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Model</td>
<td>Coursera is a content distributor rather than creator</td>
<td>edX collaborates with member institutions to provide content</td>
<td>Udacity creates courses in cooperation with corporate partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Enrolment</td>
<td>Coursera has 8.5 million users spread over 190 countries with almost 700 courses on offer</td>
<td>edX has over 2.5 million users spread over 192 countries will almost 230 courses</td>
<td>Udacity has 1.6 million users spread over 203 countries with almost 40 courses on offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Coursera has about 100 partnerships in place for its content, mostly with universities</td>
<td>edX has about 52 partnerships in place</td>
<td>Udacity has 11 partnerships in place, mostly with corporates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Model</td>
<td>Coursera has raised USD 65 million from venture capitalists and private equity firms. Coursera has also earned more than USD 4 million (till April 2014) with its “Signature Track” option which offers students Coursera verified courses</td>
<td>edX obtained funding from its partners, with MIT and Harvard contributed USD 30 million each while others contributed USD 10-20 million. Its open source platform allows it to charge licensing or hosting fees as well</td>
<td>Udacity has raised USD 21 million from its founders and venture capitalists. Udacity is exploring several revenue streams like proctored exams</td>
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Source: Technopak Analysis
Current Business Model

Most MOOCs players are currently following a freemium model wherein content is used to drive traffic while a premium is charged for additional services (or add-ons) which become the main source of revenue. These additional services can be directed towards end users via offering certification, one-on-one mentoring, career counselling and placements, or towards partners by charging licensing and hosting fees.

Several other revenue options, such as accreditation, are currently being explored by MOOCs providers. Universities like Georgia Institute of Technology have teamed up with Udacity and AT&T to offer an accredited Online Master of Science in Computer Education (OMS CS) at minimal cost (around USD 7000). Even players like Coursera and edX are exploring accreditation with the recommendations of the American Council on Education’s College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT) which are taken into consideration by over 2,000 universities and colleges for transfer of credits.

Lessons for India

Quality education in India is highly restrictive in nature and only a few who have adequate resources and are willing to put in enormous efforts get access to it. In the current scenario, if the student is not among the top 1-2% of the country, the entry to elite institutions within India is difficult. This situation is changing, with the increase in number of private universities and colleges. At the same time, the employability of some of the students graduating from these private colleges is in question as their curriculum design and delivery may not have been benchmarked against the best.

At the same time, at the current growth rates in the education sector, there will be an enormous need for funds and land to set up such institutions, a requirement that will be largely prohibitive in nature. It is estimated that USD 200 billion will be required to meet the additional intake demand across education segments. Therefore, the traditional model of education may seem ineffective in meeting the future requirements of the country.
Recently, MOOCs as a model for learning has received tremendous attention for its innovative concepts and a large scale impact. We believe that in order to address the unique challenges that India faces, the learning intervention needs to be characterized by the following key constituents, namely:

- Scale
- Efficacy (in terms of every learner being engaged and learning)
- Affordable
- Accessible
- Accredited (implying quality of delivery in terms of quality of teachers/faculty)
- Acknowledged by the Industry; and
- Linked with Assessment

Across the world, public and private bodies are experimenting with newer learning models to capture this market. We have made an attempt to evaluate these models for India.

MOOCs, which have been touted as the game-changer in this domain, quite efficiently address many challenges of the current system. However, its impact on the efficacy in terms of student engagement and learning is still questionable. This gets reflected in the low completion rates in most MOOCs offerings.

This fundamental challenge of MOOCs in its current form stops it short of claiming to be the panacea for all learning challenges. It is therefore questionable whether MOOCs will be able to reroute India’s leviathan education system. There are challenges as well with MOOCs, including the absence of an experiential learning framework and imparting employment as one of the key outcomes.

We believe that the Minerva project, begun in the West, could well be the next most significant model, even within the Indian landscape. Minerva provides higher education to the world’s brightest and most motivated students, completely online. Each class is capped at 20 students and these students travel across the world to gain experiential learning. Most importantly the application-to-intake ratio is among the highest in the world. Similarly, Udacity and Georgia Institute of Technology offer a complete online MS Program in Computer Science. Concepts like these are often categorized as Small Private Online Courses or SPOCs.
vMOOCs: Outlining the Model for India

We believe that MOOCs will evolve from their current state to Value-added MOOCs, or vMOOCs, with large number of smaller groups or sapiential circles. In the vMOOCs business model, MOOCs will continue to occupy the core position; however, they will be supplemented by value-added services which will make the internationally benchmarked content relevant and more meaningful within the Indian context. These value-added services may include:

- Placement Support
- Aptitude Profiling
- Recognition of prior learning
- Career Counselling
- Localization and Customization of the Content
- Providing additional reading/reference material on the subject to students
- Providing customizable assessment reports to students indicating gap areas for reinforcements
- Accredited
- Online Proctoring
- One-on-One Mentoring

Exhibit 4 below illustrates the mapping of the various stages of education with the possibility for changing the model (and the time required) against the degree of disruption.

Segments Conducive to MOOCs

The various stages of education highlighted above lend themselves differently to a MOOCs solution. Some education needs like K-12 cannot be fulfilled with MOOCs while, for others like test preparation, an immediate solution seems possible.

MOOCs could also provide solutions in terms of decreasing the costs of some of these education components and play a major role in promoting equity and access. A detailed assessment and possible MOOCs interventions for each of the above stages of education have been highlighted in the following sections.
Current State Assessment

The Indian Test Preparation market is currently estimated at USD 8 billion, and is growing at a CAGR of 18%. The current state of test preparation business models in India may not be sustainable in the long run as the degree of competition among service providers increases and the costs of education become prohibitive for many students and parents. Exhibit 5 below provides an overview of the current test preparation market in India.
Key Challenges

While the test preparation model has stabilized and been fairly well accepted at a macro level, it faces some challenges which are enumerated as under:

- Students need to travel to faraway locations to attend these classes, which are conducted in large batches in the physical class-room type set-up
- Technology usage is minimal and restricted to online exams
- The high cost of preparing for exams like CAT, GMAT, etc. proves prohibitive for some students who, as a result, are forced to restrict themselves to self-study. The absence of expert guidance/course material may prove counterproductive to their chances of getting through
- The delivery costs are high due to the need for a physical class-room setup and minimal use of technology
- The service provider and students are overly dependent on a few good tutors
- The recognition of prior learning is often limited and the model works on the “One size fits all” approach
- In most test preparation models, large batch sizes result in a lack of personalization and individual attention to students

Need to Transform

There is immense scope for building efficiencies into the system via increasing usage of technology and bringing down the cost of providing test preparation services. In fact the sector is witnessing the onslaught of new entrants focusing on a complete online model. Recently, one such firm, Embibe.com, raised USD 4 million from Kalaari Capital and Lightbox Ventures. Another firm, Toppr, which focusses on providing engineering and medical entrance material through a mobile app, has managed to raise USD 2 million from Helion and SAIF Partners.

Test Preparation MOOCs: The Evolved Model

A freemium model can be used to provide affordable solutions to students, who can access quality content online without the need to pay exorbitant costs in the process. Exhibit 7 below describes the new test prep model with MOOCs.
### Key Takeaways

While some courses, such as the IIT-JEE entrance examination, need individual attention and may not be easily moved to the self-study online format, other courses, most notably the CAT, GMAT, and GRE, lend themselves easily to online self-study models. A business model wherein online content is provided free of cost to students for self-study while some premium services like expert guidance and test series are charged can be explored. In this model, students can have free access to content from quality teachers, which can also be updated periodically. Also, the concept of flipped classrooms lends itself well to this model and can be explored to reduce the cost of delivery and enhance the efficacy of the program.

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### Exhibit 8

**An Evolved Test Prep Model with vMOOCs**

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Source: Technopak Analysis
Higher Education

Current State Assessment

The Indian higher education market is currently estimated at USD 11 billion, but is growing at a CAGR of 20%. The current state of higher education with the Gross Enrolment Ratio, or GER, at only 20%, is characterized by high exclusivity and low inter-university coordination, thereby isolating the masses from access to quality education and functioning of universities in silos. Exhibit 8 provides an overview of the current state of the Indian higher education framework.

![Exhibit 9: The Current State of Indian Higher Education Framework](image)

Source: Technopak Analysis

Key Challenges

Some of the key challenges presently observed within the Indian Higher Education framework include minimal inter-university knowledge transfer; the consequent failure of medium- to lower-ranked universities in terms of benchmarking their curriculum against top-ranked institutions; lower access to quality education due to enhancing selectivity among the top institutions; culture of continuing education has not yet set in among the working population of India; lack of faculty exchange and academia-industry partnerships; limited access to good quality higher education with only those who have resources and high intellectual quotient likely to get through the highly competitive entrance systems; steep disproportion between number of seats available and number of aspirants; and, massive investments, from both government and private players, as well as time is needed to fill the prevalent demand-supply gap.

The MOOCs model would encourage collaboration between universities at different levels resulting in improvement in content quality, lecture delivery, and resource utilization.
Need to Transform

There is need for collaboration among institutions of higher learning and for facilitating greater reach of quality education. MOOCs can certainly enable this collaboration and bring greater efficacy into the system.

Meta University Model: with vMOOCs

This is a unique model of distributed learning which marks a paradigm shift in the way higher education is delivered in India by utilizing, exploiting, and creating a synergy between programs, activities, and institutions.
Key Takeaways

• The meta-university model does not replace the conventional “brick & mortar” model of higher education but supplements it by filling in the need-gaps
• It serves as a platform of communication, collaboration, and cooperation and also optimizes scarce resources besides freeing students from the constraints of location
• The knowledge gathered by students across various geographies through virtual classrooms can also be tested and categorized according to their performance in the assessment exams
• Under this model, universities, autonomous educational institutions, and research centers jointly offer innovative courses by drawing upon the established excellence of the partners
Vocational Education and Training

Current State Assessment

The vocational education and training (VET) market in India is currently estimated to be worth USD 4 billion and is growing at a CAGR of 20%. Vocational training is provided on both a part-time as well as full-time basis. The government plays an important role in imparting skills to the masses through various vocational institutes like ITIs, polytechnics, etc. Private players have made fortunes in the IT/ITES sub-segment of vocational training by primarily targeting urban undergraduate students.

Corporate Trainings

Corporate training, an integral part of the Indian VET market, is one area where MOOCs can play a dominant role. Indian companies suffer from a skill gap in the mid- to entry-level workforce, rather than at senior management levels, and thus the Indian corporate training market is skewed towards the training of mid- to entry-level talent. However, senior management training is most attractive in terms of return-on-investment (ROI) and is thus most competitive with domestic training firms facing stiff competition from international franchises and Indian management schools. In many cases, functional training to new joinees is provided by an in-house expert who is generally at a senior level within the management hierarchy.

Corporate training can be classified under two broad heads:

- **Technical Training**: It is related to jobs in hand and objective is to impart technical skills required to successfully complete the assigned task. It may also include up-skilling the employee to handle larger responsibilities
- **Professional & Management Development**: This may include training in language, business communication & etiquettes, cross-functional skills, leadership development, etc.
**Key Challenges:**

- **Unstructured:** The entry- and mid-level corporate training industry is highly unstructured and dominated by freelancers and other small players with little-to-no differentiation.

- **Shortage of good instructors:** There is a huge shortage of good instructors for various courses.

- **Lack of standardization:** There is hardly any collaboration between industries and even between companies within the same industry towards standardization of training programs.

- **Absence of national competency testing and accreditation system:** In the absence of centralized testing mechanisms, there is no way to differentially treat people with different skill levels.

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**Exhibit 14**

**Challenges with the Current VET Model**

- **Customers**
  - Exorbitant expenditure on training & development needs
  - Shortage of good instructors
  - Only a small group of employees can be covered
  - In house expert spending time in training is not this KRA & inefficient use of his expertise

- **Product Offering**
  - Small set of training modules available
  - No bespoke modal (Trainee does not have any say on content & type of training)

- **Delivering Channel**
  - Limited use of technology
  - Classroom delivery a major costs component for service provider

- **Service Provider**
  - Shortage of good instructors
  - Over-dependence on few experts
  - High payment to experts

Source: Technopak Analysis
Need for Transformation

The use of technology within this space is limited to a very basic level but technology will play a key role in transforming the way training is imparted across hierarchies in corporate organizations. This transformational change is required to enhance the quality of content and delivery in corporate training.

Key Takeaway:
• The use of technology can bring expert trainers closer to those who need technical/functional training
• E-learning clubbed with classroom discussions can reduce the cost of corporate training drastically
• With training becoming affordable, organizations can cover a larger group of employees and thus become able towards significantly bridging the skill-gap
• The MOOCs model can be critical in creating a skilled workforce in some industries like manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, etc. wherein traditional education is considered inadequate.
Conclusion

While the above models have been presented with a view to highlighting the role that MOOCs can play in facilitating the transformation of education, it needs to be understood that MOOCs can only act as an enabler in this journey. Some of the models suggested above necessitate a paradigm shift whereas MOOCs can only enable a quick and easy transformation if the appropriate policy decisions and controls are put in place. These are, however, beyond the focus of this report, which focuses exclusively on the world of possibilities ahead of us. Some of these require only the will of an able investor, backed by extraordinary educationists, like in the case of test preparation and hobby and lifestyle, while others require the will of all stakeholders including universities, policymakers and, above all, students and parents.

Recently, policymakers have taken some decisions in the right direction including the launch of Indian MOOCs platform - "Swayam". The All India Council for Technical Education, or AICTE, announced that it may permit up to 15% of the credits of a degree to be obtained through MOOCs. Another committee appointed by the University Grants Commission, or UGC, is currently tackling issues related to MOOCs offerings in the Indian higher education system. The latest budget announcement also included an outlay of INR 100 crore towards MOOCs and virtual learning, which might be small but indicates the realization of the central government of the possibilities that MOOCs offer Indian students.

Keeping the above in mind, Technopak suggests that a much possibility lies in store for able investors who can grasp the opportunity, build profitable businesses, and, at the same time, aid in removing inefficiencies within the present education system. Most importantly, this will benefit the students through the easy and low cost availability of education.
About Technopak

India’s leading management consulting firm with more than 20 years of experience in working with organizations across consumer goods and services.

Founded on the principle of "concept to commissioning", we partner our clients to identify their maximum-value opportunities, provide solutions to their key challenges and help them create robust and high growth business models.

We have the ability to be strategic advisors providing customized solutions during the ideation phase, implementation guides through start-up assistance, and be a trusted advisor overall.

Drawing from the extensive experience of close to 125 professionals, Technopak focuses on four major divisions, which are Retail & Consumer Products, E-tailing; Fashion (Textile, Apparel & Engineering); Food Services & Agriculture, and Education.

Our key services are:

Business Strategy. Assistance in developing value creating strategies based on consumer insights, competition mapping, international benchmarking and client capabilities.

Start-Up Assistance. Leveraging operations and industry expertise to ‘commission the concept’ on turnkey basis.

Performance Enhancement. Operations, industry & management of change expertise to enhance the performance and value of client operations and businesses.

Capital Advisory. Supporting business strategy and execution with comprehensive capital advisory in our industries of focus.

Consumer Insights. Holistic consumer & shopper understanding applied to offer implementable business solutions.
Our Divisions

Retail & Consumer Products, E-tailing

Technopak aids retailers and consumer product companies in formulating growth strategy and performance enhancement mandates. Over the past two decades, we have worked on various facets such as entry into the Indian market, development of new category, activation of new retail formats, channel development, product extension, region expansion etc. One key reason why Technopak is considered the industry leader is the relentless focus on the Indian Market. We help clients understand the market dynamics in India and help them arrive at the best method to grow business in India. Our Retail and Consumer product expertise helps gain a competitive edge by providing execution capabilities and corporate strategies.

Fashion - Textile, Apparel & Engineering

With almost 20 years of experience in delivering end-to-end solutions to the entire gamut of the textile industry, right from fibre to retailing, the Fashion division at Technopak assists the textile and apparel organizations in optimizing their profits through enhancement and expansion. Many leading Indian and international Textile manufacturers and Apparel brands have benefited from our offerings in the areas of business planning and strategy, apparel operations, supply chain management and strategic alliances. Our team consists of top calibre advisors who have worked closely with a diverse group of clients comprising textile manufacturers, apparel retailers, garment manufacturers and exporters, apparel sourcing organizations, trade promotion councils, industry associations, international development bodies, and financial institutions as well as central and state governments.

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Technopak’s Food Services & Agriculture team comprises of established domain experts who build and enhance the business performance of organizations which are either working in the segment or are willing to enter it. Our end-to-end solutions are customized as per the business’s requirements and capabilities. We continuously strive to create strong industry relationships and work for a global footprint by delivering a wide range of services to organizations that operate or wish to operate in the Food and Agriculture sector, in India as well as internationally.

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For further dialogue, please contact:

Saloni Nangia  
President  
saloni.nangia@technopak.com

Aurobindo Saxena  
Associate Director  
aurobindo.saxena@technopak.com

Technopak Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

Registered Office: 3 Padmini Enclave, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110 016

Corporate Office: 4th Floor, Tower A, Building 8, DLF Cyber City, Phase II, Gurgaon 122 002  
T: +91-124-454 1111 | F: +91-124-454 1198

Corporate Identification Number - U74140DL1994PTC61818

www.technopak.com