

# **An Analytical Study on the Relationship Between Union Budget Allocation to the MOOC Platform SWAYAM and Employment Opportunities to Non - Technical Students in Bhopal**

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes how the Indian government's funding of the MOOC platform Swayam has affected the job opportunities to the non technical students, particularly those of arts and commerce backgrounds in a tier 2 city like Bhopal. The critical examination focuses on how the ultimate solution of employability is still lacking through these programs despite significant government funding. Using a mixed-method approach, this study comprises a survey of 100 students in Bhopal, SWAYAM reports, government records and data from the placement cells of various colleges.

The findings emphasize on NPTEL courses and reveal that even though the number of enrollment is higher as compared to the other national coordinators, funded by the Indian Government, its effect on the employability scale is still less for the non technical students. Key issue analysed is the low awareness of the platform's features, accessibility issues and a discrepancy between courses offered and industry demands.

The result of the paper discusses on the notable policy changes, improved promotion, curriculum aligned courses and placement mentorship programs. The study adds to not only the relationship between budget allocation and implication in tier 2 cities but also reveals a deeper shortcoming in the tier 3 cities. It adds to a larger conversation around digital education policy and how it can lower India's graduate jobless rate.

**Keywords:** SWAYAM, MOOC, Union Budget, Employment

## **Introduction**

After the pandemic, there was a sudden increase in providing digital education. The emergence was led forward by MOOC's which reshaped and enhanced the area of gaining knowledge and learning from any part of the world. SWAYAM or Study Web of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds was initially introduced in the year 2017 as a flagship project to liberate the educational parameters. It is in partnership with esteemed universities like IIT's, IIM's UGC, NCERT and more. SWAYAM is an umbrella term for 10 of its national coordinators which provide education online in all the fields.

The Indian Government has consistently provided SWAYAM with a sizable budgetary allocation, showcasing its dedication to digital education and the ultimate objective of child's job possibilities. However, despite these extensive expenditures, the concern about the practical application of the program, especially for non technical

students of tier 2 city like Bhopal remains questionable. While Swayam has seen exceptional enrollment numbers in science courses offered by NPTEL, its effectiveness in the field of arts and commerce remain unexplored.

### Objectives

1. To examine the awareness level of SWAYAM among college students.
2. To analyze employment outcomes post course completion.
3. To assess the correlation between the union budget allocation and its practical implementation and benefits.
4. To compare the offerings with other renowned skill - based platforms.
5. To identify structural issues faced by leveraging SWAYAM courses.

### Literature Review

The emergence of MOOC's has been extensively researched in the field of skill development and job opportunities. They have higher chances of growth in developing countries like India (Kalpan & Haenlien, 2016). However, these platforms are criticised by Ghosh (2021) and Arora (2022) for not producing effective employment result, resulting in low completion ratio which is less than 10% according to MIT analysis and a mismatch between course content and industry demands.

In researches enrollment gaps are noted by Patru & Balaji (2020), which shows that non technical streams are disregarded while NPTEL is technical driven.

According to a 2024, UNESCO report, businesses and startups value the practical learning through certifications which MOOC's find difficult to give in practical insights. In contrast to the platforms like Udemy, Coursera, Alison provide certifications which are job placement tied as compared to the government funded platform like SWAYAM.

### Research & Methodology

In order to fully understand the effect of SWAYAM on career prospects, this study uses a mixed method research approach, combining **quantitative** and **qualitative** analysis along with

#### triangulation method

**Primary Data Collection:** A structured survey among 100 students was conducted across the colleges of Bhopal. Furthermore, a subgroup of respondents particularly including teachers participated in the oral interview to acquire in depth comparison in the viewpoints.

**Secondary Data Collection:** Government reports and policy documents, union budget decisions 2020-2024, SWAYAM's official data of enrolled students and course completion data, Academic research articles, Institutional data gathered from the placement cell of various colleges.

### Background

Swayam was launched in the year 2017, under Digital India Initiative, aiming to provide free, quality education, to learners across disciplines. The platform was developed by MHRD which was envisioned to democratise the education as a game changer, particularly for students residing in remote areas. This collaborative governance model, has ten of its major national coordinators in their respective domain, mainly, NPTEL, UGC, NCERT & NIOS, CEC, IGNOU, AICTE, NTTR, INFLIBNET, IIMB. Despite this structured specialty, this study reveals a stark disparity in awareness and engagement, with NPTEL dominating student registrations (accounting for ~3 crore enrollments, nearly 3x more than other coordinators). This skew suggests a systemic bias toward technical education, leaving non-technical disciplines (arts, commerce, humanities) underutilized. The Indian government has

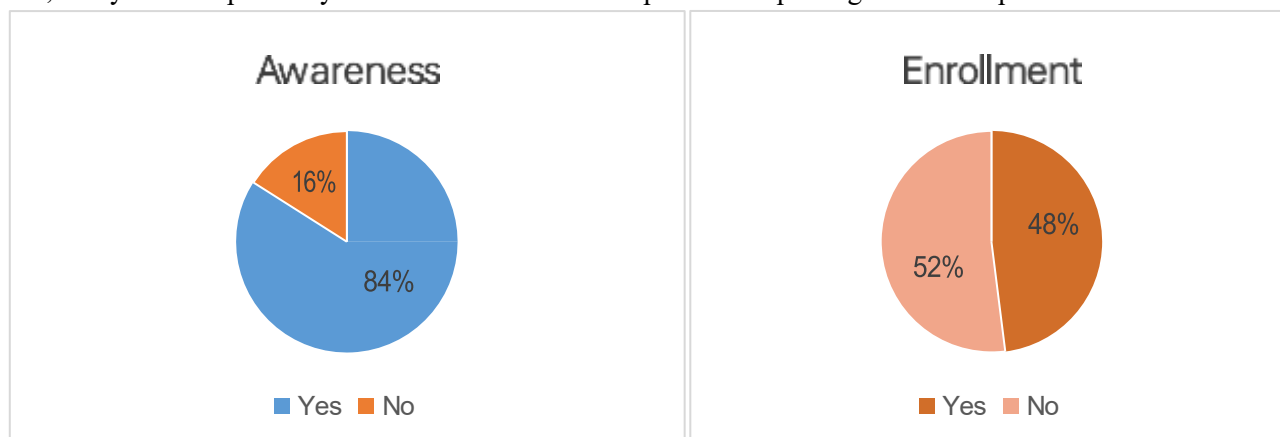
consistently invested in the digital education since 2017, approximately 3Cr in the year 2020 and has been increasing ever since. However, studies suggest that most of the funding was directed towards technological infrastructure and course content.

## Result and Findings

### Awareness and Enrollments;

The survey conducted among 100 students revealed in Bhopal revealed critical insights into awareness about the programme, the enrollment status and willingness and institutional influence. 84% of the respondents answered that they knew about the SWAYAM portal due to government branding and institutional support. However, 82% of the respondents highlighted that they were only aware about NPTEL link with SWAYAM, highlighting a stark disparity in exposure across the platform's 10 national coordinators. A failure in varied outreach was highlighted by the fact that less than 5% of the people surveyed could name any other coordinators.

With 3 crore enrollments, NPTEL has a threefold advantage over the other coordinators, thus reinforcing its reputation as 'technical-only. platform' 48% people acknowledged that they enrolled in the course due to institutional pressure and not out of personal interest or because it had any benefit in their field of study. Many of the respondents shared that they were unsure about the benefit of the course, its durability and its advantage. As a result, many of them passively attended the course under pressure impacting in low completion rates.



An oral interview with the faculty members depicted a deeper systemic issue. The college administration forced the teachers to push the students into opting SWAYAM courses with or without any appropriate assistance. Several faculty members said that when they themselves enrolled for the course, they questioned the platform's utility due to lack of measurable results. They expressed their doubts regarding the usefulness and said that they would not voluntarily endorse it. Majority of the faculty members said that they were not given any any training on the SWAYAM's full range of courses and the credit transfer process. Infact many said that credit transfer was only for technical students, resulting a bane for non technical students in academic concerns. "Miscommunication or misinformation was also one of the major reasons for students to believe that NPTEL is the only source platform to get certificate from," said only of the SHGC faculty. Certificates from the portal hardly resulted into job or skill recognition in the Bhopal job market, resulting in a skepticism about the value of these courses. It merely is a box ticking activity to showcase digital education compliance.

### Employment and skill development;

In today's dynamic world where we see a rapid evolution in the job market and in digitalization as a measure for employability, students, particularly post pandemic, are increasingly looking for ways to add credible certificate courses to add to their resumes. Many turned to SWAYWAM in hopes that its government aided course would be

of an advantage when apply for internships or job markets. However, the platform has miserably failed to deliver these promises. Only 33.3% of the surveyed students in bhopal got internship opportunity through SWAYAM portal and none of them got a direct job offer, despite offering courses from prestigious institutions like IIT's and IIM's. However, the case is a little different when talking about a technical stream. This sobering fact highlights a significant discrepancy or a stark reality between platform's credentials and their practical value in the job market. Furthermore into the issue, student's emphasized on the irrelevant nature of the course material which further exacerbated the problem. Many of them also noted that Swayam credentials were either not accepted or were written off as lacking useful industry based experience for candidates of arts and commerce by employers in Bhopal. The curriculum at swayam is still theoretical and acedemic and sometimes not extensive or new for the students who know a little about the course. With little emphasis on applied learning or workplace preparedness in comparision to private firms like udemy, coursera which majorly partners with businesses and corporate companies to offer certificates tied to job orientation. In tier 2 cities, this disconnect is prominently seen as it minimizes job opportunitites.

The platform struggles are further reflected in institutional engagement as well. Despite the widespread push or an effort too reach the maximum was adopted enthusiastically, only a small number of Bhopal's art and commerce colleges were listed among the top 200 local chapters, which reveals a systemic neglecton of non technical fields. SWAYAM is an underutilized resource for skill development. It runs at a risk of becoming outdated in the eyes of the students looking for measurable career outcomes. If immediate and appropriate reforms are not made then it has a high chance of becoming obsolete.

### **Credit Transfer Limitations**

SWAYAM has provided an option for transferring credits to students in UGC approved courses. Despite such a facility 85% students recorded that they did not know about the credit transfer nor they ever saw any integration of such credit in their academic evaluation. This disparity negates the transfer failure, which is the main selling point to the students seeking

supplement to their degree program. Furthermore, while SWAYAM claims partnerships with universities under the UGC's Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses (CFOLC), only 12% of arts and commerce colleges in Bhopal had formal mechanisms to process these credits, leaving students with certificates that hold little to no weight in their academic progression.

Such a drawback has resulted in the disinterstedness of students towards the course and if no implementation is made they might fall short of enrollments soon.

### **Tier 2 Challenges**

Implementation of SWAYAM in tier 2 city like Bhopal faces significant barriers and hurdles, limiting its potential to curb the education - employment gap. The first major issue is that of Digital Barrier: only 35% of the respondents complained that they had to consistently have access to a high speed internet for studying because the duration of the course is at time 4,6 or 12 weeks. Out of those 46% students said that they lacked the facility of a laptop and instead used mobile phones. Additionally, students of the rural side of the city noted digital illiteracy a major cause for not taking up the course.

The utility of the the portal is further reduced because of an underlying factor if curriculum gap. While private companies like UpGrad uses practical and industry based lessons and course plan, SWYAM still runs of theory based structure without real life example which makes the study monotonous because of which the applicant couldn't face problem solving circumstances resulting in no job benefit. This glaring shortfall is the basis of

comparison with paid courses.

### **Comparative Analysis of SWAYAM Portal with Other Private Firms**

The Indian government has invested significantly in digital education with a funding of 4 crore rupees and then an impressive increase of 32% after 2020. However, the primitive motive focused on content creation and infrastructure, neglecting the employability scale as compared to the private firms. Even though SWAYAM is free, its outcome were pale in comparison to other government led initiatives. Initiatives like PMKY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) which is highly skilled based course offers almost 70% placement to students.

Similarly DDUGKY (Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Vikas Yojana) provides hands on training and practical experience. Apprenticeship India is also a potential scheme which provides employment through small internship like service. Lastly NIELIT (National Institute of Electronics & and Information Technology) is a scientific operating body established to improve digital literacy and technical education. One of the Alumni commented, “ I really like to thank NIELIT, faculties and all others for their constant support in successfully completing the course and getting placed as Data Analyst in one of the leading organisation.”

The budget spent on SWAYAM as a digital educational platform is twice more than what PMKY has and still the disparity lies in bridging the gap of input and output. Due to this reason the portals efficiency in tier 2 city decreases significantly.

### **Enhancement of the portal through effective policies**

After analysing the utility and gaps found in the platform through the medium of this paper. I would like to add some suggestions and recommendations for better performance of the initiative. They are as follows:

1. To expand the relevance: The course must sought to improve the relevance and relativity. Currently the arts and commerce students find it difficult to search for skill based courses on the platform. The introduction of courses like digital marketing, content creation, AI digital content graphics, animations, BSE stock services, or Adobe Photoshop would enhance the credibility of the course, couraging employers to accept candidates for job profiles.
2. Partnership with Indian firms or even becoming startups would benefit not only the students but also the company which would further create a goodwill among the students and ultimately leading to enrollment in such courses. Collaborations with the MSME's is a missing factor which is why the course lack job placement benefits and a major source of success of PMKY which has a 70% job placement rate due to its partnership with various national international companies.
3. Faculty Development Program must be inculcated to provide absolute training to the teachers of Bhopal. Faculties lack basic knowledge of the course, resulting in a low rate of enrollment. The full potential of SWAYAM gets underutilised because students are only conveyed about NPTEL courses. Additionally every university must mandatorily include SWAYAM with credit transfers.
4. Ultimately, setting up dedicated career counseling cells at SWAYAM Local Chapters would integrate learning with employment gaps. These centers could offer personal attention, resume building sessions, and UpGrad-grade interview prep. If SWAYAM adopted the employment-driven, hands-on approaches of PMKVY and DDU-GKY—which combine classroom instruction with active learning—SWAYAM would shift from a mere certificate provider to a true career catalyst. In the absence of these changes, the platform risks significant underutilization”, despite vast budget spending and opportunities available to democratize quality education.

### **Conclusion**



Even though SWAYAM represents a historic landmark in the field of digital education, its potential has not fully been optimised and proved to be fruitful in the placement dynamics for non technical students in a tier 2 city like Bhopal. As discussed above, the program suffers majorly from structural issues and content availability, more than 76% of courses offered by NPTEL are considerable to only technical branches of study. The concern also lies in the lack of knowledge provided by institutions which further exacerbates this imbalance, where the survey shows that students are not aware of its other coordinators such as UGC or CEC. “Despite substantial government funding, which increased from ₹325 crores in 2020–21 to

₹482 crores in 2022–23, less than 5% of students obtain internships, and none of them report hiring directly from SWAYAM certifications.” source.

The solution to these problems lies in reallocating resources, making a revised policy plan and understanding the budget requirement for the platform. To fully democratise the initiative, SWAYAM has to reconsider the aim or the objective of the model. Only then it can be a befitting portal to all the people enrolling in the course beyond the metropolitan cities.

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