Awareness of SWAYAM Among B.Ed. Student-Teachers.

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ABSTRACT

SWAYAM, the online learning platform launched by the Government of India, aims to provide free, quality education to learners across the country. With the increasing importance of digital platforms in teacher education, it becomes essential to understand how student-teachers perceive and use such resources. To explore this, a survey was conducted among student-teachers of Sree Siddaganga College of Education, Tumkur. This college was selected because it caters to students from both rural and urban backgrounds, offering a balanced view of learners' awareness and opinions.

The survey findings show that most student-teachers were aware of SWAYAM and recognized its potential in supporting self-paced and lifelong learning. A large number of respondents agreed that it is particularly beneficial for rural and remote learners, as it provides access to quality video lectures and reading materials. Student-teachers also expressed willingness to recommend the platform to their peers, highlighting a generally positive attitude.

The results indicate that digital initiatives like SWAYAM can play a significant role in enriching teacher education. However, the study also suggests the need for greater awareness programs and training to help student-teachers make better use of the platform in their learning journey.

But as the result reveals that there is a significant difference between arts and science students and science students showed higher awareness and more positive perceptions towards SWAYAM than Arts stream students, it is also suggested to include courses even in Kannada Language or can have bilingual facility in SWAYAM.

Key Words: SWAYAM, MOOC, B.Ed. student-teachers,

INTRODUCTION

SWAYAM is an online learning platform created by the Government of India, launched on July 9, 2017, by former President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee. The platform was developed by the Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), with technical assistance from Microsoft.

SWAYAM was created with the core principles of the National Education Policy in mind: **access, equity, and quality**. Its primary goal is to bridge the digital divide and make high-quality educational resources accessible to everyone, especially those in underserved communities. All courses are offered **free of cost**, with an optional, nominal fee for those who wish to take a proctored exam to earn a formal certificate. A significant feature is the **credit transfer system**, which allows students to receive academic credit for SWAYAM courses at their home universities, as per University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations. The courses themselves follow a "four-quadrant" approach, including video lectures, downloadable reading materials, self-assessment quizzes, and online discussion forums to provide a comprehensive and interactive learning experience.

Objectives

To assess the awareness level of B.Ed. student-teachers about the SWAYAM platform.

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To examine the awareness of student-teachers regarding SWAYAM as an online learning initiative of the Government of India.

To find out the extent of awareness about the types and levels of courses available on SWAYAM (school, UG, PG, professional, teacher education).

To study the awareness of student-teachers about free access and certification facilities on SWAYAM.

To evaluate the extent of registration and participation of B.Ed. student-teachers in SWAYAM courses.

To analyse the perception of student-teachers regarding SWAYAM's role in enhancing teaching competencies.

To study the views of student-teachers on how SWAYAM contributes to the improvement of subject knowledge and ICT skills.

To examine the usefulness of SWAYAM in preparing for competitive exams and teacher eligibility tests.

To assess student-teacher's perceptions regarding user-friendliness and quality of learning materials on SWAYAM.

To explore the belief of student-teachers that SWAYAM supports self-paced, lifelong learning and benefits rural/remote learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid evolution of information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the landscape of education, giving rise to new pedagogical models. Among these, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have emerged as a significant force, providing flexible, accessible, and affordable learning opportunities to a global audience (Siemens, 2012). This review will situate the present study by first examining the global discourse on MOOCs and then focusing on the Indian context, specifically the SWAYAM platform.

Global Perspective on MOOCs and Online Learning

Early research on MOOCs has largely focused on their potential to democratize education and disrupt traditional academic institutions (Parr, 2013). Studies have explored various aspects of MOOCs, including learner motivation, course completion rates, and the quality of instructional design (Khalid et al., 2019). A recurring theme in the literature is the challenge of low completion rates, which are often attributed to a lack of learner engagement and support systems (Jordan, 2014). However, other studies have highlighted the value of MOOCs for lifelong learning and professional development, noting their ability to offer specialized skills that may not be available through conventional education (Kizilcec et al., 2013). For educators and aspiring teachers, MOOCs represent a flexible tool for continuous professional growth, enabling them to stay updated with new teaching methodologies and subject knowledge.

The Indian Context: SWAYAM and National Initiatives

In India, the government has proactively embraced the MOOC model to address the dual challenges of access and quality in higher education. The SWAYAM platform, launched by the Ministry of Education, is a testament to this commitment. SWAYAM aims to provide educational opportunities to a wide range of learners, from school students to professionals, by hosting courses developed by premier institutions such as the IITs, NPTEL, and IGNOU. The platform's unique features, such as credit transfer and free-of-cost access, make it a powerful tool for bridging the digital divide and enhancing educational equity (Panda & Mishra, 2019).

Prior research on SWAYAM has explored its adoption by university students and faculty members. For instance, a study by Sharma and Gupta (2020) found that while there is high awareness of the platform among students, its actual utilization is often limited by a lack of time and technical difficulties. Another study by Kumar et al. (2018) highlighted the positive perception of SWAYAM as a tool for self-directed learning and

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skill enhancement among engineering students, yet it noted a general lack of a structured approach to integrating MOOCs into formal curricula.

Research Gap

While there is existing literature on MOOCs and online learning in India, a significant research gap persists concerning the specific experiences of student-teachers in B.Ed. programs. Most studies have focused on general university students or engineering disciplines, overlooking the unique needs and perspectives of future educators. The present study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a focused empirical investigation into the awareness, utilization, and perception of the SWAYAM platform specifically among B.Ed. student-teachers. By examining their unique challenges and motivations, this research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how MOOCs can effectively support the professional development of the next generation of educators.

Hypotheses:

$H_{01:}$ There is no significant difference in the awareness of the SWAYAM platform among student-teachers based on their gender.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between a student-teacher's stream of education and their utilization of the SWAYAM platform.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference in the perception of SWAYAM's usefulness for professional development among student-teachers from different localities.

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between the year of study and the student-teachers' willingness to recommend the SWAYAM platform.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a **Descriptive survey method** to investigate student-teachers' awareness, perceptions, and attitudes towards the SWAYAM online learning platform. The study was conducted at Sree Siddaganga College of Education, Tumkur, which was **purposively** selected because it accommodates student-teachers from both rural and urban areas, and from different academic streams, thereby providing diverse perspectives.

A **structured questionnaire** was prepared using a Google Form and distributed to student-teachers. The questionnaire included closed-ended and items related to awareness, accessibility, usefulness, and overall attitudes toward SWAYAM. Responses were recorded on a three-point scale (Yes, To some extent, No) along with some demographic details such as gender, stream of study, locality, and year of study.

This methodology enabled the researcher to systematically capture the perceptions of student-teachers toward SWAYAM and draw conclusions about its effectiveness and relevance in teacher education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE – 01 Mean and Standard Deviation of Student -Teachers Responses

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	23	48.9565	5.1302
Female	64	49.3125	5.2761
Arts	41	46.7804	5.6891

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Science	46	51.3913	3.6115
Rural	67	49.1492	5.1382
Urban	20	49.45	5.5485
1st Year	40	49.1	6.07984
2nd Year	47	49.3191	4.3892

TABLE – 02 N, Mean, Standard Deviation and T-value Significance

	Variables	N	M	S. D	T-Value	Significance
Gender	Male	23	48.9565	5.1302	0.2833	Not Significant
	Female	64	49.3125	5.2761		
Stream of Education	Arts	41	46.7804	5.659117	4.454	Significant at 0.05 level
	Science	46	51.3913	3.611576		
Locality	Rural	67	49.1492	5.1382	0.216	Not Significant
	Urban	20	49.45	5.5485		
Year of Study	1st Year	40	49.1	6.0798	0.190	Not Significant
	2nd Year	47	49.3191	4.3892		

The survey conducted among student-teachers of Sree Siddaganga College of Education, Tumkur revealed the following:

Gender (Male vs Female):

The obtained t-value was 0.2833, which is less than the critical value at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, the difference between male and female student-teachers in their awareness and perception of SWAYAM is not significant. The null hypothesis was accepted.

Stream of Education (Arts vs Science):

The obtained t-value was 4.454, which is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates a significant difference between Arts and Science student-teachers. Science stream students showed higher awareness and more positive perception of SWAYAM than Arts stream students. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Locality (Rural vs Urban):

The obtained t-value was 0.216, which is less than the critical value at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. This shows that there is no significant difference between rural and urban student-teachers in their awareness and perception of SWAYAM. The null hypothesis was accepted.

Year of Study (1st Year vs 2nd Year):

The obtained t-value was 0.190, which is also less than the critical value at both levels. This means that first-

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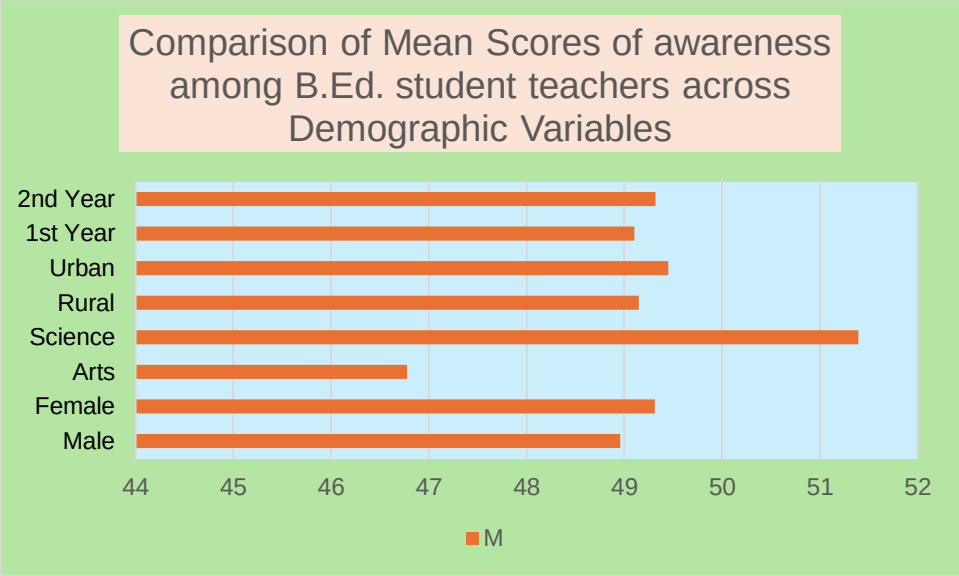
year and second-year student-teachers do not differ significantly in their awareness and perception of SWAYAM. The null hypothesis was accepted.



RESULTS

The analysis of the survey responses (N = 87) highlights the following results:

There is no significant difference in awareness and perception of the SWAYAM platform between male and female student-teachers.

There is a significant difference in awareness and perception of the SWAYAM platform among student-teachers of different streams of education (Arts and Science). Science stream students showed higher awareness and more positive perceptions than Arts stream students.

There is no significant difference in awareness and perception of SWAYAM between rural and urban student-teachers.

There is no significant difference in awareness and perception of SWAYAM between first year and second-year student-teachers.

CONCLUSION

The results reveals that most student-teachers know about the SWAYAM platform and see it as a useful tool for learning. Many of them have registered for courses, and more than half have also attended online classes. They feel that SWAYAM improves their teaching skills, subject knowledge, and helps them prepare for exams. It is especially useful for students from rural areas because it gives them access to quality learning materials. The results also show that student-teachers are ready to recommend SWAYAM to others, which means they have a positive attitude towards it. Overall, the study highlights that digital platforms like SWAYAM can play an important role in teacher education, and there is a need to provide more guidance and support so that student-teachers can use it effectively in their learning journey.

But as the result signifies that there is a significant difference between arts and science students and science students showed higher awareness and more positive perceptions than Arts stream students. This is due to the language as the barrier, because the content of the SWAYAM is in English Language and the arts students at the college are in Kannada medium. Hence, we find the above result.

Educational Implications

SWAYAM should include the courses even in Kannada language or can have bilingual facility in SWAYAM,

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so that it benefits the arts students who study in Kannada language.

2. SWAYAM can be used in teacher training colleges as an extra tool for learning.

It helps rural students get the same quality of education as urban students.

Student-teachers can use SWAYAM to improve their teaching skills and subject knowledge.

The platform also helps them learn at their own pace and continue learning even after completing their course.

Many students find it useful for preparing for competitive exams and teacher eligibility tests.

Colleges and teachers should guide student-teachers on how to use SWAYAM more effectively through workshops and training programs.

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