Open Courseware and Life Long Learning: A view

Anuva Samanta*

* Research Scholar (Education), WBUTTEPA, Kolkata, India.

ABSTRACT   *Life Long Learning is the kind of education which helps learners to learn whole life without any restriction. Information Communication Technology and advancement of internet changes the scenario Life Long Learning. OpenCourseWare, the openly available learning materials have changes the procedure of life long learning. This study is intended to find out the relation between OpenCourseWare and Life Long Learning.*

Keywords: OpenCourseWare, Life Long Learning, Open Education, MIT OCW

Introduction:

Open Education encompasses resources, tools and practices that are free of legal, financial and technical barriers and can be fully used, shared and adapted in the digital environment. Open Education maximizes the power of the internet to make education more affordable, accessible and effective (Sparc, 2017). Open Education Consortium says "sharing is probably the most basic characteristic of education, education is sharing knowledge, insights and information with others, upon which new knowledge, skills, ideas and understanding can be built." Open Education integrates free and open learning, sharing, educational networks, teaching and learning materials, open textbooks, open data, open scholarships. Open Education gives people access to knowledge, provides sharing platforms, enables innovation, and connects communities of learners and educators around the world. Open Courses are a way to share this common knowledge on the web (Truyen, 2014).

OpenCourseWare (OCW) is an effort to provide free and open educational materials to learners around the world. The OCW movement represents the movement to help education at the global level. OCW advances knowledge and education everywhere to make the program and its course materials globally accessible to everyone or at least those who have access to a computer and the Web. OCW offers in providing wider access to educational materials, based on the ideal of 'the right to education' (Huijser, 2008). OpenCourseWare is the umbrella term for open educational resources presented in a course format, often including course planning materials such as syllabi and course calendars, along with thematic content such as textbooks, lectures, presentations, notes and simulations. Open Educational Resources (OER) are materials developed by experienced educators available for use, repurposing and modification (including translation) in whole or in part by everyone, everywhere around the world (Truyen, 2014).

MIT OpenCourseWare:

MIT OpenCourseWare (MIT OCW**)** is an initiative of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), United States of America, to publish all of the educational materials from its undergraduate and graduate level courses online, free and openly available to anyone, anywhere. In the words of Dick K.P. Yue, Prof., MIT School of Engineering "The idea is simple: to publish all of our course materials online and make them widely available to everyone." MIT first announcement in April 2001, the MIT OCW pilot site opened to the public in September 2002 and offered 32 courses initially. The site was officially launched in September 2003 with 500 courses online. In 2004, the site received almost 120 million hits from visitors in more than 210 countries, territories, and city-states around the globe (Lee, 2007). MIT OCW project is jointly funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and MIT.

MIT's OpenCourseWare is a free and open educational resource (OER) for educators, students, and self-learners around the world. It is not a degree-granting or credit-bearing initiative, but a large-scale, web-based publication of MIT course materials. Users do not have to register to access OpenCourseWare course materials. Educators are encouraged to utilize the materials for curriculum development, and self-learners may draw upon the materials for self-study or supplementary use. In the words of Susan Hockfield, "OpenCourseWare expresses, in an immediate and far-reaching way, MIT's goal of advancing education around the world. Through MIT OCW, educators and students everywhere can benefit from the academic activities of our faculty and join a global learning community in which knowledge and ideas are shared openly and freely for the benefit of all." OCW now stands as a new model for disseminating knowledge,

serving as a sort of "shared intellectual commons" available to educators and learners around the globe. OpenCourseWare are shared under a Creative Commons license, a copyright license under which the rights that remain reserved and the rights that are foregone can be specified, unlike the traditional copyright licenses that do not allow for flexibility of use. MIT has chosen a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-SA) that allows sharing, copying and redistribution, and even derivative works based on OpenCourseWare (MIT, 2017).

Life Long learning:

Life Long Learning (LLL) is an aim of education. Life Long Learning is a particular type of self-improvement that is voluntary and possible only after basic education (Fain, 2009). LLL is the way to learn. Those who are outside of traditional academic system, elder people seek education, people need skill based education for future job market, young professionals for continuous update of their knowledge require Life Long Learning. The primary value of lifelong learning is in the way it supports and reflects the drive for cultural continuity and the pursuit of happiness. Life Long Learning provides excellent opportunity to learn without any restriction. LLL concept refers to the activities of people perform throughout their life to improve their knowledge, skills and competence in a particular field, given some personal, societal or employment related motives (Laal, 2011). Harper Collins Dictionary define "LLL is the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfillment."

Life Long learners can be of any age, come from any place, study at any time, and learn at any pace. Learning is also not just an individual experience for the learner. We have become a learning society in which the pursuit of knowledge has become a common goal and a collective undertaking. Open courses are a way to share this common knowledge on the Web. By providing open, in-depth courses with the full texts online, search results become more substantial and yield deeper information (Truyen, 2014).

Objective of the Study

i)   To find out the role of OpenCourseWare in Life Long Learning.

Methodology:

This study is a documentary study. It is based on site statistics document of MIT. The sources are eye witness accounts. The original documents come under the category of primary sources.

Discussion:

To identify the basic relation between OCW and LLL, MIT site statistics (MIT, 2017) has been taken into consideration. MIT site statistics shows that more than 2 million learners visit open courseware each month. Learners from all over the world visit MIT OCW for the different purposes. Visitor is divided among students, educators, and self-learners, and other category.
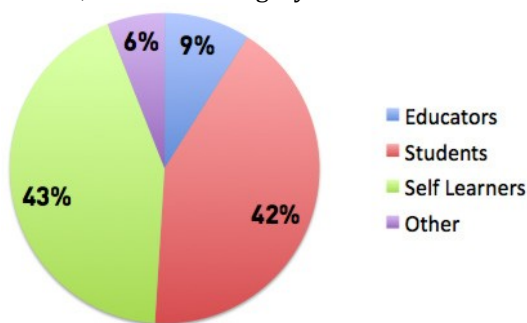

Figure-1: MIT OCW USER (https://ocw.mit.edu/about/site-statistics/)

The figure-1 shows that 42% students and 43% self-learners are visited and used MIT OCW for different purposes. Only 9% educator and 6% other people visited MIT OCW. It is interesting that Self-learners are the maximum percentage of visitor for OCW and also the students visit is very significant. Self-learning, learning for skill improvement, and professional development to develop knowledge base is the fundamental concept of LLL.

MIT OCW is being successfully used for a wide range of purposes by the educators, students and self-learners and other users.

Educators are mainly used OCW for the purposes of:

Learners	Purposes	% of use
Educators	Improve personal knowledge	31%
	Learn new teaching methods	23%
	Incorporate OCW materials into a course	20%
	Find reference material for my students	15%
	Develop curriculum for my department or school	8%

Educators are used MIT OCW basically for improve personal knowledge which is the one fundamental concept of LLL and also they use to learn new teaching methods which the step towards professional development. Professional development is also a fundamental concept of LLL.

Students are used OCW for the purposes of:

Learners	Purposes	% of use
Students	Enhance personal knowledge	46%
	Complement a current course	34%
	Plan a course of study	16%

Maximum students are used MIT OCW basically for enhance personal knowledge which is the fundamental concept of LLL.

Self-Learners are used OCW for the purposes of:

Learners	Purposes	% of use
Self-Learners	Explore areas outside my professional field	40%
	Review basic concepts in my professional field	18%
	Prepare for future course of study	18%
	Keep current with developments in my field	17%
	Complete a work-related project or task	4%

Self-learning is the fundamental concept of Life Long Learning. Self-learners are basically intended for lifelong learning through OCW. OCW helps them to increase their knowledge base throughout their life, helps in professional development, skill development. If any learner out from traditional academic environment for sometimes, learner can prepare for future course of study with help of OCW.

Conclusion:
Advancement of information communication technology basically the Internet and specifically the World Wide Web(WWW) encourage to introduce OCW. OCW is depend on WWW. Learners from the whole world are use OCW for the different purposes without any restriction. Openly available course materials help

learners to their life long learning. Self learners and students are maximum user of OCW. User are use OCW mainly for development of personal knowledge base, skill development, professional development. Through Life Long Learning learners develop their knowledge base, participated in professional development, skill improvement. From this study it is identified that OpenCourseWare enhances the Life Long Learning and actively participates in the Life Long Learning process.

References:
1. Atkins, D., Brown, J. S., & Hammond, A. (2007). *A Review of the Open Educational Resources (OER) Movement: Achievement, challenges and new opportunities.* http://www.hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ReviewoftheOERMovement.pdf (Retrieved on 05/05/2017)
2. Chakravarty, R. and Kaur, S. (2008) *OpenCourseware: Learning Beyond Classroom*. In Trends and Strategic Issues for Libraries in Global Information Society, Chandigarh, India, 18-19 March 2008.
3. Deoghuria, S. & Roy, S. (2008). *Open Courseware: A Unique Opportunity for India*. 6th Convention PLANNER - 2008, Nagaland University, Nagaland, November 06-07, 2008. 115-123.
4. Fain, G. S. (2009). *Education, lifelong learning and leisure*. In Farrell, R. V. and Papagiannis, G.(Eds). Education for Sustainability. Oxford: Eolss, 276-289
5. Huijser, H., Bedford, T., & Bull, D. (2008). OpenCourseWare, Global Access and the Right to Education: real access or marketing policy? *Int. Rev. of Res. in Open and Distance Learning,* 9(1), 1-13.
6. Laal, M. (2011). Lifelong learning: What does it mean? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 28, 470 – 474.
7. Lee, M. M., Lin, M. G., & Bonk, C. J. (2007). OOPS, Turning MIT Opencourseware into Chinese: an analysis of a community of practice of global translators. *Int. Rev. Of Res. In Open and Distance Learning,* 8(3), 1-20
8. Lerman, S. R., Miyagawa, S., & Margulies, A. H. (2008). *OpenCourseWare: Building a Culture of Sharing.* In Iiyoshi, T. & Vijay Kumar, M. S. (Eds.) Opening Up Education. Cambridge: MIT Press, 213-227
9. MIT. (2017). *About OCW*. https://ocw.mit.edu/about/ (Retrieved on 05/05/2017)
10. MIT. (2017). *OCW: Privacy and Terms of Use*. http://ocw.mit.edu/terms/ (Retrieved on 05/05/2017)
11. MIT (2017). *OCW Site Statistics*. https://ocw.mit.edu/about/site-statistics/ (Retrieved on 07/05/2017)
12. MIT (2017). *Site Statistics*. https://ocw.mit.edu/about/site-statistics/ (Retrieved on 06/05/2017)
13. Opensource.com (2017). *Open Education*. https://opensource.com/resources/what-open-education (Retrieved on 05/05/2017)
14. Šimenc, M., & Kodelja, Z. (2016). Lifelong Learning—From Freedom to Necessity. *Creative Education*, 7, 1714-1721.
15. SPARC. *Open Education*. https://sparcopen.org/open-education/ (Retrieved on 05/05/2017)
16. Truyen, F. & Verbeken, S. (2014). *Empowering Student Mobility with OpenCourseWare.* http://opencourseware.eu/files/StreamFile27103/handbook-empowering-student-mobility-with-ocw.pdf (Retrieved on 05/05/2017)