



A Narrative Study on iGOT and LEAP for the Professional Development of Government Employees in India

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Abstract: *The study's objective is to examine recently launched GoI programmes viz. iGOT and LEAP that support individuals' efforts at professional development (PD). The study is entirely focused on PD and is situated in India. The GoI has established several programmes, including SWAYAM, NPTEL, ARPIT, iGOT, and LEAP. This study project is only as far as discussing the last two designs. The discussion is based on a review of the documents for the most recent GoI notices. It has been noted that both iGOT and LEAP have continued to be successful in getting government officials' attention in order to advance their professional careers. A comparatively low participation rate indicates that individuals are not aware of these programmes. The importance of the study suggests that it will increase interest in the subject among Indian experts.*

Key Words: *Professional development, MOOC, training, India.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The most recent figures show that India has 139 crore residents, with 27.3% of them being between the ages of 15 and 29. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in India refers to this particular age group as the "young". Given the vastness and great diversity of the different living and non-living components that make up the country, the nation is lucky to have its "demographic dividend." The nation's large proportion of children and young adults is often referred to as the "youth bulge." To facilitate categorization, the authors will refer to those between the ages of 30 and 64 as "middle-aged". The entire population is split up into two groups in this study: "those in their middle ages" and "youths," respectively. Given its sizable youth population, India anticipated strong economic growth. The youth were exposed to negative events/incidents for a number of reasons, such as unequal access to education, gender inequality, child marriage, scarce employment possibilities, etc. As a result, India's "youth bulge" is actually becoming a danger. Therefore, the government must act quickly to improve young adults' employability if it is to achieve the desired social and economic success on a global scale. The "youth bulge" population is declining, but the number of "middle age persons" is increasing, according to a census data (1). It shows that India is relying increasingly on the labour force of the older population, which is counter to the idea of a nation's progress. Given the lack of new employees and bringing the current workforce to our attention, it may be argued that the situation calls for a drive to improve the professional's abilities. This results in the introduction of the concept of professional development (PD).

People in the nation, both those who are employed and those who are not, fall within the broad definition of "PD." In the age of digitization and international cooperation, it has been established that the Government of India (GoI) is implementing numerous significant programmes. Programs like SWAYAM, ARPIT, NPTEL, etc. are among them. Complete support for these programmes is available online. Due of these learning opportunities' technological effectiveness, it's possible that the youthful population, or "youth bulge," is acclimated to them. Unaffected by their position in the workforce, people can enrol in these PD-supportive courses to advance their knowledge, skills, and employability. In addition to protecting their interests, the GoI is equally dedicated to enhancing the professional calibre of its current employees through extra training. To support the effort, the government introduced projects like iGOT and LEAP. Through these platforms, the "middle age individuals" can access their PD activities. The authors want it to be clear that while there is a sort of most feasible note that has been recorded, there is not an absolute separation between the two groups and their potential to participate in any of the aforementioned PD support programmes.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Jean-Roger Mercier (2014) discussed the goals and structure of massive open online courses (MOOCs) as well as how well they worked in practice. Participants in the classes expressed a high degree of satisfaction as well as completion rates. Based on the research's findings, the author came to the conclusion that MOOCs might give vocational training the boost it needs to address Africa's capacity-building concerns (2).

Singh and Chauhan (2017) found that teacher educators have a fundamental understanding of MOOCs. There was a sense that SWAYAM and other Indian MOOC programmes were not well understood. The results showed that there were no technological or pedagogical reasons given for not choosing or enrolling in a MOOC course; instead, teacher educators cited a lack of time as their excuse (3).

A review of the literature on MOOC characteristics, a timeline of its evolution, and a synthesis of real-world problems with faculty experiences on MOOC education were presented. The advantages and cons of MOOCs were discussed in the article. The researchers concluded that interactivity and variability play a key role in MOOCs (4).

Wang and Li (2019) looked into how technostress is brought on by an imbalance in the interactions of a multidimensional environment, such as the university higher education system. Researchers demonstrated how the person-organization misfit phenomenon can be used to anticipate the person-technology or person-people misfit phenomena. The instructors' multifaceted technological stress even indicated how it affected how well they did their jobs. The study found that professors were more negatively impacted by the emphasis on ICT use in university activities than were their colleagues at lower levels in terms of producing technostress (5).

Corbett and Spinello (2020) sought to draw a connection between connectivism, adult learning theory, and organizational leadership theory. They contend that MOOCs support student autonomy and self-directed learning at the expense of ongoing education and leadership development. The researchers' study introduced a novel concept on "connectivist leadership" (6).

The Commonwealth of Learning (2021) offered a way to use MOOCs for teacher professional development. The low-income nations and underdeveloped areas were the main topics of the directory. The policy brief placed emphasis on a number of factors, including physical difficulties, regional customs, languages, gender inequity, technological problems, and educational problems (7).

There is a disconnection between people's expectations of MOOCs and their general attitude about them, which may explain why fewer people are using MOOCs in their professions. Corporations are aware of the potential for using MOOCs for workplace learning, but certain barriers like prevent this from happening (8).

Donitsa-Schmidt, Ramot, and Topaz (2022) structured the training students' opinions on the value of MOOCs for teacher preparation during COVID-19 as a successful teaching strategy. Their participation in MOOCs resulted in high learning results and satisfactory learning experiences. Students who participated in more MOOCs reported a more positive impression of their usefulness in initial teacher education programmes (9).

3. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

The examination of the literature reveals that a number of studies on PD have been conducted, some of which have included or excluded MOOCs. Researchers who are interested in the Indian setting with PD therapies through iGOT and LEAP hardly ever notice any study. The researchers made an effort to carry out this study in order to fill this gap in the literature.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE (RO):

The only RO is framed for the research's successful conclusion.

RO: To talk about recent GoI initiatives *viz.* iGOT and LEAP that assists the PD of its personnel.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study's context is the Indian environment exclusively. This qualitative study was conducted using the analysis of the aforementioned RO. The researchers examine each of the government's notices, orders, programmes, or initiatives that assist PD in order to answer the RO. Researchers have learned that the government has implemented a number of initiatives, including SWAYAM, NPTEL and ARPIT, to support people for their PD activities. These programmes are accessible online 24/7 from any location. Given that the schemes have already been covered in other research studies by scholars, it is outside the purview of our analysis to explore them further. On the other hand, it is obvious that the government must rely on the capacity development of its existing workforce of "middle age population" given the age range of its officials. Therefore, the topic of PD helpful that is expressly intended for senior government officials is given additional focus in this study. Two fairly recent GoI programmes, iGOT and LEAP, are taken into consideration for further elaboration against this logical backdrop.

**iGOT:**

A recent notification on the training of government employees through MOOCs was released by the department of personnel and training (DoPT), GoI, taking into account the relevance of MOOCs in every PD intervention. To improve the skills of central and state government personnel, the GoI launched the integrated government online training (iGOT) programme in 2019 (10). An MOU between DoPT and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), South Asia, had been inked at the Institute for Financial Management and Research, Chennai, to begin the initiative. The iGOT programme was designed to help state and central government officials enhance their capacity based on their needs and to make it easier for training facilities to reach out to people on a flexitime and on-site basis. The online training programmes offered by the iGOT programme were focused on the needs of government officials and would aid in their career advancement. The five online courses offered by J-MITx PAL's micro master programme were chosen for the iGOT initiative by DoPT, J-PAL, South Asia, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA.

The main objective of the MITx micro masters programme was to provide officials with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills they required to address some of the most pressing issues that the world's underdeveloped and disadvantaged countries are currently facing. The J-PAL, SA's MITx micro masters programme, was created because it was crucial to train policymakers and practitioners in the government in the identification and analysis of the primary causes of underdevelopment using economics concepts. The programme consists of five modules.

Officers will receive certificates if they successfully finish all of the individual courses in the MITx micro masters programme and pass the on-site proctored exam. The officers will be qualified to apply to MIT's new on-campus blended master of data, economics, and development policy programme once they have successfully completed all five micro masters' courses and the related in-person tests. A government official may apply for the domestic funding of India's foreign training (DFFT) scheme once they have completed all the courses. According to the most recent data, the sixth batch has enrolled in this training programme for the upcoming spring semester (February 2021). You may find information about the programme at <https://igot.nic.in/>. Here, engagement in training enables people to experience PD.

LEAP

In order to improve the leadership abilities of top academicians and administrators in publically funded HEIs, the education ministry of India launched the "Leadership for Academicians Programme" (LEAP) in 2019 (11). The Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMNMTT) of the Government of India oversees the operation of the initiative. It is a type of faculty development programme that some of India's leading institutes and institutions are delivering with the help of international collaboration. Program transactions take place offline.

The LEAP programme is a three-week leadership development course that includes one week of international training and two weeks of home instruction. The main goal is to prepare second-tier academic leaders who may eventually take on leadership positions. According to the most recent report, LEAP is being implemented by 15 reputable Indian institutions. Prudent administrative and research skills of the incumbents are the key selection criteria for the participants. The GoI is responsible for paying the whole cost of the training. Around 30 participants are permitted for each batch, and the candidates are chosen using a centralized online application process. At the end of the training, the trainees are evaluated on ten critical leadership qualities, including visioning and planning, managing people, resolving conflicts and managing stress, making decisions, teaching, learning, conducting research, and coming up with new ideas, as well as financial planning and management, administrative skills, student understanding, and collaboration. 352 participants were successfully accommodated in 15 locations during the program's initial attempt in 2018–19 with help from LEAP-approved universities. There were 128 participants in the 2019–20 academic years. The site shows that 325 trainees are participating in the current academic session 2022–2023. You may find more information about the initiative at www.nmtt.gov.in.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

After answering the study's RO, it became apparent that the government appeared to be highly eager to meet the PD needs of its working professionals. Existing programmes like SWAYAM, NPTEL, and ARPIT have largely succeeded in addressing the "youth bulge." Additionally, it has been observed that newer programmes like iGOT and LEAP are gradually attracting the interest of the current central and state government workers. Therefore, it is clear that the GoI is attempting to up skill both the younger generation and the established professionals in their middle years. Additionally, the GoI continued to be rigorous in adding variety to trainings. As a result, although LEAP can only be accessed offline, the iGOT application is accessible online. The researchers are thus seeing a holistic strategy in developing the PD of Indian citizens through its many PD supportive programmes.



7. CONCLUSION:

The researchers in this study talked about two recent GoI initiatives that support PD among its citizens. The two programmes are LEAP and iGOT. Both programmes are designed to help the company's brightest personnel strengthen their managerial and leadership abilities. The information that is currently available demonstrates that government personnel are encouraged to participate in such programmes. Since these programmes are still relatively new, it is anticipated that this research will increase Indians' awareness of PD support programmes in the years to come.

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