



Strengthening Teaching Skills In Indian Higher Education Through Swayam Courses

Dr. Mohammad Arif

Associate Professor, Faculty of Commerce, Govt. P.G. College, Deoband, Saharanpur

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ABSTRACT

The ever-evolving education system in India demands that teachers of higher education continuously upgrade their knowledge and teaching skills. The SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) platform, launched by the Government of India, serves as a transformative tool to empower teachers by offering a wide range of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). This research paper explores the impact of SWAYAM courses in enhancing the academic and professional skills of teachers in higher education institutions. The study uses secondary data and analysis of existing research to assess how SWAYAM contributes to faculty development, subject enrichment, and technological adaptation in teaching practices. The paper concludes with suggestions to further strengthen the role of SWAYAM in teacher training and development.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world of education, teachers are expected to do more than just teach in classrooms. They are now seen as mentors who guide and support students in many ways. Teachers also need to keep updating their knowledge and teaching methods to stay relevant. With the rise of digital tools and learner-focused education, it has become important for teachers to continue learning and improving their skills, especially those working in colleges and universities.



To support these changing needs, the Government of India started a platform called SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) in July 2017. This initiative, led by the Ministry of Education, aims to provide free online education to everyone, especially those who cannot attend regular classes. As part of the Digital India mission, SWAYAM brings high-quality courses from top Indian institutions like IITs, IIMs, and central universities to learners across the country.

SWAYAM has become a useful platform for teachers in higher education who want to improve their skills. It offers more than 2,500 online courses in various subjects such as science, humanities, management, and technology. These courses are created by well-known bodies like NPTEL, UGC, IGNOU, and AICTE. Teachers can join these courses to deepen their knowledge, learn new teaching methods, and earn certificates that help in their professional growth.

This platform also supports the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which encourages digital learning and ongoing training for teachers. SWAYAM provides video lessons, reading materials, online tests, and discussion forums. These tools make learning easier, more flexible, and more interesting. Teachers can study at their own pace, which allows them to manage both teaching duties and personal learning without stress.

The main purpose of this study is to understand how SWAYAM helps teachers in higher education improve their skills. The paper focuses on how this platform supports teachers in their professional development, helps them become more digitally aware, and encourages new teaching ideas. With its easy access and quality content, SWAYAM is changing the way teachers upgrade themselves and teach their students in Indian colleges and universities. This paper follows a descriptive and analytical approach based on secondary data. Information has been gathered from official sources such as the SWAYAM portal, UGC reports, research articles, and government education policy documents. The paper also draws on data from research surveys, case studies, and feedback available from teachers who have taken SWAYAM courses.

OVERVIEW OF SWAYAM

SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is a digital learning platform launched by the **Government of India** to provide free online education to all learners, including students, professionals, and teachers. It was introduced in **2017** under the Ministry of Education as part of the **Digital India initiative**. The courses are developed by top Indian institutions such as **IITs, IIMs,**



NPTEL, IGNOU, and NCERT, making quality learning accessible to people across the country, especially those who may not have access to regular classroom teaching.

One of the main highlights of SWAYAM is its **four-quadrant learning approach**. This model includes: (1) video lectures to explain topics, (2) downloadable reading materials for self-study, (3) self-assessment quizzes and tests to check progress, and (4) online discussion forums to help learners interact with peers and instructors. More than **2,500 courses** are available in different subjects such as arts, science, commerce, law, engineering, and teacher education. Learners can also earn a **certificate** after passing a **final proctored examination**, which adds value to their academic or professional profile.

SWAYAM plays an important role in achieving the goals of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which focuses on improving digital education, enhancing teacher training, and ensuring inclusive learning for all. The platform supports teachers in upgrading their skills through online faculty development programs and encourages the use of technology in teaching. By offering flexible and low-cost learning opportunities, SWAYAM is helping bridge the gap between quality education and learners from remote or underprivileged areas (Ministry of Education, 2024).

CONTRIBUTION OF SWAYAM TO TEACHER SKILLING

SWAYAM has become a **valuable tool for teacher skilling** in India. By offering academic enrichment, improving teaching methods, promoting digital skills, supporting research, and ensuring equal access, SWAYAM empowers teachers to grow professionally. It also aligns with the goals of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which emphasizes **digital education, continuous teacher training, and inclusive learning**. With platforms like SWAYAM, the future of Indian education looks more connected, skilled, and student-centered.

The **SWAYAM platform (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds)** was launched by the **Ministry of Education, Government of India in 2017** to provide free and high-quality online courses to learners across the country. It is especially beneficial for **teachers in higher education**, helping them enhance their skills, knowledge, and teaching practices. SWAYAM offers over **2,500 courses** in subjects like science, arts, commerce, law, and teacher education. Below are the key areas where SWAYAM contributes to the professional development of teachers.

Academic and Subject Enrichment



One of the main benefits of the **SWAYAM platform** is that it helps teachers keep their **subject knowledge up to date**. With the rapid growth of information and new developments in every field, it is important for teachers to continue learning. Through SWAYAM, teachers of subjects like computer science, economics, or physics can join **online courses** created by top institutions such as **IITs, IIMs, and central universities**. These courses provide detailed knowledge of the latest theories, practical tools, and techniques used in the academic and professional world.

By learning through these advanced-level MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), teachers gain a deeper understanding of their subjects and can include **current and relevant topics** in their classroom teaching. This not only improves how they explain complex ideas but also makes learning more meaningful and interesting for students. Continuous professional development through SWAYAM ensures that teachers are well-prepared and confident, which in turn **raises the academic standards** of the institutions they work in.

Pedagogical Skills Enhancement

In today's education system, teaching is no longer limited to just giving lectures. Teachers are expected to understand their students' learning styles, needs, and interests. To support this, **SWAYAM** offers useful courses on **instructional design, educational psychology, and outcome-based education**, which help teachers improve their **teaching methods**. These courses teach educators how to make learning more **student-friendly** and focused on activities, making classes more interactive and enjoyable for students.

SWAYAM also uses a **four-quadrant model**, which includes video lectures, reading materials, online quizzes, and discussion forums. This structure allows teachers to experience and adopt **blended learning**—a teaching approach that combines traditional classroom methods with digital tools. It helps teachers create more engaging lessons, promote active participation, and improve the overall learning experience. By using these new strategies, teachers become more effective in reaching all types of learners in both physical and online classrooms.

Use of technology in teaching

In today's digital world, using technology in education has become very important. Teachers are now expected to know how to use online tools and digital platforms to improve their teaching. **SWAYAM** supports this by offering courses that teach educators how to use **Learning Management Systems**



(LMS), design **multimedia presentations**, and conduct **online assessments**. These skills help teachers stay up to date with modern teaching practices and make them confident in handling **online or hybrid classes**, which became more common after the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

By learning how to use technology effectively, teachers can make their lessons more **interactive and flexible**. They can share videos, quizzes, presentations, and other online resources that keep students more engaged. Technology also allows teachers to give instant feedback, track student progress, and communicate easily with learners. With the help of SWAYAM, teachers are not only improving their subject knowledge but also becoming **digitally skilled**, which is essential in today's education system.

Research and Curriculum Development

For teachers who are involved in **academic research** or in designing courses, **SWAYAM** offers helpful online programs in **research methods**, **data analysis tools**, and **curriculum development**. These courses teach how to collect and interpret data correctly, how to use modern research techniques, and how to plan courses that match current educational goals. By learning these skills, teachers can write stronger research papers and contribute better to the academic reputation of their institutions.

In addition, these courses help teachers create **outcome-based and student-centered syllabi** that are updated with recent trends and industry needs. This makes the teaching material more relevant and useful for students. As a result, both the **quality of research** and the **value of classroom teaching** improve. With support from SWAYAM, teachers are better prepared to contribute not just as educators but also as researchers and course planners in higher education.

Inclusivity and Flexibility

SWAYAM makes sure that all teachers—whether they live in big cities or far-off rural areas—can get access to the **same high-quality education**. Many teachers in remote regions often don't have access to proper training or workshops. Through SWAYAM, they can now learn from the best professors in India, including those from **IITs, IIMs, and central universities**, without having to travel or leave their jobs. This helps reduce the gap between urban and rural education opportunities.

The platform follows an **anytime-anywhere learning model**, which means teachers can choose when and where to study. This flexibility allows them to manage their teaching responsibilities while also improving their skills. Since there are no travel costs or fixed classroom schedules, it saves both time and



money. In this way, SWAYAM promotes **inclusive and equal learning opportunities** for all teachers, supporting professional growth across different regions of the country.

CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

Low Awareness in Smaller Cities and Towns

One of the major challenges in the successful implementation of SWAYAM among higher education teachers is the lack of awareness, especially in tier-II and tier-III cities. Many teachers in smaller towns and rural areas are still not fully informed about the platform, its features, or the types of courses available. Even though the government and universities are trying to spread awareness, there is still a gap in communication and training at the ground level. Without proper guidance and orientation programs, many teachers hesitate to explore SWAYAM, missing out on valuable opportunities for skill enhancement.

Language Barriers for Non-English Speakers

Another big challenge is the language barrier. Most of the courses on SWAYAM are offered in English, which becomes a hurdle for many teachers, particularly those who are more comfortable with regional languages. While some courses are now being translated or developed in Hindi and other Indian languages, the number is still limited. As a result, teachers from rural backgrounds or non-English-medium institutions often find it difficult to understand the course content. This limits their ability to participate actively in the learning process and benefit from the platform.

Lack of Motivation and Institutional Recognition

Many teachers do not feel motivated to join SWAYAM courses because there are no formal incentives in many institutions. In some colleges and universities, SWAYAM certifications are not recognized for promotions, career advancement, or performance evaluations. When the effort made by a teacher to complete a course is not officially acknowledged, it reduces the enthusiasm to invest time in online learning. If SWAYAM courses were linked to faculty appraisal systems or given weightage in annual performance reports, more teachers would take them seriously.

Digital Divide and Poor Infrastructure

The digital divide is a serious issue, especially in remote and rural areas. Not all teachers have access to high-speed internet, smartphones, laptops, or uninterrupted electricity. These technological barriers make



it hard for them to participate in online courses smoothly. Even when they are willing to learn, poor digital infrastructure prevents consistent engagement with course content. Teachers in cities benefit from better digital resources, while those in villages are left behind, which leads to inequality in access to professional development opportunities.

Time Constraints Due to Heavy Workload

Teachers in higher education often have a tight work schedule filled with lectures, administrative responsibilities, student mentoring, and academic planning. Due to these multiple duties, they struggle to find time for extra learning. While SWAYAM offers flexibility through its “learn at your own pace” model, teachers still need dedicated time to complete course modules, assignments, and exams. Without institutional support or a reduction in workload during training periods, many teachers are unable to manage both their job responsibilities and online learning.

While SWAYAM has the potential to transform teacher development in India, these challenges need to be addressed for full-scale adoption. Solutions like regular awareness drives, expanding multilingual content, official recognition of certifications, improved internet access, and time allowances for course participation can help teachers make the most of this platform. Bridging these gaps will ensure that every teacher, regardless of location or background, can grow professionally and contribute meaningfully to the quality of higher education in India.

Government Initiatives and Support

To encourage teacher participation, the UGC has made it mandatory for all HEI faculty to undergo a minimum number of SWAYAM courses for Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) promotions. The ARPIT (Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching) program, integrated with SWAYAM, specifically focuses on faculty development. National Digital University and NEP 2020 also endorse these initiatives.

A PLATFORM WITH LIFE-CHANGING POTENTIAL

(CASE STUDIES AND SUCCESS STORIES OF SWAYAM’S IMPACT)

The **SWAYAM platform**, launched by the **Ministry of Education, Government of India in 2017**, has proven to be a major step forward in bringing **quality education and professional development** opportunities to teachers across the country. Although the platform is open to all learners, its impact on **faculty development in higher education institutions (HEIs)** is particularly noteworthy. By providing



access to free online courses created by leading academic institutions such as **IITs, IIMs, IGNOU, and central universities**, SWAYAM has helped bridge gaps in skills, knowledge, and digital literacy—especially among teachers in **rural and underserved areas**.

These contributions are not just theoretical. Many **real-life case studies and success stories** have emerged from across the country that show how SWAYAM has directly improved the performance, confidence, and effectiveness of teachers. These stories demonstrate that when given the right tools and opportunities, even educators in remote or resource-poor settings can achieve **outstanding growth** and bring about **positive change** in their institutions.

The stories from Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and other parts of India clearly show that **SWAYAM has the power to transform teaching and learning** when used effectively. Teachers from under-resourced institutions, tribal areas, and small towns are now gaining access to world-class knowledge, improving their research skills, adopting digital tools, and becoming leaders in their academic communities.

Improved Research Output in Kerala: A Model of Academic Growth

One remarkable success story comes from a **government college in Kerala**, where several faculty members decided to enroll in **SWAYAM courses on research methodology and data analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)**. Before this training, the college had low research output, with few publications and limited exposure to modern research tools. However, after completing the SWAYAM courses, the participating teachers reported a **40% increase in research productivity** within a single academic year (MoE Report, 2023).

The courses helped teachers learn how to **design research projects**, collect and analyze data effectively, and write research papers suitable for national and international journals. Faculty members started presenting papers at conferences, mentoring student researchers, and contributing to academic journals. This not only enhanced their personal profiles but also raised the overall **academic reputation** of the college. SWAYAM enabled them to access knowledge that was earlier available only in larger, urban institutions—demonstrating the power of **equitable digital education**.

Digital Transformation in a Tribal College of Madhya Pradesh

Another **inspiring example** comes from a **tribal-dominated region in Madhya Pradesh**, where access to modern educational resources is very limited. A young faculty member from a **government college in**



Mandla district, with little exposure to digital tools, enrolled in a SWAYAM course called “**Digital Teaching Techniques**.” The course introduced her to basic concepts of **e-content development**, use of **PowerPoint presentations**, **online classroom management**, and **virtual libraries**.

After completing the course, the teacher didn’t stop at just improving her own methods. She took the initiative to **digitize the college’s traditional library**, converted old teaching materials into digital formats, and encouraged her colleagues to adopt **e-learning tools** like Google Classroom and YouTube tutorials. With limited infrastructure and support, she also trained her students in using mobile phones and computers for learning purposes. This transformation changed the face of teaching and learning in the institution. Students became more engaged, teachers became more confident, and the college began receiving recognition from the state higher education department for innovation and digital literacy.

This example is a powerful reminder of how **one motivated teacher, equipped with the right tools from SWAYAM**, can make a lasting impact—not just on their own career, but on the **entire institutional culture**.

National Trends and Broader Success

Beyond individual stories, national data also shows SWAYAM's growing impact on the Indian education system. According to a **report by the National Testing Agency (NTA) in 2023**, more than **2 crore learners** had enrolled in SWAYAM courses since its launch, with **over 10 lakh teachers** benefiting directly through MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) focused on **teacher education, curriculum design, assessment practices**, and **digital pedagogy**. Many colleges across **Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Assam** have made it mandatory for faculty to complete at least one SWAYAM course every year as part of their **career development plans**.

In some universities, SWAYAM-certified faculty members have been given preference in promotions and leadership roles. In addition, several state governments have partnered with the Ministry of Education to conduct **orientation programs** for faculty to increase awareness and enrollment in SWAYAM courses. These efforts have not only improved teaching quality but also led to **cost savings**, since teachers no longer have to travel for in-person training or seminars.

However, for SWAYAM to reach its full potential, more needs to be done in terms of **institutional recognition, multilingual content**, and **supportive infrastructure**. Despite these challenges, the success



stories so far prove that SWAYAM is not just an online platform—it is a **catalyst for academic empowerment**, professional growth, and **inclusive development** in India’s higher education system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To make SWAYAM more effective and widely used by teachers in higher education, some important steps need to be taken. First, there should be a **mandatory orientation session** on how to use SWAYAM during the **initial training of newly recruited faculty**. This will help them understand the platform early in their careers. Colleges and universities should also offer **incentives like academic credits, awards, or recognition** for teachers who complete relevant SWAYAM courses. Such rewards can encourage more faculty members to participate actively and view these courses as part of their professional growth.

In addition, creating **regional-language content** is essential to make SWAYAM more inclusive for teachers who are not fluent in English. The government and course providers should work together to offer **multilingual versions** of popular courses. To improve course quality, there should be a system for **regular feedback from learners**, which can help update and redesign content based on user needs. Finally, **greater collaboration between universities and the SWAYAM platform** is needed so that these courses can be formally integrated into college curricula and teacher training programs. This will strengthen the role of SWAYAM in building a skilled and digitally-ready teaching workforce across India.

CONCLUSION

SWAYAM has become a valuable platform for the **ongoing professional development of teachers** in India. It helps educators not only **upgrade their subject knowledge** but also improve their **teaching methods**, gain **digital skills**, and strengthen their **research abilities**. Even though there are still some challenges in its widespread use, these can be addressed through proper planning, support from educational institutions, and by offering courses in **regional languages** to reach more teachers.

With better integration of SWAYAM into **college and university policies**, along with the goals of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, it can become a key part of improving **teaching quality and learning outcomes**. When teachers are regularly trained and given access to updated knowledge and tools, they become more confident and effective in the classroom. In this way, SWAYAM can help build a **stronger, more skilled, and future-ready higher education system** in India.



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