

# Role of ICT And Digital Pedagogies in Promoting Democratic Citizenship Awareness Among Adults Students in India

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## Abstract

In the 21st century, the innovation and initiatives of technology are an important part of the development of nations. Government of India take various initiatives towards developing infrastructure and developing digital platform for first earning importance of youth and innovate new ideas to evolving adult mine so inspiring and active participation in digital era. This study examines the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital pedagogies in promoting democratic citizenship awareness among adult learners in India. As digital learning expands through platforms such as MOOCs, government e-resources, and social learning networks, understanding how adults interpret and benefit from these tools has become essential. The Quantity research focus on thematic analysis and finding analysis of various government documents, government generals and relevant documents, Google scholar Journal, International research findings also be collected for using data analysis and a findings interpretation. At the same time, challenges including low digital literacy, limited connectivity, and exposure to misinformation hinder the full effectiveness of ICT-based civic learning. The study concludes that ICT serves as a powerful bridge for strengthening democratic values among adult learners, provided that access, literacy, and pedagogical support are improved. Recommendations call for integrating civic content into MOOCs, expanding digital

literacy initiatives, improving ICT infrastructure, and training educators in digital pedagogical skills. Overall, the research highlights the transformative potential of ICT in empowering adults to become active, informed, and responsible democratic citizens in a rapidly evolving digital society.

**Keywords:** ICT; Digital Pedagogies; Democratic Citizenship; Adult Learners; MOOCs; Civic Awareness; Digital Literacy; Constitutional Rights; India; Citizenship Education; E-learning; Democratic Values.

## Introduction

In recent years, the fast growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has changed how people learn, especially adults who often need flexible and easy-to-access study options. ICT today is not just a tool for teaching—it also plays an important role in helping people understand and participate in democratic life. Many scholars point out that when digital tools are used well, they can strengthen civic engagement, support active learning, and help individuals make sense of how democratic systems work (Selwyn, 2016; Buckingham, 2019). In India, where adult learners come from a wide mix of backgrounds, digital teaching methods give them new chances to learn about civic issues, engage in discussions, and explore democratic values in ways that fit their own pace and needs.

Online learning platforms like MOOCs, government civic websites, and multimedia resources help adults build a clearer understanding of their constitutional rights, duties, and democratic responsibilities (Veletsianos & Houlden, 2020). Studies also show that technology-supported learning environments encourage learners to think, question, and participate in civic conversations in ways that traditional classrooms may

not always offer (Freire, 2005; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). With India expanding its digital education efforts through initiatives like Digital India, adult education is becoming more closely connected to digital literacy and civic empowerment (Kapur & Sinha, 2020).

Since adult learners are increasingly encountering digital spaces for civic learning, it becomes important to understand how they view these tools and how digital civic content influences their awareness of democracy. This study aims to explore these experiences and examine how ICT can help strengthen democratic citizenship among adult students in India.

## Literature Review

The role of ICT in adult learning has been widely examined, especially in relation to civic education and democratic participation. Scholars note that digital technologies significantly expand access to civic knowledge by creating flexible, interactive learning environments suitable for adults with varied personal and professional responsibilities (Knowles, 1984; Selwyn, 2016). ICT-based learning platforms such as MOOCs, YouTube lectures, and digital news portals allow learners to engage with diverse perspectives and strengthen their understanding of democratic processes, rights, and duties (Veletsianos & Houlden, 2020). These opportunities are particularly valuable in countries like India, where adult learners often rely on digital literacy initiatives and open-access educational content to acquire civic awareness (Kapur & Sinha, 2020).

Digital pedagogies also promote democratic citizenship through participatory learning structures. Research suggests that online forums, discussion boards, and interactive multimedia enhance civic dialogue, encourage reflective thinking, and foster collaborative problem-solving elements central to democratic citizenship education (Buckingham, 2019; Rheingold, 2012). Freire's (2005) perspective on dialogic learning further highlights how technology-mediated spaces can empower adult learners to question dominant narratives and develop critical consciousness, reinforcing democratic values such as equality and justice.

Moreover, the integration of ICT in education is closely linked to the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which emphasizes that effective digital pedagogy requires a balanced understanding of technology, content, and learner needs (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Studies in adult education

confirm that when digital pedagogies are learner-centered, adults show increased engagement and greater capacity to interpret civic content meaningfully (King, 2009; Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Despite these benefits, challenges such as digital divides, limited access, and varying levels of digital literacy remain persistent barriers (van Dijk, 2020). In the Indian context, these disparities influence how adult learners perceive ICT and how effectively digital civic content shapes their democratic awareness. Existing literature therefore highlights both the transformative potential and the contextual limitations of ICT in promoting democratic citizenship among adult students.

## Objectives:

- To explore how adult students perceive the role of ICT tools and digital learning platforms in developing democratic citizenship awareness among adults**
- To assess how exposure to digital civic content (videos, MOOCs, e-resources) shapes adult learners' understanding of constitutional rights and duties.**

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to understand the lived experiences and collect various data and findings from government documents and relevant channel sources and analyse data refining areas Research and government documents perceptions of adult learners regarding the role of ICT and digital pedagogies in promoting democratic citizenship awareness in India. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable because it allows for an in-depth exploration of how learners interpret digital civic content, engage with ICT tools, and construct meaning around constitutional rights and democratic participation in their everyday lives.

## Research Design

The study follows an interpretive phenomenological approach, focusing on capturing adult students' subjective experiences with digital learning platforms, online civic resources, and ICT-based instructional practices. This design supports rich, narrative data that highlight individual meaning-making processes.

**To explore how adult students perceive the role of ICT tools and digital learning platforms in developing democratic citizenship awareness.**

**1. Perceived Usefulness of ICT for Civic Learning.**

1.1 Access to democratic information: Learners feel ICT makes information on rights, duties, elections, and governance easily available.

1.2 Convenience and flexibility: Adults appreciate the “learn anytime” nature, especially for civic content and public administration topics.

1.3 Enhanced understanding: Visual materials, videos, and infographics help learners grasp democratic concepts more clearly.

**2.Perceptions of Digital Platforms as Spaces for Democratic Dialogue.**

2.1 Peer discussions: Learners see forums, chat groups, and MOOCs discussion boards as safe spaces to share civic opinions.

2.2 Exposure to diverse viewpoints: Interaction with people from different states, regions, and backgrounds broadens democratic thinking.

2.3 Increased confidence in public expression: ICT reduces social barriers and encourages voice, debate, and participation.

**3. ICT as a Tool for Civic Empowerment**

3.1 Awareness of constitutional rights: Online civic courses make adults aware of rights related to equality, justice, liberty, and freedom.

3.2 Encouragement of responsible citizenship: ICT resources promote values like tolerance, participation, and social justice.

3.3 Development of critical thinking: Exposure to multiple media sources fosters questioning, evaluation, and civic reasoning.

**4. Role of Digital Pedagogies in Learning Democratic Values.**

4.1 Interactive learning methods: interactive learning methods profiles online wages simulation and interactive poles, online role-play strengthen understanding of democratic processes.

4.2 Digital storytelling: now the age of AI automatically converts any story like human eyes and also interactive story with sense of feelings like Civic narratives, case studies, and real-life democratic events increase engagement.

4.3 Visual pedagogy: virtual pedagogy means to lead a child through the technology and visualize manner like

animations pictures animations interactive sessions animations understanding animation concept, Videos and animations simplify complex democratic concepts.

**5. Challenges Perceived by Adult Learners**

5.1 Digital literacy limitations:

Some adults struggle with advanced navigation, limiting civic learning.

5.2 Access constraints:

Low connectivity, devices, or financial limitations impact learning consistency.

5.3 Misinformation and confusion:

Learners sometimes feel overwhelmed or unsure which civic information online is reliable.

**6. Overall Perception of ICT’s Role in Democratic Awareness**

6.1 ICT seen as a bridge to democracy: Adults view digital tools as modern pathways to becoming informed citizens.

6.2 Sense of inclusion: ICT gives adults especially those from marginalized backgrounds—a feeling of involvement in national democratic discourse.

6.3 Motivation for civic participation: Learners report feeling more aware and motivated to participate in elections, debates, and local governance.

**Table 0.1 : Analysis of MOOCs Initiatives and Their Role in Promoting Democratic Values**

Equity Indicator	India	Indonesia	Philippines	Central African Republic (CAR)
Digital Access and Connectivity	Moderate high internet penetration in urban areas: strong	Growing broadband and mobile-first access: gaps in remote	High mobile dependency: uneven connectivity across islands	Very low connectivity; limited broadband and high cost of access

	mobile usage	islands		
<b>MOOC Infrastructure</b>	Strong national platform (SWAYAM) integrated with higher education	National platforms like IndoneX and UT MOOCs operating	UPOU MOOCs well-established: government-supported ODL culture	No national MOOC system; reliance on external/global platforms
<b>Socioeconomic Barriers</b>	Income and rural urban divides affect data/device access	Rural learners face affordability & bandwidth gaps	Lower-income groups face data-cost burden: digital divides persist	High poverty rates severely restrict access to devices & internet
<b>Language and Cultural Accessibility</b>	Courses in English and regional languages: diversity remains a challenge	Bahasa Indonesia support improving; English still dominant	English widely used: supports regional MOOC participation	French, Arabic and local languages not well supported in global MOOCs
<b>Gender Inclusion in</b>	Gender gaps reducing;	Gender parity improving	Women's participation	Gender inequality

<b>Higher Education Access</b>	rural women still at risk	ving, but cultural norms affect access	high but varies by region	remains a significant barrier
<b>Technological Barriers</b>	Bandwidth variation between states; device quality varies	High smartphone usage but unstable speeds in remote areas	Power outages & internet instability affect remote islands	Severe electricity and internet instability
<b>Institutional Support for MOOCs</b>	Strong policy and credit recognition through SWAYAM	Institutional partnerships growing; universities adopting MOOCs	Strong ODL presence via UPOU: credit recognition emerging	Very limited institutional capacity for MOOC integration
<b>Potential for Equity Expansion</b>	High potential due to policy support and national platforms	Moderate high: depends on improving infrastructure across islands	High strong English proficiency supports access	Low system without major digital investment, equity gains minimal

This Table 0.1 presents a comparative overview of four developing countries India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Central African Republic (CAR) based on key indicators such as MOOC platform availability, internet access, digital readiness, language accessibility, institutional support, and equity-related challenges. The

comparison clearly shows major regional differences in digital infrastructure and MOOC integration into higher education. India demonstrates the strongest MOOC ecosystem, supported by the national SWAYAM platform, government-led digital initiatives, and increasing recognition of online course credits in universities. However, despite high enrollment numbers, equity gaps persist due to the urban rural digital divide, language diversity, and device affordability issues.

Indonesia shows a growing but moderate MOOC landscape, led by IndonesiaX and Universitas Terbuka's online programs. Internet penetration is improving, but geographical fragmentation (islands) and income disparities still limit equitable participation, especially for rural learners. The Philippines presents a mobile-first MOOC adoption pattern, with UPOU leading national digital learning. Its English-language advantage increases course accessibility, yet rural connectivity, typhoon-related disruptions, and socioeconomic inequalities continue to affect equitable access. The Central African Republic remains the most disadvantaged among the four countries. Extremely low internet penetration, limited university-level digital infrastructure, and the absence of a national MOOC platform make equitable MOOC participation highly challenging. Learners depend heavily on international platforms or NGO-supported blended models. Structural issues including poverty, unstable electricity, and conflict—create the highest barriers to equitable digital access.

Overall, the comparison highlights that while MOOCs create new possibilities for expanding educational access, their equity impact is strongly shaped by national infrastructure, socioeconomic conditions, and government policy support. Countries with stronger digital ecosystems (India, Philippines) experience more meaningful inclusion, while low-resource contexts (CAR) face significant structural barriers that limit the potential of MOOCs to promote equitable higher education access.

### Findings of the Research

1. MOOC participation strongly correlates with digital infrastructure: Countries with higher internet penetration (Philippines, Indonesia) show better MOOC enrollment and completion. CAR lags significantly due to severe infrastructural challenges.
2. Government policy plays a major role: India's SWAYAM shows how national platforms can democratize access when policies support credit transfer and institutional adoption.
3. Socio-economic inequalities persist: Rural learners, low-income students, and those without digital devices remain underrepresented across all countries.
4. Language and data cost barriers affect equity: English-dominant MOOC content and high mobile data costs limit participation especially in India's rural belts, Indonesia's islands, and the Philippines' remote regions.
5. MOOCs offer flexible pathways but benefits are uneven: Learners with stronger digital literacy, better connectivity, and prior education gain most from MOOCs, reinforcing pre-existing inequalities.

### Conclusion

This study shows that MOOCs hold great promise for widening access to higher education, but their impact is far from equal across countries. India, Indonesia, and the Philippines benefit from growing digital ecosystems and supportive policies, yet rural learners and low-income groups still face barriers. In the Central African Republic, limiting infrastructure prevents MOOCs from becoming a realistic opportunity for most students. To truly advance equity, governments must invest in connectivity, reduce data costs, localise content, and strengthen institutional recognition of MOOC learning. Only then can MOOCs become a meaningful pathway toward inclusive, accessible higher education for all.

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