

Revolutionising it, online

K.C. DEEPIKA



Facts and figures

Total number of enrolments - overall and for each course.

- Statistics for Business - 1:23927
- Statistics for Business - 2: 6321
- Innovation and IT Management: 12260
- Introduction to Operations Management: 19320
- Introduction to Managerial Economics - 2197
- Strategy and the Sustainable Enterprise - 1779

Over 20,000 students enrol for the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offered by IIMB since July this year

As the date with the Common Admission Test (CAT) nears, thousands of students scale up preparations for their only gateway into the prestigious Indian Institutes of Managements (IIMs). And then is this other set of students who have already begun classes at the IIM-Bangalore (IIMB) - without belling the CAT.

Launched this July, 'IIMBx', through edX (a non-profit online initiative by MIT and Harvard), started offering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to reach out to a vast majority of interested learners from across the world. Today, of the eight MOOCs announced at <https://www.edx.org/school/iimbx>, two have been completed while four are currently live, with two more slated for October.

So who is enrolling into these courses? Shankar V., who is teaching the Statistics for Business course, says: "We are in the process of finishing the course now. There are 20,000 students registered for the course, which gets people started on basic statistics. While most of the participants already have a bachelors or master's degree, there is a significant chunk that has finished school, and has had to work. More than a third of the students are from India, and many of them have openly expressed that they are interested in picking up some courses from a premier

Students from dozens of countries are taking these courses

institute. With the content being translated in the vernacular, we hope to reach far many more people in India."

Adding to this, Rahul De' said his course on 'Innovation and IT Management' has over 10,000 students from 170 countries. "Over 80 per cent of the students have a college or advanced degree, and the median age is 30 years. Those who have introduced themselves personally, in response to a question, show a consistent pattern of being working professionals in IT or related areas who are seeking management inputs. This profile of students is not similar to what IIMB takes in its flagship programme, but this profile certainly matches those seeking executive education at IIMB," he explained.

With over 3,000 of the total students from India, Prof. De said these are students IIMB cannot accommodate physically, and who are taking advantage of this digital facility. "It is also

interesting to note that students from dozens of countries are taking this course, who would otherwise not have been able to access IIMB," he added.

These courses can be learnt for free, with fee being charged only for a certificate at the end of the course. But most of who are enrolling as they are interested in the subject material, Prof. De said.

"About 200 students (a little less than two per cent of the total students) have paid the nominal \$25 to obtain a verified certificate. The rest are taking the course on an Honor Code basis, which means they are interested in the subject material, not in the certification. Well over a 1,000 students are actively taking the graded assignments (these assignments are not really required for those simply interested in viewing the videos and reading the assigned material)."

To this, Prof. Shankar added, "A majority of the students have an active interest in picking up the concepts. We have set the bar reasonably high, because less than five per cent have been able to attempt all the questions that we have asked. Putting down the fee money alone will not fetch them a certificate. From the feedback we are receiving, the skills that people have picked up appear to be helping them with their work. That in my opinion is far more important!"