

TL;DR:

The United States has substantial uptake of open online learning—including MIT OpenCourseWare. The evidence does **not** support the impression that Americans largely ignore these resources while the rest of the world embraces them.

However, your article illustrates a particularly valuable form of adoption: **a teacher learns from MIT, adapts that knowledge locally, and spreads the benefits to students and other teachers.** Website statistics capture that impact poorly.

I’m interpreting “OTL” as open online teaching and learning. The more common terms are **OER**—open educational resources—and **MOOCs**—massive open online courses.

● What the numbers show

These measures describe different kinds of uptake; they should not be combined into one adoption rate.

Measure	United States	Rest of the world	What it tells us
MIT OCW’s 2025 user survey	27% of respondents	73%, including India’s 23%	The U.S. was the largest country group reported; international respondents collectively predominated.
Same MIT survey in 2015	27%	India accounted for 22%	The U.S.–India balance changed very little over ten years.
Coursera registered learners, end of 2024	Approximately 31 million	Approximately 137 million, including India’s 28 million	The U.S. had the largest national learner base, while roughly 82% of registrations were international.

MIT’s survey covered **5,240 respondents from its website and YouTube channel**, but respondents selected themselves. The percentages describe the survey, not a representative count of everyone using OCW. The Coursera figures are cumulative

registrations, not active learners or course completions; the international total and percentage above are calculated from its rounded figures. [MIT OpenCourseWare News](#)

My interpretation: U.S. participation is strong in absolute terms. Comparing one country with the entire rest of the world makes international dominance unsurprising. These figures do not establish which population is more likely to participate, or which obtains greater educational benefits.

Also, **Coursera is a broader comparison, not an exact substitute for OCW:** its mix includes paid credentials and degrees. OCW is freely available course material without enrollment, MIT credit, or certificates. [s27.q4cdn.com](#)

U.S. institutional adoption is substantial—but uneven

Individual browsing is only one dimension. U.S. educators also incorporate open resources into existing courses.

Bay View Analytics' 2025 higher education survey, covering more than 3,400 faculty, found:

- **49% used OER in at least one course**, up from 41% the previous year.
- **About one-third used OER as required course materials**, up from 26%.

These figures cover open resources generally, including textbooks; they do not mean half of American professors teach using MIT courses. Nevertheless, they show meaningful adoption within established institutions. [bayviewanalytics.com](#)

The picture is less developed in schools. A separate April 2025 survey of 1,137 U.S. K–12 teachers found **36% were aware of OER**, rising to just under half among teachers in grades 9–12. Awareness is not usage, but this suggests considerable room for expansion. [bayviewanalytics.com](#)

What your Indian article reveals that the numbers miss

Mohammad Imran Khan Mewati's story demonstrates **indirect adoption**. He studied programming through OCW, developed Hindi-language learning tools, shared materials through WhatsApp, helped establish a lab with 15 donated computers, and exchanged resources with a network of more than 1,000 teachers. His students can benefit without ever becoming identifiable MIT users. [Global MIT](#)

The important ingredients are:

Ingredient	Why it matters
A motivated local educator	Someone selects useful knowledge and helps others apply it.
Local language and appropriate learning activities	University material becomes usable for a different audience.
Smartphones, shared computers, and offline access	Participation fits available infrastructure.
A teacher network	One person's learning can spread beyond one classroom.

The article supports this mechanism, but it does not establish its prevalence across India. It also reports better test results without providing a controlled comparison, effect size, or independent evaluation. The network's size does not establish that every teacher adopted his resources.

● International uptake includes organized national systems

India offers evidence beyond individual success stories. Its government reported that, by January 2026, **SWAYAM** had accumulated approximately:

- **58 million course enrollments**
- **5.29 million certifications**
- **More than 4,400 unique courses**
-

Its framework also allows participating higher education institutions to offer up to **40% of a semester's courses through SWAYAM**. That is a policy allowance, not evidence that institutions routinely reach that percentage. Enrollments can include multiple courses taken by the same person. static.pib.gov.in

This illustrates a meaningful difference in approach: **India has a national mechanism connecting open online courses to formal academic recognition**. OCW itself supplies educational content without that recognition.

International use also extends well beyond developing countries. MIT's survey identifies Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Egypt, China, Bangladesh, Germany, and the U.K. among its ten most represented locations. MIT's impact reporting documents uses ranging from physics study in Spain to translations for Ukrainian learners and career development involving learners from Serbia and Togo. These examples establish diversity of use, not national adoption rates. [MIT OpenCourseWare News](#)

● Does this make technology an “equalizer”?

It can equalize access to excellent content. It does not automatically equalize the ability to benefit from it.

An older MIT–Harvard study of 68 MOOCs, using 2012–2014 data, found that more advantaged young people were more likely to enroll and succeed. That is historical evidence, not a current adoption estimate, but it identifies a persistent design challenge: free content alone does not supply preparation, time, encouragement, or instructional support. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)

Mewati’s story is compelling because he supplies several of those missing supports.

The teacher, adaptation, equipment, and sharing network are part of the intervention.

■ What I would take from this for PSA

My judgment is that the most useful opportunity is **turning abundant open content into supported local learning**.

A small rural education experiment could combine selected open materials, a local teacher or facilitator, AI assistance for explanations and practice, and concrete projects. It should measure demonstrated learning, continued participation, and teacher reuse—not simply registrations or video views.

The question worth testing is whether that combination can help people who currently struggle to benefit from online resources. Your article offers a promising model for that experiment; it does not yet prove the outcome at scale.