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# VISUALIZING LIBRARY SERVICES IN 2030 (NWVLS 2030)

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Editors: Prof. B. Ramesh Babu, Dr. I. Azariah Jeba Kumar



*[Signature]*  
Principal  
St. Xavier's College of Education  
(Autonomous)  
Palayamkottai - 627002

Department of Library Services  
Christian Medical College,  
Vellore - 632 004, Tamil Nadu, India



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Principal

St. Xavier's College of Education  
(Autonomous)

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## OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) INITIATIVES IN INDIA: IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Dr. Ravi Kumar Kennedy,**

I St. John's College, Palayamkottai – 627 002

E-mail: i.r.k.kennedy1996@gmail.com

**Tamilarasan, T .Research Scholar,**

DLIS, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar

E-Mail: ttarasan4@gmail.com

**Dr. Raja, T**

Principal, St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous),

Palayamkottai E-Mail: rajathangiah@gmail.com

Principal

St. Xavier's College of Education

(Autonomous)

Palayamkottai - 627002

### Introduction

UNESCO (2013) defines that, Open Educational Resources (OERs) are any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them. OERs range from textbooks to curricula, syllabi, Lecture notes, assignments, projects, audio, video and animation". Hewlett Foundation defines that "Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others".

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) "Digitised materials offered freely and openly for educational purposes, and self-learners to use and. teaching, learning and research. OER includes learning content, software development, use, and distribute content, and implementation of resources such as open licences. Over the last two decades OER movement in India and Asian countries are very significant. This paper analyzing the OER initiatives in India



Advantages of Using OER, Barrier on Using OER, Impact of Higher Education on using OER.

### **Origin of OER**

In 1999, University of Tübingen (Germany) and The Open University (UK) released some OER courses free of cost to the academic community. In the year 2002, Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (USA) released 32 courses with open licenses. UNESCO in 2002 convened the Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries, where the term OER

was coined. The Cape Town Open Education Declaration (2008) and the Paris OER Declaration (2012) provided guidelines and encouragement for governments to release educational resources especially those created using public funding with open licences. In later, national policy of OER framed by some countries such as USA, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Poland, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In 2013, Antigua and Barbuda adopted an OER policy within the framework of its national policy on information and communication technology (ICT) in education. In 2014, the National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT) in India adopted an open licence policy.

### **OER Initiatives in India**

A-VIEW (Amrita Virtual Interactive e-Learning World) It is developed by Amrita Vishwa Vidhyapeetham, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), and funded by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under the Indian Government's National Mission for Education using Information and Communication Technology (NME-ICT). It was an award winning indigenously built multi-modal, multimedia e-learning platform that provides an immersive e-learning experience.



nence that is almost as good as a real classroom experience. It is along with various other projects in Virtual Labs, Haptics and Natural Language Processing. A-VIEW is now deployed at several IITs, NITs and other leading educational institutions across the nation.

### **Flexilearn**

IGNOU has recently introduced its New Portal called Flexilearn –<http://www.ignouflexilearn.ac.in>. Prospective students can now log on to Indira Gandhi National Open University's (IGNOU) Flexi-Learn, to pick the subject of their choice and gain education free of cost. Flexi-Learn provide free and easy access to IGNOU's courses. It integrates free learning resources with learning management systems for anyone who wants to learn, whatever their educational needs and experience. In addition, the platform provides a self-learning environment with a list of Academic Advisors/ Course guides to act as mentors. The Personal Learning Environment (PLE) also have an interactive tools like Discussion Boards, Blogs, Wikis, podcasting, RSS Feeds etc.

### **NPTEL**

The National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) was initiated by seven Indian Institutes of Technology (Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras, Guwahati and Roorkee) along with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in 2003. Five core disciplines were identified, namely, civil engineering, computer science and engineering, electrical engineering, electronics and communication engineering and mechanical engineering and 235 courses in web/video format were developed in this phase. The main goal of NPTEL Phase II (2009-14) was to build on the engineering and core science courses launched previously in NPTEL Phase I. An additional 600 web and video courses were created in all major branches of engineering, physical sciences at the undergraduate



and postgraduate levels and management courses at the post-graduate level.

## SWAYAM

SWAYAM platform is indigenously developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with the help of Microsoft and would be ultimately capable of hosting 2000 courses and 80000 hours of learning: covering school, undergraduate, post-graduate, engineering, law and other professional courses. Its aim to achieve the three cardinal principles of Education Policy viz., access, equity and quality. The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching learning resources to all, including the most disadvantaged. SWAYAM seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy. The courses hosted on SWAYAM are in 4 quadrants – (1) video lecture, (2) specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed (3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and (4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts. They are AICTE for self-paced and international courses, NPTEL for engineering, UGC for non technical post-graduation education, CEC for under-graduate education, NCERT & NIOS for school education, IGNOU for out of the school students, IIMB for management studies and NITTE for Teacher Training programme

## SHAKSHAT

SAKSHAT is envisaged as one stop education portal to facilitate lifelong learning of the students, teachers and those in employments or in pursuit of knowledge free of cost. The portal is expected to be the main delivery platform for the contents developed under the National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT). Sakshat integrates all the contents developed



under the Mission and also provides Mission related information and to facilitate public scrutiny, feedback and transparency for the projects undertaken by the Mission. Sakshat portals provides e-content through Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), 77 Post Graduate subject course materials from e-PGpathsala , Engineering and Media e-content from NPTEL and others.

### **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS-OER)**

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) initiated Open Educational Resources (OER) specifically for Vocational programmes to be offered at Secondary and Sr. Secondary (+2) levels, including stand alone programmes, in partnership with state level institutions and organizations. These educational resources will not only be beneficial for the students pursuing their studies through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system at school level, but also accessible to millions of learners interested in development of their skills in various vocations. This will also help in vocationalization of the curriculum at Secondary and Sr. Secondary levels in the country. It was around 3000 open educational resources available in the portal. It was funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

### **OSCAR Project**

The main goal of Project OSCAR (Open Source Courseware Animations Repository) has to build a large repository of web-based, interactive animations and simulations, referred to as learning objects (LOs), for teaching and learning concepts in science and technology. These could be useful not only for a classroom environment but also to enable independent learning and distance education. The current goal is to develop LOs for topics in various subjects at the Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels. An auxiliary goal of Project OSCAR is to provide training opportunities to students in



developing LOs, managing the back-end of the repository, and conducting educational research. It was funded by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay. More than 700 animations and learning objects are available in the project blog.

### **National Digital Library (NDL)**

The National Digital Library (NDL) under the NMEICT has taken up a mammoth task of collating and harvesting all the digitized and digital content available across the educational institutions in the country and indexing and hosting them in the National Digital Library Server to facilitate search and access to open content through single window. The National Digital library of India is a project under Ministry of Human Resource Development, India. It's object is to integrate several national and international digital libraries in one single web-portal. The NDLI provides free of cost access to many books in English and the Indian languages. It was covered 25,323,340 open resources including 7 lakhs books available in the application portal.

### **Advantages on Using OER**

- Students anywhere in the world can access OERs at any time, and they can access the material repeatedly.
- OERs are easy to distribute with little or no cost.
- OERs can supplement textbooks and lectures where deficiencies in information's are evident.
- Information may be disseminated rapidly (especially when compared to information published in textbooks or journals, which may take months or even years to become available).
- Quick availability of material may increase the timeliness and/or relevance of the material being presented.



- A wide audience may learn of faculty research interests and expertise. Potential students and donors may be impressed, and student and faculty recruitment efforts may be enhanced.
- OERs provide an excellent way for alumni to stay connected to the institution and continue with a program of lifelong learning.
- Knowledge of user needs.
- Knowledge of usage levels amongst various user groups.
- The characteristics of organisations successfully using OER.
- A knowledge of and compliance with standards.
- The range of technological assets required to benefit from OER.
- open education will reduce the gap between different strata of society and countries, improve the quality of education, accelerate the knowledge flow and increase the number of people involved in the educational process (mostly informal and lifelong). From its definition stems that OER can be used, reused, edited, remixed and repurposed without restrictions
- students are exposed to different educational resources that are in accordance with their learning style, learners become more active participants in educational process through a collaboration in virtual communities of learning, teachers can compare their own teaching materials with other teachers all around the world
- Students can try the course before signing up;
- Flexible study time not bound by weekly timetables or semester



- Students work at their own pace;
- Access to huge amount of study materials;
- Intellectual capital is available for reuse.
- Keeping in mind this open environment, OER are a significant component of making open education possible. As we have seen from the preceding definitions,
- Are digital (also non-digital), accessible through the Internet and not bound geographically;
- Allow access to huge amounts of data and information through OER Repositories.

### **Barriers in Using OER**

- Copyright issues
- Finding open educational resources
- Assessing the credibility of open educational resources
- Setting up the infrastructure (hardware, software and smart classrooms)
- Gathering, organizing and maintaining the digital materials
- Importing the resources in to a course website
- Economic issues
- Lack of awareness
- Language and cultural barriers
- Lack of quality assessments

### **Impact on Higher Education**

The last two decades, has seen a rapid increase in the provision of higher education in almost all parts of the Asian countries. Over the last decade, especially in the last five years, rapidly increase the usage of open educational resources.



higher education. Government of India promotes various schemes under NMEICT project. Towering over these initiatives is the NME-ICT, launched in 2009, and its Web portal — Sakshat — that provides one-stop access to e-content, e-journals and e-books. In addition, the National Educational Foundation, under the aegis of the National Knowledge Commission, seeks to develop web-based open resources. OER has limitless potential to expand knowledge among lifelong learners around the world. Believing in the capacity of OER, the reach and impact of open courseware needs to be extended by encouraging the adoption and adaptation of open educational materials around the world. In India, we still in the nascent stages of using OER. The high growth of production and acquisition of open educational resources initiatives in India should reached the academic community and curriculum needs of the academicians in the field of agriculture, teacher training, basic and applied sciences and engineering, technical education, liberal arts and social sciences, communication skills, ethics and values, public health, and high end skills including management.

### Conclusion

This article finds the predominant role of open educational resources (OER) in the 21st century, rapid growth of OER initiatives in India and biggest contribution to the higher education sector. The authors find the OER initiatives in India, growth of OER in the last decade, increasing the higher education enrolment ratio through OER courses. This paper also finds some technical barriers to accessing the OER. The government sector and higher education department should initiate some steps to clear the technical barriers and accessing the OER easily by the academic community.



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