

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) SIGNIFICANCE AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

In the new globalized world order of today, ICT-enabled Education plays a significant role in any Educational Society. In a society that is increasingly services-sector-oriented, the role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a developmental tool need not be over-emphasized. This is particularly relevant in respect of a developing economy like India striving to become the 'global education hub'. Modern Information Communication Technology (ICT) has penetrated into all areas of people's lives. The teaching community must take ICT into account and use ICT in their teaching-learning process. The role of teachers is now changing and boundaries between him and the student are getting clear that facilitate cooperation. The role of the student is also changing, their role has changed from gaining knowledge to developing practical skills. The new trend of Open Pedagogy using Open Educational Resources is opening new opportunities to both teachers and learners. Open Educational Resources (OER) remove barriers to accessing instructional material. In this paper, the author tries to define Open Educational Resources and their scope in enhancing the teaching-learning process at educational institutions. It also attempts to identify the challenges of OER and its implications on education.

Key words: Open Educational Resources (OER) - OER-enabled pedagogy - Information Communication Technology (ICT)- Educational Technology – Significance and challenges

Introduction

The Internet has made knowledge available to everyone. But it is very unfortunate that there is a section in the digital world to make knowledge a property that can be used like any consumable product. This section of people tries to limit the treasure of knowledge only to those who have access to money. It is a clear case of the commercialization of education. As a reaction to this, a group of people came forward to begin the concept of Open Educational Resources. "OER-enabled pedagogy," is defined as the pedagogical practice that is only possible or practical in using OER resources. The "open" in open educational resources indicates that these materials are having the permission for everyone to participate in the 5R activities - retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute. The 5R permissions are the characteristics of OER.

To Retain – It is the right to make, own, and control copies of the content (e.g., download, duplicate, and manage).

To Reuse - It is the right to use the content in a wide range of ways (e.g., in a class, in a study group, on a website, in a video).

To Revise -It is the right to adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself (e.g., translate the content into another language).

To Remix - It is the right to combine the original or revised content with other material to create something new (e.g., incorporate the content into a mashup).

To Redistribute -It is the right to share copies of the original content, your revisions, or your remixes with others (e.g., give a copy of the content to a friend).

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Open educational resources (OER) are those that are available at little or no cost that can be used for teaching, learning, or research. The term can include textbooks, course readings, and other learning content; simulations, games, and other learning materials that can be used for educational purposes. The term OER generally refers only to digital resources that are used in online or hybrid learning environments. OER content can certainly be used in face-to-face environments as well. Each resource is issued under a license that directs, how it can be used: Some materials may only be used in their original form; in other cases, learning resources can be modified, remixed, and redistributed. OER are generally found in collections or repositories. These can be made by individuals, or a single institution, such as a college or university makes available online. Teachers and individual learners can download OER materials and use them in formal or informal learning situations. Flexibility is the hallmark of OER. They are modular in nature, allowing them to be used in novel combinations to suit particular learning activities. The OER resources are so tractable, that they can be adapted to keep pace not only with new technologies but also with changes to academic disciplines and teaching methods.

One of the longest-running and highest-profile OER initiatives is the Open Course Ware project from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which began in 2002 and today features all of the course materials from roughly 2,000 MIT courses. The Open Course Ware model has been replicated by dozens of colleges and universities around the world, which are putting full course materials online for anyone to use. OER projects use different models for how they function but all endorse the notion that teaching, learning, and research are improved when educational resources are more open and more accessible.

Significance of Open Educational Resources.

OER materials are considered more valuable than other educational resources because educational resources developed in an open environment can be vetted and improved by a broad community of educators. It provides educators with new access to educational material. OER resources have the potential to increase pedagogical innovation, introducing new alternatives for effective teaching. OER has the potential to expose students and teachers to the long tail of content, most of which never finds its way into widespread educational use. The OER resources that can be modified and reused promote collaboration and participation among the users.

Due to copyright restrictions, many of institutions find it hard to develop high-quality learning materials and activities. But OER brings a greater range of tools within reach of more users. OER can also reduce the costs for students to obtain quality educational content. OER and online or hybrid learning are natural partners in efforts that promote developments in educational technology that facilitate new media, new formats, and new means of distribution.

During the Covid 19 pandemic time education was only possible through online mode. In online hybrid education, it is identified the significance of OER materials in the teaching-learning process. A large attempt was made by almost all institutions to make OER materials and share the

same among the students. It was noticed that both teachers and students used OER materials extensively during Covid 19 pandemic time. In Kerala, the Samagra portal created by Kite was providing OER materials extensively to teachers and students. Many of the teaching and learning community used those resources uploaded in the Samagra portal for learning and teaching.

National level

Challenges of Open Educational Resources.

Like all other educational resources, the quality of OER can be uneven and depends largely on its sources. Some OER is simply ineffective in certain times as it is presenting content that may not be valuable. Some of the OER collections do not have a continuous feedback mechanism by which users can share their evaluations about the quality of a resource. The value of educational resources may get depleted without periodic updation. The flip side of the flexibility of open resources is that many need to be adapted for use in a departmental or institutional context to meet local requirements or needs. Some open resources are not useful for users with disabilities. The abundance of OER may leave users spending a long time searching for a resource that fits their needs, and the volume of OER will only increase. OER repositories and the tools to search for and filter resources will need to build out their capacities and capabilities to help instructors and individual learners navigate the sea of open content.

Conclusion

OER is likely to have far-reaching effects on the character of teaching and learning. OER movement will lead to a future in which all of the components of education will be available online for free and learners will have the opportunity to construct a course of study. The OER model for education will persist in a form not wholly different from what it is today, but enhanced with high-quality, open, digital content. OER will give access to educational resources to more learners. In particular non-traditional students will be benefited from open resources because they are available for independent, self-directed study. Open resources are one way to address the increasing costs of education, and they also have the potential to facilitate new styles of teaching and learning.

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