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## Impact of Open Educational Resources on Curriculum Democratization

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### **Abstract:**

Open Educational Resources (OER) are vital for adapting to societal changes and developments. They support the goals of SDG 4 and NEP 2020, providing equal access to students in rural and remote areas. This study explores the impact of OER on curriculum democratization, highlighting their role in promoting pedagogical innovation and educational equity. Utilizing a systematic review of research papers, theses, and journals, the findings indicate that OER significantly contributes to inclusivity, collaboration, lifelong learning, and social justice in education.

**Keywords:** Open Educational Resources, Curriculum Democratization, Equity, Inclusive Education.

### **Introduction:**

Though education has been declared equal for all through policy-making across the globe, it hasn't been fully implemented yet. Rigid curriculum, expensive books, geographical location, and lack of funds are pushing continuous education away from the common people. Open Educational Resources is one of the most significant innovations of the modern era, allowing individuals from anywhere in the world to access, modify, and share education. Not only researchers and teachers, but students also benefit from this facility. Open Educational Resources make the education system more democratic, accessible, participatory, and inclusive, thereby implementing the objectives of NEP 2020 and SDG 4. Open Educational Resources typically includes textbooks, study notes, educational video lectures, and online courses, making it easily accessible to teachers and students.

The utilization of OER is especially significant amid growing classroom diversity and the worldwide movement for inclusive education. Educators encounter the difficulty of creating curricula that address the linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic diversity of their students (Adhikari and Paria, 2025). Open Educational Resources (OER) enable teachers to adopt creative approaches in teaching. Through these resources, students from diverse cultural, economic, and social backgrounds can easily understand the subject matter. OER helps to remove various barriers in education, such as linguistic, cultural, and economic constraints. It also fosters creativity among students and makes them more active participants in the learning process. By providing access to new and diverse content, learners can interact with the subject matter more effectively. As a result, learner-centered education, inclusive lifelong learning, and curriculum democratization are promoted.

### **Review of Related Literature:**

OER offers a strong route to democratize education and create an equitable, learner-focused digital future (Adhikari, G., & Paria, M. 2025). OERs help students by learning remotely, without any cost and can also get certification. However, there are also some challenges that hinders the learning process. By overcoming these challenges, it is possible to make education available for all (Yadav, A. 2024). OERs could bring incremental changes in the learning by the students, and it is gender unbiased. It could be

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used by learners of different learning levels, to support self-paced learning (Lalith Prasad, C. S. 2024).

Small-scale Professional Development cannot combat barriers like digital and information literacy that impede engagement in Open Educational Practice efficiently and this may ultimately prohibit its sustainability in secondary contexts (Arispe, K., Hoye, A., & Palmer, K. 2023). OER adoption provides stakeholders with a wide range of educational resources, allows content personalization, promotes active and self-directed learning, expands knowledge paradigms, fosters a culture of knowledge sharing, is cost-effective, increases collaboration and innovation, and improves teachers' pedagogy (Saikia, S. 2023). OER courseware is more effective for enhancing academic performance and teaching competency of prospective teachers than the conventional teaching method (Ashalatha, S. 2023).

Previous studies indicate that Open Educational Resources (OER) significantly reduce the economic burden on both teachers and students. Additionally, individuals from any part of the world can access the same content freely without any cost. However, some research findings reveal that both teachers and students face various challenges related to Open Educational Resources adoption like institution barriers, lack of infrastructure and teacher digital literacy gap. However, limited studies directly examine OER as a mechanism for curriculum democratization, especially through pedagogical practices.

#### Impact of Open Educational Resources (OER) on Curriculum Democratization:

##### **Reduce Curriculum Development related Barriers:**

Students differ from one another in terms of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, even though curricula are designed keeping this diversity in mind, various challenges arise during their implementation in practice. In this context, Open Educational Resources (OER) play a significant role. Through OER, both teachers and students gain easy access to a wide range of quality learning materials, which makes the curriculum more democratic, relevant.

##### **• Encourage Pedagogical Innovation:**

After accessing high-quality study materials from OER, teachers first retain and revise them. Then, they reuse and remix the content and redistribute it to students in new and creative ways. This process fosters pedagogical innovation among teachers. It shifts education from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach, thereby promoting learner-centered education.

##### **• Promote Life-Long Learning:**

Instead of memorizing textbook content line by line in formal education, learners use open access resources to solve problems on their own in an informal way. This

empowers each learner and supports lifelong learning, ultimately leading to democratic education.

##### **Support Inclusivity and Equity:**

Since educational materials can be accessed freely, the financial burden on both teachers and students is significantly reduced. Those who belong to rural areas and economically disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain greater access to educational opportunities. As a result, the education system becomes more inclusive and equitable, which supports a democratic curriculum.

##### **Challenges in Using OER:**

Just as everything has its positive aspects, it also has some negative sides. Similarly, teachers and students face several challenges while using Open Educational Resources (OER).

##### **Increase Health Issue:**

Excessive and ineffective use of Open Educational Resources (OER) can lead to several health issues among teachers and students. In most cases, problems such as eye strain and headaches are commonly observed. As a result, many individuals prefer traditional books over digital resources.

##### **Digital Divide:**

The use of Open Educational Resources (OER) requires proper infrastructure. In developing countries like India, such infrastructure is often lacking in many areas. Particularly in rural regions, internet connectivity is often poor. As a result, not everyone is able to benefit from OER, which leads to a digital divide.

##### **• Infodemics:**

In the age of social media, content creation has become a profession for many people. Amid such an abundance of resources, it is not easy to distinguish which information is accurate and which is not. Therefore, users of Open Educational Resources (OER) need to remain aware and ensure that they learn from reliable information, while also spreading awareness among others.

##### **• License and copyright Issue:**

The RoMEO analysis came to the conclusion that research articles are better protected by copyright law than most academics need. This illustrated the necessity for academic institutions to provide instructors and researchers with training on copyright law. To address this issue, open content licenses were created, which allow for restricted sharing while retaining certain author rights (Tandel, 2024).

##### **Suggestions:**

- Teachers need to be provided with proper training on Open Educational Resources (OER).

- Proper infrastructure needs to be developed so that students in rural areas can access Open Educational Resources (OER).
- Open Educational Resources (OER) should be made accessible to everyone, including children with disabilities, and it should also be developed in local languages.
- Proper awareness should be created among Open Educational Resources (OER) users so that they can access authentic and reliable resources.

### **Conclusion:**

OER offers a strong route to democratize education and create an equitable, learner focused digital future (Adhikari & Paria, 2025). Open Educational Resources (OER) not only promote curriculum democratization but also emphasize learner-centered education. They empower teachers and encourage them to adopt creative teaching methods. OER also helps reduce literacy gaps among students and enables them to actively participate in various learning activities, leading to self-directed learning. Open Educational Resources (OER) play a crucial role in transforming teacher-centered education into learner-centered education. Learners can study from home and access educational content from any part of the world, which helps reduce barriers to learning and promotes wider access to education. While in earlier times not everyone had the opportunity to receive education, in the present era OER has brought education within everyone's reach. OER not only supports the cognitive development of learners but also contributes to their holistic development. Students can learn at their own pace and access the works of renowned scholars from across the globe. Through collaboration, they can also share and distribute their knowledge with others. As a result, education becomes more culturally responsive and inclusive. In conclusion, Open Educational Resources play a significant role in making the education system more inclusive, participatory, equitable, accessible, and in promoting curriculum democratization.

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