

National Consultative Meet on OER Policy for Higher Education in India
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A Few Reflections on OER Policy Framework

By

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➤ **Policy is essential**

System based and policy based responses are necessary to address the phenomenal changes that are taking place in the world of education. Open Educational Resources (OER) as 'public good' needs a public policy to support, facilitate and regulate its development and use. Policy - a series of steps to be taken to achieve the goal-provides a legitimate basis for action and helps in taking integrated view and actions to realise the full potential of OER.

➤ **OER policy to address the challenges of education**

Access, equity and quality are the major concerns of higher education in India. The ways and means of addressing these concerns by OER should form an important component of OER policy. Many international studies have indicated that reducing the costs of curriculum development and improving the quality of teaching and learning are the two major concerns in the use of OER (G.Dhanarajan (Ed.) 2016, OER: Vignettes of Selected Asian Experiences). The vision, mission and scope of OER policy should bring conceptual clarity on OER and many other types of open movements like open practices, open infrastructure, open culture and similar others.

➤ **OER policy at national and institutional levels**

Individuals, institutions and education system are the reference units of national OER policy. The inclusive national policy may take note of multiple uses and forms of OER. The use of OER in formal and non-formal systems have to be integrated in the national OER policy. The diversity and complexity are the important features of higher education in India. The institutions are in different stages of development. They may have to be encouraged to develop institutional OER policies appropriate to their context. It may be desirable to develop OER maturity matrix of three stages i.e., low, medium and high and the institutions may be encouraged to move from one level to other (like in Open Educational Quality Initiative, OPAL, www.oer-quality.org). The national OER policy may provide a framework for development of institutional OER policies.

➤ **Rational approach to OER policy**

Effective and efficient ways of achieving goals is a rational approach. Public policy making should move from 'arrangement focused' approach to 'realisation focused' approach. The arrangement focused view is more abstract and general in contrast to realisation focused view which is more operational and specific.

➤ **Dynamic Policy**

The policy should include the process of policy review and provisions for incorporation of necessary policy changes as responses to changes in context.

➤ **Learning from experiences and addressing apprehensions**

The Indian experiences in OER practices deserve critical reflection to get inputs for policy. Contradictions in the education context like knowledge in public domain for free use and management of education in private domain; OER without open educational practices; practices of recognition of individual excellence; competition among public institutions for scarce resources may be taken note in policy formulation of OER. The policy as an action guide will have relevance only if it can provide a broad way forward in the use, development and regulation of OER, in this complex higher education scenario.