Role of Libraries in Promoting the Use of Open Education Resources (OER) in India: A Study of NPTEL Resources and Major Technology Libraries

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The number of higher educational Institutions in India is growing steadily. Institutions imparting higher education in science and technology, particularly the ones setup up by Government of India as Institutes of national importance has almost doubled during last one decade. This development is a part of the national strategy to increase the capacity building in the S & T area. In order to support this major initiative, the eight major Institutes of national importance viz Indian Institute of Technology located in different parts of country and the Indian Institute of Science with support from Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Govt. of India, have initiated a major collaborative project called National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) in 2003. The major objective of this programme is to develop high quality video & web based courses, each covering 40-45 lectures, delivered by well-known faculty members from the eight participating Institutes in the respective areas and make all these freely available to large number of students and teachers in India who are not able have access to quality teaching materials & education. As a result of this initiative, we have now over 125 web based courses and over 135 video based courses in the major engineering disciplines available in open access domain for any one and every one to access both within and outside India. This is number will further grow in due course. Over 800 + Institutions in India are registered and regular users of these Open Education Resources. This has created a major impact on S & T education in India.

For the successful utilization of these valuable resources at the national level, several Institutions and communities have worked together. Among them and quite understandably, the librarians’ community
has also played a vital role by promoting the use of these resources within their respective Institutions. This study (using a survey method) being undertaken by the authors focuses on what and how are the different & creative methods of librarianship, the librarians have used to enhance the usage of these resources (courses) in order to make these resource so popular and useful among the student community. This study is based on the data being collected from over 50 major Technology Institutes’ Libraries in India. It is hoped that, the methods so successfully used by the Librarians in these Institutes to promote and guide the usage will be useful to Librarians in other part of the world.