

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN PROMOTING AWARENESS OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

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Introduction

The world we live in is in a state of constant change. Changes are experienced over a significant period in our lives. Due to covid pandemic technological change has become unavoidable. Though readers are reading books, journals etc. they had to shift to e reading. As the reader is not approaching the library, library has to be made available at the doorstep of the reader. Physically taking the library to the reader may be possible in a limited way, but the vast amount of content available in the digital form can temporarily replace the need to be physically serving the needs of the reader. The librarians have to motivate readers to use e resources and provide them with requisite knowhow about available e resources and especially the Open Education Resources (OER) to the students and faculty alike.

While performing these tasks, the librarian felt the need to evaluate the existing awareness about different OERs available to the community so that efforts could be directed in appropriate manner. This paper presents the findings of a nationwide survey of OER awareness conducted by the Librarian, Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's Smt. Surajba College of Education and the Librarian of Lords College of Education. The survey was administered through an online questionnaire using Google Forms and was responded by about 500 participants all over the country. The respondents included students and faculty members of different colleges and universities in India.

What is OER?

Open Educational Resources are defined as "technology-enabled, open provision of educational resources for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes". They are typically made freely available over the Web or the Internet.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are those teaching and learning materials that are available to anyone free of cost and under an open license to allow others to retain, reuse, revise, remix and redistribute them with few or no restrictions.

The term Open Educational Resources first came into use at a conference hosted by UNESCO in 2002, defined as "the open provision of educational resources, enabled by information and communication technologies, for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes" (Johnstone, 2005). The definition of OER now most often used is: "open educational resources are digitized materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research.

What does it include?

1. Open course ware
2. Open textbooks
3. Open learning
4. Stakeholders

What activities does it include?

1. Retain
2. Reuse
3. Revise
4. Remix
5. Redistribute

Advantages

1. Low cost -OER are mostly freely available so anybody anywhere any place any time readers can use OERS.
2. Readers can pick and choose required information from each source
3. It is a potential way to bridge gap between formal and non formal education.

Disadvantages

1. 1.Lack of standard licence is one of the challenges that OER face.
2. 2.Quality of material is questionable because that can be created by anyone.
3. 3.Few technological issues can be faced by users e.g. Internet issue, low internet bandwidth

Few higher education initiatives taken by India

1. IGNOU
2. NDLI
3. NPTEL
4. E-PATHSHALA
5. SWAYAM

Review of literature

Vivien R Ol states in his paper Open educational resources: staff attitudes and awareness states ere is a positive collegiate culture within the faculty, and overcoming the lack of awareness and dismantling the barriers to sharing will help advance the open educational practices, benefitting faculty, staff and community.

Jenny Haymann in his research paper titles Awareness and use oER open educational resources in Ontario: preliminary study of post-secondary Educator perspective states that respondents are familiar with concepts and practices use of OER as part of their course.

Deshmukh Umesh states in Open Education resources and the role of librarian that OER is very encouraging trend as a librarian who are custodian of information are highly aware of OER even though it is new concept in the field of library and information science.

Open Educational Resources: Role of Librarians by Meghana Sanjiva and Dr Sushma Poudwal,

Librarians have taken some steps in integrating OER into the library collection and services. Much, however, needs to be done like creating metadata and adding them to the E-resource collection.

Objectives of the Survey

1. To find out familiarity among readers about open educational resources?
2. To explore level of information literacy needed to be delivered by library professionals regarding awareness OER users.

Rational

During covid period, when face to face teaching is not possible, OERs are very useful. OERs are playing significant role in open and distance learning. Specially during the pandemic situation, the researcher found great need of awareness of OERs among users. So to understand knowledge of readers regarding the OERs was very essential. The findings would help the librarian develop his information literacy programme. Following key elements were observed interacting with the students and faculty members

- Lack of preparation time: Teachers have not prepared their learning content to adapt to online learning, and preparing such content takes time. Similarly, several universities and schools have not improved their online learning environments to support this kind of learning experience.
- Teacher/learner isolation: In this first-ever application of pure long-term online learning (without face-to-face learning or blended learning), both teachers and learners should not feel that they are left alone during the teaching and learning processes.
- Need for effective pedagogical approaches: New effective pedagogical approaches are needed to keep learners motivated and engaged during this long period of online learning,
- To help overcome the problem of limited time to prepare online learning content, teachers should make use of the thousands of open educational resources (OER).

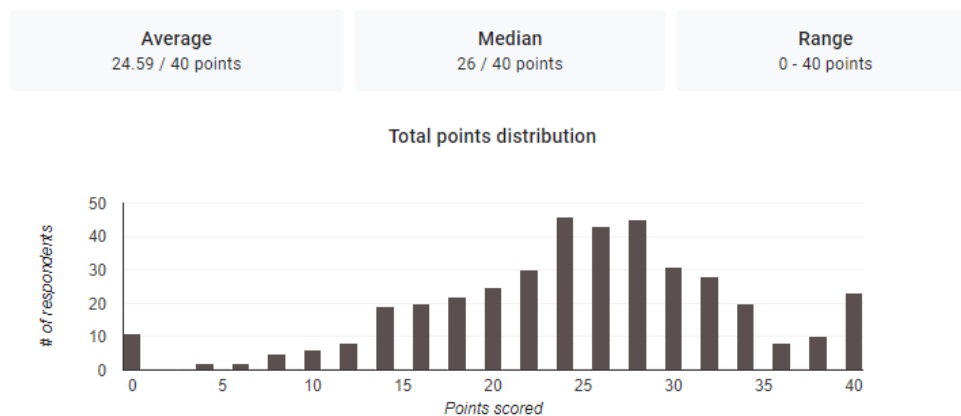
This situation required researcher to understand familiarities of OER among reader spread all over India. As a librarian, actions needed to be taken for motivating for the same.

Methodology

An online, nationwide quiz was launched to students, researchers and faculty members of various colleges and university using google forms as a tool. The quiz contained 25 multiple choice questions to understand the awareness and depth of knowledge about OERs in the academic community. The quiz was subjected to reliability and validity before it was launched. The responses were analysed using capability of spreadsheets and inferences drawn from the analysis.

Data Analysis

Of the total respondents, it was observed that 29% respondents scored below average on a point scale of 0 to 40 marks. It was encouraging to see that 71 % of the respondents scored above average indicating significant awareness about OERs.



Score Range					
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	Total
No of Respondents	26	94	195	99	414
	6.28%	22.71%	47.10%	23.91%	

It was also observed that the respondents were aware of different OERs available to them, it was not complete. Further, there was a little bit of confusion with regards to the right source for a specific information, article, thesis etc. The librarians would do well in exploring different OERs for the specific needs of their faculty and students and propagate the relevant information to their community members. Conducting such awareness sessions and refreshing the knowledge at regular frequency could be an approach that the librarians should take.

Role Of Librarian

Librarian should familiarise with all OER terms and he should educate readers about this information. Librarians should play following roles regarding OER.

- Discover OER- He should motivate faculty members to write and generate and share material in OER which will be very useful to the students. Material should be related their syllabus.
- Promotion of OER- Librarian should orient readers about content and use of OER. He can use blogs, facebook, twitter but best way is to use library website. Librarian can give assignments based on OER. Librarian can render selection dissemination service with the USE of OER. EG FOR PhD students can use this OER for their research.
- Manage OER-This is a new role of librarian. To manage OER means, help in meta data, develop subject based guides, managing intellectual property rights, informing proper licensing
- 4.Use of OER-Librarian can conduct sessions of use of OER under umbrella of Information literacy programme. He can assign work and he can motivate readers to use OER.

Conclusion

The global education community continues to face the major challenge of providing interactive and motivating educational experience during school and university closure. In this special situation, Open Educational resources are very useful. To familiarize these sources to readers is major role expected by librarian. Librarian should explore, propagate, keep users updated and then motivate the users to use relevant databases as well as create and share the information to users.

REFERENCES

1. Benny, L. (2015). Selection and acquisition of e-resources in academic libraries: Challenges. *International Journal of digital library services*, 5(2), 124-137