

WORKSHOP ON OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT



15th to 18th October, 2014
Hotel Nakshatra, Guwahati



Organized by
Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
In Association With
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University



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Background

The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) organised the workshop on "Open Educational Resources (OER) for Development" as part of the research entitled "Teachers' Attitudes, Motivations and conceptions of Quality and Barriers to Open Educational Resources in India" supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada to strengthen south-south cooperation on development and use of OER. This was one of the four workshops to provide orientation to teachers about OER and to collect data for research study in both qualitative and quantitative manner. Hence, nature of this research workshop was participative and focused on assessing constructs of the research apart from providing basic introduction to OER. The four day workshop was planned for university teachers to assist them to understand history and development of OER and enable them to relate the need of OER in their work setting.

The development of Open Educational Resources is increasingly being felt as a necessity in the emerging knowledge scenario at both global and local level. Teachers are the experts and the content creators/ managers for OER. Thus, ascertaining and assessing attitude and motivation of the teaching community toward OER are pre-requisites for development of OERs.

CEMCA research team conducted the second workshop from 15th to 18th October, 2014 at Guwahati hosted by the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), Guwahati – the youngest open university in India (at the time of research) located at the North-East of India and offers courses only through distance mode. Thirty teachers (26 from KKHSOU and 4 from Institute of Distance and open Learning (IDOL), Guwahati University) participated in the workshop. These participants were requested to complete a survey, but only selected teachers were interviewed for collecting in-depth qualitative data on the issues related to the research. List of participants of the workshop is given at Annexure 1.

Objectives of the Workshop

The main objective of the workshop was to facilitate the research and collect both qualitative and quantitative data to examine teachers' attitudes, their motivations and barriers related to creation and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and to analyze their perception of quality of OER. However, other objectives of the workshop were to:

- Assist the participants to understand history and development of OER; and
- Enable the participants to relate the need of OER in their work environment and facilitate appreciation of the importance of open license in educational materials.

Hence, as a research and development workshop, it was designed to provide basic understanding of OER to all participants and explain different parameters concerning OER through different sessions based on activities related to attitude,

motivation, barriers and quality to collect the data. The programme schedule of workshop is given at Annexure II.

Inaugural Session



The inaugural session commenced with a welcome address by Sh. R. B. Mahanta, Registrar of KKHSOU who outlined the importance of the workshop. He also highlighted that the workshop on Open Education Resources is the first of its kind in the entire North-East India. He mentioned about the fruitful association of KKHSOU and CEMCA towards spreading open and distance learning in the region. He expressed hope that the workshop would help the participants in understanding the concept of Open Educational Resources and contribute towards this upcoming field.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA presented the overall framework of the workshop. He discussed the themes, tasks and activities that would be taken up in the course of the workshop. With a reference to the on-going project, he outlined the basic objectives of the workshop as to understand how teachers in higher education engage with OER. He also mentioned that the workshop also would serve as an instrument to gather data for the on-going research project apart from providing basic knowledge about OER to teachers.

In his inaugural speech, Prof. Srinath Baruah, hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of KKHSOU outlined the role of the workshop in popularising OER in the region. He also mentioned a few important international initiatives, like the initiative taken by UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for its wider publicity. In making a strong case for OER, Prof. Baruah stressed on the fact that since we make use of government funds to prepare educational resources, these should be made available freely to the public. It will also help the teachers to improvise their writing skills and expand their knowledge horizon.

DAY 1: 15th October 2014

First Session: Introduction

The inaugural session was followed by an introductory presentation on OER by Dr. R.C. Sharma, Resource Person. The session mainly focused on introducing all the participants to OER and emphasised on providing quality materials which could be introduced through OER.



In the context of OER, he explained the meaning of 'Open' in OER and other related terms such as Open Access, Open Content, Open CourseWare, Open Source Software, and Open Education. While tracing the historical evolution of OER, Dr Sharma enumerated the history and evolution of OER in the world. Deliberating on the factors that helped in the growth of OER, Dr Sharma pointed out to four factors, viz., (a) Change in Philosophy (Social factor), (b) Affordability of the internet (Technological factor), (c) A range of financial models (Financial factor) and (d) Alternative copyright or licensing (Legal). However these factors are interlinked and have been found to influence one another.

Discussing the benefits of OER, Dr Sharma mentioned that OER content is open for all. In this context, he mentioned the five R's of OER, put forward by David Wiley- *Reuse, Revise, Remix, Redistribute and Retain*.

Second Session: Just A Minute

In continuation to the discussion about OER, a just-a-minute (JAM) session for data collection on attitude towards OER was organised, where an active interaction took place. This was an instant response session where the participants were given only one minute to respond to their first impression about being positive or negative towards OER. The participants were given one minute to respond to the question, 'I am positive or negative about OER because'. Most of the participants were positive about OER with some apprehensions. Common responses include free to access, quality material, global reach, beyond conventional barriers like financial, cultural and geographical, meets the need of aspirant learners, enhanced self-learning, multi-format availability, sharing of knowledge etc. A few of the apprehensions expressed by the participants were like no control over validity and quality of content. Only one participant expressed negatively about OER owing to the observations that the open content availability would promote plagiarism.

Third Session: Demonstration of OER Projects and Searching

The first day concluded with third session on the demonstration of OER projects and searching for OER content where various websites were presented, through which one can search OER in any field. Both advanced Google search and specific directory search were demonstrated.

DAY 2: 16th October 2014

Fourth Session: Copyrights and Open License

The second day started with the recap of the first day activities and discussions. Subsequently, Dr R. C. Sharma started the fourth session on introduction to copyrights and open licenses. He went on to explain the meaning of copyright and defined it as a collection of exclusive rights given by law to the author/creator of a work. Any work which is not an exact copy of someone else's work can be copyrighted. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, only expression of ideas is copyrighted.

Dr Sharma further said that both copyright and Creative Commons licensing are based on fair use policy. He added that Creative Commons Licensing policy is based on three layers of licensing- Legal code, Commons code and Digital code.

Besides, discussions on types of knowledge and knowledge commons were also held. A basic question raised by him in this regard was: *who owns knowledge?* He explained that researchers stand on the shoulders of the giants. Previous research is necessary for new research. In the similar line of argument, he said that knowledge is free, but information is not. He then differentiated between explicit (know what) and tacit (know how) knowledge.

Fifth Session: Exercise on Open License

To understand Creative Commons licenses and how to use them, exercise on open license was conducted. The six license types were further discussed with the help of two case studies in an interactive manner, where the participants worked on the cases in groups and presented their results for discussion in the plenary.

Sixth Session: Motivation for OER - Interactive Questions and Answers Session

After a very clear discussion on open licensing, the session on motivation for OER was initiated which was also an interactive question and answers session focusing mainly on few basic questions. On the issue of necessity for a teacher to know about OER, participants opined that the teacher has the responsibility to contribute something which is beneficial for the learners as well as for the community and society. Through OER teachers can help learners in a classroom but can reach more students; it popularises the resources, encourages innovative practices, supplements classroom learning experiences and enhances teachers' role as facilitator of learning. OER was also seen as a medium through which teachers can be more creative and continue to up-grade their skills, knowledge, teaching while maintaining the intellectual rights of other.

Teachers also perceived that OER will help to make their teaching learning interesting, enhance effectiveness of teaching-learning practices; enhances knowledge of teacher; reuse material and save time. The motivation for using and adopting OER in their teaching ranged from ease of accessibility, low cost, improvement in quality and dissemination of knowledge, free from copyright issues and a sense of giving back to the public for using public money. Participants viewed that their university/ institute should provide better infrastructure, support in terms of organising similar workshops and provide time relaxation for involving in OER.

Seventh Session: Group Discussion on Barriers to OER

For the session on barriers to OER participants were grouped into six teams. The exercise started as penning down individually the perceived barriers to OER in ten minutes, followed by discussion with one peer member and subsequently within the whole team in next set of ten minutes each. On the basis of the discussions within the groups one member from each team presented the common barriers to OER listed by them.

Group 1: Barriers to OERs

- Lack of awareness or partial awareness among people
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of confidence or fear of criticism
- Lack of proper infrastructure, geographical and technological factors
- Lack of qualifying criteria for materials to be categorised as OER
- Inhibitions in general regarding the use of licensing and fear of infringement of legal copyrights
- Fear of being dependent on ready-made materials which might lead to intellectual complacency
- Resistance of resource persons to contribute to OER i.e. to upload their materials to Internet for the fear of their original works of being distorted by other users, which may hamper its original quality

Group 2: Barriers to OERs

- Lack of awareness
- Doubts and inhibitions regarding open licensing
- Lack of motivation
- Institutional
- Individual
- Lack of infrastructure facilities
- Changing the traditional mindset

Group 3: Barriers to OERs

- Lack of motivation and awareness
- Physical barriers
 - Lack of infrastructure

- Lack of technical support
- Geographic barriers
- Dilution of quality
 - Wrong concepts, ideas, spellings, mistakes etc.
 - Validity and reliability of the materials are questionable
- Lack of institutional commitment and accountability/ responsibility to make OER
- Mis-use of OER for personal economic gain
- Increases the chances of dependency

Group 4: Barriers to OERs

- Lack of infrastructural facilities i.e. electricity, internet
- Lack of awareness towards OER
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of training and skill development program
- No monetary incentives to the contributors
- Afraid of criticism
- Apprehensions regarding quality control

Group 5: Barriers to OERs

- Technological hindrances
 - Internet connectivity
 - Electricity problem
 - Lack of techno-knowledge
- Lack of positive attitude
 - Awareness level is low in older generation
 - Unwillingness to learn and share
- Quality check mechanism
 - How to determine quality of edited stuff
- Problem of identifying the right material out of the vast repositories of information
- Materials having the most restrictive licenses are themselves barriers

Group 6: Barriers to OERs

- Lack of awareness about OER
- Quality of OER
- Difficult to deal with legal issues
- Expertise on the topic
- No certifying authority

DAY 3: 17th October 2014

Eighth Session: Creating OER (Using Technology)

The third day of the workshop, started with the session, 'creating OER using technology' by Dr R. C. Sharma. During this session various online platforms to host OER were shared. Dr. Sharma provided step-by-step instructions to use WikiEducator and OER commons platforms.

Ninth Session: Panel Discussion on Quality of OER

The ninth session, 'debate on quality of OER' continued with an interesting panel discussion in which the panelists were drawn from the participants themselves. This session had 5 panel members (3 Male and 2 Female Panelists) with Dr Sharma as the moderator.

On the indicators of quality, panelists viewed certain general indicators like accuracy, reputation of the author and the institution, accessibility, fitness of purpose, relevance to local needs as relevant to OER. For quality enhancement steps such as adoption of Multi-disciplinary approaches, peer reviews, sincerity on the part of the author, central monitoring authority were also suggested. The accountability of the quality of OER materials rests equally with authors or content creators, editors and the institution hosting or uploading these resources. Quality was agreed to be indispensable as OER has a wide impact reaching out to a large number of users.

Session Ten: Filling of the Survey Questionnaire

Towards the end of the discussions and the workshop a questionnaire prepared by research team from CEMCA was administered to collect data on attitudes, motivations, conceptions of quality and barriers to OER.

Valedictory Session

Towards the end of the third day a valedictory session took place where Shri Hemanga Kishore Sharma, Education Commissioner, Govt. of Assam, was the chief guest. He discussed the condition of higher education in Assam and assured to use OER in education system of the state for betterment of the education system.



In fact, Shri Sharma expressed the view that in line with the national OER policy designed by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India, the state of Assam should also formulate a State OER Policy. The session ended with the vote of

thanks by Prof. Srinath Baruah (VC- KKHSOU), Rajat Baran Mahanta (Registrar- KKHSOU), Dr. Sanjaya Mishra (Director- CEMCA) and Dr. R. C. Sharma (Resource person of the workshop).

DAY 4: 18th October 2014

Interviews with Selected Participants

Last but not the least, on the fourth day a series of interviews with the selected participants were held by the two Research Associates from CEMCA. The aim of these interview sessions was to collect in-depth qualitative data on aspects of the research parameters using third generation Activity Theory lens.

Annexure I: List of Participants

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Annexure II: Programme Schedule

Timing	Day 1 (15/10/2014)	Day 2 (16/10/2014)	Day 3 (17/10/2014)	Day 4 (18/10/2014)
10:00-10:30	Registration	Recap of Previous Day	Recap of Previous Day	Interviews (6X30 Min)
10:30-11:30	Inauguration of the workshop	Session 4: Copyrights and Open license	Session 8: Creating OER (using technology)	
11:30-12:00	Tea/Coffee break	Tea/Coffee break	Tea/Coffee break	
12:00-13:15	Session 1: Introduction to OER	Session 5: Exercise on Open license	Session 9: Debate on Quality	
13:15-14:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14:30-15:30	Session 2: Just a Minute (JAM) on Attitude towards OER	Session 6: Motivation for OER (Interactive Questions and Answers Session)	Session 10: Filling of the survey questionnaire	
15:30-16:00	Tea/Coffee break	Tea/Coffee break	Tea/Coffee break	
16:00-17:00	Session 3: Demonstration of OER projects and searching	Session 7: Group Discussion on Barriers to OER	Valedictory session	