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# Librarian's Awareness on Open Educational Resources in India

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## Abstract:

Open educational resources (OER) are freely accessible, openly licensed text, media, and other digital assets that are useful for teaching, learning, and assessing, as well as for research purposes. This paper attempts to know the awareness of librarians in higher educational institution's such as professional and academic librarians in different states of India. A survey method was adopted to collect the required primary information. Study found that, 55% of the respondents used the OER available in different websites. Further it is found that, they are using it for updating subject knowledge, teaching and learning and research work. 68% of them felt that they are using OER because of its easy availability in the full text and reliable information and quality of information. Concluded with the note that, library professionals has to make more and more awareness and training about the OER in all the higher educational institutions in India.

**Keywords:** OERs, Open Access Resources, Academic Librarian, Institutions of Higher Learning.

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# OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

## **Introduction:**

The world economy is transforming from an industry- based economy system to a knowledge -based economy. Knowledge based economies in general means “economies that are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information” (OCED, 1996). In this context, knowledge can be considered the most critical means of production, even morecritical than land, labour and capital. “In knowledge society, knowledge has an ultimate economic renewable value; the stock of knowledge is not depleted by use. However, the value of knowledge to an economy comes from sharing it with others” (Brinkley, 2006:5)

Academic libraries play an important role in the scholarly communication system. Since many educational institutions are research-intensive and a library’sprimary mandate is to support the teaching, learning, and research activities of their parent institutions (Jain 2012). In carrying out this mandate, many activities are involved in facilitating access to knowledge. Open Access means accessibility of knowledge and information. Ugwauanyi, et al, (2013)refer that Open Access means accessibility of all kinds of information that is published and can be accessed through the internet free of charge.

## **Open Educational Resources:**

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 digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research”.

"Open Educational Resources (OERs) are any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally and freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them. OERs range from textbooks to curricula, syllabi, lecture notes, assignments, tests, projects, audio, video and animation". (UNESCO)

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research resources released under an open license that permits their free use and reuse by others. OER can be full courses, course materials, lesson plans, open textbooks, learning objects, videos, games, tests, software, or any other tool, material, or technique that supports access to knowledge."- SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition)

In nut shell, Open Educational Resources (OERs) are teaching materials which are publicly available online, including textbooks, lecture notes, assignments, tests, audio, video and animation.

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. To determine the awareness of Librarians about the open educational resources
2. To determine the purpose and reason for using the open educational resources
3. To find out the satisfaction level of users in using the open educational resources

### **Methodology:**

The study intends to measure the awareness about the open educational resources among the Librarians in different colleges in India. We have adopted the survey method through Google forms. The study consists of Librarians only working in various higher education institutions such as Medical, Engineering, University and, Degree Colleges in India. This study is based on primary data which was collected through a questionnaire method from the respondents. A structured questionnaire method was used to collect the data from the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed among the 300 respondents. Out of 300 questionnaires, 212 filled questionnaires were received. The questionnaire contained both open- ended and close-ended questions. The secondary data were collected from print and non-print sources. The collected data were classified, analyzed and tabulated with the help of MS-Excel.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**Table No. 1**  
**Gender of the Respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Male	148(69.81)
Female	64(30.18)

Table No. 1 depicts the gender- wise information of respondents. In this study total of 212 respondents have been covered, in which 69.81% are male respondents (N=148) and, 30.18% are female respondents (N=64). The majority of the respondents are male respondents, which accounts for 70%.

**Table No. 2**  
**Type of the Respondents Institutions**

<b>Type of Colleges</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Degree College	80(37.73)
Engineering College	92(43.39)
Industry	4(1.88)
Medical College	12(5.66)
Polytechnic	4(1.88)
University	20(9.43)

Information about the respondent's belongingness to different higher education institutions is provided in Table No. 2. Among the 212 respondents, 43% of the respondents are from engineering colleges, followed by 38% from the degree colleges, 9.43% of respondents are from the State and Central Universities of different states. The remaining type of colleges such as Medical colleges, polytechnic colleges, and Industry libraries together 9.42%..

**Table No. 3**

**Experience of the Respondents**

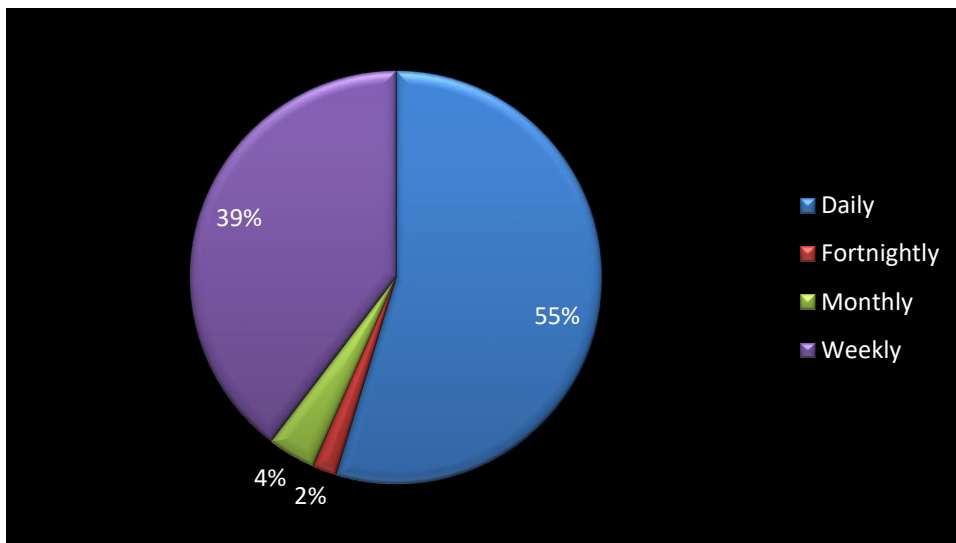
<b>Experience in Number of Years</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
10-15 years	112(52.83)
5-10 Years	72(33.96)
Less than 5 years	24(11.32)
More than 15 Years	4(1.88)

Table No. 3 shows the experience of respondents in using electronic resources. The majority 53% of the respondents have ten to fifteen years of experience in using the electronic resources, followed by five to ten years with 34% and 11% of the respondents have less than five years of experience. Very meagre 2% of the respondents are having an experience of more than fifteen years in using electronic resources.

**Table No. 4**

**Frequency of Use of Open Educational Resources**

<b>Frequency of Use</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Daily	116(54.71)
Fortnightly	4(1.88)
Monthly	8(3.77)
Weekly	84(39.62)



**Figure No.1**

The frequency of use of Open Educational Resources by the respondents is displayed in table no. 4 and figure no.1. It is understood from the table that 55% of the respondents are using the Open Educational Resources daily available on different websites. At the same time, 40% of the respondents are using it on a weekly basis. It is noted here that, almost daily or weekly, all the respondents are using the Open Educational Resources for their users' purpose or for themselves. Very meagre use of OER is found fortnightly and monthly with 2% and 4% of usage respectively.

**Table No. 5**

**Reasons for Using Open Educational Resources**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Availability of Full Text	12(5.66)
Easy availability	48(22.64)
Quality and Reliability of Information	8(3.77)
Above All	144(67.92)

Reasons to use the Open Educational Resources are shown in table no. 5. The majority 68%, of the respondents felt that they are using Open Educational Resources because of its easy availability in full text form and quality and reliable information. 23% of the respondents are opined that its easy availability made them to use Open Educational Resources more. 6% respondents agreed that, availability of full text and followed by quality and reliability of information with 4% made them to use Open Educational Resources.

**Table No. 6**

**Purpose of Use of Open Educational Resources**

<b>Purpose of using OER</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Updating Subject Knowledge	24(11.32)
Teaching/Learning	4(1.88)
Research Work / Writing Articles etc	24(11.32)
Other Academic Activities	8(3.77)
Above All	152(71.69)

Table No.6 depicts the respondents' purpose of using Open Educational Resources, 11% of the respondents said that they are using Open Educational Resources to update their

subject knowledge and for writing articles, and doing their research work. 72% of the respondents informed that they are using it for Updating subject knowledge, teaching and learning, research work, and other academic activity purpose.

**Table No. 7**

**Awareness of the Respondents on Open Educational Portals**

<b>Open Educational Portals</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)	132(62.26)	76(35.84)
Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC)	32(15.09)	20(9.43)
COURSERA	128(60.37)	84(39.62)
Creative Commons Search	36(16.98)	16(7.54)
DOAB (Directory of Open Access Books)	192(90.56)	20(9.43)
DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)	200(94.33)	12(5.66)
e-GyanKosh	180(84.90)	32(15.09)
e-PG Pathshala	188(88.67)	24(11.32)
ERIC Database	48(22.64)	4(1.88)
Khan Academy	120(56.60)	92(43.39)
KOER - Karnataka Open Educational Resources	20(9.43)	32(15.09)
MOOCS	48(22.64)	4(1.88)
National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)	28(13.20)	24(11.32)
NDLI (National Digital Library of India)	204(96.22)	8(3.77)
NPTEL	180(84.90)	32(15.09)
Open Textbook Library	172(81.13)	36(16.98)
Sakshat	96(45.28)	116(54.71)
Shodha Ganga	52(24.52)	-
ShodhaGangotri	48(22.64)	4(1.88)
SWAYAM	48(22.64)	4(1.88)
TED	192(90.56)	120(56.60)

Awareness of the respondents on Open Educational Resources Portals are revealed in table no. 7. Among the Open Educational Resources Portals, the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) with 96%, followed by Directory of Open Access Journals with 94%, and Directory of Open Access Books and TED with each 90%. Karnataka Open Educational Resources (KOER) is the lowest known OER among the 9% of the library professionals.



**Table No. 8**

**Preference of Electronic Resources**

<b>Electronic Resources</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
E-Repositories	8 (3.77)
Electronic Thesis and Dissertations	8 (3.77)
E-Journals	104 (49.05)
E-Databases	40 (18.86)
E-Books	40 (18.86)
Any Other	12 (5.66)

Table No. 8 represents the preference for the use of Open Educational Resources. 49% of the respondents preferred the electronic journals, followed by 19% each electronic databases and electronic books and 4% of the respondents preferred to use electronic repositories and electronic thesis and dissertations.

**Table No. 9**

**Respondents Satisfaction with Open Educational Resources**

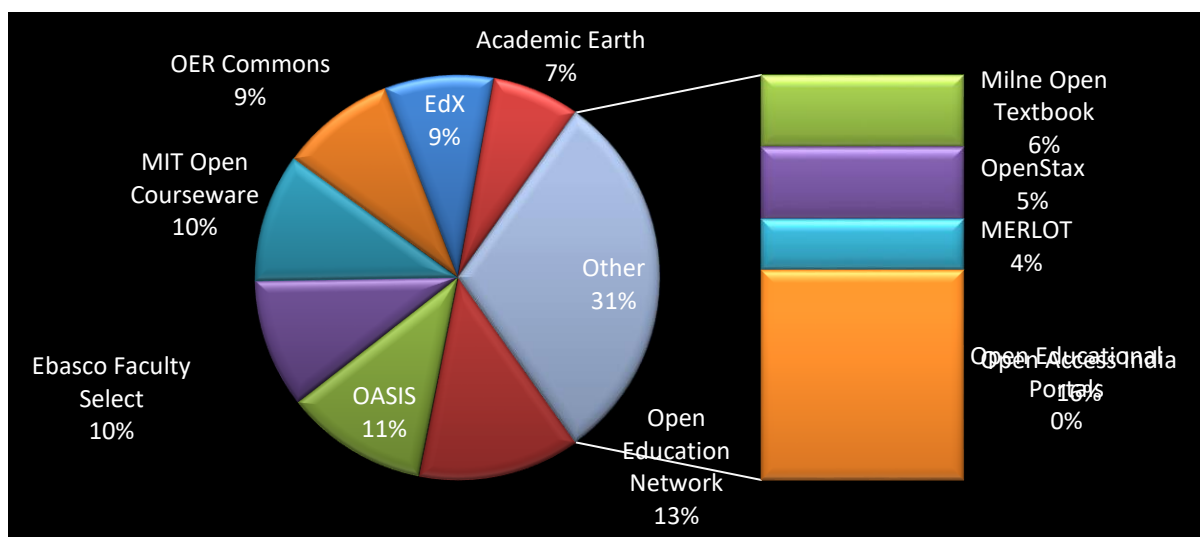
<b>Satisfaction with OER</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
Yes	132 (62.26)
No	80 (37.74)

The satisfaction of the respondents with the available Open Educational Resources is rendered in table no. 9. Among the respondents, 62% of them informed that they are satisfied with the available Open Educational Resources, whereas, 38% of the respondents notified that they are not satisfied with the available Open Educational Resources on the various websites.

**Table No. 10**

**Awareness on Open Educational Resources**

Sl. No.	Open Educational Portals	Yes	No
1.	Open Education Network	96 (45.28)	64 (30.18)
2.	OASIS	84 (39.62)	76 (35.84)
3.	Ebasco Faculty Select	76 (35.84)	84 (39.62)
4.	MIT Open Courseware	76 (35.84)	84 (39.62)
5.	OER Commons	68 (32.07)	88 (41.50)
6.	EdX	64 (30.18)	96 (45.28)
7.	Academic Earth	52 (24.52)	108 (50.94)
8.	Milne Open Textbook	40 (18.86)	120 (56.60)
9.	OpenStax	40 (18.86)	120 (56.60)
10.	MERLOT	28 (13.20)	132 (62.26)
11.	Open Access India	116 (54.71)	44 (20.75)



**Figure No. 2**

Table No. 10 and figure no. 2 displayed the awareness on Open Educational Resources, 55% of the respondents are well-versed with the Open Access India Portal, followed by 45% of them informed that they are aware of Open Education Network and 40% about the OASIS resources. EBASCO Faculty Select and MIT Open Courseware are known to 36% of the respondents. The remaining Open Educational Resources such as EdX,

Academic Earth, Milne Open Textbook, and OpenStax are known to less than 30% of the respondents. Only 13% of the respondents are known to MERLOT resources.

## **Findings and Conclusion:**

Based on the response received from respondents, the following findings were drawn.

1. The highest numbers of the respondents are male respondents, which accounts for 70%.
2. Among the 212 respondents, 43% of the respondents are from Engineering colleges, followed by 38% from the degree colleges, 20% of them are from the State and Central Universities of different states. The majority of respondents are from professional colleges and have good infrastructure to implement OER.
3. 53% of respondents have ten to fifteen years of experience in using the electronic resources, followed by five to ten years with 34%, and 11% of the respondents have less than five years of experience.
4. Daily 55% of the respondents are using the Open Educational Resources available on different organisations websites. Whereas, 40% of the respondents are using it on a weekly basis
5. Most of the respondents 68% felt that they are using Open Educational Resources because of its easy availability in full text form and quality and reliability of Information, another 23% of the respondents are opined that its easy availability made them to use Open Educational Resources more.
6. 11% of the respondents are said they are using Open Educational Resources for updating their subject knowledge and for writing articles and doing their research work. Whereas, 72% of the respondents informed that they are using it for updating subject knowledge, teaching and learning, research work, and other academic activity purpose.
7. Among the top Open Educational Portals, the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) with 96%, followed by Directory of Open Access Journals with 94%, and Directory of Open Access Books and TED with 90% each. Karnataka Open Educational Resources (KOER) is the lowest known among the 9% of the library professionals. From the data, librarians are aware of the availability of OER in different portal.

8. Highest 49% of the respondents preferred the electronic journals, followed by 19% each electronic databases and electronic books and 4% of electronic repositories and electronic thesis and dissertations.
9. 62% of them informed that they are satisfied with the available Open Educational Resources; whereas 7% of the respondents notified that they are not satisfied with the resources available in Open Educational Resources on the various websites.
10. 55% of the respondents are well-versed with the Open Access India Portal, followed by 45% of them informed that they are aware of Open Education Network and 40% about the OASIS resources. EBSCO Faculty Select and MIT Open Courseware are known to 36% of the respondents. The remaining Open Educational Resources such as EdX, Academic Earth, Milne Open Textbook, OpenStax are known to less than 30% of the respondents. Only 13% of the respondents are known to MERLOT resources.

## Conclusion:

OERs can help the distance education students as well as institutions to bridge the gap between non-formal, informal and formal learning thus providing learning opportunities to those unable to use more traditional method of learning. Open Educational Resources are an emerging area and have more opportunities for the librarian to provide quality resources available freely to their users. Higher Educational institutions need to focus on the OERs available in their domain and train the users to use it in their studies. Compared to western countries, India has to provide Open Educational Resources in different subjects for the end-users. More awareness is required for Open Educational Resources to the users and as well as faculty members in their respective domains. Higher educational institutions such as INFLIBNET has to take a special interest to conduct training for the librarians and faculty members on how to make use of these OERs available in their respective domain.

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