



**Report on National Conference on OER held on 18-19 December 2015
at Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata, India**

Dr. Anirban Ghosh, Officer-in-Charge, School of Professional Studies of the University delivered the welcome address mentioning the importance of OER in open education system. He mentioned the topic of discussions to be deliberated during the two-day National Conference on OER.

Professor Phalguni Gupta, Director, National Institute of Teachers' Training Institute and Research, dwelt at length in his inaugural address, the security issue of the openness of every thing. He is more concerned about the security of the materials. He told that if everything is open, there is no need to come to the class rooms for interaction with the teachers. Dr. Gupta reiterated that the teachers have to motivate the students to come to the classes in the www era. The on-line materials are not sufficient to gather knowledge it would be nothing but a bookish knowledge. In this context, he also mentioned the system of open book examination for the students. In the same way for the on-line programme and on-line examination, deep thought of teachers is required to set the questions. It should be designed in such a way that the answer cannot be readily available on-line. In case of openness, we should be careful and it cannot be misused. Before any materials are made public, the important factors like who is preparing and for whom it is being prepared are to be taken care of.

Professor Ashok Kolaskar, Vice-Chancellor, The Neotia University and former Adviser, National Knowledge Commission, India, opined that the quality and standard of the resources should be maintained and it should be clearly defined where the resources would be put. He also stressed upon the clear cut policy on educational resources. There should be an educational resource policy to use the OER for making available the resources to the public. The usefulness of OER is to share the knowledge among others. Professor Kolaskar also discussed the term 'Rubrics' in detail in terms of OER. It identifies different aspects/ parameters where to get the resources and led emphasis on the gradation/ level i.e. zero - not useful, one - better, three- most superior etc. He also pointed out that the achievers evaluation through rubrics is very important in case of evaluating the OER. He stressed upon the degree of alignment and standardization of the OER. Quality assessment is another major issue of OER in respect of subject matter and the technology we use. Professor Kolsakar also mentioned that the OER should be developed in regional languages to cater to the needs of the larger sections of the society. It should be developed in proper socio-cultural needs.

Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, Education Officer, CEMCA began his lecture with the history of OER and stated its advantage in sharing the resources. He also told about the role of UNESCO and COL in promoting the OER. He mentioned that presently the CEMCA is working in developing the Institutional Policies of OER in Asian Countries. He described the 6Rs in respect of OER and different types of open licensing policies in using the OER.



Professor Uma Kanjilal, Dept. of Library and Information Science, IGNOU, in her key-note address discussed various issues relating to the open access, open courseware, OER, MOOCs and e-learning. Prof. Kanjilal told that the OER will avoid the duplication of effort as a result the cost will be minimum. She described in detail the various types of licences under creative common. As far as quality is concerned, the contents which are made available on public domain, will be reviewed by others which in turn improve the quality. She also stressed upon a definite policy regarding the OER and described the importance of 'Stack' i.e. repository where all the OER will be available.

In his Presidential Address, Professor Subha Sankar Sarkar Vice Chancellor, NSOU, described the terms viz. Open Education, Open Educational Resources, Open Access and he mentioned that the common thing in these words - openness. He added that the OER is used with some riders like different types of licenses. Professor Srakar also advised that the OER should be designed in such a way that the intenders can easily search their subject matter. He also felt that for developing the OER, subject experts and technology experts have to work together for a qualitative content.

Ms Barnali Roy Choudhury, Asst Prof LIS, Netaji Subhas Open University propose the Vote of Thanks at the end the Inaugural session.

There were five technical sessions viz. **Theme I:** Open Educational Resources and Courseware, **Theme II:** Open Learning Spaces and Technologies, **Theme III:** Open Educational Practices and Higher Education-i, **Theme IV:** Open Educational Practices and Higher Education-ii, and **Theme V:** Quality Assurance and Open Educational Resources.

The Organizing Committee received about 40papers, Out of these papers, only 25 Papers were selected for presentation in these technical session as per the theme. About fifty participants including the participant from Bangladesh Open University attended the 2-day long UGC-DEB National Conference on OER.

The Valedictory session started with the presidential address, delivered by Dr Asit Baran Aich. Dr Manas Ranjan Panigrahi briefly expressed valedictory address with suggestions and recommendations regarding OER. The National Conference on Open Educational Resources was concluded by Dr Anirban Ghosh, Associate Professor of Commerce, Officer- in-Charge, School of Professional Studies.

After having all sessions, this conference recommends following major issues as follows:

- More and more awareness programme on OER may be conducted to make aware of the potential strength of OER in education system
- Framing of institutional Open Educational Resource mandates rather than institutional policy to ensure inclusive and equitable educational opportunities with OER provision.
- Inclusion of Open Educational Resource Repository in institutional library.