

Open Access Journals Initiatives in India

*Rupak Chakravarty, **Preeti Mahajan

*Assistant Professor

DLISc.,
Panjab University, Chandigarh,
INDIA

**Professor

DLISc.,
Panjab University, Chandigarh,
INDIA

Correspondence to:
Dr. Rupak Chakravarty
rupak@pu.ac.in

ABSTRACT

न चोरहार्यम् न च राज हार्यम् ।
न भ्रातृभाज्यम् न च भारकारी ॥
व्यये कृते वर्धत् एव नित्यं ।
विद्या धनम् सर्व धन प्रधानम् ॥

Neither can a thief steal it, nor can a powerful politician take it,
Neither can it be divided amongst brothers, nor is too heavy to carry.

The more it is expended or shared, the more it increases.

Knowledge is prime amongst all wealths .

The message conveyed by this shloka (verse) resonates with the open access philosophy of sharing of knowledge without any barrier. The five laws of Library Science, as propounded by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, are also in unison with open access. The second law of Library Science, i.e., "Every book its reader" and the third law, i.e., "Every reader his/her book" clearly recommend so. Open Access knowledge is important and Indian initiatives in this direction are discussed below:

1.1. Open J-Gate:

Open J-Gate is an electronic gateway to global journal literature in open access domain. Launched in 2006, Open J-Gate is the contribution of Informatics (India) Ltd to promote OAI. It is a database of journal literature which is indexed from 5783 Open Access Journals (3330 Peer-Reviewed) with links to full text at publisher's site. It provides links to over one million open access articles with annual addition of more than 30,000 new articles. The database is updated every day. Journals are classified in a three-level hierarchical system to provide for better relevancy in search results. Users can browse the TOC of latest issues and the back issues and the database allows various search options like title, author, author's address/institution, keywords with boolean search across fields. It also facilitates mailing of articles.

1.2. Indian Academy of Sciences (IAS):

The Indian Academy of Sciences, founded and registered as a society in 1934, aims to promote the progress as well as uphold the cause of science, both in pure and applied branches. A number of journals currently being published by the Academy are 'open access' and their full text is available as PDF files.

1.3. Medknow Publications:

Medknow Publications provide free access to 80 high quality peer-reviewed scholarly STM journals. Medknow pioneers in 'fee-less-free' model of open access publishing and provides immediate free access to the electronic editions of the journals without charging the author or author's institution for submission, processing or publication of the articles. Total number of journals providing open access is 87. Each journal published by it has its independent website facilitating libraries to link users as directly as possible from citation to full text of the article resulting in more than half a million article downloads in a month. It also has an original electronic manuscript submission and peer review system that has processed over 25,000 manuscripts since 2001.

1.4. MedInd:

MedIND is a database of 40 full-text Indian biomedical journals, accessible free of cost to the medical community in India as well those outside the country. It was developed by Indian MEDLARS Centre. The database which includes open access journals, was developed subsequent to the development of IndMED, a

bibliographic database of 75 biomedical journals. Indian MEDLARS Centre provides an opportunity to journals to be covered in Index Medicus (MEDLINE) by participating in MedInd after signing an MoU with the Indian MEDLARS Centre.

1.5. OK Society (Open Knowledge Society):

Open Knowledge Society aims to facilitate all forms of Open Access to Knowledge. It aims to support creation of Institutional Repositories, publication of Open Access Journals, conversion of print journals into online versions, making online journals OAI-PMH compliant, automation of libraries, Digital Libraries, Open Courseware and Open Data.

1.6. CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research):

In February 2009, CSIR approved the implementation of the recommendations of the "Group for Open Access to Science Publications (GOASP) of CSIR. It recommended that all research papers published from the CSIR laboratories be made open access either by depositing the full-text and the metadata of each paper in an institutional repository or by publishing the papers in the open access journals and each laboratory should set up its own interoperable institutional open access repository, CSIR / lab to set up one or more centres to harvest the full-text and metadata of these papers, each laboratory to set up Electronic Thesis and Dissertations Repository, to hold a conference for creating awareness on Open Access, to hold in-house training programmes on open access and sensitize the CSIR researchers.

1.7. National Knowledge Commission (NKC):

NKC constituted a working Group on Open Access and Open Educational Resources (OER) which considered open access and open educational resources of national importance as carrier of growth and development of India. The working group opined that the Indian government will have to review and upgrade its education system, specially the higher education network. Hence, the government must take significant steps to improve, adapt and grow the overall knowledge capital. NKC has recommended that all research articles published by Indian authors which have received any government or public funding must be made available under Open Access and should be archived in the standard OA format on his/her website. Moreover, a national academic OA portal should be developed and research articles should be made available through this portal. Moreover, the government should allocate

specific funding to increase the current digitization efforts of books and periodicals which are outside the copyright protection and a training program be developed to take the materials available under Open Access to remote towns and villages.

The NKC working group has suggested that the parent institution should pay on behalf of the author in case the publishers charge cost of publication and online maintenance for which the institution will get a certain percentage as reimbursement through government depending upon the citation index of the journal. As such, the government will ensure that India's research scientists publish high quality papers. It also proposed that the government should establish a specific fund for open access research publications. At the end of each fiscal year, money should be transferred to each OA journal depending upon the number of papers published by the Indian authors. With these two initiatives, the government would provide incentives to authors for producing high quality papers.

2. Other Open Access Scholarly Works

Although the open access journals are important agents of implementing open access phenomenon, yet there are plenty of other scholarly communication formats which are not published through these and are reported elsewhere. They provide a significant momentum to the OA movement along with the open access journals. These non-journal OA material can be in the form of ebooks, digital libraries offering digitized content, databases, open coursewares, etc. Some of the significant developments pertaining to alternative resources of open access are discussed below:

2.1 Open Access Books and Digital Libraries:

In India, two important digital library initiatives are the Digital Library of India and the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL). The Digital Library of India is digitizing books, journals, newspapers and manuscripts in several subject areas like Astrophysics, Biology, Chemistry, Education, Law, Mathematics, Mythology, Religion, etc. The languages covered are Sanskrit, English, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The project has scanned document starting from 1850. TKDL is a collaborative project between Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of Science and Technology and Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and is being implemented at CSIR. It involves documentation of the traditional knowledge available in public domain in the form of existing

literature related to Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Yoga in digitized format in five international languages namely English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish.

2.2 Open Course Ware (OCW):

An Open Course Ware is a free and open digital publication of high quality educational materials organized as courses. It contains educational material and resources that are offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licenses to re-mix, improve and redistribute. It aims to support learning and teaching programme significantly. Learning material in an OCW provides learners an opportunity to gain knowledge beyond their routine classroom environments. These are in the digital form which can be accessed online, thus breaking the barriers of time and distance. It provides open access to the primary teaching materials for educational institutions and promotes free and unrestricted access to knowledge.

Two main OCW/OER (open educational resources) initiatives in India are eGyanKosh and National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL). eGyanKosh is a National Digital Repository of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to store, index, preserve, distribute and share the digital learning resources including online courses and open courseware. NPTEL is being carried out by seven Indian Institutes of Technologies (IIT's), the Indian Institute of Science and other premier institutions around the country and being funded by the Human Resource Ministry. Its objective is to enhance the quality of engineering education by developing curriculum-based video and web courses for the students. Faculty from these institutions are involved in developing their course material in the electronic form.

National Knowledge Commission has also recommended to support the production of quality content by a select set of Indian institutions and to undertake a large scale e-Curriculum development effort directed toward adaptation and adoption support. It has recommended that India must develop a network enabled delivery infrastructure with a focus on two primary areas - access and delivery. For access to the network, high bandwidth connections across institutions and a national backbone that provides advanced networking capabilities are major requirements. For the delivery of OER content, NKC has suggested creation of distributed repositories of educational resources, upkeep and preservation of educational content, increasing the availability of educational applications such as "Learning Management Systems", integration of

OER into university curricula and organizational structures and developing new OER to bridge the gap of the human resources trained in the universities par excellence and the other universities. The working group has suggested the creation of the Institute for Virtual Knowledge Resources and Management (VIKRAM) to monitor and support the implementation, adoption and sustainability of the network-based education resources.

3. Conclusion

As the saying goes "necessity is the mother of invention", the academic community has found an answer to the scholarly communication crisis in the form of open access. It can bring a revolutionary change in the traditional scenario of scholarly communications where everything was in control of the publishers and the authors' were deprived of their basic rights. The libraries were losing their purchasing power as the publishers had raised subscription charges steeply. The worst sufferers being the readers who were unable to access the knowledge they needed. With the advent of open access, the grim situation has gradually started to improve as more and more scholarly works in the form of journal articles, open courseware, theses and dissertations, conference papers, presentations, reports, etc. are freely available online. A number of initiatives are being undertaken by various academic institutions, discipline oriented research organizations, learned societies, governments of various countries and many international LIS associations like IFLA, ALA, SPARC, etc. These initiatives have also led to an impact on the commercial publishers to think alternative publishing model to help the authors who want their scholarly work to be in public domain without harming their commercial interests. The authors are now getting the freedom to publish in open access journals and/or submit their works in the open access institutional repositories. If the author's organization does not have an institutional repository, they can deposit the article in a disciplinary archive. But these initiatives are not sufficient to bail out the budget starving libraries. Hence, more efforts have to be made to create free and conducive environment encouraging knowledge creation, rapid dissemination and maximum sharing leading to advancement of global knowledge and ultimate progress of the world.

References:

1. OpenJ-Gate. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.openj-gate.com/Search/QuickSearch.aspx>

- 2 Indian Academy of Sciences - Index. (n.d.). . Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.ias.ac.in/>
- 3 Medknow Publications: Publisher of peer reviewed scholarly journals. (n.d.). . Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.medknow.com/>
- 4 medIND: Indian Fulltext Bio-Medical Journals Indexed in IndMED. (n.d.). . Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://medind.nic.in/>
- 5 Indian Medlars Centre (Bibliographic Informatics Division, National Informatics Centre, New Delhi - 110003, India)"(n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://indmed.nic.in/>
6. Open Knowledge Society. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.oksociety.in/>
- 7 Memorandum issued by Dr. Naresh Kumar, Head of CSIR's R&D Planning Division to the directors of all CSIR labs on February 6, 2009. <http://epublishingtrust.blogspot.com/2009/02/big-step-for-oa-in-india.html>
- 8 National Knowledge Commission Working Group on Open and Distance Education. 2007. Report of the working group on Open Access and Open Educational Resources. New Delhi: National Knowledge Commission, Government of India, p.3. Retrieved from http://knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/documents/wg_open_course.pdf.
- 9 Digital Library of India: Indian Institute of Science. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.new.dli.ernet.in/>
- 10 TKDL Traditional Knowledge Digital Library. (n.d.). . Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.tkdli.res.in/tkdli/langdefault/common/Home.asp?GL=Eng>
- 11 OCW Consortium. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.ocwconsortium.org/>
- 12 eGyanKosh: Home. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.egyankosh.ac.in/>
- 13 National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning(NPTel) Home. (n.d.). . Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://nptel.iitm.ac.in/>
- 14 NKC: Recommendations: Open Educational Resources. (n.d.). Retrieved July 27, 2010, from <http://www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/recommendations/oer.asp>