

# Pedagogy of the oppressed through OERs

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**E**nlightenment in human beings can be realized only when they are educated, because education strengthens the capabilities in people and helps to bring up the knowledge population in a developing country. However, providing opportunities of education also means that a country is able to protect the people from any discrimination, provide the required opportunities to all concerned, and make them empowered in every aspect of life. But in reality, such attempts are yet to be fully harnessed, as a large mass of people in a country like India are still deprived to get basic education. In this connection, women are the most obvious victims of marginalization. But in a developing country like India, there is an urgent need for democratization of education so that everyone enjoys equal opportunities and justice in every sphere of life. Education in the present century must combat all forms and types of exclusiveness and, hence, it is the need of the hour to devise new ways to extend and impart education.

It is against this background that the pedagogy of the oppressed is a prerequisite for bringing positive so-

cial transformation and make the people in society empowered in every aspect of their life. The Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, who is also the leading advocate of the 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', famously rejected the banking system of education in his seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Because, the banking system of education allows only a few people to receive education in society. Freire wanted to provide pedagogy of education to all sections of people in a liberal way as he felt that pedagogy of the oppressed and the marginalized can only boost up the knowledge economy, and subsequently, all people in a society can contribute economically and socially in an equitable manner. Here, the idea of Open Educational Resources (OERs) can prove very handy as they would provide educational opportunities to all sections of people thereby help in realizing Freire's views in a more engaging way.

India has a rich demographic dividend, because it has 54% of population below the age of 25. It also means that the young age of population, the number of school-going people in that age group, and the level of work force in that period, are considered assets

for the entire country. If the proper form of skill-based education could be given to this group of population, then it could contribute a lot to a positive social transformation through social and economic mobility by creating the knowledge-enabled population in the country. Therefore, it is the right time for us to provide skill-based educational opportunities to all and make them productive citizens in future. For the greater interest of educating the 'oppressed' people in our society, the use of OERs, which means those resources available as free resources to be used, reused, reshuffled and redistributed without any cost on the part of the learners, has been seen as the most viable option to disseminate useful knowledge and information.

OERs can be made available in both online or digital as well as offline or non-digital formats. With the help of these resources, a knowledge-enabled population can be boosted up in a welfare society. This is very important as ensuring the formation of a knowledge-enabled population is one of the major challenges in the higher education system in a country like ours. Adopting one of the Licenses provided by Creative Commons, the use of OERs may become very useful in an educational institution whose social role needs to justify the use of

educational resources for all. As many people fail to get education due to adverse circumstances and socio-economic constraints, through mobilizing the OERs, a new pedagogy of knowledge can be disseminated among the people with the help of the Community Communication Centres, Community Information Centres of the villages, and other multimedia resources and so on. But, for this, the dedication and accountability on the part of the persons who are developing the OERs is necessary, and the resources should also be practically implemented for the betterment of the learners of the society and the country as a whole.

In this connection, the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and the Open and Distance E-Learning (ODEL) systems may be adopted sincerely for starting a new frontier for socio-economic development of the country. After doing the survey on the employability as well as fulfilling the requirement of the dearth of manpower by launching various general, professional and vocational courses, the ODL mode of education should cater to the needs of those who are deprived to receive education due to various constraints. By releasing the materials on OERs, innovative practices can be made for imparting

knowledge, training and skills to the common people and eventually this helps to disseminate known knowledge which were once indigenous and have now become global and inaccessible to the poor. In this connection, reference can be made to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), which has demonstrated that by using information and communication technologies, flexible and blended learning approaches can be adopted. This may increase access to quality technical and vocational skills development education that further helps to overcome the urban-rural and gender divides that exclude learners from training to create a skilled workforce of lifelong learners for the informal and formal economics.

The North-east India Vision 2020 document released on July 2, 2008 also includes education as an important component of achieving a high level of human development. However, there is a visible mismatch between the pace of development in higher education and employment, which have trapped our societies within multifarious problems. This has particular relevance to North-east India where the educated youth are facing acute unemployment problems, which in turn, has contributed to social restlessness in the region.