From the Desk of Editors

Dear Scholar,

Please accept Season’s Greetings! On behalf of Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, we deem it our proud privilege to present you the fourth issue of the *Journal of Open Learning and Research Communication* (JOLRC), an annual publication of the University. The third issue of the Journal was launched by the Vice Chancellor of the University on 1st of January, 2018 in an event to mark the release of a few publications of the University including the Journal. We are happy to inform you that the earlier three issues have been well received by the readers and the researchers within the country and outside.

WE have offered the *Journal of Open Learning and Research Communication* as an *unconventional* platform to the academic and research fraternity, across the space. *Unconventional* in the sense that unlike other journals this journal stands apart in a few aspects: *first*, this journal is inter-disciplinary. Extending the philosophy of the University “*Education beyond barriers*”, this journal rightly extends its coverage to all academic disciplines. However, in saying so, we would also like to reiterate the fact that the Journal lays its emphasis particularly in the field of Open and Distance Learning. *Second*, in conformity with the philosophy of the University, the Journal also frees itself from any geographical barrier. This gives the journal a true international character. *Third*, as its name itself suggests, we also propose to offer the researchers a platform to communicate their research findings: particularly, of their recently concluded projects or other research works and findings, which are in their advanced stages of completion.

The fourth issue of the Journal presents seven research articles/papers and a few book reviews. In this issue, we have included articles written by academicians of repute and young research scholars of both from this University and outside. We are indeed very delighted to introduce this issue of the Journal, like the earlier three issues with an article entitled ‘*Dharma and Karma in Open Universities: A Commentary on the Work of V. S. Prasad*’ written by Sir John Daniel, one of the most renowned personalities in the field of Open and Distance Learning at the present time. The paper is based on a discussion on the work of
Professor V. S. Prasad’s book “Higher Education and Open Distance Learning Trajectory in India: Reflections of an Insider”. Sir Daniel has drawn reference to Prasad’s identification of the disconnect between the social purposes that open universities proclaim and how well they fulfil them in the current state of open universities. Sir Daniel then has summarised the essential elements of the dharmas of ODL as outlined by Professor Prasad. Subsequently, the karmas Professor Prasad had outlined in his work have been outlined. Sir Daniel then has analysed the disconnect between dharma and karma in distance education and the different means to address it. In this connection, he has drawn the relevance of the four keys to success for the future of open universities, which have been drawn basically from the first Vice Chancellor of UK Open University, Lord Geoffrey Crowther’s four elements of mission he had articulated at its inauguration in 1969. The author has concluded the discussion outlining the ways in which open universities can discharge their missions in a contemporary context that is very different from the world into which they were born in the 1960s.

The second paper entitled ‘Coverage of Antenatal Care by NRHM in Regional Newspapers of Assam with Special Reference to The Assam Tribune’, has been authored by Arpana Barman and Dr. Arupjyoti Choudhury. The paper is based on the content analysis of the coverage on Antenatal Care (ANC) by NRHM in a widely known local daily newspaper – The Assam Tribune. In this primary study, the authors have analysed the content of coverage in the newspaper The Assam Tribune with particular reference to NRHM for a period of one year. In doing that, the authors have observed that, in terms of numbers, maximum coverage by NRHM in the concerned paper are related to tender/quotation notices, advertisement for manpower recruitment and audits and bid. In terms of area of the column, maximum column space is occupied by display of ads on feature articles, services provided under NRHM and projection of special drives like Mission Indradhanush, Mission Tejaswi etc. Thus, the authors have come up with the finding that the coverage of content related to ANC is almost negligible. Based on this study, the authors have argued that considering the highest MMR of the State, print media should be made accountable to extend coverage of content on the measures to be taken in order to curb the issue of increased Maternal Morality Ratio. The authors have concluded the study outlining the need for an effective and
appropriate use of health communication on Antenatal Care among the pregnant women. Further, extensive research into health communication to assess and reform health communication strategies, has been outlined.

The third paper of the issue entitled ‘Hierarchy of Effects and Consumer Buying: Findings from Literature Review’ has been authored by Rishi Chakravarty and Professor Nripendra Narayan Sarma. In this paper, the authors have argued that consumer behaviour is a very complex phenomenon and this complexity has provided the inquisitiveness amongst marketing practitioners and researchers to investigate in depth about its intricacies. Past research on different attitudinal models, generally termed as ‘hierarchy of effects’, categorises phases that a consumer passes through before eventually making the purchase decision eventually. In the present study, the authors have made an attempt to explore the extant research in the area of buyer behaviour and the different hierarchical models to understand the stepwise approach to decision making. Based on an extensive review of literature, the authors have come up with the finding that all the hierarchical models developed by researchers in the early phase reflected certain similarities. However, the ones developed during the recent phase do reflect some unique reasons for consideration. After an extensive review of literature, the authors have arrived at the conclusion that advertising is a prime component that shapes the attitude of buyers from generating awareness to the ultimate purchase decision. The study further observed that the Internet boom brought with it a new dimension in the way buyers take their buying decisions and there is much reason to believe that the age old hierarchical models may not be able to capture the new age buying behaviour. As such, the authors have outlined the fact that there is a scope for future researchers to establish the relation between old hierarchy models and the new development in the field of online marketing.

In the next paper entitled ‘Is Media a Boon or a Bane to the Society? Some Reflections in the Light of ‘Dokmoka Lynching’, Dr. Trisha Dowerah Baruah has argued that as carriers of messages of mass communication, the mass media is a very powerful instrument in informing the people or masses about virtually anything on earth. While highlighting some of the benefits of the new media which includes internet, internet radio and social media, the author has argued that social media has gained notoriety for spreading fake news leading to mob violence. With particular
reference to the recent lynching of two boys in Karbi Anglong district of Assam, the study has outlined the perils of communicating via social media platforms. The study concludes highlighting the fact that new media, specially the different social media platforms can sometimes lead to disastrous consequences if proper care is not taken. The study concluded outlining the fact that we as responsible citizens must be able to distinguish between right and wrong. Thus, the author argues, even while the media may throw at us innumerable news and views of events around the world, we must play the role of a gate-keeper and take in only those stories which are supported by facts and figures.

The fifth paper of the issue has been authored by Jiban Chandra Phukan, Professor Srinath Baruah and Dr. Chandrama Goswami. The paper entitled ‘Sustainable Development of Guwahati: Is Satellite Township a Viable Solution?’, is based on a primary study. In this paper, the authors have made an attempt to explore if the model of satellite township could be a viable solution for the sustainable development of the city of Guwahati. The authors have argued that the capital infrastructure growth in the city of Guwahati has been able to match its growing needs. As the study has outlined, there has been acute shortage and deficit of service delivery and infrastructure viz. water supply, solid waste management, sewerage, urban network, streetlight and storm water drainage in the city. The consequence of such deficiencies has resulted in a number of problems, viz., water logging, non-availability of streetlights, water scarcity and the lack of proper maintenance of roads. To solve such problems, the authors have argued that one of the ways to enable sustainable development in an over grown city is to facilitate satellite townships that can relieve the load of population pressure on the main city. The authors undertook a primary study to assess people’s willingness to shift to new townships with enabling amenities on the outskirt of Guwahati. The study came up with the finding that over 60 percent of the households surveyed agreed to shift to a new place. Therefore, the authors have concluded with the argument that the development of satellite townships could be an option for the sustainable development of the Guwahati city.

In her paper entitled ‘Religious and Cultural Influences on Abortion: A Care-ethical Discussion’, Dr. Tejasha Kalita has made an attempt to discuss the problem of abortion and the cultural influences on it. The author has argued that different
cultures have played different roles on the issue of abortion. However, it is not necessary that these influences are always ethical in nature. In this paper, the author has analysed the religious and cultural influences on abortion with the help of some traditional and contemporary ethical theories. Examples have been drawn from different religions and cultures across India, as well as from Japan, China, Thailand and Ireland. Based on analysis of such examples, the study came up with the finding that as socio-cultural and religious influences are found to be very strong in the society, therefore, everyone should be clear about that fact that cultures should be such that are guided by the ethics and not by some biased and rigid laws. All the cultures are mainly man-made. That is why they should be changed with time for the overall wellbeing of the entire society. The author further argues that abortion laws should therefore be implemented with time and the mind-set of the people should also change. Only then, an ethical and unbiased decision regarding abortion can be taken properly.

The seventh paper of the issue has been authored by Pallavi Gogoi. In her paper entitled ‘Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa’s Burhi Aair Xadhu : Musings on the Metaphorical Meanings and Allegorical Representations of the Text’, the author has made an attempt to derive a more meaningful reading and extract a set of interpretation of the most popular Assamese fables and folktales, with special reference to the timeless stories of Burhi Aair Xadhu. In the paper, the author has highlighted some of the woven metaphors and allegories in the text with particular reference to certain social problems and practices, morals and messages that are also universal in nature. The paper offers an insight into the likely meanings and symbolical representations in the fables and folktales of Burhi Aair Xadhu from which generations of Assamese children, have derived the joys of imagination along with the necessary moral instruction and to which the young, as well as, the aged have nostalgically continued to retrace their roots of childhood.

We are indeed happy to see that the academic and research fraternity across the country has well received this Journal. This has been revealed from the increasing number of subscriptions to this newly published Journal. We sincerely acknowledge the encouragement received from the authorities, officials and faculty members of the University. We also acknowledge the authors of the academic papers of this issue for their invaluable contribution to the Journal. Due to certain
constraints, a few papers of a few research scholars/academicians could not be included in this fourth issue of the Journal. We do acknowledge their keen interest shown towards the Journal and hope that in the future, we would be able to include their papers in the Journal.

The Journal would not sustain without the support of its avid readers, particularly those belonging to the fields of academics and research. In an attempt to make this Journal a truly International platform of research and research communications, we would like to invite you to make your valuable contributions in the form of research articles, research papers and brief research communications. We would also encourage the readers to subscribe this journal either individually or through their respective institution’s library. The details are also available in the website of the University: www.kkhsou.in/web.

Thanking you, have an enjoyable, insightful reading!

January 01, 2019

KKHSOU, Guwahati.

Arupjyoti Choudhury  Bhaskar Sarmah
Chief Editor, JOLRC  Editor, JOLRC