Access, Awareness And Use Of Electronic Resources By Post Graduate Students In Gulbarga University

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Abstract

Universities are seeking to play a key role in the research and development process. An important element in the research process is the accessibility of information resources and services provided by libraries. Postgraduate students are key producers of research in universities, and an important element in their research process is the access to information. This study examines postgraduate students' views on the access, awareness and usage in facilitating their research and their satisfaction with the sources and services currently provided. The Random Sampling technique together with a Questionnaire was used for data collection from 50 postgraduate students from Gulbarga University. The findings shows that the majority (90.1%) of respondents acknowledged the important role of library in facilitating research, and 72.5% of the respondents were satisfied with the current role being played by the libraries. However, certain areas needed to be improved such as longer opening hours for physical visits, in spite of the facilities for remote access assistance for supporting students' research. The findings will be useful to academic libraries in providing better services to postgraduate students for their research. The paper records the reasons why Post graduate students use electronic information resources are; research activity, Paper writing for publication, and referring course materials. It suggests further for an improvement in the access facilities with high Internet speed and subscription to more e-resources by the University Library. The present study also attempts to encounter different problems faced by the students during accessing e-resources.

1. Introduction

In the fast-emerging and ever-growing information explosion it is very difficult to retrieve particular information without wasting time. Recent advances in the field of information technology contribute significantly to improve the services of libraries. Now-a-days libraries are not only seen with printed document and non-print document but also with computers. The impact of technologies such as CD-ROMs, multimedia, computer networks, Internet, etc. have lead to a paperless society. Changes in technology in recent years have dramatically altered how information is accessed, stored and disseminated. With advances in technology and e-publishing access to information on a local, regional, national and international basis, by overcoming the traditional barriers of time and space has become easy. The electronic resources are systems in which information is stored electronically and made accessible through electronic systems and computer networks. These resources include OPAC, CD-ROMs, Online-Databases, E-journals, E-books, Internet resources etc. Multiple accesses speed, richer in content, reuse, timeliness, anywhere access is some of the features of e-resources.

In recent years, universities have started paying greater attention to research. Universities do this by developing appropriate policies, making funds and facilities available for research, and encouraging their staff and students to do research. In many postgraduate programmes at universities, students are required to carry out a research project and submit a report as a pre-requisite for completing their degree. Faculty members are also required to do research themselves, take on more postgraduate students, and are assessed based on the outputs of their research. This has led to researchers making greater demands for access to information and on the quality of information provided (Singh 2007). Access to information through Internet has changed the role of libraries. Libraries now have both printed document as well as electronic information resources in their collection. The electronic documents can be stored, accessed, and delivered as and when required; therefore the services of libraries are not confined within the four walls but are integrated into local, regional, national, and international networks. It is common knowledge that virtually all scholarly and academic journals, electronic databases, online library catalogues, grey literature and other relevant scholarly materials in all fields of knowledge are now accessible on the internet.

2. Operational Definition Of Key Terms

E-resources: An electronic resource (e-resource) can be: - a bibliographic or full text database that allows you to search for relevant articles in your subject area. - a book or journal that has been made available in electronic format - a set of web pages - a CD-ROM The Library makes all its e-resources available to web pages.

PG students: A student who has obtained a degree from a University etc, pursuing studies for a more advanced qualification.

E-database: An e-database is an organized collection of information, of a particular subject or multi-disciplinary areas. The information of an e-database can be searched and retrieved electronically.

E-journals: An electronic journal is a periodical publication which is published in electronic format, usually on the Internet. Search the contents pages and/or the full text of journals to find articles on a certain subject.

University: An institution for higher learning with teaching and research facilities constituting a graduate school and professional schools thataward master's degrees and doctorates and an undergr aduate division that awards bachelor's degrees.

3. Literature Review

- *Thanuskodi, S. and Ravi, S. (2011)* in their paper titled "Use of Digital Resources by Faculty and Research Scholars of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli discusses utilisation of digital resources by faculty and research scholars of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. Results show that 67.14% of the faculty is familiar with the use of digital resources, and majority of these members are using digital resources for research purpose. Study also reveals that majority of the faculty members are learning the required skills for the usage of digital resources through self-study. Majority of the faculty members and research scholars (55.71 %) felt that the information available in the digital resources is always „adequate".

- *Madhusudan (2010)* in his article titled "Use of electronic resources by Research scholars of Kurukshetra University" concluded that electronic resources had become an integral part of information needs of research scholars there. Further, he found that e-resources can be good substitute for conventional resources, if the access is fast, and more computer terminals are installed to provide fast access to e-resources.

- *Kaur and Verma (2009)* on use of electronic information sources in Thapar University shows that maximum number of user accessing E-resources for their purpose. The impact of E-resources is visible from the decrease in number of printed journals in comparison to increase in number of electronic journals.

- *Verma (2008)* in their study on "Use & impact of electronic journals in the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi" found that the usage of e-journals is increasing; this is due to awareness among the users about the library e-resources and services. Owing to an easy access available at various places in the institute, users are accessing these resources at hostels and departments more as compared to the library. The users coming to library decreased.

- *Islam and Panda (2007)* in their article entitled "Web based Information Retrieval Trends of Researchers" explains that in Indian University, traditional library and printed materials were still more effective to research scholars than web-based Information and resources".
- *Rajeswari (2005)* on "Use of information sources in digital environment-A Case Study" reveals that majority of the user including faculty members, research scholars and students are using OPAC system in the library and also using INFLIBNET services for accessing thousands of e-journals.

4. Scope Of The Study

The present study focuses on the awareness, access and use of electronic resources by Post Graduate students of Gulbarga University in Gulbarga district. It also highlights the present scenario of e-resources in the university library.

5. Objectives

The study was an attempt to find out the access, awareness & use of electronic resources and services by the PG students in Gulbarga University. The study was designed & conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- I.   To assess the current use of electronic resources by PG students.
- II.   To find out the level of awareness of electronic resources.
- III.   To find out the main reason and purpose behind the use of e-resources.
- IV.   To find out the frequency of accessing E-resources.
- V.   To find the level of satisfaction with existing information sources
- VI.   To find the suggestions for development of library resources

6. Methodology

This study is based on Survey (questionnaire) Method. A structured Questionnaire was designed to collect data from Post Graduate students of Gulbarga University, keeping in mind the basic objectives of the study. For collecting the requisite data from 50 Post Graduate students from different departments were selected. The data was collected from Post Graduate students by administering questionnaire on "Access, Awareness and usage of electronic resources by PG students in Gulbarga University".

7. Procedure

For the present study the researcher visited Gulbarga University Library i,e Virtual learning center and collected information from them. Standard questionnaire covering 15 questions regarding the access, awareness and usages of e-resources was given and after their response it was collected back and based on the response analysis was carried by applying percentage for the total responses.

8. Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

Table 1: Generally how many hours do you use e-resources?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. 0-1 hour	28	56%
2. 1-2 hours	18	36%
3. 2-3 hours	11	22%
4. Above 4 hours	04	8%

The above table reveals that 56% of student's use e-resources for 0-1hour, 36% of them use 1-2 hours, 22% use 2-3 hours and only 8% of them use above 4 hours in the library.

Table 2: The place where e-resources are accessed?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. University campus	41	82%
2. Off campus	14	28%
3. Internet café	34	68%
4. Other resource	14	28%

The above table shows that University campus access are of 82% which is followed by 68% uses in Internet café, 28% off campus and 28% go with other resource.

Table 3: Which of the following e-resources are used?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. E-books	24	48%
2. Databases	20	40%
3. Online journals/ thesis	29	58%
4. Others	26	52%

The response from the above table shows that 58% of the students use E-resources for Online journals/thesis followed by 52% in others, 48% use for E-books and only 40% of them use for databases.

Table 4: What is the frequency of using e-resources?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. More than once in a week	32	64%
2. Once in a week	28	56%
3. Once in a month	10	20%
4. Less than once a month	06	12%

The above table indicates that 64% of the PG students visit frequently for using e-resources, which follows 56% visit once in a week, 20% of them for once in a month and only 12% less than once in a month.

Table 5: The reason to use e-resources

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. To gain general/specific information	32	64%
2. To study course materials	28	56%
3. To use web resources	10	20%
4. To meet/support research work	06	12%

From the table 5 it has been revealed that 64% students gain general/specific information. The 56% students gave reason for studying course materials. 20% of them for web resources and only 12% to meet research work.

Table 6: Choice of e-resources

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. Ease of access	26	32%
2. Saves time	34	68%
3. No need to go to library	23	46%
4. Availability of search tools	28	56%

The table 6 shows that 68% students say that it saves time. Similarly 56% choose because of availability of search tools, 46% say no need to go to library and 32% say for ease of access.

Table 7: What motivates you to use electronic resources?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. Pleasure	26	52%
2. Research/projects	35	70%
3. Writing term paper	20	40%
4. Doing course assignment	25	50%

From the table 7 it has been found that 70% of the PG students use e-resources for their research/projects work. Followed by 52% for pleasure, 50% for doing course assignment and only 40% for writing term paper.

Table 8: What problems do you encounter while accessing e-resources?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. Non-connectivity	20	40%
2. Inability to use computer	18	36%
3. Too few computers with internet facilities	16	32%
4. Lack of IT skills	15	30%

Table 8 highlights the response of respondents regarding the problems in accessing e-resources 40% say due to non-connectivity. 36% are unable to use computer. 32% say too few computers with internet facilities. 30% are Lack of IT skills**.**

Table 9: What do you suggest one should do to solve the problems?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. Increase Bandwidth	32	64%
2. Provision of more computers	28	56%
3. Provide a conducive environment	10	20%
4. Have stable electrical backup	06	12%

The above table reveals that 64% students suggested increasing bandwidth. 56% say there should be provision of more computers. 20% say to provide a conducive environment. 2% suggested having stable electrical backup.

Table 10: Which of the following e-resources do you use in current days?

OPTIONS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
1. E-journals	30	60%
2. E-books	31	62%
3. ERIC	16	32%
4. Search engines	22	44%

Table 10 highlights that 62% of PG students use for E-books following 60% for E-journals. In the same manner 44% use for search engines and only 32% for ERIC.

9. Suggestions

➢ It is suggested that the library should provide more internet services and most particularly increase the web resources to support their research activities.

➢ It is suggested that although the PG students use the E-resources to update their knowledge mostly but they are lacking proper instant communication, quick access and database search. So they should be encourage for the use of electronic information resources and how it could be make fruitful in different purposes.

➢ The appropriate measures should be taken to increase the satisfaction level on e-resources. Particularly on Digital Library, OPAC/Web-OPAC; Network based Information services, CD-ROM Databases.

➢ The Library needs to arrange various orientation and training programmes for faculty members for the optimum use of available e-resources. In this context the Library may arrange orientation programmes, on subscribe databases.

➢ Almost all the users agree, perceive and acknowledged and the importance and use of internet in the today ICT environments and more particularly in their research activities. The library should facilitate with high bandwidth WI-FI, LAN & WAN to exploit the internet facilities by the students.

➢ The students are unable to use liber office text version in the present system. If they copy some materials in this it cannot open in the other computer. So they are in need of demonstration in usage of such operations.

10. Conclusion

In the changing information environment electronic era, ICT and its electronic information resources are claiming its importance in the research activities. The library should provide more facilities of CAS to keep up to date of the research scholar, study materials to support their academic pursuit, more internet services and most particularly increase the web resources to support their research activities. Library should subscribe to e-resources keeping in view the priorities and preferences of users. Announcements should be done by the library about the availability of new e-resources or additions of new databases for user of the library. Library should provide the facilities for the user to get familiar with e-resources subscribed by the library; this can be done by the presentations organized by the concerned publishers or vendors. Special training programs should be organized for students for the maximum use of e-resources so that users can adequately trace relevant information. The library should also organize orientation programs every year.

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