
Impact of Electronic Information Resources and Services on Humanities' Research Scholars of Karnatak University, Dharwad: An analytical study

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ABSTRACT

The advent of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has led to new ways, where information is accessed, disseminated and used. Traditional sources of information are gradually being replaced with electronic information resources (EIRs). EIRs include e-books, e-journals, e-magazines, e-theses and dissertations etc. Today research and development activities are more dependent on EIRs as they are accessible anywhere, anytime. In this study an attempt has been made to know the extent of use of EIRs among research scholars of humanities discipline of Karnatak University, Dharwad. The findings of the study reveal that most of the research scholars are aware of electronic resources, but the library authorities must make efforts in enhancing the usage of EIR's.

Keywords: e-resources, electronic information resources and services, KUD, library services, e-journal, OPAC.

1. Introduction

The advent of information and communication technology (ICT) has enhanced the availability and usage of electronic information resources among the academic community in the recent years globally. This development has posed challenges to libraries and information centers in their attempt to meet information needs of users in the digital era. Owing to the technological revolution and advent of modern ICT, the scholarly community no longer relies upon the traditional library resources and services. They are, however, encouraged to rely on electronic information resources with a belief that, the wealth of information available in electronic formats can absolutely accomplish their scholastic needs as a better substitute to traditional print services (Swain, 2009). Hence, with the growing popularity of e-resources, many academic libraries, especially university libraries are gradually migrating from print documents to e-resources where providing access to information is considered more important than owning it. This has compelled libraries to rethink about their collection development functioning. Commenting on the advantages of electronic resources, Dadzie (2005) writes that electronic resources are invaluable research tools that complement the print – based resources in a traditional library setting. Their advantages include: access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finances, access to more current information, and provision of extensive links to additional resources of

related contents (Adeniran, 2013). The present study attempts to analyse how library usage is changing as a result of the advances in networked electronic services.

2. Karnatak University, Dharwad: A Brief Profile

Karnatak University, Dharwad is one of the oldest and premier universities of the country, established in 1949, and had its official inauguration in March 1950. Dr. D. C. Pavate was the vice-chancellor from 1954 to 1967. The rapid development of the institution is credited to him. The university was recognized with the "University with Potential for Excellence (UPE)" by the University Grants Commission. The university is the second oldest, after University of Mysore, in the state of Karnataka. The University is working as a leading light to the many students of every nook and corner of the State. There are 43 post graduate Departments, 222 teachers and 5000 students (PG, M. Phil., Ph.D.). The girl students constitute more than 50% of the total strength, including PG Diploma, M. Phil. and Ph.D. courses. 6% of the students are from outside the state. There are 5 constituent colleges, offering UG courses in science, arts, commerce, fine arts, law and education. The University provides wide options and choices – 43 PG courses, 4 advanced diplomas and 28 diplomas, 11 certificate courses, 26 M.Phil. and 42 Ph.D. programmes. The Karnatak University Library was established in 1950. The library building has a carpet area of 4030 sq. mtrs. It accommodates about 4 lakhs books in its four stack rooms and around 300 students at a time to read in the reading halls of the library. A good collection of CD-ROMs in various subjects is also available for is also available for access. Library subscribes around 400 Research Journals in print and 5000 in Electronic form through UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium. UGC Info net E-Journals access facility - Library subscribes more than 5000 electronic journals in different disciplines through UGC-INFONET Electronic Journals consortium.

3. Review of the Literature

Ojo and Akande (2005) in a survey of 350 respondents examined students access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Nigeria. The study revealed that the level of usage of the electronic information resources is not satisfactory. A major problem however identified was the lack of information retrieval skills for exploring electronic resources, thus, making the level of usage of resources by medical students very low. Madhusudhan (2010) evaluates the use of e-resources by research scholars of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra (India). The research scholars who participated in this survey are aware of e-resources and majority of them used these resources in support of their research. This shows that e-information sources will continue to be the necessary components of the academic community. The study concludes that electronic resources have become an integral part of the information needs of research scholars at Kurukshetra University. Shukla & Mishra (2011) determine the extent to which research scholars of Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University are aware and make use of electronic information resources, and also highlight the problems faced by research scholars in accessing e-resources. Results reveal that the Research scholars prefer electronic resources against print resources. 76% of the research scholars use e-resources daily. It is found that 88% of the scholars use electronic information resources for their research work. Anil Kumar & Reddy (2014) conduct a study on use pattern of e-journals among research scholars in university libraries of Andhra Pradesh. From the study it was found that 16.10% of the researchers do not use UGC-INFONET e-journals. The study also reveals that 69.03% of them are not using open access e-journals. Most of the research scholars i. e. 71.40% face problems in using e-journals. Gakibayo et al. (2013) assess the utilization of electronic

information resources in Mbarara University Library. The study found that the students have a positive attitude towards electronic resources. 57.5% of the respondents can access wider range of e- information. The frequency of use of these resources indicated that a lot need to be done to increase e-resource use. 60.5% of the respondents were of opinion that University should have more networked computers.

4. Significance of the Study

In the present era of information explosion, number of publications is becoming Web-concerned. Most of the university libraries have changed the contemporary outlook towards functions and services. The investigators decided to conduct this study with an intention to measure the usage of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) by the research scholars of various departments in discipline of Humanities', Karnatak University, Dharwad.

5. Scope and Limitations of the study

The present study is confined to the research scholars of Humanities discipline of Karnatak University, Dharwad. The main focus of this study is to identify the specific needs and requirements of the research scholars and also to understand the level of satisfaction with regard to the use of EIRs and services extended by the University Library.

6. Objectives of the study

1. To examine the awareness of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs).
2. To find out the different purposes of using EIRs.
3. To know the problems faced by the research scholars.
4. To assess the impact of EIRs on research activities.
5. To suggest the ways and means for improving the collection of EIRs.

7. Methodology

Humanities research scholars are the target population for the study. The survey has been conducted and questionnaire was used to collect data in order to achieve the above mentioned objectives. A well structured questionnaire was designed to elicit data from Humanities research scholars. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed among researchers, out of which, 90 valid questionnaires were collected with a response rate of 90% and then data was analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and presented.

8. Results & Discussion

The data collected through the questionnaires has been organized and tabulated by using simple statistical methods and presented in the form of tables in the following sections.

8.1 Gender wise distribution of respondents

Table-1: Gender wise distribution of respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	70	77.78
Female	20	22.22
Total	90	100.00

Table-1 indicates gender wise distribution of respondents. Of the total 90 respondents surveyed, 70 (77.78%) are male and about 20 (22.22%) respondents are female.

8.2 Level of Internet skills among respondents

Table-2: Level of Internet skills among respondents

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very good	35	38.89
Good	49	54.44
Fair	06	06.67
Uncertain	00	00.00
Poor	00	00.00
Total	90	100.00

It can be observed from the data given in the table-2 that majority of the respondents i.e., 49 (54.44%) rated their internet skills as good, while 35 (38.89%) rated as very good, followed by 06 (6.67%) rated as fair. It is clear that research scholars are aware of Internet and its use.

8.3 Awareness about Electronic Information Resources

Table-3: Awareness about Electronic Information Resources

	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	86	95.56
No	04	04.44
Total	90	100.00

Table-3 shows that, out of 90 respondents, 86 (95.96%) are aware of the EIRs and only 04 (04.44%) are not aware. This reveals that maximum number of respondents are aware and make use of EIRs.

8.4 Preferred version of information

Table-4: Preferred version of information

Types of resource(s)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Print	18	20.00
Online	27	30.00
Both	45	50.00
Total	90	100.00

Electronic resources along with printed resources have become an integral part of library collection. A large number of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) are being acquired by libraries to their collection. A question was raised to know which version of information resources the respondents prefer to make use. It can be observed from the table-4 that majority of the respondents i.e. 45 (50.00%) prefer both print and online resources, 27 (30.00%) respondents prefer online resource and only 18 (20.00%) respondents prefer only print resources.

8.5 Purpose of using Electronic Information Resources (EIRs)

Table-5: Purpose of using Electronic Information Resources

Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
For teaching	05	05.56
Information gathering	36	40.00
For research work	41	45.56
Keeping update with the Subject trends	08	08.88
Total	90	100.00

Table-5 Shows that the majority of respondents i.e. 41 (45.56%) use EIRs for research work, followed by 36 (40.00%) respondents make use for information gathering, less number of respondents i.e.08 (08.88%) make use for updating themselves with the subject trends and only 05 (05.56%) making use EIRs for teaching purpose.

8.6 Method of learning to use EIRs

Table-6: method of learning to use E-Resources

Methods	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Trial and error	35	38.88
User education from university library	43	47.77
Guidance from colleagues and friends	12	13.33
Total	90	100.00

The table-6 shows that the majority of the respondents i.e. 43 (47.77%) acquired necessary skills to make use of EIRs through user education from university library, followed by 35 (38.88%) respondents learnt through trial and error method and only 12 (13.33%) respondents learnt by getting/taking guidance from colleagues and friends.

8.7 Important features of Electronic Information Resources (EIRs)

Table-7: Important features of Electronic Information Resources

Features	No. of Respondents (N=90)	Percentage (%)
Quick retrievability	37	41.11
Full text searching	43	47.78
Access to up to date information	53	58.89
Free availability (Open Access)	15	16.67
Links to other resource	58	64.44

A question was raised to know the important features which motivate the respondents to make use of EIR. Table -7 reveals that, majority of the respondents i.e. 58 (64.44%) are of the opinion that, links to other resources is considered to be the most important feature, followed by 53 (58.89%) opine that they can access up to date information, 43 (47.78%) respondents feel that full text searching can be done, 37 (41.11%) respondents opine that quick retrievability and about 16 (16.67%) of the respondents opine that free availability is more helpful.

8.8 Frequency of accessing Electronic Information Resources (EIRs)

Table-8: Frequency of accessing Electronic Information Resources

Types of EIRs	Very Frequently	Frequently	Some times	Rarely	Very Rarely
E-databases	30 (33.33)	22 (24.44)	30 (33.33)	07 (7.78)	01 (1.4)
E-Journals	10 (22.22)	43 (47.78)	21 (23.34)	03 (3.33)	03 (03.33)
E-articles/ E-reprints	26 (28.89)	38 (42.22)	18 (20.00)	06 (06.67)	02 (02.22)
E-books	29 (32.22)	34 (37.78)	20 (22.22)	05 (5.56)	02 (2.22)
E-News groups	27 (30.00)	32 (35.56)	23 (25.55)	07 (7.78)	1 (1.4)
E-Theses/ Dissertations	29 (32.22)	26 (28.89)	22 (24.44)	07 (7.78)	6 (6.67)

(Note: Number given in parenthesis shows the percentage)

Results presented in the table-8 reveal that, 30 (33.33%) respondents are using e-databases very frequently and sometimes and only 7 (7.78%) respondents use rarely. Majority of the respondents i.e. 43 (47.78%) use e-journals frequently, followed by 38 (42.22%) use e-articles/e-reprints frequently, about 29 (32.22%) respondents are making use of e-books very frequently, whereas, 07 (07.78%) respondents are using e-news groups rarely, about 35.56% of the respondents make use of e-news group frequently. 29 (32.22%) of respondents use e-theses/ dissertations most frequently.

8.9 Awareness about UGC –INFONET consortium

Table-9: Awareness about UGC –INFONET consortium

Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	87	96.67
No	03	03.33
Total	90	100.00

Table-9 shows the awareness of UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium among the respondents available through the library. Majority of the respondents i.e. 87 (96.67%) are aware of UGC-INFONET consortium and only 03 (03.33%) respondents are not aware.

8.10 Knowledge about Copyright /Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Table-10: Knowledge about Copyright /Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Knowledge of IRP Act	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	83	92.22
No	07	07.78
Total	90	100.00

Copyright is a major issue in making use of EIRs. To make use of plenty of EIRs available over Internet, the users must be well acquainted with copyright issues which promote the ethical and fair use of information. Keep this in view; a question was raised to know the respondents' awareness about copyright and IPR in making use of EIRs. Table-10 indicates that 83 (99.22%) respondents have knowledge about copyright act, whereas, 07 (07.78 %) of the respondents do not have knowledge about the same.

8.11 Problems faced by the respondents in making use of EIRs

Table-11 Problems faced by the respondents in making use of EIRs

Problem	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Difficult to search without assistance	24	26.67
Too expensive	06	06.67
Lack of Time	01	01.11
Non Availability of required E-resources	02	02.22
Lack of Training	38	42.22
Lack of Hardware & Software	03	03.33
Technical problems	04	04.44
Information Explosion	12	13.34
Total	90	100.00

Table-11 reveals the different problems being faced by the respondents while accessing and making use of EIRs. It is found that 38 (42.22%) respondents feel that lack of training is a major problem of accessing to e-resources, followed by 24 (26.67%) respondents find it difficult to search e-resources without assistance. About 12 (13.34%) opine that information explosion is one of the problems, 04 (04.44%) respondents face technical problems and 02 (02.22%) respondents express that non availability of required e-resources is a major problem.

8.12 Need for training / orientation programs

Table-12: Need for training / orientation programs

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	86	95.56
No	04	04.44
Total	90	100.00

Today large proportion of library budget is being allocated to acquire EIRs in academic libraries like Universities and colleges to promote the use of EIRs. But due to the lack of training and orientation programs the acquired EIRs are either unused or unaware by the users. Hence, a question was asked to whether the respondents required training program. The table-12 reveals that, 86 (95.56%) respondents feel they need training to make use of EIRs, whereas only 04 (04.44%) respondents feel that they not require.

8.13 Mode of Training

Table-13: Mode of Training

Mode of training	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Workshop with hands on experiences	26	28.89
Online Tutorial	11	12.22
Self help guide	03	03.33
Provision of list of resources	11	12.22
Support when needed	34	37.78
One-on-one demonstration	05	05.56
Total	90	100.00

Table-13 depicts the mode of training preferred by the respondents in making use of EIRs effectively. Majority of the respondents i.e. 34 (37.78%) prefer support by the library staff whenever it is needed, while 26 (28.89%) respondents prefer workshop with hands on experience, followed by 11 (12.22%) respondents prefer online tutorials and others as reflected in table.

9. 14 Advantages of Electronic Information Resources

10.

Table-14: Advantages of Electronic Information Resources

Advantages	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less time in searching	68	75.56
Simultaneous Usage	41	45.56
Easy accessibility	61	67.78
Downloading facility	63	70.00
Multiple choice formats	43	47.78
Access to comprehensive information	29	32.22
Multiuser access	49	54.44
Archival facility	34	37.78

A question was raised to elicit the opinion of the respondents about the advantages of making use of electronic information resources. Table-14 reveals that the majority of respondents i.e. 68 (75.56%) feel that it takes less time in searching, about 63 (70.00%) respondents indicate that downloading facility is an advantage and 49 (54.44%) respondents opine that multi users accessibility is an advantage. While the least number of respondents i.e. 29 (32.22%) are of the opinion that accessibility to comprehensive information is an advantage.

8.15 Impact of Electronic Information Resources on Research and Academies

Table-15: Impact of Electronic Information Resources

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage(%)
Strongly agree	62	68.89
Agree	22	22.44
Uncertain	03	03.33
Disagree	02	02.33
Strongly disagree	01	01.11
Total	99	100.00

The respondents were asked to give their opinion about the impact of Electronic Information Resources on their research activity .Table-15 reveals that 62 (68.89%) respondents strongly agree that their quality of research has increased, followed by 22 (22.44%) agreed, 3 (3.33%) respondents felt uncertain and only one (01.11) respondent strongly disagrees.

9. Major findings of the study

- Majority of the respondents i.e. 45 (50.00%) prefer both print and online resources, 27 (30.00%) respondents prefer online resource and 18 (20.00%) of the respondents prefer printed resources.
- About 86 (95-96%) are aware of the e-resources and 04 (04.44%) are not aware.
- Majority of respondents, i.e. 41 (45.56%) are using EIRs for research work.
- Majority of the respondents i.e. 43 (47.77%) acquired necessary skill to use EIRs through user education from university library.

- Majority of the respondents that is 58 (64.44%) opine that links to other resources is considered to be most important feature for the efficiency of their research study.
- About 30 (33.33%) of the respondents are using e-databases very frequently and sometimes, 43 (47.78%) respondents use e-journals frequently and 38 (42.22%) use e-articles/e-reprints frequently.
- About 87 (96.67%) of the respondents are aware of UGC-INFONET consortium.
- 83 (99.22%) respondents have knowledge about copyright act.
- 38 (42.22%) of respondents feel that lack of training is a major problem of access to EIRs.
- 95.56% of the respondents need training to make use of EIRs
- 62 (68.89%) the respondents strongly agree that their quality of research has increased by using EIRs.

10. Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that, the use of EIRs is very common among the research scholars of Karnatak University, Dharwad and majority of the research scholars are dependent on EIRs to get the required and relevant information. But practical use of EIRs is not up-to the worth in comparison to investments made in acquiring these resources; secondly infrastructure and training programs should also be revised as per requirements. However it is observed from the study that the use of EIRs has a definite impact on research and academic activities of research scholars in KUD. Therefore, it is very necessary that efforts must be made to increase the number of tutorials and training programmes on the use of EIRs, so that the research scholars of KUD can make effective use of EIRs and increase their research productivity and enhance their academic scholarship.

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