

**USE AND AWARENESS OF SCHOLARLY INFORMATION RESOURCES BY  
DOCTORAL STUDENTS OF KARNATAKA UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY**

**MR. MANJUNATH. G. A\***  
**DR. A.N. JOSHI\*\***  
**SMT. LATA. R. PATIL\*\*\***

\*Asst Librarian (Guest), Prof. S. S. Basavanal Library, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

\*\*Deputy Librarian, Prof. S. S. Basavanal Library, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka, India

\*\*\*Librarian, Govt First Grade College, Navalgund, Karnataka, India

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of conduct this study is to examine the awareness and usage of open access information resources among research scholars of Karnataka University, Dharwad. The study suggests that DOAJ is the most preferred and most frequently accessed directory of online journals and other e sources. The article recommends that majority of the researchers are having awareness of online resources and they are using the online resources very effectively, even though there is a need to create some more awareness for the research scholars in order to acquire and accessing of OA resources.

**KEYWORDS:** Open Access Resources, Karnatak University-Doctoral Students, DOAJ, Academic Libraries. Awareness of OA Resources

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

Research is an important component in any academic setup. Awareness regarding latest developments in their field is essential for the researcher to undertake in-depth studies. Library being the information provider, strives to give access to diverse kinds of resources. Electronic information has become a major source now. To meet the changes user needs academic Libraries have to subscribe full text e-journals, e-books, and online bibliographic database. The impending factor for the library from providing access to a large number of resources is its shrinking budget. As a result the libraries strive to provide access to maximum type of resources in the available budget. At this juncture of increasing demands of users and tightening of purses open access initiatives have dawned as a relief in the academic scenario.

**1. Emergence of Open Access**

After the vibrant activities in the academic field causing thrill in the world of scholarly publishing, Open Access found its origin in 2001 at Budapest Open Access Initiative. In 2003 Bethesda statement on Open Access stated that "open access will be an essential component of scientific publishing in the future and that works reporting the results

of current scientific research should be as openly accessible and freely useable as possible. Libraries and publishers should make every effort to hasten this transition in a fashion that does not disrupt the orderly dissemination of scientific information". In the same year Berlin Declaration emphasized on use of OA by stating that "Our mission of disseminating knowledge is only half complete if the information is not made widely and readily available to society. New possibilities of knowledge dissemination not only through the classical form but also increasingly through the open access paradigm via the Internet have to be supported".

India has also contributed to Open Access Initiatives, like e-prints @ IISc, Open J-Gate Informatics (India) Limited, India Medlar Center, Indian Statistical Institute, The National Academy of Sciences etc. Besides this India is contributing 624 journals to DOAJ. (As per July 2013).

## **2. Meaning and Definition:**

Open Access (OA) is free, immediate, permanent online access to the full text of research articles for anyone, web wide available freely at any point of use.

According to 'Budapest Open Access Initiative' (BOAI) the concept of Open Access refers to; "World-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature, completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds."

'Harnad' (2008) has described the Open Access as; "Information, which is Free, immediate, permanent, full-text, on-Line and accessible". He suggests three main justifications of OA: "to maximise the uptake, usage, applications and impact of the research output of your university; to measure and reward the uptake, usage, applications and impact of the research output of your university (research metrics) and, to collect, manage and showcase a permanent record of the research output and impact of your university".

'Peter Suber' (2010) describes, "Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions". Suber also states that open access contents are not restricted only to peer-reviewed research articles; they can be in any formats from texts and data to software, audio, video, and multi-media. Although the OA movement focuses on peer-reviewed research articles and their preprints, OA can also apply to non-scholarly content, like music, movies, and novels, even if these are not the focus of most OA activists (Suber, 2010).

### **3. Karnatak University and Research**

With the increasing impact of Open Access resources on academic libraries, a study was undertaken to know the usage of Open Access resources by researchers of Karnatak University, Dharwad. It was established in the year 1950; it has devoted itself to the University's mission of teaching, research and service. It caters to the needs of all the departments. In view of the changing shift of the users from print to electronic, and the ease of access to Open Access resources a survey was conducted on the researchers of Science and Social Science faculties only as the researchers expressed that the information in Indian languages offered at Karnatak University is hardly available through Open Access.

### **4. Objectives:**

- 4.1. To know the familiarity with OA content
- 4.2. Know the type of information resources accessed through OA
- 4.3. To know which directories of OA are preferred
- 4.4. To know which OA resources are preferred.

### **5. Scope and Limitations**

The present study is limited to research scholars of Karnatak University Dharwad. The researchers of Sciences and Social Sciences faculties are taken for the study.

### **6. Methodology**

The research students of Karnatak University were taken as sample for the study. Those researchers who visited the library everyday and are frequently using e-resources were selected to administrate the questionnaire 100 such students belonging to Sciences and Social Sciences were administrated with a questionnaire regarding usage of OA resources for their academic needs. Out of 100 respondents who were surveyed, 83 of them have responded to the questionnaire. The collected questionnaires were analysed and tabulated.

### **7. Results and Discussion**

The questionnaires were analysed based on the responses and the results were as follows.

**a) Distribution of Research Scholars:**

The Sample consists of scholars undertaking research in Sciences and Social Sciences. There were 47 (57%) respondents from Social Sciences and 36 (43%) from both the Sciences faculties their composition is shown in Figure 1.

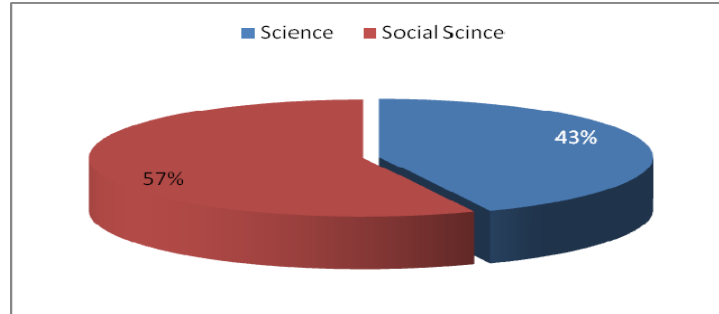


Figure 1. Distribution of Research Scholars

b) Familiarity with OA: Out of 83 students who used the internet everyday, 73% of them were familiar with usage of Open Access Scholarly Content

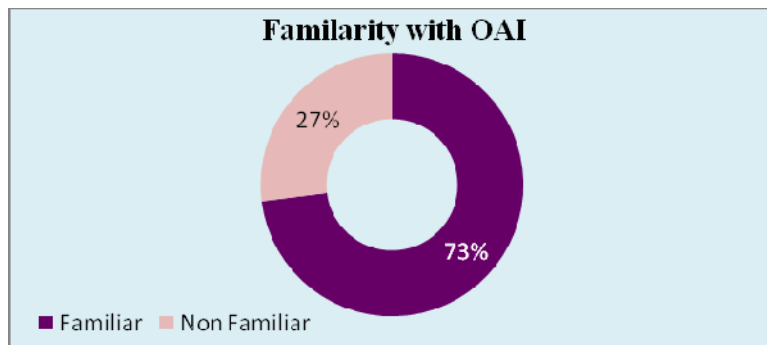


Figure 2. Familiarity with OAI

The above figure shows that majority of the internet using research scholars are familiar with OA scholarly content and its usage.

**c) Type of Information Resources Accessed:**

As many types of resources are available on open access, an effort was made to know the most preferred sources accessed through OA. The options given were journal articles, books, and conference/publications, Thesis/dissertations, research reports or any other sources. The responses are shown in Figure 3.

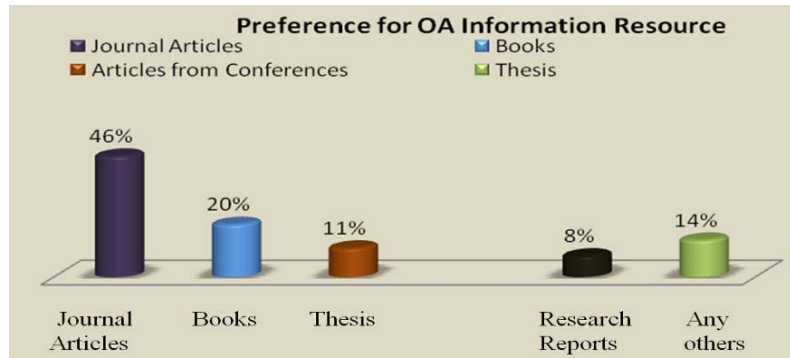


Figure 3. Preference for OA Information Resources

The results showed that majority of users i.e. 38 (46%) refer OA journal articles, while 17 (20%) refer OA books, 9 (11%) refer articles presented in conferences and thesis/dissertations are referred by none. 7 (8%) refer OA research reports and 12 (14%) refer other OA sources which are not specified in the survey.

**d) Directory Preferred for OA Content:**

The responses of the researchers showed that among the directories most preferred out of DOAJ, Open J-gate, Public Library of Science, Pub Med, Google Scholar, or any other sources were DOAJ. The figure 4 shows the preference of the users.

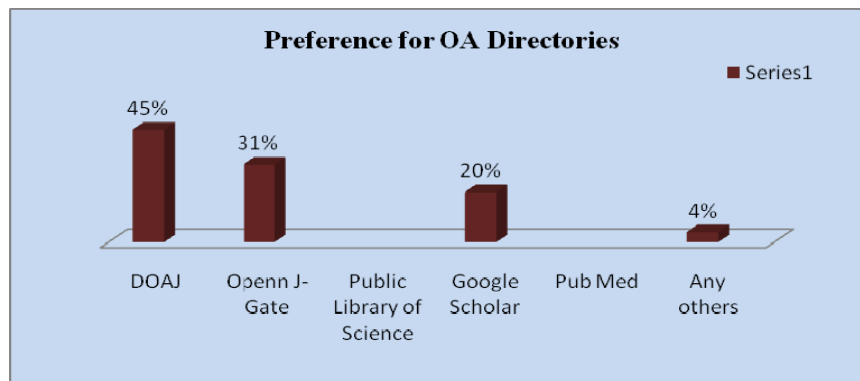


Figure 4. Preference for OA Directories

DOAJ was the most preferred database with 37 (45%) preferring it for their information needs, followed by J. Gate with 26(31%) using it, Google Scholar was used by 17 (20%) and any other source not mentioned in the questionnaire was used by 3 (4%) people.

**8. Findings of the Study**

The finding shows that there is fairly a good mixture of researchers from both the faculties and there is no such major bias towards any one faculty. It is evident from the study that

majority of the researchers of Karnatak University are familiar with usage of Scholarly Content of Open Access resources. The OA content in Indian regional Languages is hardly available; hence the Scholars working in such fields do not use OA resources for their information needs.

Journal articles are the most current source of information in any academic field, hence the preference for journal articles under OA by the researchers is obvious (46%) followed by books (20%) and conference papers. The thesis and dissertations are also being available made through OA Librarians need to create awareness to tap this source of information also. DOAJ, a Directory of Open Access Journals Started functioning from 2003. It has good visibility and covers around 9914 journals from 120 countries.. Open J-gate provides access to 3000 + OA journals. Hence the first choice of researches was DOAJ (45%) followed by Open J Gate (31%) and Google Scholar (20%) However Pub Library of Science and Pub Med were not accessed by the them. Therefore the library staff needs to create awareness regarding the prime journals available to them which might be pertaining to their area of interest.

## **Conclusion**

Shifting from traditional model of Scholarly communication to open access is a significant move, perhaps even a revolutionary one. Dehua (2013) is the opinion that the academic libraries have transformed their role of collecting, organising, providing information to researchers to other roles title selecting, reviewing, evaluating and describing internet resources, creating meta-data records for the areas of interest of the parent institution. In this new role the academic libraries should take initiation in Launching IR of the publications of its parent institution, information literacy regarding use of diverse OA resources and should be shouldered the responsibility of preservation of OA materials and making them available to the researchers as and when necessary is the need of the day.

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