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Use of E-Resources and UGC-Infonet Consortium by the Teachers and Research Scholars in Aligarh Muslim University

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Introduction

Electronic publishing has been revolutionizing the format of the recorded knowledge. Electronic information services are attracting readers' attention in today's networked environment. E-journals and E-databases bring new challenges before the library and information professionals to give full text access to scholarly publications both in print and electronic version to its end users. Further subscribing to printed journals by individual libraries is beyond human comprehension. Ever-increasing prices of journals accompanied with the shrinking budget of libraries, management/parent bodies are forced to resort to the best alternatives like consortia. In this respect the contributions and the benefits of E-journals and E-databases provided by UGC-Info-Net are numerous.

Origin of Consortia

According to Kopp (1998) Melvin Dewey wrote about library cooperation in an issue of the library journal in 1886 and 1887 E. A. Mac presented his views on cooperation vs. competition in the same journal in 1888. ALA has formed a cooperation committee whose report was published in ALA Bulletin in 1880s. During a symposium organized by ALA on the tropic "the library of tomorrow" in 1939, R. D. Downs presented a futuristic view of library cooperation in his paper "one for all"; a historical sketch of library cooperation 1930-1970. During 1970 the US office of Education commissioned the System Development Corporation (SDC) to carry out a nationwide study of the academic library consortia to develop a fund of descriptive and prospective information about the activities of academic library consortia and provide

guidance of libraries that were forming or planning to form consortia.

Current Indian Scenario

During last couple of decades the formation of library consortia has shown steady growth mainly due to the developments in electronic communications. Consortia are no more restricted to the developed countries. Many efforts have taken place in the country for formation of library networks mainly due to the radical changes in the functioning of the libraries. The fact that financial crunch in these libraries forced them to find out some sort of cooperation. As a result formal library networks came into existence, such as CALIBNET in 1986, DELNET in 1988, MALIBNET, etc. Establishment of INFLIBNET by UGC in 1988 gave a real boost to library automation activities in the country. Many libraries in India came together voluntarily for resource sharing and the most prominent among them was the consortium of Astronomy libraries in India.. Even after two decades of cooperative efforts for resource sharing among the libraries in India, there is not even a single successful programme that could be used as a point of reference to replicate in other libraries. The main factors that affected these kinds of efforts were more human and attitudinal than technological or economical. However, things are changing and the information environment is more conducive today. The advent of Internet has provided the tools to tackle the problems faced earlier mainly the physical movement of information resource which no longer is required. As a result successful consortium like INDEST and UGC Infonet: E-journal consortia have come up.

FORSA Consortium

The Indian Astrophysics Consortium called Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy (FORSA) is a typical example of homogenous group of members wherein the libraries have common area of interest and establishing the consortium is slightly easier than in heterogeneous type of members. The FORSA consortium consists of five members who joined the consortium for negotiating licensing for astronomy journals and identified a subscription agent as a supplier of journals. Under the consortium Nature journal was also subscribed by six libraries those committed to share the license fee to access the Nature electronically

CSIR Consortium

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in India has 40 scientific laboratories involved in basic and applied research in various disciplines. Many of the laboratories have well equipped libraries, and some of them act as the main information centres in different subjects functioning as consultant libraries at the national level. Access to electronic journals through the use of state-of the art technology is possible in many of the libraries belonging to these laboratories. Each of the laboratories have a well established library documentation centre that is also backed up with strategic information support from the National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resource (NISCAIR), a constituent establishment of CSIR formed with the merger of INSDOC and NISCOM.

UGC Infonet Consortium

UGC-Infonet is an ambitious programme of UGC to interlink all the universities in the country with state-of-the-art technology. The network will overlay on ERNET backbone and provide Internet and intranet services. It is

providing Internet connectivity to 150 universities in first phase. INFLIBNET is responsible for executing and monitoring the entire project. University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated a programme called The UGC-Infonet E-Journals Consortium to provide online access to electronic journals and databases in all disciplines to the universities in India. Indian Universities constitute one of the largest educational systems in the world. Fast changing curricula, frequent introduction of new subjects, globalization of education and competitive research, has increased the demand for scholarly journals over the years. But due to insufficient funds, which affects the research and academic activity. Realizing the need for a common mechanism for access to scholarly information, University Grants Commission (UGC) set the priority for providing access to scholarly information for the research and academic community by supplementing the existing collection in the individual universities. Under this initiative UGC is modernizing the University Campus with state-of-the-art campus wide net work and setting up its own nation wide communication network named 'UGC-Infonet". UGC,INFLIBNET and ERNET came together to meet the challenges that may face the education community with respect to real time information. But the question is how much are our scholars and professors are benefiting from it? Are all of them aware of it? If so what is the extent of use? These are some of the questions that come to our mind. Hence there is a need to know through systematic opinion survey, what is the extent of influence the UGC Info-Net has, on the user community in universities. The present study is envisaged with this backdrop in mind. Journals from 25 publishers across the globe can be accessed through the UGC Info-Net. It provides current as well as archival access to core and peer-reviewed journals in different disciplines. So far 122 universities are accessing resources from the programme. Which come under the purview of UGC, have been provided access to these journals and it will soon be extended to affiliated colleges of these universities. It covers almost all areas of learning like Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Physical and Chemical Sciences, Life Sciences, Computer Sciences, Medical, Mathematics and Agricultural science etc., and other subject areas are to be added in the near future. The programme is completely supported and funded by the UGC and monitored by INFLIBNET (Information and Library Network) Centre, Ahmedabad.

Scope and Coverage

Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) is a premier central university in north India; Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in the 19th century created a modern educational institution which, first as M .A.O. College and then since 1920 as Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) has been the path breaker in brining Muslims to modern scientific fields and education. The main reason behind the establishment of this institution was the wretched dependence of Muslims, which had been debasing their position day after day their misguided and misleading, religious fanaticism did not let than avail the education facilities provide by the government school and colleges. Sir Syed therefore deemed it necessary to make some special arrangement for their education. Aligarh's "culture of decency" has a compelling appeal. There are 16 halls of residence comprising 69 hostels with more than 35000 students, 2000 around teachers and 7000 non teaching staff. AMU has 12 faculties compromising a wide spectrum of academic disciplines, 91 departments, and 5 institution 13 centers. The university offers 289 courses. Students come from all over INDIA and more than 500 hundred international students in the various academic disciplines from professional to research. We take from sample from the position. This study is confined to the users of UGC-Info-Net at the Aligarh Muslim University. Only Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Life Science, Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Science members and research scholars are covered in this survey. The journals out of the purview of UGC-Info-Net are excluded from the scope of this study.

Significance of the Study

In the present era of information explosion-more and more publications are becoming Web-concerned. Most of the science and technology libraries have changed the contemporary outlook towards functions and services. The environment is rapidly changing to an electronic one. The investigators decided to conduct this study for measuring the usage of online journals by Faculty members, Researchers and Post-Graduate Students, at Aligarh Muslim University, (AMU).

Objectives

E-journal consortium is providing access to scholarly literature to the academic community of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). In order to understand the futuristic demands of users it is inevitable to assess the usage of these online information resources. To determine how faculty and users in the university are using information for their research and teaching activities, the university conducted focus group sessions structured around following areas:

The objectives of the study are

- To identify the use pattern and impact of UGC-INFONET Consortium.
- To know the significance of e-journals over print journals.
- To measure the frequency of access to the consortium.
- To know the problems faced by teachers and Research Scholars of AMU in accessing the e- resources.
- To ascertain the need for user orientation programme in accessing e-journals.
- To draw opinions and suggestions from the users towards improving the accessibility of the e-resources through the consortium.

Methodology

The study has been carried out by using a questionnaire. Only 100 questionnaires were distributed among the teachers, research scholars and PG students of the university. Out of the respondents a few were half done. Ultimately 60 properly filled in questionnaire were supplemented by interview. The findings of the present study are thus based purely on the responses made in the questionnaire returned by the respondents and the interviews conducted informally.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study is limited to

- Aligarh Muslim University
- UGC-INFONET Consortium
- Teachers and Research Scholars

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Awareness of UGC-INFONET Consortium

Respondents	Awareness of UGC-INFONET Consortium	
	Yes	No
Teacher	16(53.33%)	13(43.33%)
Research scholar	17(56.67%)	4(46.67%)

Total	33(55%)	27(45%)

Table1. Awareness of UGC-INFONET Consortium

Table 1 indicates that out of 60 respondents, only 33(55%) respondents are aware of UGC INFONET Consortium and remaining 27(45%) respondents are not aware of this programme. It is evident that awareness programme to access the e-resources of the UGC INFONET Consortium is very much necessary.

Guidance in Using UGC-INFONET

The respondents were asked about their guides of using the UGC INFONET. The following table shows the category of guides who helped the library users.

Respondents	Library Professional	Teacher/Guide	Colleague	Others
Teacher	10	Nil	8	7
Research Scholar	7	8	7	1
Total	17(51.52%)	8(24.24%)	1515(45.45%)	88(24.24%)

Table 2. Guidance of using UGC-INFONET

Out of 60 respondents, only 33(55%) respondents are aware of UGC-INFONET Consortium .Among the 33 respondents, 51.52% of respondents are known from library professionals followed by 45.45% of respondents from colleague and 26.67% of respondents from teacher or guide and others.

Orientation and Training

Respondent	Need for Orientation/Training Programme	Total	Yes	No
Teacher	20 (66 .67%)	10 (33 .33%)	30(100%)	
Research Scholar	27 (90%)	3(10%)	30(100%	
Total	47 (78 .33%)	13 (21 .67%)	60(100%)	

Table. 3. Need for Orientation /Training Programme

Table. 3 reveals that out of 60 respondents 78.33% of the respondents have expressed that they are in need of orientation /training programme to access the e-resources through UGC-INFONET Consortium. It is evident that majority of the respondents need orientation /training programme to access the e-resources of UGC-INFONET Consortium. Therefore, authority of the AMU should conduct the orientation/training programme regularly.

Requirement for Print Journals

Respondent	Requirement of Print journals in addition to e-journals	Total	Yes	No
Teacher	27(90%)	3(10%)	30(100%)	
Research Scholar	28(93.33%)	2(6.67%)	30(100%)	
Total	55(91.67%)	5(8.33%)	60(100%)	

Table4. Requirement of Print journals in addition to e-journals

Table 4 reveals that out of 60 respondents, only 55(91.67%) respondents are shown keen interest in print journals in addition to e-journals but remaining 5(8.33%) respondents did not feel the requirement.

Need for More Journals in the UGC-INFONET Programme

Respondent	Expectation of more number of e-journals to be included in the UGC-INFONET Programme	Yes	No
Teacher	17	Nil	
Research Scholar	16	Nil	
Total	33 (100%)	Nil	

Table 5 Expectation of more number of e-journals to be included in the UGC-INFONET Programme

Out of 60 respondents, only 33(55%) respondents are aware of UGC-INFONET Consortium .Among the 33 respondents, 100% of the respondents expect more number of e-journals to be included in the UGC-INFONET programme.

Access Problems

Respondent	Problem faced to Access the e-resources	Total	Yes	No
Teacher	24 (80%)	6 (20%)	30(100%)	
Research Scholar	23 (76.67%)	7 (23.33%)	30(100%	
Total	47 (78.33%)	13 (21.67%)	60(100%)	

Table6. Problem faced to access e-resources

Table 6 reveals that 78.33% of the respondent's encounters problems in the use of the e-resources through the UGC-INFONET Consortium .The major problems which they encountered include the followings:

- They are not aware of UGC-INFONET Consortium.
- Lack of ICT knowledge
- Frequent power failure disturbs them.
- The speed of the internet is very low.
- The number of computer available is not sufficient to serve the users.
- Problem in the selection of desired title of journals

Frequency of Access

Respondents	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Monthly	Total
Teacher	3(17.65%)	7(41.18%)	6(35.29%)	1(5.88%)	17(100%)
Research Scholar	2(12.5%)	8(50%)	4(25%)	2(12.5%)	16(100%)
Total	5(15.15%)	15(45.46%)	10(30.30%)	3(9.09%)	33(100%)

Table7. Frequency of access to UGC-INFONET

Table 7 reveals that most of respondents access to e-resources only once in a week. 5 (15.15%) respondents access e-resources daily while

15(45.46%) respondents access to e-resources weekly with 10(30.30%) respondents access to e-resources occasionally and 3(9.09%) respondents access to e-resources monthly. Current information is essential for teachers and research scholars. The UGC-INFONET Consortium, by subscribing to and providing e-resources, will help to improve the reading habits and academicians.

Improving the E-journal Service

In the opinion of the respondent the different points with which the access of e-resources through UGC-INFONET Consortium can be improved upon include the following:

- Regular conduct of Orientation /Training programme for the UGC-INFONET Consortium
- Installation of more computer terminals and increasing network accessibility.
- Regular power supply.
- Providing better infrastructure facilities for the improvement of internet speed.

Findings

- 55% of the respondents are aware about the UGC –INFONET programme.
- Majority of the respondents (86.67%) felt that they are in need of regular training programme to make effective use of UGC-INFONET Consortia.
- 91.67% of the respondents have recommended for print journals in addition to e-journals.
- All the respondents (100%) who are aware of UGC-INFONET are of the view that more number of e-journals should be included in the UGC-INFONET Consortium.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The present study reveals that there is increased acceptance of electronic journals by the university academicians and users in the present environment in which the UGC-INFONET has to play a significant role to assist academic and research community. Major problems encountered by the users toward access to e-consortium are lack of awareness and frequent power failure. Proper feedback as well as orientation programmes should be conducted from time to time by the university so that the problems encountered must be resolved according to users' requirements. The infrastructure facilities should be enhanced for the better utilization of UGC-INFONET E-Journals.

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