N-LIST E-Resources: A Major Boon To The User Community During Covid-19 Pandemic Era: A Study

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Abstract:

The novel Coronovirus pandemic has made us to use the digital resources due to closure of colleges across the globe. Librarians and users all over the world have had to adjust to new ways of work and life. The study explores the e-resources provided by N-LIST in the form of e-journals and e-books from various reputed publishers included in the consortium. The data has been gathered from the library users (students, research scholars and the faculty) of the academic colleges across Goa through online Google form. From the study, it was found that N-LIST e-resources have been playing a crucial role in satisfying the information needs of the users throughout the Covid-19 pandemic era. The study shows that N-LIST e-resources has significantly contributed to the demands of the college library users as the vast collection of e-resources can be accessed from anywhere and at any time through remote access. This paper tries to shed light on the importance of having N-LIST e-resources, the crucial role played during the pandemic era in fulfilling the information needs of the users and the satisfaction level of the users. The study also made it very clear that the users are very satisfied with the e-resources provided under N-LIST consortium.

Keywords: N-LIST, Database, Online, E-Resources E-Books, E-Journals, Consortium, Goa, Covid-19, Pandemic, Services

Introduction:

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan's Laws of Library Science enunciates that every reader should get his or her book and every book should get its reader, similarly delivering every piece of information to the library patrons is a must-adopted approach for every library in this digital era. Every library of the country should have all the essential information required for the progress and growth of its members. Library resources play a vital role in helping the learners and research scholars to conduct research study and procuring good quality information. Information and communication technology (ICT) has completely transformed the world into a "Global Village". Due to ICT, libraries have revolutionized into virtual and digital libraries where journals, magazines and books have been converted into e-journals, e-zines and e-books. It gives an opportunity to the libraries to provide its users with value-added information services and an access to a variety of digital based information resources. ICT has played a pivotal role in the development of library consortium. Nowadays, consortium has become an important part of library to provide its users with the best of e-resources. One such important consortium is the N-LIST consortium facilitating the college library users with a variety of useful e-resources.

The life-taking Corona Virus has enormously affected the entire world. Covid-19 pandemic era has radically changed the ways academic institutions function today. The present scenario has transformed the traditional methods of teaching and learning into web-based teaching and learning where in online methods are adopted by the teaching professionals and learners to virtually connect and communicate with each other. During this pandemic and lockdown period, the library users could only rely on the library e-resources to meet their information needs as the doors of the library had to be shut and the physical library collection could not be accessed by the users. At this crucial phase, N-LIST e-resources proved to be the best source of information to the users. To have an access to the N-LIST E-resources was a major boon for the users during the pandemic as they able to access a wide variety of collection of e-books and e-journals on diversified subjects to select from by various Indian and foreign publishers.

About N-LIST:

National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST) was proposed under the Ministry of Human Resource Development under its national mission on education through information and communication technology. It is an initiative of INFLIBNET centre and it was launched on 4th May 2010. It is jointly implemented by UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and INDEST-AICTE Consortium, IIT Delhi. From the year 2014, N-LIST programme is included under UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium as a college component. The colleges except Agriculture, Engineering, Management, Medical, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Nursing in India are eligible to access the e-resources under the programme. N-LIST aims to provide access to e-resources to students, researchers and faculty of the colleges and other beneficiary institutions across the country through server(s) installed at the INFLIBNET Centre at affordable cost. N-LIST Consortium inception has changed the scenario of academic college libraries in India. NLIST consortium is one of the fast-growing consortia for college libraries in India. MHRD, has made significant efforts and funded good amount to the promotion and use of N-LIST electronic resources for the college libraries. It is an excellent step towards higher quality education.

Importance of having N-LIST e-resources especially during the Covid-19 pandemic era:

1. N-LIST helps the users to access large collection of e-resources during the Covid-19 pandemic era.
2. N-LIST e-resources are most convenient to the users as it can be accessed at any time and from any place.
3. N-LIST consortium provides variety of e-resources from various publishers, thus benefiting the users to procure up-to-date, authentic and reliable information.
4. E-resources are categorized into various subjects and the user can search for the required information using different search fields. This helps the users to quickly find the needed information.
5. It saves a lot of time of the user by providing instant access to the e-resources.
6. N-LIST e-resources help the Libraries to build up digital library.

Literature Review:

Living in the digital age, it is very important for every academic college library to subscribe to E-resources, especially to help in providing to the needs of the information seekers at this crucial phase.

Bilawar Prakash Bhairu (2020) in his study "Lockdown Period and Information Sources" has made us aware about Coronavirus lockdown period and how the online resources have come to the rescue of students across the globe. The result of this research study highlighted that during the lockdown period 377 webinars, followed by 36 FDP, 26 workshops, 19 quiz 7 training programs etc. were conducted on different subjects by various institutions. The current situation directs for 'digital citizenship' amongst the academicians and the students.

Sheikh (2020) in his research article mentioned that around 20% of libraries of Pakistan have institutional repositories which are not accessible through the internet nor mentioned in OpenDOAR. The open access movement in Pakistan was the main highlight of the study. However, there was no such research study conducted to identify the importance and use of open access resources during the pandemic period and emergency situations, because no such situation has been faced at such a large level. COVID-19 crisis has sparked greater visibility of freely accessible scholarly books and articles. Students and staff can no longer visit physical libraries, millions of research papers have been released online to support studies and vaccine preparations.

Ali Amna Farzand & Qurat Ul Ain Saleem (2020) under the research study titled "Open Access Resources as an Opportunity for Academic Libraries during Pandemic: A Study" also highlighted the major role of libraries and librarians in the providing of services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The other main purpose was to bring to the notice the efforts of HEC and high ranked university libraries during a pandemic to provide to the needs of their patrons. The research study made it very clear about the status of digital services provided by the universities during Covid-19 pandemic. . The study was limited to the advantages of open access resources

for academic college libraries and in terms, university selection as only the top 5 university libraries were selected for review.

Mehta Dipti & Wang Xiaocan (2020) in his research paper described the library's exact position during the crisis and illustrates the uncharted challenges that the pandemic has posed to its digital usage and services provided. Further in the study the researcher has shown how the libraries has adapted to few existing services transformed into digital format and explored new techniques to support universities online teaching and learning. The research paper describes the different digital services provided by the library during Covid-19 pandemic period. This paper aims to make other university libraries aware of what the library has implemented with providing digital services to its teaching faculty and students during the pandemic. It also mentions the challenges and implications for the librarians working in-house and remotely.

Veeresh B. Hanchinal (2019) has conducted a study on the topic "Awareness and usage of e-resources of N-LIST consortium: The research study is with reference to affiliated academic colleges of Mumbai". The main objective of this study was to know whether the users are aware about N-LIST consortium, the main purpose of accessing N-LIST, is to examine its usefulness, identify the highly used electronic resources, to know the difficulties faced while accessing, suggested ways and means to maximize the use of N-LIST electronic resources. The findings also revealed that 89 respondents were not aware about electronic resources of N-LIST consortium and 50% of the respondents had not accessed it. Electronic books are highly used by most of the students. It was found that the purpose of using N-LIST e-resources was to prepare class notes and projects. Lack of proper infrastructure and slow net speed were the two main problems faced by the users.

Singh Jagjit (2017) in his article titled "Use of electronic resources in N-LIST programme by the undergraduate students of four postgraduate colleges of Jalandhar District, Punjab: A study" aims to check the usage of various electronic resources in various aspects by the undergraduate students, preferences of e-resources, satisfaction level and the problems faced by them while accessing the e-resources. The research study reveals that most of the students were aware of the

N-LIST programme. UG students access N-LIST programme twice a week in great numbers and students in large number access it from their homes. Students preferred subject choice to access e-resources in N-LIST. Indian journals were accessed the most. Students faced the problems of slow speed of internet while accessing the N-LIST e-resources. Overall the students were satisfied using N-LIST e-resources as it is easy to use, time saving, more informative and more useful.

P Arul Pragasam (2016) in his research study titled "A study of awareness and use of INFLIBNET's N-LIST consortium in colleges" has focused on the use of NLIST consortium by the faculty, research scholars and students under the university of Mumbai region. The research study aimed to understand whether the users were aware of the N-LIST e-resources, the purpose of using N-LIST e-resources, determine the frequency of N-LIST usage and to know how much time spent in using N-LIST. The study revealed that all users use N-LIST e-resources as a useful source of information to meet their needs. 92% of the respondents were aware of N-LIST services. Frequency of use depended on the working nature of the users and maximum number of users used it daily. Poor broadband connectivity and restricted access and lack of training were the major problems faced by the users. Most of the users were satisfied and had a good attitude towards N-LIST e-resources.

Rani (2015), in her study ascertained that the remote and rural areas are still unaware about N-LIST consortium, so government and Librarians should spread awareness in those parts of the country through seminars and conferences to make them to provide a good library environment in those areas. He further recommended different regional languages and books written by Indian publishers should be included in N-LIST consortium so that our students can be benefitted by it because this books will cost very less.

Objectives of the Study:
1. To ascertain the usefulness of N-LIST E-resources during the Covid-19 pandemic era.
2. To find out the purpose of accessing N-LIST E-resources.
3. To measure the level of satisfaction of the users using N-LIST E-resources.

4. To recommend ways to enhance the use of N-LIST E-resources.

5. To understand the viewpoint of the users towards usefulness of N-LIST E-resources during the pandemic phase.

Research Methodology:

A structured online questionnaire prepared using Google Forms was used as the data collection tool. The data has been gathered from the library users (students, research scholars and the faculty) of the academic colleges in Goa. The online questionnaire was sent to 100 library users out of which 82 responded to the questionnaire. The data collected has been analyzed and presented using frequency tables and percentages.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1: Awareness of N-LIST E-resources

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	75	91.5%
No	7	8.5%

Table No. 1 reveals the users awareness about N-LIST e-resources. The information collected from the above table clearly indicates that a bulk of the users are aware about N-LIST database. Seventy five users out of eighty two know about N-LIST database.

Table 2: Source of Awareness about N-LIST Programme

Classification	No. of respondents	Percentage
Librarian	50	61%
Teacher	14	17%
Friends	10	12.2%
Library Website	8	9.8%

Table No. 2 depicts the sources of awareness about N-LIST services among the users. It was learned that the college librarian plays a major role in creating awareness about N-LIST e-

resources. For majority i.e. 61% of the users were informed by the librarian whereas 17% and 12.2% were made aware by their friends and teachers respectively. Library website was the source of awareness for least (9.8%) number of the users.

Table 3: In the present Covid-19 pandemic scenario, do you feel N-LIST E-resources are the best substitute to conventional/printed resources?

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	68	82.9%
No	14	17.1%

The above table 3 clearly indicates that majority i.e 82.9% of the college library users gave a positive response saying that they feel N-LIST E-resources are the best substitute to the conventional/printed resources during the Covid-19 pandemic era. N-LIST E-resources have proved to be the best source of information to the users by providing a vast collection of E-resources on varied subjects to choose from distinguished publishers across the world. It was of great advantage to the users as they could access the E-resources from anywhere and at anytime.

Table 4: Purpose of accessing N-LIST E-resources (Multiple answers were permitted)

Classification	No. of respondents	Percentage
For assignments/Project/Research study	67	81.7%
Preparing/Accessing Teaching resources	27	32.9%
Preparing study notes	35	42.7%
General reading to update knowledge	30	36.6%

The purpose of accessing N-LIST E-resources differs from user to user. The above table 4 indicates the user's purpose of accessing N-LIST E-resources. It is seen that most of the user's i.e. 81.7% use N-LIST E-resources for completing their assignments, projects and for research study. 42.7% use it for preparing study notes. 36.6% of the users say that they access, download and read e-books, e-journals to update their knowledge, while 32.9% claim that N-LIST E-

resources help them in preparing/accessing teaching resources. N-LIST consortium aids in providing college library users with a number of useful quality e-resources on diversified subject areas.

Table 5: Most liked features of N-LIST

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Current Information	63	76.8%
Multimedia	34	41.5%
Easy to find information	54	65.9%
User friendly	60	18.3%
Free information	5	6.1%
Comfortable to handle	10	12.2%
Resource sharing	3	3.7%

N-LIST E-resources have many distinguished features. From the above Table 5, the feature of providing current information is the most liked feature of N-LIST by 76.8% of the users, followed by 65.9% for easy to find information while 18.3% users like to access N-LIST as it is user friendly.

Table 6: E-resources preferred the most.

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
E-journal	53	64.6%
E-book	29	35.4%

N-LIST consists of thousands and lakhs of e-books and e-journals classified in different subject categories. Table No. 6 indicates that 64.6% of the users preferred to access e-journals while e-books were accessed by 35.4% users.

Table 7: Frequency of accessing N-LIST E-resources prior to Covid-19 pandemic.

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	13	15.8%
Weekly	28	34.2%
Fortnightly	25	30.5%
Monthly	16	19.5%

The above table No. 7 shows the frequency of accessing N-LIST E-resources prior to Covid-19 pandemic. Most (34.2%) of the users accessed N-LIST weekly, whereas it was found that least number of users (15.8%) accessed N-LIST E-resources daily. Prior to Covid-19 pandemic, the doors of the library were open to the users. This was the main reason the users did not feel the urge to access the library N-LIST E-resources as the physical collection of the library was easily accessible to the users.

Table 8: Frequency of accessing N-LIST E-resources during Covid-19 pandemic era.

Classification	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	47	57.3%
Weekly	18	22%
Fortnightly	12	14.6%
Monthy	5	6.1%

Table No. 8 indicates the frequency of accessing N-LIST E-resources during the Covid-19 pandemic era. It was found that majority (57.3%) of the users access N-LIST E-resources daily during the pandemic era and very few users (6.1%) access it monthly. The Covid-19 pandemic phase has literally boosted the number of users accessing the library E-resources. Having access to the information is the right of every user and it is the duty of the librarian to provide access to the resources to satisfy the demands of the users. Library e-resources were the only source of information to the users during the pandemic and lockdown period and having access to N-LIST E-resources was a major boon to the college library users.

Table 9: Major benefits of having access to N-LIST E-resources during the pandemic phase.

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Easily accessible from anywhere 24 x 7	69	84.1%
Time saving	25	30.5%
Up-to-date reliable information	56	68.1%
Wide variety of E-resources	59	72%

Table No. 9 depicts the major benefits of having access to N-LIST E-resources during the pandemic phase. It clearly indicates that the benefit of easily accessing the N-LIST E-resources from anywhere and at any time showed the highest 84.1%, followed by the 72% for the benefit of getting access to a wide variety of E-resources sitting at home during the pandemic and lockdown period. The various E-resources boosts the knowledge of the users by providing up-to-date and reliable information published by well known publishers across different countries of the world.

Table 10: Problems faced while accessing N-LIST E-resources.

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Poor Internet connectivity	28	34.1%
Problem with the system	24	29.3%
Varied search pattern	14	17.1%
Lack of guidance	16	19.5%

The above table No.10 indicates that the poor internet connectivity (34.1%) and problem with the system (29.3%) are the two main problems faced by the users while accessing N-LIST E-resources. Proper internet connectivity is a must for easily accessing and downloading the required E-resources. Poor connectivity results in a lot of wastage of time which is a major disadvantage. The users should be trained and proper guidance will help the users to access the E-resources smartly.

Table 11: Users viewpoint on the usefulness of N-LIST E-resources during the Covid-19 pandemic era.

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very useful	65	79.26%
Useful	10	12.20%
Moderately useful	5	6.10%
Slightly useful	2	2.44%
Unuseful/ useless	0	0%

Table No. 11 indicates that 79.26% of the users found N-LIST E-resources very useful during the Covid-19 pandemic era as it was the best source providing authentic, reliable and current information to the users. Library e-resources were the only source of information to the users during the pandemic and lockdown period and having access to N-LIST E-resources was a major boon to the college library users.

Findings:

★ N-LIST E-resources are the best substitute to the conventional/printed resources during the Covid-19 Pandemic era.

★ Most of the users use N-LIST E-resources for the purpose of completing assignments, projects and for research study.

★ The feature of providing current information attracts most of the users to access the N-LIST E-resources.

★ There is an increase in the number of users accessing N-LIST E-resources on a daily basis during the Covid-19 phase.

★ N-LIST E-resources are easily accessible from anywhere and at any time, this was the major advantage to the users during the pandemic and lockdown period.

★ The users are satisfied with the N-LIST e-resources and it is found to be very useful during the Covid-19 pandemic era.

Suggestions:

• The college library users should be trained and guided well to use the N-LIST E-resources. Training is very essential fir better utilization of E-resources.

• Educating the users by using various web-based techniques, conducting webinars, etc is the need of the hour which will aid in creating awareness about the N-LIST E-resources**.**

• It is very important to see that all the students are enrolled under the programme so that they can access the E-resources and take the utmost benefit especially during the pandemic era.

Conclusion:

The outburst of the Coronavirus pandemic has imposed sudden and drastic changes in deliverance of library services, as firm social distancing and lockdown measures were forced in the early phases of the pandemic, but with the help of information communication technology, libraries and the librarians were successful in reaching users and fulfilling their requirements of information in a speedy manner. N-LIST E-resources are easily accessible from anywhere and at any time, this was the major advantage to the users during the pandemic and lockdown period. The inclusion of N-LIST consortium subscription has made a huge impact in the ways of enhancing the quality of the higher education among the users. The research study highlights the impact of N-LIST consortium which has made on the user community during this difficult situation. The research study has proved that N-LIST E-resources are the best substitute to the conventional/printed resources during the Covid-19 Pandemic era. The main problem indicated in the study is the poor internet connectivity (34.1%) which is faced by the users while accessing N-LIST E-resources. The findings of the research study indicate the users were very satisfied with N-LIST E-resources for their learning outcomes, research and updating themselves in the field of their specializations.

Future study:

The librarians can do further study on NLIST database for in-depth knowledge on most preferred publishers and E-resources under consortium

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