

Chapter 48

Impact of Advent of Electronic Information Resources on Research

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ABSTRACT

The study has been conducted with an objective to assess the impact of e-resources on seven aspects of research. Seven agricultural universities of North India were surveyed while using questionnaire as a data collection tool. The majority of respondents are of the opinion that due to advent of e-resources and in view of the ICT developments, they 'feel much comfortable and competent to search information' and the changed scenario has enabled them to 'generate new research ideas'. The quantity as well as quality of research has improved. A majority of the respondents are also of the opinion that their 'research output finds more citations'. A majority of users are of the opinion that the problem of 'duplication of research' has diminished while in contrast the menace of 'plagiarism has increased'. A majority of the users agree that advent of e-resources has laid a positive impact except for the fact that 'plagiarism' has enhanced.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of electronic form of information in association with sophisticated ICT infrastructure has revolutionised the academic and research environment across globe. In this new environment more than one user can use a single electronic source of information simultaneously from different places of work. It has also paved a way to share the information in a better, economical, faster and wider sense. However, cost of information resources in electronic form is much more than their print versions (Selvaraja, 2014). It proves individually difficult for economically poor libraries to subscribe to each and every electronic source of information they need, . It is for this reason that new avenues of subscription, like

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that of demand driven acquisition, article to article subscription, chapter to chapter subscription, etc have emerged. Thus, the availability of information seems to be both facilitated, as well as hampered, due to its existence in electronic form.

The study has been conducted with an objective to assess the impact of advent of electronic information resources on the following core aspects related to 'research' as a consolidated phenomenon. The study seeks to find answer to following research questions.

- Has the advent of e-resources got any bearing on competence of users with respect to searching of information?;
- Has the rate of generation of new ideas increased or decreased?;
- What is the impact of advent of e-resources on quantity of research output?;
- What is the impact of advent of e-resources on quality of research work?;
- Have the chances of citation of research output been increased or decreased due to advent of electronic availability of information?;
- If the duplication of research has diminished or enhanced in electronic era?; and
- Whether the menace of plagiarism in electronic era has increased or decreased.

BACKGROUND

As pointed out in the introduction section of this paper the availability of information seems to have got both facilitated as well as hampered due to emergence of its electronic form. That is why almost all the libraries in India and other developing countries are still hybrid in nature, possessing both print and electronic forms of information resources. In this mixed type of situation it remains to see what type of impact is registered by core aspects of research. Research is a composite activity comprising of a series of sub-activities and associated attributes, ranging from initial generation of new ideas to final publication of research outcome. Process of research is grossly associated with application of mind and a number of mind related aspects are involved in the process. The availability of information in real sense plays an important role in completion of research activities and lays an impact on these mind related aspects of research. The study in hand is an attempt to work out the proportions of users who agree that the advent of e-resources has laid a positive impact on seven of the core aspects related to the 'research activity'.

Four out of seven states of northern India, viz. Delhi, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Punjab have been selected randomly as a cluster for investigation. Seven well established agricultural universities/deemed to be universities existing in the sampled out states have been considered for investigation. These are: 1. Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi; 2. Chowdhury Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishvavidyalaya (CSKHPKV), Himachal Pradesh; 3. Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (DYSPUH&F), Himachal Pradesh; 4. Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science & Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J), Jammu & Kashmir; 5. Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science & Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Jammu & Kashmir; 6. Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Ludhiana (GADVASU), Punjab; and 7. Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Punjab. Response of only three categories of users, viz. Scientists (Faculty Members), PhD Scholars and Masters' degree students has been collected and analysed to consolidate the facts and findings.

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