

USE OF E-DATABASES IN SELECTED SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN KARNATAKA STATE: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the awareness, use, purpose, levels of satisfaction and problems in the use of e-databases by the researchers and faculty members across the Social Science Research and Training institutions in Karnataka state, India. Apart from questionnaire, interview and observation techniques were employed for data collection. Main objectives of the study are, to ascertain the level of awareness, channels of awareness, frequency of use and purpose, search techniques employed, level of satisfaction, problems faced and suggestions in the use of e-databases. The findings revealed that majority are aware of the e-databases, majority came to know through user education programs, almost 2/5th of research scholars and faculty members visit on daily basis to use JSTOR database, lion's share consult e-databases 'To find specific information in their field', a high proportion of them search e-databases through Boolean search, more than half are highly satisfied with its use, and lack of assistance from library staff as the major problem. Recommendations for improvement provided.

Keywords: *Databases, Academic Databases, Electronic Databases, E-Databases, Electronic Resources, E-Resources, Faculty Members, Research Scholars, Students, Awareness, Use, User Survey, Social Science Research, Social Science Libraries, Research Libraries, Karnataka, India.*

1. Introduction

The rapid advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have changed the techniques of generation, acquisition, organization, processing and dissemination of library information resources in recent times. The advances and new technological innovations have resulted in a shift from the traditional to a virtual environment related to the operations of organizations and institutions, including library and information centres. E-database is a computerised collection of sets of data or

records or information related to various subjects meant for use and dissemination of knowledge. Here the study is on e-databases in Social Science research. It includes Sociology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, History, Anthropology and related areas. In this respect, Social Science libraries play a vital role in the promotion of use and dissemination of information to the users at the right time in the right way to meet their information needs. In this present era, e-databases have become a major component of the library collections in the field of Social Science research and training institutions for

teaching, training and research and development activities.

This study has covered a total of eight Social Science Research and Training institutions in the state which is listed below table 1 with abbreviations. Such a study to attempt to explore awareness, use and level of satisfaction related to e-databases among the social scientists across the selected Social Science Research and Training Institutions in Karnataka state has not been done so far, thus the need of this study. The use of electronic databases in developed countries differ from the developing countries, depends on the level as well as the subject. When compared to its use, developing countries have so many limitations due to several reasons.

2. Review of Literature

There are umpteen number of studies on the use of e-resources by research scholars as well as faculty members in various type of universities and institutes. But those studies on the use of electronic databases are comparatively less in quantity and in certain cases along with studies on e-resources it is dealt with. In this review, only those studies on the use of electronic database in the recent decade are included. This section of literature analysis focuses on databases mostly used by the research scholars and faculty, rather than undergraduates and others.

A joint study by Adesola and Ojemola (2021) assessed the use of e-databases by academic staff of Bowen University, Nigeria. Another study done in Nigeria is by Oyeyemi (2021) who studied its use in Ambrose Alli University. Yet another study in Nigeria is by Azubuike et al. (2021) which deals with utilization of e-databases by both research scholars and faculty. Use of e-databases among research scholars across Pakistani universities has been done by Ismail (2020). Olayemi and Aziken (2019) conducted a study

on the use of databases among medical students at the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Use of JSTOR database among the research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University has been studied by Ansari and Raza (2018). The study by Akinola et al. (2018) investigated the awareness and use of electronic databases by postgraduates in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Yet another study of databases in Nigeria is reported by Yusuf and Farook (2017) in Bayero University Library, Kano, Nigeria. Ngozi et al. (2018) conducted a study on awareness and usage by academic staff members in the Federal University of Technology Owerri, Nigeria.

Database use among research scholars and faculty members of University of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh has been reported by Gautam and Sinha (2017). Durgappa and Sheshadri (2017) examined the awareness level of faculty and postgraduate students in the use of online databases. Anane (2016) submitted a Master's thesis in Pretoria University which deals with the use of electronic databases of the students of University of Ghana College of Health Sciences. Use of e-databases by the academics of faculty of Sciences of Umaru Musa Yar'sdua University in Nigeria has been described by Musa et al. (2015). The aim of this paper by Naqvi (2012) is to examine the impact and use of databases at GB Pant University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Nainital.

3. Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are:

1. To ascertain the level of awareness regarding e-databases among research scholars and faculty members in Social Science Research and Training institutions in Karnataka.

2. To find out the channels of awareness regarding e-databases.
3. To examine the frequency of use and purpose of using e-databases.
4. To determine the search techniques for accessing relevant information for e-databases.
5. To ascertain the level of satisfaction related to the use of e-databases.
6. To understand the problems faced by users while accessing e-databases.
7. To put forward recommendations for improvement.

4. Methodology

It is observed with the help of secondary sources such as directories and

bibliographical tools that a total of eight social science research and training institutions exist in Karnataka state. Of the selected ones, some are autonomous, state, central and a few are private intuitions. The selected institutions with abbreviations are listed under table 1.

The library users include faculty members, research scholars and research staff engaged in social science research. A survey method of research was adopted for collecting the necessary data from the respondents. A total sample of 410 researchers and faculty groups out of 485 researchers and faculty groups belonging to these institutions, working at different levels were selected and subsequently, a questionnaire was distributed. Overall, 294 responses were received, constituting 71.71% of the respondents.

Table 1
Questionnaire Response

SI. No.	Name of the Institute	Total Population	No. of Questionnaire Distributed			No. of Questionnaire Received			Response Rate (%)
			Faculty	Resear-chers	Total	Faculty	Resear-chers	Total	
1	ISEC	180	35	130	165	28	89	117	70.91
2	NIAS	90	26	40	66	20	34	54	77.14
3	CMDR	15	7	6	13	6	6	12	92.31
4	ATI	45	18	10	28	12	6	18	64.29
5	NIPCCD	22	10	9	19	7	6	13	68.42
6	ASI	30	0	25	25	0	17	17	68.00
7	FPI	30	12	11	23	7	7	14	60.87
8	IIHS	73	20	47	67	13	36	49	73.13
	Total	485	128	278	410	93	201	294	71.71

ISEC – Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore; **NIAS** – National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore; **CMDR** – Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development and Research, Dharwad; **ATI** – Administrative Training Institute, Mysore; **NIPCCD** – National Institute for Public Co-operation and Child Development, Bangalore; **ASI** – Anthropology Survey of India, Mysore; **FPI** – Fiscal Policy Institute, Bangalore; **IIHS** – Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bangalore.

5. Hypothesis of the Study

H-1: There is significant relationship between researchers and faculty members towards awareness of e-databases

H-2: There is significant relationship between researchers and faculty members towards the opinion about frequency and purpose of e-databases

H-3: There is significant relationship between the researchers and faculty members towards opinion about level of satisfaction of the use of e-databases

6. Analysis of Data and Interpretation

The collected data was analysed, organized and tabulated using SPSS (Version 22) in the form of tables, columns and charts etc. The data analysis-based results are presented in the following section.

6.1. Demographic Information

Majority of the respondents are male (57.48%) and majority are research scholars (68.36%).

Table 2
Demographic information

Demographic information	Particulars	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	169	57.48
	Female	125	42.51
Designation	Researchers	201	68.36
	Faculty	93	31.63

6.2. Awareness of E-Database

It is seen (table 3) that the social science community in Karnataka are aware of 13 databases of which, lion's share of the research scholars ((84.58%) and faculty members (90.32%) are aware of JSTOR most. JSTOR (short for Journal Storage) is actually a digital library containing back issues of academic journals (peer reviewed). It contains books as well as current issues of journals in humanities and social sciences. Next in order is Indiastat (44.41). Indiastat.com is the most comprehensive e-resources of socioeconomic statistical information of India. Published by Datonet India Private Limited an ITeS

company, it is useful to the Indian Social Science Research community. Social Science Abstract is known by 35.8% of research scholars and 27.9% of faculty members. This database provides indexing and abstracts of most important English language social science journals. This is followed by Proquest, Web of Science (SSCI), IBSS, Political Science Abstract, Sociofile, ERIC, Ebsco Host, Econlit and J-Gate. The Chi-Square test was conducted to find out whether there was any significant difference between those who answered "yes" to the question and those who answered "no". The test p value <0.05 shows that we can reject the null hypothesis.

Table 3
Awareness of E-Database

Name of Databases	No. of Respondents		Chi-Square
	Researchers	Faculty	
JSTOR	170 (84.5%)	84 (90.3%)	128.2
Indiastat	130 (64.6%)	65 (69.8 %%)	44.41
Social Science Abstract	72 (35.8 %%)	26 (27.9%)	30.73
Proquest	116 (57.7%)	56 (60.2%)	28.74
Web of Science (SSCI)	115 (57.2%)	59 (63.4%)	26.30
International Bibliography of the Social Science (IBSS)	78 (38.8%)	31 (33.3%)	24.85
Political Science Abstract	64 (31.8%)	32 (34.4%)	24.66
Sociofile	67 (33.3%)	33 (35.4%)	22.89
ERIC	68 (33.8%)	33 (35.4%)	22.73
EBSCO Host	109 (54.2%)	58 (62.3%)	20.42
Econlit	71 (35.3%)	45 (48.3%)	11.14
J-Gate	84 (41.7%)	48 (51.6%)	10.35
<i>Scopus</i>	89 (44.2%)	52 (55.9%)	09.56

6.3. Channels of Awareness

It is found from the analysis (table 4) that a large share of the respondents (88.78%) got awareness of e-databases through library

user education/orientation programs. The other channel is the internet (83.33%). Those who came to know through the library website is 85.03% of the total. Rest of the channels are shown in table 4.

Table 4
Channels of Awareness of E-databases

Channels of awareness	Researchers	Faculty	Total
Library User Education/Orientation Program	178 (88.56%)	83 (89.25%)	261 (88.78%)
Internet	177 (88.06%)	68 (73.12%)	245 (83.33%)
Library Website	175 (87.06%)	75 (80.65%)	250 (85.03%)
Friends	166 (82.59%)	69 (74.19%)	235 (79.93%)
Workshops/Seminars	150 (74.63%)	60 (64.52%)	210 (71.43%)
Library Notice Board	164 (81.59%)	75 (80.64%)	139 (47.28%)
Publications	146 (72.64%)	51 (54.84%)	197 (67.01%)

- Multiple answers allowed

6.4. Frequency of Use of E-database by Research Scholars

An attempt was made to elicit the opinion of users i.e., both “Researcher group” and “Faculty group” regarding awareness of Database services. The opinion of users about the Frequency of use of Database services was elicited by giving choice alteration such as Daily, Weekly, Twice in a week, Occasionally, which is 4 point scale. The details are given in table 5. It is found that almost 2/5th (19.9%) of

the research scholars visit the library on a daily basis for using JSTOR, 13.9% twice in a week and 26.9% weekly. As a part of the study on e-resources Singh et al. (2018) found that JSTOR is used by 44% of the Social Science research scholars of Panjab University. EBSCO Host is used by 8.5% daily, 23.4% twice in a week and 25.4% weekly. Those using Scopus ‘daily’ are 7% and ‘weekly’ 24.4%. Those databases which are used occasionally by them more are Indiastat (54.2%), Social Science Abstract (52.7%), and IBSS (50.2%).

Table 5
Frequency of Use of Database by Research Scholars

Name of Database service	Frequency				t-test
	Daily	Twice in Week	Weekly	Occasionally	
Sociofile	15 (7.5%)	51 (25.4%)	34 (16.9%)	101 (50.2%)	0.928
Web of science (SSCI)	15 (7.5%)	55 (27.4%)	49 (24.4%)	82 (40.8%)	0.736
EBSCO Host	17 (8.5%)	47 (23.4%)	51 (25.4%)	86 (42.8%)	0.619
ProQuest	10 (5.0%)	90 (44.8%)	42 (20.9%)	59 (29.4%)	0.575
International Bibliography of the Social Sciences	15 (7.5%)	41 (20.4%)	44 (21.9%)	101 (50.2%)	0.401
Political science abstract	16 (8.0%)	42 (20.9%)	44 (21.9%)	99 (49.3%)	0.314
EconLit	15 (7.5%)	38 (18.9%)	55 (27.4%)	93 (46.3%)	0.294
Scopus	14 (7.0%)	47 (23.4%)	49 (24.4%)	91 (45.3%)	0.187
J-Gate	16 (8.0%)	52 (25.9%)	38 (18.9%)	95 (47.3%)	0.082
ERIC	15 (7.5%)	50 (24.9%)	39 (19.4%)	97 (48.3%)	0.072
JSTOR	40 (19.9%)	28 (13.9%)	54 (26.9%)	79 (39.3%)	0.009
Indiastat	19 (9.5%)	28 (13.9%)	45 (22.4%)	109 (54.2%)	0.009
Social Science abstract	11 (5.5%)	44 (21.9%)	40 (19.9%)	106 (52.7%)	0.02

6.5. Frequency of Use of Database by Faculty Members

The data presented in table 6 shows how frequently e-databases are used by the faculty members. It is seen that around 2/5th (20.4%) visit the library on 'daily basis' for using JSTOR and those using weekly are 30.1%. The study by Mishra and Shukla (2020) found that electronic database use by Social Science

scientists of Banaras Hindu University and they prefer JSTOR. Web of Science is used by 10.8% daily and 31.2% weekly. Daily users of ERIC and Social Science Abstracts are very less. E-databases such as Indiastat (46.2%), IBSS (43.0%), Scopus (39.8%), Political Science Abstracts (39.8%), J-Gate (38.7%), ERIC (38.7%), Social Science Abstract (38.7%) and a few others are used occasionally.

Table 6
Frequency of Use of Database by Faculty members

Name of Database	Frequency of use of Database service by Faculty category				
	Daily	Twice in a week	Weekly	Occasionally	t-test
Political science abstract	9 (9.7%)	28 (30.1%)	19 (20.4%)	37 (39.8%)	0.673
J-Gate	6 (6.5%)	25 (26.9%)	26 (28.0%)	36 (38.7%)	0.544
Scopus	7 (7.5%)	20 (21.5%)	29 (31.2%)	37 (39.8%)	0.486
Indiastat	8 (8.6%)	24 (25.8%)	18 (19.4%)	43 (46.2%)	0.343
ProQuest	5 (5.4%)	43 (46.2%)	16 (17.2%)	29 (31.2%)	0.333
JSTOR	19 (20.4%)	12 (12.9%)	28 (30.1%)	34 (36.6%)	0.332
Social Science abstract	3 (3.2%)	27 (29.0%)	27 (29.0%)	36 (38.7%)	0.329
Sociofile	6 (6.5%)	25 (26.9%)	27 (29.0%)	35 (37.6%)	0.319
ERIC	3 (3.2%)	29 (31.2%)	25 (26.9%)	36 (38.7%)	0.227
International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)	5 (5.4%)	29 (31.2%)	19 (20.4%)	40 (43.0%)	0.185
EBSCO Host	7 (7.5%)	20 (21.5%)	31 (33.3%)	35 (37.6%)	0.036
EconLit	5 (5.4%)	26 (28.0%)	27 (29.0%)	35 (37.6%)	0.027
Web of Science	10 (10.8%)	24 (25.8%)	29 (31.2%)	30 (32.3%)	0.08

6.6.Purpose of Use of Database

The main purpose of a great majority (91.8%) of the respondents is to find specific information in their field of interest. The second purpose (90.4%) is to gather

information for their project or thesis. Those who are referring e-databases to consult journal articles are 78.9%. The purpose of almost 3/4th (72.4%) of them is for research and training work. Rest of the purpose is seen in table 7.

Table 7
Purpose of Using E-databases

Purpose of using Databases	No. of Respondents		
	Researchers	Faculty	Total
To find specific information in their field of interest	188 (93.5%)	82 (88.1%)	270 (91.8)
To gather information for project works/thesis	180 (89.5%)	86 (92.4%)	266 (90.4%)
To consult journal articles	159 (79.1%)	73 (78.4%)	232 (78.9%)
For Research and training work	151 (75.1%)	62 (66.6%)	213 (72.4%)
For updating the general knowledge	138 (68.66%)	54 (58.0%)	192 (65.3%)
For general reference purpose	110 (54.7%)	52 (55.9%)	162 (55.1%)
For Literature search	90 (44.7%)	40 (43.0%)	130 (44.2%)

- Multiple answers allowed

6.7. Searching Techniques Used

Lion's share (92.18%) of the researchers and faculty members are searching e-databases through Boolean search technique. Those using simple search are

87.76%. Searching through keywords are 87.07%. Those using phrase search and truncation search are 80.27% and 75.17% respectively. A separate search analysis of the two categories of respondents are given in table 8.

Table 8
Searching Techniques Used

Searching techniques	Researchers	Faculty	Total
Boolean search	186 (92.54%)	85 (91.40%)	271 (92.18%)
Simple search	183 (91.04%)	75 (80.65%)	258 (87.76%)
Keyword search	179 (89.05%)	77 (82.80%)	256 (87.07%)
Phrase search	168 (83.58%)	68 (73.12%)	236 (80.27%)
Truncation search	163 (81.09%)	58 (62.37%)	221 (75.17%)

- Multiple answers allowed

6.8. Level of Satisfaction in the Use of E-database

It is found from the analysis (table 9) that more than half (54.4%) of the respondents are

highly satisfied in the use of e-databases. Those who are moderately satisfied are just above a quarter (28.2%).

Table 9
Level of Satisfaction in the Use of E-database

Level of Satisfaction	No. of respondents		Total
	Researchers	Faculty	
Highly satisfied	109 (54.2%)	51 (54.8%)	160 (54.4%)
Moderately satisfied	48 (23.8%)	35 (37.6%)	83 (28.2%)
Partially satisfied	36 (17.9%)	5 (5.3%)	41 (13.9%)
Not satisfied	8 (3.9%)	2 (2.1%)	10 (3.4%)

6.9. Problems Faced While Using E-Database

The major problem while accessing e-database is the lack of assistance from the

library staff pointed out by 89.1% of respondents. Lack of awareness is the problem for 84.69%, while for 83.67% it is information overload. The other problems they faced are given in table 10.

Table 10
Problems Faced while using E-Databases

Problems Faced	Researchers	Faculty	Total
Lack of assistance from library staff	182 (90.55%)	80 (86.02%)	262 (89.12%)
Lack of awareness	178 (88.56%)	71 (76.34%)	249 (84.69%)
Information overload	170 (84.58%)	76 (81.72%)	246 (83.67%)
Slow internet connectivity	175 (87.06%)	61 (65.59%)	236 (80.27%)
Limited access to terminals	162 (80.60%)	71 (76.34%)	233 (79.25%)
Time consuming	160 (79.60%)	73 (78.49%)	233 (79.25%)
Lack of knowledge of search techniques	165 (82.09%)	66 (70.97%)	231 (78.57%)
Inadequate infrastructure	152 (75.62%)	58 (62.37%)	210 (71.43%)

7. Findings of the Study

Major findings of the study are:

1. Among the Social Science research and training institutions in Karnataka state, majority (57.48%) of them are males and researchers constitute 68.36% and faculty members 31.63%.
2. Majority of the researchers and faculty members are aware of the various databases such as JSTOR, Proquest, Indiatat, Web of Science, EBSCO Host etc.
3. A large proportion of respondents make use of the online databases occasionally only.
4. Majority of the researchers and faculty came to know about those e-databases through library user orientation/education program, library websites while browsing in the in the internet and from friends.
5. Almost 2/5th of the Social Science research scholars visit their library on a daily basis to use JSTOR database. EBSCO host is also used in more frequencies.
6. Around 2/5th of the faculty members visit the library on a 'daily basis' for using JSTOR, followed by Web of Science.
7. The purpose of lion's share (91.8%) of researchers and faculty in consulting e-databases are 'To find specific information in the field of interest' and the purpose of almost equal percentage (90.4%) is 'To collect information for project work/ thesis'.
8. A high proportion of researchers and faculty (92.18%) search e-databases through Boolean search, followed by 87.76% through simple search.
9. More than half of them (54.4%) are highly satisfied with the use of e-databases and those who are not satisfied are a very negligible percentage (3.4%).
10. The major problem faced by the researchers and faculty members (89.12%) while using e-databases is 'lack of assistance from library staff;. The other major problem is 'lack of awareness' expressed by 84.69%.

8. Recommendations

- a) The Social Science Research and Training institutes in Karnataka should subscribe to more e-databases, pertaining to social science research.
- b) Those faculty members working in these institutes, who are using regularly more number of e-databases should be considered by the authorities in their promotion criteria to their next grade.
- c) Library staffs in these institutions should be given proper training in the effective searching and retrieving of information from these databases.
- d) User awareness programs should be intensified in these institutes.
- e) Institute authorities as well as library administrators should evaluate and find out from the research scholars and faculty as to how frequently and effectively are the e-databases used as well as eliciting the opinion in this regard and recording it.

9. Conclusion

Research, study and development in social science is the prime function of the Social Science Research and Research Institutes in the state. The outcome of this study will enable the authorities, librarians and LIS professionals in exploring the extent of use of e-databases and for their further improvement. It is found from literature that very little studies have been conducted in the Social Science Research and Training Institutes in the country on e-databases, but a few studies done primarily on e-resources, where use of e-databases has been discussed partially only.

High cost of e-databases is a problem in subscribing to it in these institutes reported by the authorities. This can be solved by initiating negotiations in a consortium level so that subscription rates can considerably reduce. For improving the research output and for enhancing the standard and quality of social science research, it is essential that each and every researchers and faculty members should be made aware of the know-how of e-databases and information retrieval. The library professionals in this institutes should organize awareness and orientation program and circulate pamphlets and display list of e-databases subscribed as well as unsubscribed. They should be informed about the potential value of e-databases from time to time. Uninterrupted access to e-databases will result in quality research output. Further the research scholars and faculty members should be provided with uninterrupted internet connectivity to avoid wastage of their precious time and energy because of the poor internet connectivity and low bandwidth. More comprehensive studies are essential to gain a holistic view on the use of e-databases in the social science research institutes in other states of India as well.

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