

Use of UGC-Infonet e-Journals by Research Scholars of Manipur University, Manipur: A Study

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ABSTRACT

At the higher education everyone needs advanced & scholar's literature to improve the quality of study and research. The UGC (University Grants Commission) has entered into alliances with publishers for adapting a consortia-based approach for e-journals. UGC-INFONET (University Grants Commission – Information network) is an innovative project launched by UGC to facilitate scholarly e-resources to Indian researchers. With globalization of education and competitive research the demand for the journals has increased over the year. Increase in journal costs, depleting library budgets and drastic cut in number of journals has led to "journal crisis". On this background the UGC- Infonet is indeed a boom for higher education in India. On 29th January 1993 Infflibnet select Manipur University (MU) as one of the eleven Infflibnet nodes of India in the first phase. Under this programme Manipur University can access the union database as well as 5000 journals. The main objective of the study is to find out the perspective and attitudes of users towards e-journals, to analyse the use and users of e-journals, to study the impact and use of e-journals by the researchers, to know the awareness of the e-journals by the researchers, to find out the significance of e-journals over print, to find out the problem faced by the research scholars in accessing. Proposed study adopted questionnaire method to collect relevant data. A total of 270 responded out of 300 distributed questionnaire. The finding reveals that 93% of the researchers covered under study has knowledge about UGC Infonet. E-journals are having positive impact.

Keywords: Manipur University; University Grants Commission (UGC); Information and Library Network; e-journals; Researcher

INTRODUCTION

We are living in Information age, availability of online information and its effective use contributes to all round development of individuals and nations. Information is the most crucial resource for development and it has been rightly said that "the future of each nation as well as that of mankind is based on, now more than ever, on information. Or knowledge gained rather than any other material or resources. Information leads to knowledge and in turn to innovations and development". At the higher education level everyone needs advanced and scholar's literature to improve the quality of study, teaching and research with remarkable development in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) information resource in abundances in made available through the consortia approach on the net/online. [Kanniyappam ... et al 2008] discloses that the digital era affects teachings, learning and research but also the whole of higher education.

Scholarly journal provide basic theoretical background as well as an input for the research at the higher education level. Majority of the research articles are available online now-a -days. These online electronic journals are bargained, negotiated and acquired from the publishers and other database vendor access for the same is enabled by the UGC-Infonet consortia on 24 x 7 hour basis at the desktop of the academician, scholars & individuals. "The electronic journals are made available beyond the barriers of time, distance and cost." [Gowda 2007]. "The UGC has entered into alliances with publishers for adapting a consortia-based approach for e-subscription of journals. These journals are available over UGC-Infonet to all over the Universities, thereby, making quality information accessible to a wider academic scholar base spread across the country at an affordable price" [Chakravarty and Sukhwinder 2005]. The enormous growth of electronic journals since 1990s has made the world wide change in scholarly communication in the 21st century. The electronic journals are more likely to facilitate communication within scholarly communities because of the speed with which it can be readily accessibility. Publishers have recognized the existence of two types of researchers with

differing needs and some publishers have offered their journals in both print & electronic formats to assure the researchers that journals traditional standards of editing and peer review have been applied to both the version.

In order to meet the complex information needs of the researchers, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched the UGC-Infonet: e-Journal Consortium. "*The UGC-Infonet e-Journal consortium is India's pride in the field of education and research which has been formally launched on the concluding day of UGC's Golden Jubilee Celebrations by Honorable Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the then President of India on 28th December 2003 by dedicating a bouquet of E-journals to the nation*" [Hirwade 2008]. UGC-Infonet is an innovation project launched by UGC to facilitate scholarly e-resources to Indian researchers.

Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of the study are as follows

- To find out the knowledge of researchers about UGC- Infonet e - resources;
- To find out the purpose of using UGC- Infonet e - resources;
- To know the significance of UGC- Infonet e - journals over print journals;
- To understand the level of satisfaction, search technique & rate of using the facility;
- To find out the problems faced by the research scholars in accessing e - journals; and
- To take suggestions and means for the effective use of the UGC-Infonet e - resources.

Scope and Limitation of the Research

The present study is restricted to Manipur University UGC- Infonet e-consortium. The study does not cover the students, teaching staff and non-teaching staff of the Manipur University. The study covers only the research scholars of the Manipur University under various departments having Ph.D. facility. Attempts have been made to know the information requirements of the research community. The main focus of the study is to identify the needs and requirements of users mainly research scholars. The study geographical area is restricted to the research scholars of Manipur University & the usage of UGC- Infonet e-resources.

The number of research scholars for Manipur University under study is from the year 2000 to 2008 under each department as follow: *Physics - 23; Chemistry - 42; Life Science - 70; Earth Science- 20; Anthropology-31; Bio-chemistry-11; Mathematics-12; Geography-16; Statistics-5; English-61; Linguistics-28; Manipur-36; Education-21; Economics-67; History-70; Hindi-20; Political Science-63; Commerce -24; Philosophy-9; Library Science-11; MIMS – 4 & Adult Education-19.*

The total number of research scholars of Manipur University enrolled from 2000 to 2008 is 663. The number of researchers of the School of Humanities is 154, that of the School of Sciences are 230 and that of the School of Social Sciences are 279.

Hypothesis

The present study is expected to test the following hypotheses:

- *The e-resources are highly useful for the researchers and academic community in the present environment;*
- *UGC- Infonet project aims to create awareness to the research community for the availability of the scholarly journals in their respective fields;*
- *The e- journals are more significant over print journals regarding time and money;*
- *Majority of the research scholars use the UGC- Infonet e – journals.*

METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out the study, a questionnaire method was adopted as a tool to collect the data relevant, a total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to the research scholars of Manipur University. As mostly research scholars are not available at the campus, the study distributed the questionnaire to the research scholars available at the campus.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A total of 270 out of 300 respondents returned the questionnaires giving a response rate of 90%. Among the respondents 150(56%) were from Sciences, 70(26%) were from Social Sciences and 50(19%) were from Humanities.

Knowledge about UGC-Infonet Consortium

The UGC Infonet e-consortium is India's pride in the field of education and research which dedicates a bouquet of e-journals to the nation. It is one of the programmes launched by UGC, India for free flow of scholarly information among the Indian Universities. It is a new phase for the higher educational system of the country in which peer reviewed literature from all across the world is being given to the academic and research community. A question was asked to the research scholars about whether they know about UGC-Infonet e-resources. Table 1 shows that they know about the consortium and remaining 7 percent (18) of them are not aware of this consortium.

Table 1: Knowledge about the UGC-Infonet Consortium

Sl. No	Particulars	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Know about UGC-Infonet Consortium	252	93
2.	Do not know about UGC-Infonet Consortium	18	7

N= 270

Access of UGC-Infonet e-resources

A question was asked where they access UGC-Infonet electronic resources and the major purpose of the question was to identify the place where research scholars surveyed access to e-Journals. It is shown in the Table 2.

Table 2: Place where the researchers access to Consortium

Sl. No.	Place	No. of Researchers	Percentage (%)
3.	Library (MU)	207	82
1.	Department Computer Lab.	72	29
5.	Any other	63	25
4.	Hostel	45	18
2.	Computer Center (MUCC)	18	7

Note: Respondents are Permitted Multiple Answer [N=270]

Table 3: Purpose of Using UGC-Infonet e-resources

Sl.No.	Purpose	No. of researchers	Percentage (%)
1.	Research Work	234	93
5.	Finding Relevant Information	180	72
4.	Getting Current Information	135	54
2.	Publishing Articles/books	108	43
3.	Updating Subject Area	108	43
6.	Completion of Assignment & Seminar Presentation	81	32
7.	Study	99	39

Note: Respondents are Permitted Multiple Answer [N=270]

Table 2 summarizes where the respondents had access UGC-Infonet electronic resources. 82% of the respondents are accessing e-journals through Library (MU), followed by 29% (72) accessed from Department computer Labs, 25% (63) accessed through other means and 18% (45) accessed the consortium from the University Hostel. The access rate to e journals from Computer center (MU) was limited (7%).

Table 3 shows purpose of using UGC-Infonet Consortium by research scholars of Manipur University is for research work, 93% (234), followed by 72% (180) for finding relevant information, 54% (135) for getting current information and 43% (108) for updating subject areas.

Frequency of using UGC-Infonet e-Journals

This is the most important and basic aspect related to the appraisal of the usefulness of the UGC-Infonet Consortium. Frequency of using UGC-Infonet Consortium by the research scholars is presented in

Table 4: Frequency of using UGC-Infonet e-journals

Sl. No.	Duration of Consortium Use	No. of Researchers	Percentage (%)
2.	Weekly	99	39
1.	Daily	72	29
4.	Occasionally	54	22
3.	Monthly	27	11

Note: Respondents are Permitted Multiple Answer [N=270]

From the Table 4, it is clear that most of the research scholars i.e. 39% (99) of the research scholars are using UGC-Infonet Consortium weekly. It is followed by 29 % (72) using daily, 22% (54) using occasionally and 11% (27) are using depending more on traditional source than e-journals.

Searching full text e- Journals

The number of research scholars who search the full-text journals published by the publishers is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Publishers of E-Journals

Sl. No.	Publisher	No. of Researchers	Percentage (%)
4.	Springer & Kluwer	99	39
2.	Ebsco	81	32
1.	Emerald	72	29
3.	Elsevier	63	25
5.	Any other	45	18

Note: Respondents are Permitted Multiple Answer [N=270]

It is noted that Springer & Kluwer is the leading publisher as 39% (99) of the research scholars responded in the study are searching electronic journals published by Springer & Kluwer, followed by 32% (31) searching through Ebsco, 29% (72) searching through Emerald and 25% (63) searching through Elsevier 18% (45) of the researches search through Elsevier 18% (45) of the researchers search full text e-Journals through other publishes.

Search Techniques

Many times it is found that the users usually get lot of hits and the users waste their valuable time in filtering the information. Manipur University library provide access to many of the e-journals to their users under the UGC-Infonet consortium. All these e-Journals provide basic search strategies, such as search by Boolean operators, truncation, phrases, field searching wild cards, etc. the respondents were provided with multiple choices and were asked to give their search preferences. The responses received are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Search Technique used by Researchers

Sl. No.	Search Technique	No. of Researchers	Percentage %
3.	Phases	108	43
1.	Boolean Operators	90	36
4.	Field Searching	72	29
6.	Any Other	54	22
5.	Wild Cards	36	14
2.	Truncation	18	7

Note: Respondents are Permitted Multiple Answer [N=270]

It reveals that out of 270 respondents, the most popular search technique was “Phases” with 43% (108) preferring this technique. The second most favorable option was searching by “Boolean Operators” 36% (90) followed by “Field Searching” 29% (72) and “Wild Cards” 14%, (36). 22% (54) of the researchers use the other search techniques and 7% used “Truncation”. From the figure 6 its reveals that 86% (216) of the respondents are reading full-text articles by downloading on the computer, 57% (144) by printing out on the paper and 50% (126) of the respondents are reading on the computer screen. The remaining 4% (9) of the respondents are reading by using other methods.

Need for Orientation/Training Programmes

Researchers can access information resources from all over the world without even entering the library and this could be devastating for the library in its role as information provider. However, with the number of electronic journals being published and the variety of different interfaces, more sophisticated searching and retrieving skills are necessary. In view of this, the question was raised to research scholars and students whether orientation/training is required or not. A question was raised to research scholars whether orientation/training is required or not for searching and retrieving sophisticated information. The responses are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Need for Orientation/Training Programmes

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Researchers	Percentage %
1.	Need for Training/Orientation Programmes for Searching UGC-Infonet	207	82
2.	No Need for Training/Orientation programmes for searching UGC-Infonet	45	18

Note: Respondents are Permitted Multiple Answer [N=270]

It reveals that out of 270 respondents 209 (82%) want training in using e-Journals for current awareness and also for locating full text for reference. However, remaining 45 (18%) respondents stated that the training program is not needed. The reasons behind is probably they are familiar with the skill and technique for searching information using UGC-Infonet consortium.

Need for Printed Journals in Addition to electronic Journals

Electronic journals open up many exciting opportunities and potentials for academic libraries. There is a general consensus that “*Electronic journals would not replace but coexist with the print format. Flexible and multifaceted services for patrons would be the way to accommodate the diverse formats of scholarly journals*” [Chan, 1999, p. 15]. Nowadays, e-resources are posing challenges to the printed documents. A question was asked to know whether print journals are required in addition to electronic journals. The data is presented in Table 8.

It is surprising to note that Print Journals are also needed in addition to e- Journals, 96% (243) respondents agreed that print journal should be preferred for the future use, only 4% (9) of the research scholars responding that they do not need for printed journals. It clearly shows that printed Journals are equally preferred in addition to e-journals.

Table 8: Need for Printed Journals in addition to e-journals.

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Researchers	Percentage (%)
1.	Need for Print Journals in addition to e-journals	243	9
2.	No Need for print journals.	9	4

Satisfaction with existing Internet facilities

For browsing electronic journals, there is a need for good band width and internet facilities in the university campus. To know the curiosity whether the researchers are satisfied with the existing internet facilities or not, an easy question was raised. The responders are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Question of Satisfaction

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Researchers	Percentage (%)
2.	Not satisfied with the existing Internet facility	234	93
1.	Satisfied with the existing Internet facility	18	7

It revealed that 93% (234) of the responded are not satisfied with the existing internet facility at the university campus and the remaining 7% (18) satisfied with the existing internet facility (band width) at the campus. It is clearly shows that the existing band width facility at the Manipur University campus is very slow.

Influence of UGC-Infonet E-journals on Research Efficiency

E-Journals collections have also provided is way for research scholars to locate more articles, which they are reading and citing in their work. In this way, e-journal collections are assisting with changing nature of scholarship and are allowing researchers to find materials they would not have otherwise found. The influence of UGC-Infonet E-journals on research efficiency is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Influence of UGC-INFONET e-journals on Research Efficiency

Sl. No.	Influence	No. of Research Scholars	Percentage (%)
1	Up – to – date information	162	64
4	Expedites the research process	135	54
2	A wider range of information	126	50
3	Faster access to information	117	46
6	Easier to access to information	117	46
5	Improves profession competence	72	29

Table 10 reveals the influence of UGC-Infonet E-journals on the research efficiency of the research scholars. The information available in the E-journals has proved to be a great asset to many of the respondents. The researchers have access to up-to-date information (64%, 162), the consortium expedites the research process (54%, 135), the respondents have access to a wider range of information (50%, 126), have improved professional competence (29%, 72) and faster access to information (46%, 117).

Problems faced by the scholars while accessing the UGC-Infonet E-journals

Respondents were asleep regarding the problems faced by them while making use of UGC-Infonet E-journals and the response received have been presented in the Table 11.

Table 11: Problems faced by various group of users while accessing e-journals

Sl. No.	Problems	No. of Researchers	Percentage (%)
1	Slow Internet Speed	243	96
2	Lack of system speed	162	64
5	Limited Access terminals	117	46
4	Difficulty in accessing to full- text	81	32
7	Poorly Designed websites	54	21
6	Retrieval Problems	27	11
8	Difficult to read from computer	18	7
9	Any other	18	7
3	Insufficient time & training	9	4

The Table 11 reveals that 96% (243) of the respondents felt that the internet connection provided by the university is slow. 64% (162) find it differently in systems speed, 46% (117) state limited access to terminals as barrier to use of e-journals, 32% (81) admit that they cannot access full- text, 21% (54) said that they face problems owing poorly designed websites, which makes it difficult to select the relevant information.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The resources subscribed under UGC-INFONET E-journals consortium for many universities would cost a large amount of money if the universities subscribe the resources individually. The consortium facilities access to journals to academic libraries and signed agreement with different publishers and access were provided under multiple sites licensing to hundred universities in different phases. The launch of UGC-Infonet E-journal Consortium in 2004 has changed the entire situated and enriched the resource base of university libraries. University libraries in India have accessed to large number of scholarly journals from major foreign publishers for the last three years. Thus, this ambitious programme has bridged the digital divide and introduced e-journals, free of cost in university libraries.

Findings

- Majority of the respondents (96%) stated that they needed printed journals in addition to e-journals to fulfill their research work.
- Majority of the respondents (96%) felt that the internet connection provided by the University is very slow, followed by 64% (162) who find it difficulty in systems speed.
- Majority of the research scholars (54%, 135) use the UGC-Infonet e-journals.
- Most of the research scholars (82%) are accessing electronic journals through Manipur University Library.
- Research scholars use UGC-Infonet e-Journals for research work, 93% (234), followed by 72% (180) for finding relevant information.
- Thirty – nine percent (99) of the respondents are using UGC-INFONET Consortium weekly, followed by 29% (72) using daily and 22% (54) using occasionally.
- The most popular advanced search technique is “Phrases” with 43% (108) of the respondents preferring this technique, followed by “Boolean Operators” with 36% (90).
- Eighty – six percent (216) of the respondents are reading full-text articles by downloading in the computer, followed by printing out on the paper (57%).
- Sixty – four percent (162) of the respondents opined that they are accessing UGC-Infonet E-journals for current and up-to-date information, followed by 54% (135) of the research scholars who stated that the consortium expedites the research process..
- Sixty – one percent (153) of the respondents stated that the consortium is good, followed by 14% (36) who rated it as satisfactory.

Suggestions & Recommendations

- Manipur University should increase the number of e-journals subscription in all subjects.
- The University Librarian and staff members should conduct an orientation/training programme how to search full text articles and information under UGC-Infonet Consortium.
- The internet speed of the University must improve; otherwise scholars will neglect the access to e-journals under UGC-Infonet Consortium.
- More high speeds computer terminals should be installed in the Department Computer Laboratories, Department Library, University Library, etc.
- There is need to introduce electronic document delivery by the Manipur University library.
- The respondents suggest for establishment of separate departments library for each department with internet facility to reduce trouble on the access to the journals.
- Manipur University Library should design and develop Multimedia presentation for UGC-Infonet e- resources for reference management and searching and for improving motivation towards efficient and effective use of e-journals of UGC-Infonet E-journals consortium.

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