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Use of e-Resources by the Postgraduate Students of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) : A Gender Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the use of e-resources by postgraduate students at state agricultural universities in Maharashtra. A web-based questionnaire was developed and designed to elicit responses from respondents. Agriculture universities are located in four different locations throughout Maharashtra state. The web-based questionnaire was distributed via email, WhatsApp, Telegram, and other social media platforms. A total of 124 postgraduate research scholars responded in a time frame manner. According to the findings of this study, the majority of postgraduate research scholars at agricultural universities use e-resources for their research. Further research suggested that agriculture university campuses and hostels be facilitated with internet and Wi-Fi resources.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Sate Agricultural Universities, e-Resources, Web Survey.

INTRODUCTION

The majority of a library's collection consists of electronic resources, in the modern digital era. The goal of this assortment of electronic materials is to deliver specific, exhaustive, and quick access to information services to its users. Even small academic and public libraries have come to understand the importance of electronic resources, and they've spent an increasing share of their budgets on electronic sources, even at the expense of buying books.

The National Agriculture Research System (NARS) consists of 63 State Agricultural Universities, two Central Agricultural Universities, and one Central University, as well as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), which consists of more than 100 ICAR Research Institutes, including the ICAR headquarters, five Deemed

Universities, 77 All India Coordinated Research Projects and Networks, and 11 Agricultural Technology Application and Research Institutes and 723 Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) in the country. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous agricultural scientific organization with responsibility for research, education, and extension.

Each university and institute of agriculture has a self-sustaining library to serve its users. These days, the various issues of information explosion, user diversity, interdisciplinary research, duplicity of resources, the rise in foreign journal costs, and budget constraints have led libraries to pursue resource sharing. Nevertheless, the appearance of the Internet, the growth of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment, and the availability of it at any time and for any purpose have compelled libraries to select consortium journals, which allow for a broader exposure of journals to a large number of readers at low cost. To provide the greatest coverage possible, ICAR formed Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA) to make journals, their users, and their publishers more relevant and profitable by supplying unlimited access, unlimited downloads, easy accessibility and full-text downloads, among other things. CeRA was launched at its headquarters at IARI, New Delhi on April 30, 2008, with the goal of establishing an e-access culture among ICAR scientists/teachers in State Agricultural Universities (SAUs). CeRA has helped in the development of ICAR Institutes/agricultural university R&D information bases and in the creation of an e-access culture among scholars, scientists, and teachers.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the frequency and extent of library reliance on research by gender.
- To investigate the gender differences in PG scholars' access to e-resources.
- To assess the extent to which students use online information for academic and research purposes.
- To determine the gender-specific purpose and method of acquiring IT skills when using library e-resources.
- To learn about the gender perspectives on the need for an orientation training and the utility of CeRA.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary information was collected via a web-based survey that was created for the agricultural university research scholars. The study was conducted using an ex-post facto design of social science. Maharashtra has four agricultural universities, each with its own unique mandates. Out of which one Agricultural University-Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli was selected. Further, researcher had selected PG students from College of Agriculture, College of Horticulture and College of Agricultural Engineering, Dapoli. The list of PG students and their contact information such as Mobile number, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Email was obtained from academic section of the respective colleges. The questionnaire was administrated to the respondents in Google form via email, WhatsApp and other social apps. Total 124 research scholars responded to the questionnaire. In the end, these 124 postgraduate students were considered as sample for the current study. The data was analyzed with descriptive statistics, tabulated, and presented in the subsequent session.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results are shared in conjunction with a comprehensive overview.

Table I: Gender Wise Respondent's Frequency of Library Visits

S.No.	Gender	Everyday	More than once a week	Once a week	Once in a fortnight	Once in a month	Occasionally	Never	Total
1	Male	48	27	21	1	6	-	-	103
2	Female	10	6	4	0	1	-	-	21
	Total	58 (46.77)	33 (26.61)	25 (20.16)	1 (0.81)	7 (5.65)	-	-	124 (100)

The information presented in Table I reveals that the frequency of library visits by gender. According to the results of the survey, 48 male and 10 female postgraduate students in the sample visited the library daily, while 27 male and 6 female respondents made multiple visits in a week. Additionally, 21 male and 4 female students were seen at the library weekly, while one male participant came once a fortnight and 6 male and one female made monthly visits. The fact that most of the male respondents visit the library every day is evident from the results described above.

Table II: Gender Wise Respondent's Extend of Dependence of Library for Research

S.No.	Age	Totally Dependent	Substantially Dependent	Marginally Dependent	Occasionally Dependent	Never Dependent	Total
1	Male	58	33	12	-	-	103
2	Female	11	9	1	-	-	21
	Total	69 (55.65)	42 (33.87)	13 (10.48)	-	-	124 (100)

From Table II, it is evident that there is a difference in the number of respondents who rely on the library for research, by gender. Among the 124 PG scholars, 58 male and 11 female respondents were completely reliant on the library, 33 male and 9 female respondents were significantly reliant on the library, and 12 male and one female scholar were marginally reliant on the library for research. The male respondents in the study appear to be heavily reliant on the library, with 58 of them being totally dependent on it.

Table III: Gender Wise Respondent's Access of E-Resources

S.No.	Gender	Daily	Thrice a Week	Once a Week	Once a month	Never	Total
1	Male	69	16	15	3	-	103
2	Female	18	1	2	-	-	21
	Total	87 (70.16)	17 (13.71)	17 (13.71)	3	-	124 (100)

Access to e-resources for research activities is depicted in Table III, which breaks down respondents' access by gender. Among the total of 124 respondents, 58 male and 11 female access e-resources daily, 16 male and one female access e-resources three times a week, 15 male and two female access e-resources once a week, and only three male respondents access e-resources once a month. The above table reveals that the majority of male respondents use e-resources on a daily basis.

Table IV: Gender Wise Respondent's Extend of Use of Online Information

S.No.	Gender	Sometime	Always	Never	Total
1	Male	67	36	-	103
2	Female	19	2	-	21
	Total	86 (69.35)	38 (30.65)		124 (100)

Table IV revealed that respondents, regardless of gender, make extensive use of online information for academic and research purposes. Total 67 male and 19 female respondents use online information on occasion, while 36 male and 2 female respondents use online information all of the time. According to the discussion, the majority of male respondents (67) use online information at some point.

Table V: Gender Wise Respondent's Purpose of Using Library E-Resources

S.No	Gender	For Research	For Project	To prepare Seminar	To prepare Article	To update Knowledge	Total
1	Male	63	25	3	8	4	103
2	Female	19	1	1	-	-	21
	Total	82 (66.13)	26 (20.97)	4 (3.230	8 (6.45)	4 (3.22)	124 (100)

Table V discloses that out of the 63 male and 19 female respondents who used library e-resources for research, 25 male and one female respondent used them for project preparation, three male and one female respondent used them for seminar preparation, eight male respondents used them for article preparation, and four male respondents used them to keep up-to-date on their knowledge. From the discussion, it can be inferred that the majority of male respondents used the library's electronic resources for research.

Table VI : Gender Wise Respondent's Method of Acquiring IT Skills

S.No.	Gender	Trail and Error Method	Formal Training	Through Colleagues	Training at Work Place	Attending Workshop	Total
1	Male	50	39	10	2	2	103
2	Female	10	5	5	1	-	21
	Total	60 (48.39)	44(35.48)	15 (12.10)	3 (2.42)	2 (1.61)	124 (100)

Table VI, it reveals that respondents from both genders are acquiring IT skills in different ways. Of the 124 respondents, 50 men and 10 women got IT skills from attending workshops, 39 men and 5 women from formal

training, and 10 men and 5 women from colleagues and coworkers. Two men and one woman acquired IT skills through on-the-job training, and two men acquired them through workshops. A majority of the male respondents (50) reported they acquired IT skills through trial-and-error, while 39 male respondents learned through formal training.

Table VII: Gender Wise Opinion on the Need of Orientation Training

S.No.	Gender	Yes	No.	Total
1	Male	93	10	103
2	Female	19	2	21
	Total	112 (90.32)	12 (9.68)	124 (100

It is evident from Table VII that men and women have different perception about the necessity of orientation/ training programmes for greater awareness about e-resources. Among the 124 respondents, 93 of them were male and 19 female respondents, and they all agreed that the organization should implement a formal orientation/ training programme to educate everyone about e-resources.

Table VIII: Gender Wise Opinion on Utility of CeRA

S.No.	Gender	Most Useful	Useful	User Friendly	Simpleness	Easy way to connect world class research	Total
1	Male	34	18	11	29	11	103
2	Female	11	8	-	1	1	21
	Total	45 (36.29%)	26 (20.97)	11 (8.87)	30 (24.19)	12 (9.68)	124 (100)

Table VIII displays the opinions of respondents on the use of CeRA based on their gender. According to the 124 survey respondents, 34 men and 11 women thought CeRA utilization was most impacted who described it as "most useful," while 18 men and 8 women found it "useful." 11 men reported that it was "PG Scholar user friendly," while 29 men and one woman found it "simple" and 11 men and one woman thought it was "easy to connect to the world class research." Most of the 34 male participants in the previous discussion acknowledged that utility of CeRA is due to popularity of e-resources.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

According to the study's findings, the vast majority of postgraduate research scholars at agricultural institutions conducted their research using electronic resources. Consortium on e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA) users are obtaining more information through electronic journals, which are the most popular and frequently used e-resources. Many researchers, according to the study's findings, struggled to connect to the internet or Wi-Fi while on campus. It is suggested that agriculture university campuses and dormitories be equipped with internet and wireless networking capabilities. When university researchers use the university library's electronic resources, notably CeRA, they report high levels of satisfaction. The agriculture university library's e-services are useful to its patrons.

The data indicate that the majority of male respondents use the library on a daily basis. Male respondents appear to be significantly reliant on the library in the survey. At some time, the majority of male respondents (67) utilise internet information. Male respondents used the majority of the library's electronic resources for research as compared to female students.

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