

CHAPTER-4

ACTIVITY PATTERNS AND AWARENESS OF OPEN ACCESS RESOURCES AMONG ACADEMICS IN KARNATAKA: A CASE STUDY OF BANGALORE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The global Open Access (OA) movement has reshaped the landscape of academic publishing by providing free and unrestricted access to scholarly resources such as research papers, datasets, and journals. The idea behind OA is to make research findings available to all, irrespective of geographic location or institutional affiliation, thus promoting knowledge dissemination and enhancing academic collaboration. In India, Open Access has slowly gained traction, but its usage and awareness among academics vary across regions and institutions.

Bangalore University, one of the leading educational institutions in Karnataka, represents an interesting case for exploring the patterns of OA usage and awareness. Situated in an urban centre like Bengaluru, the university has access to better infrastructure, resources, and exposure to global academic trends. However, the degree to which academics in Bangalore University utilize OA resources and understand their benefits is yet to be fully understood. This case study aims to explore the activity patterns and awareness of OA resources among academics at Bangalore University, offering a deeper insight into the factors that influence OA engagement in Indian academic institutions.

Keywords: Open Access (OA), Academic Resources, Research Repositories, Open Access Journals, Academic Publishing, OA Adoption Barriers

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to:

- Investigate the level of awareness of Open Access resources among academics at Bangalore University.
- Explore the usage patterns of Open Access resources across different academic disciplines.
- Identify the key factors influencing the adoption and utilization of OA resources.
- Examine the barriers faced by faculty, researchers, and students in using OA resources.
- Propose strategies to improve OA engagement at Bangalore University.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A structured survey was distributed to 200 academics (faculty members, researchers, and postgraduate students) at Bangalore University. Additionally, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of faculty members and researchers to understand their perspectives on OA and its role in their academic work.

The survey included questions related to the frequency of OA usage, awareness of OA platforms, the perceived benefits of OA, and barriers to usage. The interviews aimed to provide detailed insights into individual experiences, challenges, and motivations for using OA resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Open Access (OA) has been gaining ground globally, with several studies highlighting its importance for knowledge dissemination, research visibility, and collaboration. Research conducted in India and other developing countries has shown varying levels of awareness and usage of OA resources. While urban academic institutions in India, such as those in Bengaluru, have been more receptive to OA, smaller institutions in rural areas often lag behind due to limited access to infrastructure and lack of awareness.

Several studies have indicated that awareness of OA among Indian academics is generally high, but actual usage remains low. For

instance, a study conducted at the University of Delhi found that while many researchers were aware of OA resources, they often preferred traditional subscription-based journals. The reasons for this preference include perceived credibility, quality concerns, and lack of adequate institutional support for OA.

At Bangalore University, the situation is somewhat different, given the city's status as an educational and technological hub. The availability of internet infrastructure and the presence of numerous research institutes make it an ideal setting to study OA engagement.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table 1 shows the gender of the respondents in a survey. The data consists of 182 respondents, of which 108 (59.3%) are male and 74 (40.7%) are female. The table presents a clear summary of the gender distribution of the respondents. The data suggests that there were more male respondents than female respondents in the survey. This indicates that the survey had a male-prominent response.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Male | 108 | 59.3 |
| Female | 74 | 40.7 |
| Total | 182 | 100.0 |

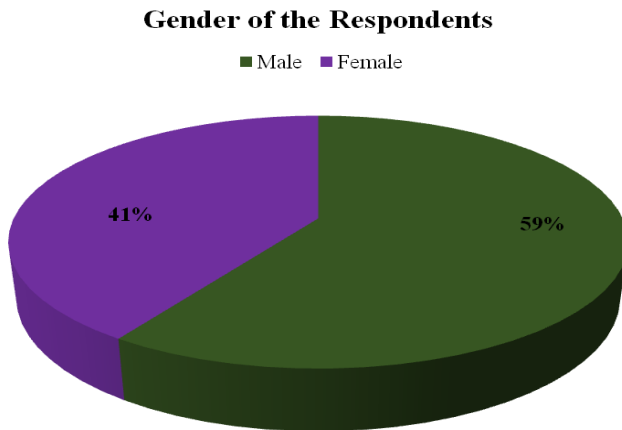


Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Table 2: Level of Awareness of Open Access Resources

| | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Fully Aware | 62 | 34.1 |
| Somewhat Aware | 112 | 61.5 |
| Not Aware | 8 | 4.4 |
| Total | 182 | 100.0 |

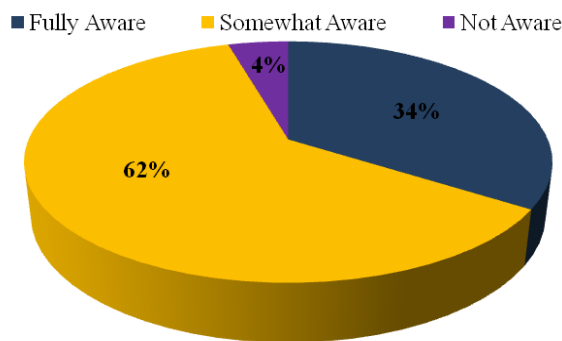


Figure 2: Level of Awareness of Open Access Resources

Table 2 provides data on the level of awareness of open access resources among the respondents. The table includes three categories of responses: Fully Aware, Somewhat Aware, and Not Aware. The majority of the respondents have reported that they are somewhat aware of open access resources (61.5%), while 34.1% of the respondents have reported being fully aware of these resources. A small proportion of the respondents (4.4%) have reported that they are not aware of open access resources. The data suggests that a significant proportion of the respondents have some level of awareness of open access resources. This information may be useful in developing strategies to promote the use of open access resources among the respondents. Additionally, the relatively small proportion of respondents who reported not being aware of open access resources suggests that efforts to promote awareness of these resources may be effective in reaching a majority of the respondents. Based on the data, it can infer that the level of awareness of open access resources may have an impact on the use of these resources by the respondents. For

instance, respondents who are fully aware of open access resources may be more likely to use them than those who are only somewhat aware or not aware at all.

Table 3: Frequency of Use of Open Access Resources

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Daily | 35 | 19.2 |
| Sometimes a week | 97 | 53.3 |
| Occasionally | 40 | 22.0 |
| Never | 10 | 5.5 |
| Total | 182 | 100.0 |

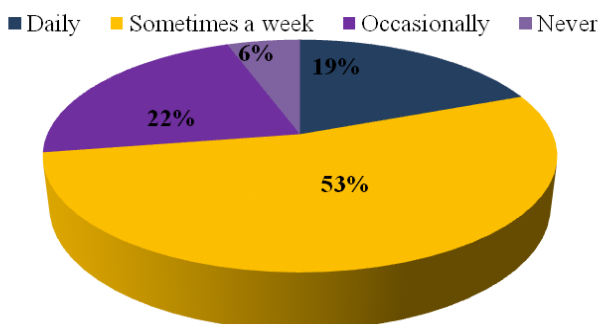


Figure 3: Frequency of Use of Open Access Resources

Table 3 provides data on the frequency of use of open access resources among the respondents. The table includes four categories of responses: Daily, sometimes a week, occasionally, and never. The data shows that the majority of the respondents use open access resources sometimes a week (53.3%), followed by occasionally (22.0%). Only a small proportion of the respondents reported using open access resources daily (19.2%). Additionally, 5.5% of the respondents reported that they never use open access resources. The data suggests that while the majority of respondent's uses open access resources, their frequency of use is relatively low. This may indicate that there is a need to further promote the use of open access resources among the respondents. It is worth noting, however, that the respondents may have access to other types of resources that meet their information needs, and this may be a factor contributing to the lower frequency of use of open access resources. Based on the data, it can infer that it may

be useful to explore whether the level of awareness of open access resources is related to the frequency of use.

Table 4: Factors Responsible for Awareness of Open Access Resource

| Source of Influencing Factors | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------------|
| | N | Percent | |
| From Friends/colleagues | 89 | 19.7% | 51.7% |
| Library Professionals | 100 | 22.2% | 58.1% |
| Internet/Website | 115 | 25.5% | 66.9% |
| Conference/Workshops | 91 | 20.2% | 52.9% |
| Social Media | 56 | 12.4% | 32.6% |
| Total | 451 | 100.0% | 262.2% |

Sources of Influencing Factors

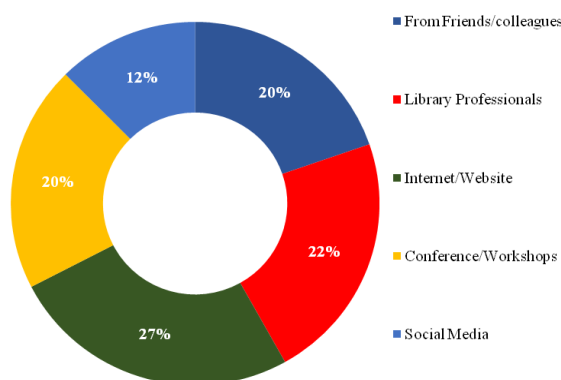


Figure 4: Factors Responsible for Awareness of Open Access Resource

Table 4 shows the factors responsible for creating awareness about open access resources among the respondents. The table provides the frequency and percentage of responses for each source of influencing factor of this multiple response question.

The most cited source of influencing factors was the internet/website, with 115 responses accounting for 66.9% of cases. This suggests that the internet plays a crucial role in creating awareness about open access

resources among the respondents. The second most cited source of influencing factors was library professionals with 100 responses, accounting for 58.1% of cases. This indicates that library professionals also have a significant role to play in creating awareness about open access resources. Conference/workshops were cited by 91 respondents (52.9%), indicating that these events are also an important source of influencing factors for creating awareness about open access resources. From friends/colleagues were cited by 89 respondents (51.7%), indicating that informal networks also play a role in creating awareness about open access resources. Social media was the least cited source of influencing factors, with only 56 respondents (32.6%) indicating it as a source of awareness. This could suggest that social media is not as effective as other sources in creating awareness about open access resources.

Overall, the findings suggest that multiple sources of influencing factors are responsible for creating awareness about open access resources among the respondents. The internet/website, library professionals, conference/workshops, and informal networks play significant roles in this regard.

Table 5: Various Open Access Resources

| | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
|------------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------------|
| | N | Percent | |
| Open Access Journals | 166 | 17.0% | 97.6% |
| Open Access Books | 138 | 14.1% | 81.2% |
| Open Access Databases | 72 | 7.4% | 42.4% |
| Open Thesis/Dissertation | 127 | 13.0% | 74.7% |
| Open Directories | 48 | 4.9% | 28.2% |
| Open Educational Resources | 79 | 8.1% | 46.5% |
| Free Online News Papers | 110 | 11.3% | 64.7% |
| Free Online Magazines | 93 | 9.5% | 54.7% |
| Free Conference Proceedings | 90 | 9.2% | 52.9% |
| Institutional Repository | 53 | 5.4% | 31.2% |
| Other | 1 | 0.1% | 0.6% |
| Total | 977 | 100.0% | 574.7% |

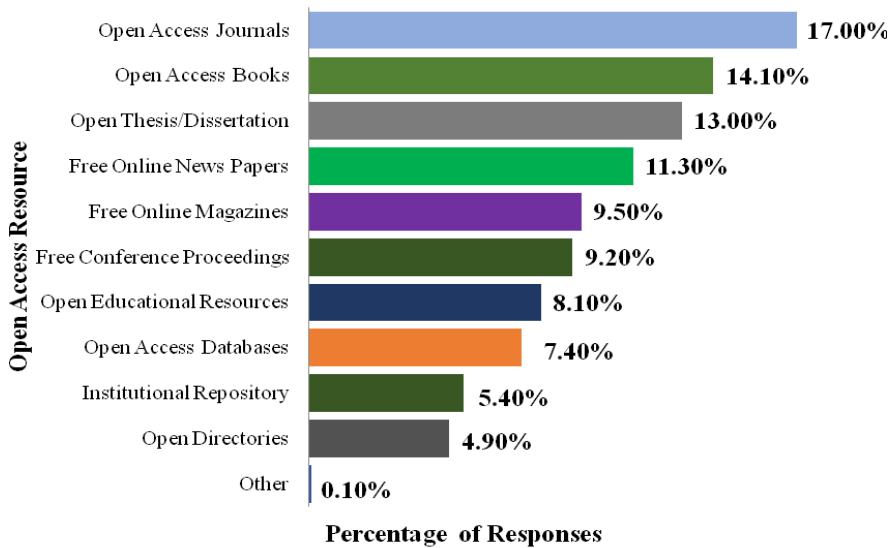


Figure 5: Various Open Access Resources

Table 5 provides information about various Open Access Resources and their frequency of usage. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they use different types of open access resources, and their responses are recorded in the table. The most commonly used open access resource among the respondents is Open Access Journals, with 166 (17%) respondents indicating that they use this resource. The next most commonly used resource is Open Thesis/Dissertation with 127 (13%) respondents indicating that they use this resource. Open Access Books and Free Online Newspapers are used by 138 (14.1%) and 110 (11.3%) respondents respectively. Open Educational Resources, Free Online Magazines, and Free Conference Proceedings are used by a relatively smaller number of respondents, but still have a significant percentage of usage. The least used open access resources are Other, which was chosen by only one respondent, and Open Directories, which was chosen by 48 (4.9%) respondents.

Overall, the table shows that the majority of the respondents use Open Access Resources, with a total percentage of responses of case of 574.7%. This indicates that open access resources are gaining in popularity among the academic community.

Table 6: Purpose of Use of Open Access Resources

| | Responses | | Percent of Cases |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------------|
| | N | Percent | |
| To update subject knowledge | 138 | 23.1% | 83.1% |
| To writing research articles/papers | 107 | 17.9% | 64.5% |
| For research projects | 134 | 22.4% | 80.7% |
| To update current development | 102 | 17.1% | 61.4% |
| For learning and teaching | 114 | 19.1% | 68.7% |
| Any other | 2 | 0.3% | 1.2% |
| Total | 597 | 100.0% | 359.6% |

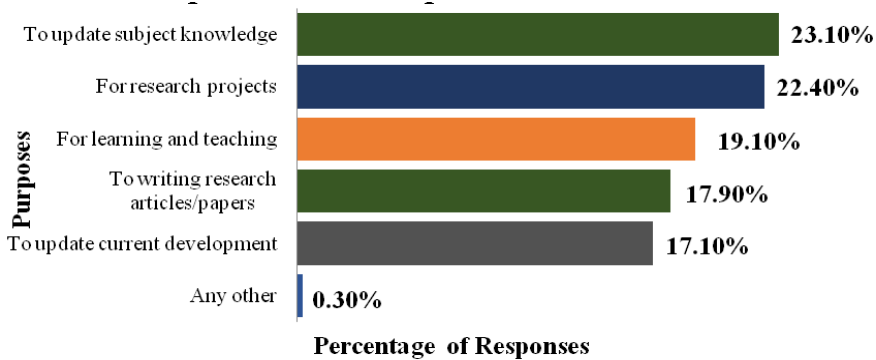
**Figure 6:** Purpose of Use of Open Access Resources

Table 6 shows the purpose of use of open access resources by the respondents. The majority of the respondents (23.1%) use open access resources to update their subject knowledge, followed by using them for research projects (22.4%) and for learning and teaching (19.1%). 17.9% of respondents use open access resources for writing research articles/papers, while 17.1% use them to update current development. Only a very small percentage of respondents (0.3%) use open access resources for other purposes not listed in the table. From these results, it can be inferred that open access resources are primarily used by respondents for academic purposes such as updating subject knowledge and research projects. The use of open access resources for teaching and learning purposes also highlights their potential for supporting education in universities. These findings suggest that open access

resources play an important role in facilitating academic research and education in higher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that while awareness of Open Access resources is relatively high among academics at Bangalore University, the actual usage is not as widespread as expected. Disciplinary differences, technical barriers, and concerns about quality all contribute to varying levels of engagement with OA resources.

To enhance the use of OA resources at Bangalore University, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Increased Awareness and Training:** Organizing regular workshops, seminars, and training sessions to educate academics on the benefits of OA and how to effectively use OA platforms can boost engagement.
- **Improved Institutional Support:** The university should develop a comprehensive OA policy that encourages academics to publish in OA journals and upload their research to the institutional repository.
- **Addressing Quality Concerns:** Efforts should be made to familiarize academics with high-quality OA journals and provide guidance on distinguishing reputable journals from predatory ones.
- **Technical Infrastructure:** The University should invest in improving the technical infrastructure and user experience of OA platforms to facilitate easier access to OA resources.

By addressing these barriers and promoting the benefits of OA, Bangalore University can foster a more open and accessible academic environment, benefiting both faculty and students and contributing to the global Open Access movement.

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