

# *Informative Abstract*

## **Usage of E-Resources in the University Libraries of Assam:**

### **A Comparative Study**

The convergence of ICT has given rise to the evolution of several new jargons like paperless society, electronic resources, portal/gateway and global digital library. Now-a-days, the academic libraries are not only providing printed resources to their users rather they provide printed as well as electronic resources like e-journals, e-books and databases for fulfilling the day-to-day academic and research requirements of the library users as a result of which the user satisfaction level has been increasing. In 21st century, libraries are moving from print to e-resources either subscribing individually or through consortia. There has been paradigm shift in the collection development policies for acquiring printed as well as e-resources (both offline and on-line resources). The higher education of 21<sup>st</sup> century is passing through the phase of Information/Knowledge revolution. Library consortia is a community (a supportive) of two or more libraries which have formally agreed to cooperative, synchronize, organize, collaborate or consolidate certain functions to achieve joint objectives.

The Consortium namely UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, DeLCON and AICTE-INDEST subscribes to electronic resources covering all major subject discipline being taught in universities of India. It includes wide variety of materials e.g. e-journals, bibliographic databases, reviews published by scholarly societies, university presses, institutional and commercial publishers. Again, consortia-based subscription to electronic resources provides access to wider number of electronic resources at substantially lower cost.

The area selected for the study is Assam State of North-East India. The formation of consortia or the process of buying e-resources by the different libraries of Assam together has become very important activities in the last few years. This study “*Usage of E-Resources in the University Libraries of Assam: A Comparative Study*” discusses the usefulness of e-resources available under library consortia in the university libraries of Assam. The present study has been designed for library user’s communities of university libraries of Assam having “UGC-INFONET”, “DeLCON” and “INDEST-AICTE Digital Library Consortium” and which also includes research scholars, faculty members and librarian. The area selected for the study is Assam state of Northeast India which consists of four universities, viz. Assam University, Tezpur University, Gauhati University, and Dibrugarh University.

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To examine the e-resource usage pattern among the university library users of Assam;
- To examine the preference of e-resources by the university library users of Assam;
- To examine the usefulness of e-resources available under library consortia and the preference of e-journal publishers among the university library users of Assam; and
- To find out the problems, prospects and measures for improving the usage of e-resources available under library consortia in the university libraries of Assam.

The present literature review has covered 187 (one hundred and eighty-seven) publications which are directly or indirectly related to the topic under study.

The present study has made an attempt to understand the usage pattern of e-resources in the university libraries of Assam. The area of the study selected for the

research is “Assam” state of Northeast India; with four universities i.e. two central universities and two state universities as mentioned below:

- Assam University, Silchar (Central University);
- Gauhati University, Guwahati (State University);
- Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh (State University); and
- Tezpur University, Tezpur (Central University).

The respondents were chosen from the common Departments in all four universities of Assam under this study. Broadly, it was further divided into two distant groups which falls under the “Linguistics, Humanity & Social Sciences” (LH&SS) and “Science, Technology and Management” (STM) group.

For this study, “Survey Method” of research was adopted to collect data from the LH&SS and STM group library users of central and state universities of Assam; which consists of Assam University, Silchar; Gauhati University, Guwahati; Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh and Tezpur University, Tezpur.

While surveying the universities and collecting data from the individual respondent various techniques have been adopted. In this regards, “Stratified Random Sampling” technique was used in the case of data collection through questionnaire from the individual scientists in different stages. The following tools were used for collection of data pertaining to the present study: Questionnaire; which is followed by Interview-schedule; and Observation-method.

The finding of the study shows that the response rate of the returned questionnaire of this study has been recorded as 73.55 percent. Further, the responses received from Tezpur University were highest (82.5%) which is followed by Dibrugarh University (78.34%), Assam University (70.84%) and Gauhati University (62.5%) respectively. The category wise responses have shown that majority of respondents belongs to “Research

Scholar” category (51.8%) which is followed by respondents belongs to “Faculty Member” category (48.2%).

The survey result reveals that majority of respondents (56.4%) are “Female” respondents. Most of the respondents fall under the age groups of “below 35 years” in which majority of them are “Research Scholar” category. Again, respondents with age group of “above 46 years” belong to “faculty members”.

Out of the total faculty members, 47.1% belong to Assistant Professor which is followed by Associate Professor (37.6%) whereas 15.3% belong to Professor Category. The study further shows that 34.7% faculty members are having “11-20” years of experience which is followed by 32.4% faculty members with “1-10” years of experience whereas 29.4% faculty members have “more than 21” years of experience.

In this study, it is very interesting to find that all respondents (100%) are aware of Internet/e-resource, which indicates that the all the library users belong to different universities are well aware of Internet/ e-resource and extensively using Internet to access e-resource and others facilities in their day to day activities.

Further, the study highlights that majority of the library users (84.4%) use e-journals to a maximum extent, which are followed by 55.5% respondents use e-books, whereas 40.5% respondents use e-dictionary. Moreover, 39.10%, 34.00%, 24.90%, 24.60% and 13.30% respondents also use E-Thesis, Offline databases, Online database, Blog and others e-resources respectively.

It also shows that out of total respondents who are aware of Library Consortia, majority of the respondents (98.5%) belong to Science, Technology and Management (STM) Stream whereas 81.6% respondents from the Humanities and Social Science (LH&SS) are aware of Library Consortia.

The study shows that out of all the consortia which is being subscribed by the universities libraries of Assam, majority respondents (77.6%) aware of UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium which is followed by 18.1% respondents aware of DeLCON Consortium whereas only 14.2% respondents aware of INDEST Consortium. Thus, it is found that UGC-INFONET Library

Consortium is famous consortium among the respondents. It is very interesting to find that UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium is one of the most well-known Library Consortia among all others consortia subscribe by the university. This is may be due to majority library users are getting their required material by using UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium.

The study shows that the majority of the respondent (82.0%) use E-Resources/ Library Consortia for learning/ guiding, which is placed at 1<sup>st</sup> rank which is followed by reference search/ consultation purpose (80.4%) and placed at the 2nd rank order, whereas to keep up-to-date with journal or database (73.6%) is placed at the 3rd rank order.

The study shows that majority of the respondents belong to Faculty Members (48.9%) rate consortia services of their own university as “highly useful”; whereas only 19.7% respondents belong to Research Scholar rate it as “highly useful”. But, it is also found that majority of the respondents (14.2%) feel the services of INDEST as poor whereas and 23.6% numbers of respondents feel the services of DeLCON consortia as very poor.

The study shows that the majority of the respondents (81.9%) preferred “Emerald” journal most of the time, which is placed at 1st rank which is followed by 72.6% respondents preferred “Oxford University Press” and placed at the 2nd rank order, whereas 67.8% respondents preferred “Science Direct” journals and placed at the 3rd rank order.

It is further found that majority of the respondents (65.4%) have their own publications. Further, it is found that respondents belong to STM have more publication (70.8%) in compare to the respondents belong to SSH&L (58.9%).

The study shows that out of total respondents, the most of the respondent (83.9%) are facing problem due to “Less no. of relevant journals”. Again, it shows that majority of the respondents are facing problems due to the difficulty in judging relevant information (60.6%); which is followed by “problem in accessing relevant information from e-resources/ e-consortium” (55.2%) whereas (52.4%) respondents face “problems on accessing articles of own field”.

The result shows that majority of the respondent (70.8%) suggested “to develop adequate e-journal collection”, which is followed by 67.7% respondents feel “printing facilities on demands” should be done effectively, whereas 65.4% respondents suggest “e-resources

orientation/ training program should be introduced at regular interval short of time” and “comfortable sitting arrangements for long term usage of Internet” each. Further, some other suggestions are as follows: more numbers of Internet terminals in library/ departments; needs for e-resource collection development; e-resource sharing between libraries must be increase; adequate e-journals should be provided; and library services should be users friendly in use; perpetual access of journal should be continued, etc.

Therefore, the finding of the study shows a clear picture of e-resource usage pattern by library users belong to Universities of Assam along with the preference of e-resources or e-journals and usefulness, role and preference of e-consortia services. Thus, it would be the great contribution towards the national development in general and Assam, North-East India in particularly to build a new network in future and to improve e-consortia services as per the needs of library users.

**Keywords:** *Usage Pattern, E-Consortia, E-Resources, University Library, Library Users, Assam state.*

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