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Indian student's awareness and need for help to use open access journals

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ABSTRACT

This study is undertaken to evaluate the awareness & utilization of open access journals amongst Indian students. It was conducted amongst 44 participants belonging to the Bangalore & Chennai region. The results show us that the awareness is high & a large number of students access open access journals to do their research assignments. Most importantly a large majority of students expressed that it would be beneficial if their teachers helped them with information to use open access journals.

Keywords— Awareness, Utilization, Open access journals

1. INTRODUCTION

The government of India has now recognized the challenges of its higher education system which is - Innovation & Research. In the world university ranking 2020, not a single university from India has featured in the top 100. The prestigious IISc has a ranking of around 300 & received a score of 55.3 for research, which is by the way the highest amongst Indian universities. This reflects that India's education system needs to be nurtured into a research-oriented environment by instilling a scientific attitude in students at an early stage in the schooling journey. Efforts are in progress to achieve this and the latest UGC regulation has made PhD compulsory for the appointment of teaching faculty from the year 2021 which is a clear sign of how India is moving towards a research rich nation. This landmark decision by the UGC is likely to create ripples in the student as well as the teaching community of the higher education strata and they will seek out ways to engage in research work & assignments that require scientific enquiry.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To engage in any research activity a student must firstly be aware of the various steps involved in the research process and furthermore be abreast with the accessibility & availability of various journals available. Acquisition of skills and knowledge to access these resources is vital. With the technological advancement and the advent of the internet, free access to materials has become possible & convenient. Google search offers options like Wikipedia, google scholar and most importantly open access journals which is a boon to the research community - both the contributors & the consumers. We attempt to examine the awareness levels amongst the student community & their need to receive help with respect to skills & knowledge to use open access journals.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

Students of higher education strata need teacher assistance on 'How to use Open Access Journals for their research work'.

4. METHODOLOGY

This is a simple quantitative study where percentage analysis is used to identify students' awareness levels of open access journals & their perceived need to get support from teachers to improve their skills & knowledge so as to use these resources effectively. A short survey questionnaire was sent to students in higher educational institutions both in Chennai & Bangalore.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

The questionnaire consists of the following six closed ended questions. The responses are kept anonymous so ensure confidentiality of the participants.

1. What course are you currently studying? This gathers demographic details like which course the student has enrolled into. 2. Are you aware of Open access journals? This gathers information about the students' awareness of open access journals. 3. Have you ever accessed open access journals for your research work? This question explores if students have used these resources for their

research work. 4. Do you think it would be useful if your teacher helped you with information on how to use it? This question shows the perceived need of students to receive help from teachers so that they can use these resources. 5. Do you think open access journals are helpful to do your assignments? 6. Are you grateful to the research community for the free access of open journals? A simple percentage analysis is conducted.

6. POPULATION

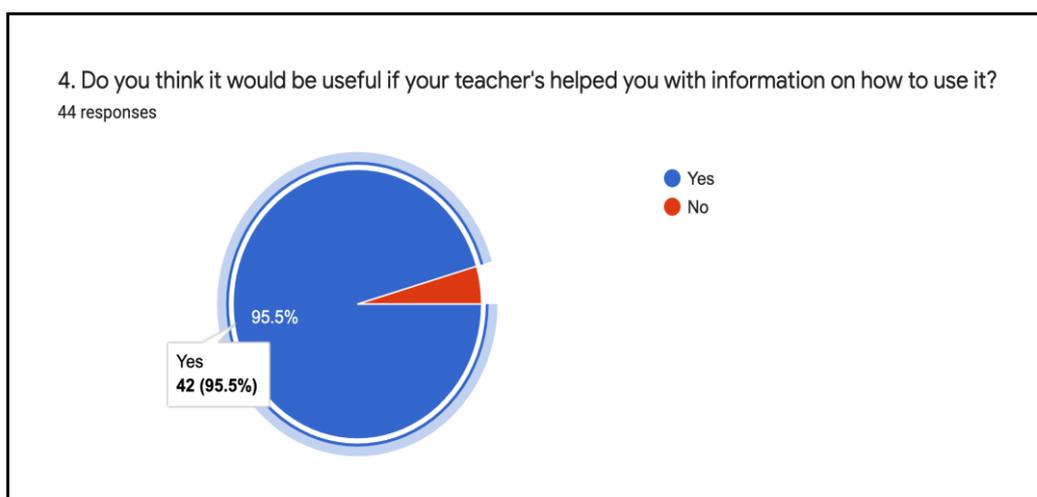
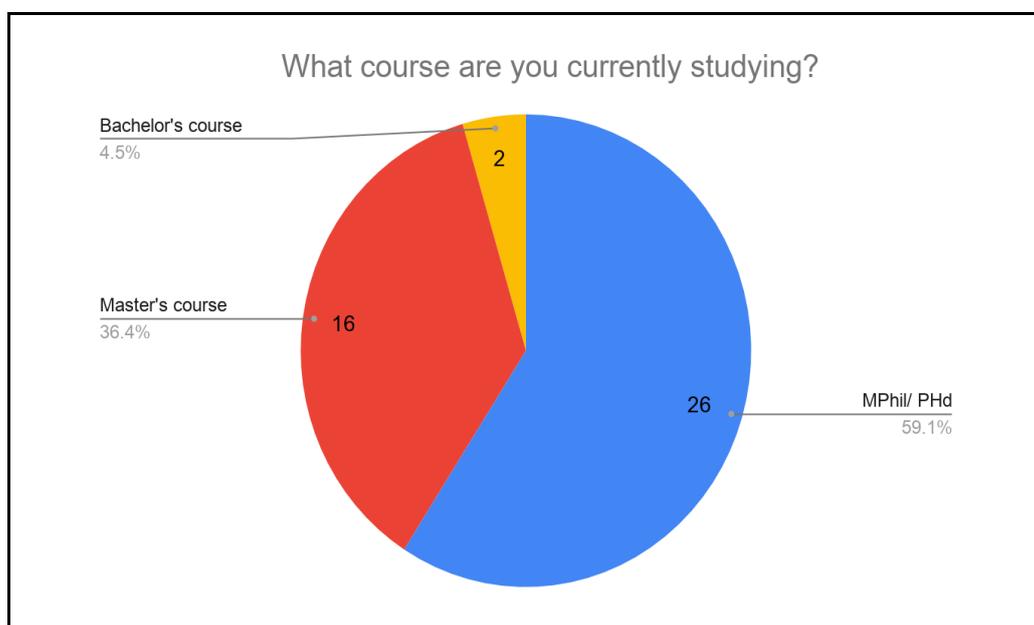
The population consists of students from higher education institutions from Chennai & Bangalore enrolled into Bachelor's, Masters, MPhil & PhD. The number of respondents are 44. Majority of the respondents are enrolled into M.phil & PhD courses (26) , followed by Master's courses(16) and a small percentage of students from Bachelor's courses (2).

7. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data is collected with the help of google forms. Six close ended questions are asked to identify responses pertaining to awareness, utilization and need for help regarding open access journals. All the six questions are mandatory. Respondents are sent the URL through WhatsApp and Email and the data is collected.

8. RESULTS

Demographics : Total no of respondents belonging to various courses Bachelor's Degree-2 , Master's Degree - 16 , PHd - 2695.5 % of the respondents said 'Yes' & 4.5% said 'No' to the question, Do you think it would be useful if your teacher's helped you with information on how to use it?



9. DISCUSSION

The findings from this survey show us that a very large percentage of students from the higher education sector have expressed the desire to receive help from teachers regarding open access journals. Although the awareness of this free access resource is fairly high amongst students & most of them use these resources for their assignments, they lack the confidence and ease with which they are able to use it. This study has implications for the teacher community in designing an intervention to ensure students can learn the skills and knowledge to use open access journals. Particular attention has to be given to students doing their bachelor's program as the students are not aware of the open access journals at all. A well-designed intervention which is experiential in nature, for example audio-visual aids in computer labs will be of great value to the student community.

10. CONCLUSION

The study findings show us that most of the students are aware of open access journals & they do access it to do their research assignments. However, a great majority of the students revealed that it would be of help if their teachers helped them in acquisition of skills and knowledge in using the free access materials. Additional support from teachers wrt open access journals will enable students to make use of these free resources effectively. There are a few limitations of this study, firstly the small sample size although respondents were from two different states a larger sample would improve the effectiveness of the study. Secondly, the validity and reliability of the scale and of the research design needs to be done. Therefore, the study can be improved by using a large sample & conducting the validity and reliability of the scale.

11. REFERENCES

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