AWARENESS AND USE OF DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS (DOAJ) AMONG THE FACULTIES OF ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES IN PUDUCHERRY – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the awareness and use of the journals covered in Directory of Open Access Journals for teaching-learning among the faculties working in arts and science colleges in Puducherry. A survey was conducted in ten such colleges to obtain the opinion of 143 faculties towards this direction through a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that that majority of the respondents were aware of DOAJ database and 50% to 85% of the faculties made use of the journals indexed in DOAJ database for various primary purposes like Preparing for seminars/ conferences, etc. (56.08%), Teaching (52.2%), conducting Research (49.49%), and Self-Learning (48.38%). Writing Journal Articles (44.07%), and Lecture Notes (38.52%) were found to be unexpectedly the secondary purposes. Frequency and time spent by the respondents towards the use of DOAJ database were found to be significant. It is quite encouraging that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the usage of DOAJ in terms of coverage and convenience. However, there are certain problems also identified, based on the opinion of the respondents, such as No Feedback Mechanism' and 'Slow Speed'.

Key words: open access journals, DOAJ, open educational resources, Puducherry, Arts and Science Colleges, teaching-learning resources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Before the existence of open access movement in the earliest twenty first century, there was a digital divide of information between have's and have not's. To bridge the divide the open access movement came into existence. The information rich always had the privileges of accessing to plenty of resources conveniently while the other counterpart had a lot of restrictions in accessibility to basic information. To eliminate this barrier, many initiatives were taken in India and other countries to make scholarly publications accessible to everyone for free. Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is one of such initiatives which paved the way to scholarly community for having access to quality scholarly journals irrespective of the discipline at free of cost. "The DOAJ was launched in 2003 at Lund University, Sweden 300 open access journals. Currently, the database contains 12000 open access journals covering all areas of science, technology, medicine, social science, and humanities" (doaj.org/about). In view of the above, the authors intended to assess the extent of utilization of the Journals covered in DOAJ by the faculties working in arts and science colleges located in Puducherry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three different routes, green-gold-diamond to have access to electronic resources. It was noticed that majority of the respondents were aware of the green and gold routes while they were not well acquainted with the diamond route (Bosah, 2017). A large majority of the respondents made use of online resources effectively, and particularly, out of various online sources e-journals were found to be the prominent source utilized daily by the respondents from both the institutions under study. Surprisingly it was found that the use of free educational resources available online were very popular among the respondents (Ahmed, 2017; Mahadevamurthy & Adithyakumari, 2015). With regard to the use of social media tools for academic purposes, it was observed that Instagram was used by majority of the participants on daily basis spending most of their time followed by Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter (Alhabash et al (2017). It is a common phenomenon that majority of the users are not well-versed with the search and retrieval of précised information from online resources. Towards this direction, Malone and Videon (2015) proved that the provision of instructions on how to make use of electronic resources can significantly enhance the use of these online resources optimally.

Availability of open access journals is a boon to the academia. Though there are open access journals available in plenty covering all the subjects, the usage of such journals are not up to the expectations. On the one hand, a few studies reported that the researchers were still in favour open access journals and the same was popular, and utilized by the respondents fairly (Bartle & Walton, 1996; Eqbal & Khan, 2007). On the other hand, it was observed from a few studies that the open access journals are not popular among the researchers and the utilization of these journals was found to be low due to lack of awareness. The studies suggested that the libraries should take initiatives to create awareness among the stakeholders to enhance the use of open access journals which are supplement to subscribed journals (Ojedokun & Owolabi, 2003; Badu & Markwei, 2005; Mallik, Saxena & Roy, 2007). However, a few problems in the use of open access journals such as inadequate end-user training, poor connectivity, and limited access to PCs, poor search skills, and low bandwidth were reported in the earlier studies (Manda, 2005; Smith, 2007).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

- To study the level of awareness and the extent of use of DOAJ among the faculties of arts and science colleges in Puducherry;
- To identify the purpose and frequency of using of DOAJ by the respondents;
- To examine whether the use of DOAJ enhances the teaching learning skills of the respondents;
- To assess the level of satisfaction of the respondents on the use of DOAJ; and
- To ascertain the problems associated with the use of DOAJ by the respondents.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is based on the faculties working in the arts and science colleges located in Puducherry. The survey was conducted using census method covering all the following ten colleges:

- Indira Gandhi College of Arts & Science (IGCAS)
- Rajiv Gandhi College of Arts & Science (RGCAS)
- Kasthurba College of Arts & Science (KCAS)
- Perunthalaivar Kamarajar College of Arts & Science (PKCAS)
- Tagore College of Arts & Science (TCAS)
- Bharathidasan College of Arts & Science for Women (BCASW)
- Kanchi Mamuniver Centre for Post Graduate Studies (KMCPGS)
- Sarada Gangadaran College of Arts & Science (SGCAS)
- Idhaya College of Arts & Science for Women (ICASW)
- Achariya Arts & Science College (AASC)

The data were collected using structured questionnaire. Proportionate stratified sampling was adopted. A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed. Of which, 143 questionnaires duly filled in were received back with a response rate of 79.44 percent (Table 1). The abbreviations provided along side of the colleges will be used throughout the paper.

Table 1 Status of the questionnaires distributed vs. received

Institution		Distributed	Received	Response Rate
Achariya Arts & Science College	AASC	20	16	80.00
Bharathidasan College of Arts & Science for Women	BCASW	20	17	85.00
Idhaya College of Arts & Science for Women	ICASW	15	12	80.00
Indira Gandhi College of Arts & Science	IGCAS	15	11	73.33
Kanchi Mamuniver Centre for Post Graduate Studies	KMCPGS	20	16	80.00
Kasthurba College of Arts & Science	KCAS	15	12	80.00
Perunthalaivar Kamarajar College of Arts & Science	PKCAS	20	15	75.00
Rajiv Gandhi College of Arts & Science	RGCAS	15	11	73.33
Sarada Gangadaran College of Arts & Science	SGCAS	20	17	85.00
Tagore College of Arts & Science	TCAS	20	16	80.00
Total		180	143	79.44

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Awareness on DOAJ

Table 2 reveals the awareness level of the respondents on the journals covered in Directory of Open Access for Arts & Science disciplines. The institution wise result indicates that out of 143 total faculties working in Arts & Science colleges in Puducherry region, 134 faculties from BCASW were well aware of DOAJ that ranks first in order recording 93.71 percentage of awareness followed by AASC (89.51%), KMCPGS (86.71%), KCAS (83.22%), IGCAS (82.52%), SGCAS (81.12%), TCAS (79.72%), PKCAS (79.02%), RGCAS (78.32%), and ICASW (68.53%).

Table 2 Institution wise awareness level of the faculties on DOAJ

Institution	Awareness (N=143)	%
AASC	128	89.51
BCASW	134	93.71
ICASW	98	68.53
IGCAS	118	82.52
KMCPGS	124	86.71
KCAS	119	83.22
PKCAS	113	79.02
RGCAS	112	78.32
SGCAS	116	81.12
TCAS	114	79.72

5.2. Awareness on versus Use of DOAJ

Based on the result of awareness on DOAJ, an attempt was made to analyse the use of DOAJ against awareness among the faculties. It was found that out of 114 faculties from TCAS, who were aware of DOAJ, 95 of them made use of DOAJ reporting 83.33 percent followed by PKCAS (83.19%), KMCPGS (79.84%), SGCAS (79.31%), IGCAS (78.81%), AASC (73.44%), KCAS (72.27%), BCASW (71.64%), RGCAS (70.54%), and ICASW (58.16%).

Table 3 Awareness Vs. Use of DOAJ

Institution	Awareness	%	Use	%
AASC	128	89.51	94	73.44
BCASW	134	93.71	96	71.64
ICASW	98	68.53	57	58.16
IGCAS	118	82.52	93	78.81
KMCPGS	124	86.71	99	79.84
KCAS	119	83.22	86	72.27
PKCAS	113	79.02	94	83.19
RGCAS	112	78.32	79	70.54
SGCAS	116	81.12	92	79.31
TCAS	114	79.72	95	83.33

5.3. Purpose of Using DOAJ

Table 4 presents the result on the purpose of using DOAJ by the faculties. The options given in the questionnaire were multiple in nature. The institution wise analysis revealed that out of total number of respondents from AASC, 58.82 percent of them made use of DOAJ for teaching purpose followed by the other purposes such as Self-Learning (43.44%), conducting Research (43.28%), Preparing for seminars/ conferences, etc. (61.72%), Writing Journal

Articles (42.23%), and Lecture Notes (39.23%). With regard to BCASW, 47.24 percent of the faculties made use of DOAJ for teaching purpose followed by the other purposes such as Self-Learning (52.34%), conducting Research (53.67%), Preparing for seminars/ conferences, etc. (69.32%), Writing Journal Articles (52.12%), and Lecture Notes (33.28%). Similarly, the same observation was found in other institutions also. However, the overall result indicates that Preparing for seminars/ conferences, etc. was found to be the primary purpose sharing 56.08 percent followed by Teaching (52.2%), conducting Research (49.49%), Self-Learning (48.38%), Writing Journal Articles (44.07%), and Lecture Notes (38.52%).

Table 4 Purpose of using DOAJ by the Faculties

Institution	Teaching	Self-Learning	conducting Research	Preparing for seminars/ conferences, etc.	Writing Journal Articles	Lecture Notes
AASC	58.82	43.44	43.28	61.72	42.23	39.23
BCASW	47.24	52.34	53.67	69.32	52.12	33.28
ICASW	39.09	47.87	42.98	51.11	43.67	29.43
IGCAS	57.61	56.71	45.16	53.27	46.17	37.65
KMCPGS	49.29	43.23	41.83	49.22	39.03	41.23
KCAS	54.22	38.84	53.11	55.16	42.16	36.67
PKCAS	55.46	51.11	55.29	47.25	39.14	43.28
RGCAS	56.67	48.43	48.44	53.28	36.92	40.13
SGCAS	55.06	44.12	54.28	55.36	49.13	39.21
TCAS	48.49	57.72	56.82	65.11	50.11	45.11

5.4. Frequency of Using DOAJ

Table 5 illustrates the result of how frequently the faculties made use of the journals covered in DOAJ. The result shows that out of total number of respondents from AASC, 34.91 percent of them made use of DOAJ 'Daily' followed by Weekly (17.85%), Fortnightly (29.66%), Monthly (11.01%), and Occasionally (6.57%). With regard to BCASW, 20.17 percent of the faculties made use of DOAJ 'Daily' followed by 'Weekly' (21.32%), Fortnightly (36.34%), Monthly (13.45%), and Occasionally (8.72%). Similarly, the same observation was found in other institutions also. However, the overall result indicates that 26.5 percent of the faculties used DOAJ 'Fortnightly' followed by 'Occasionally' (23.64%), 'Monthly' (18.87%), 'Weekly' (18.02%), and 'Daily' (12.97%).

Table 5 Distribution of the Frequency of using DOAJ

Institution	Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Occasionally
AASC	34.91	17.85	29.66	11.01	6.57
BCASW	20.17	21.32	36.34	13.45	8.72
ICASW	8.92	11.50	27.34	32.32	19.92
IGCAS	24.23	13.67	27.11	18.04	16.95
KMCPGS	20.97	18.34	25.95	15.66	19.08
KCAS	8.14	12.01	22.11	28.90	28.84
PKCAS	11.01	21.26	22.16	17.01	28.56
RGCAS	13.92	26.38	34.23	9.32	16.15
SGCAS	14.46	16.45	30.78	30.99	7.32
TCAS	9.34	13.67	23.77	11.36	41.86

5.5. Time spent in using DOAJ

Table 6 highlights the result of time spent on weekly basis by the faculties to make use of DOAJ. The result indicates that out of total number of respondents from AASC, 31.21 percent of them spent '0-2 hrs/week' followed by '2-3 hrs/week' (16.99%), '3-4 hrs/week' (31.2%), '4-5 hrs/week' (9.32%), and '>5 hrs/week' (11.28%). With regard to BCASW, 36.2 percent of the faculties spent '0-2 hrs/week' followed by '2-3 hrs/week' (17.25%), '3-4 hrs/week' (25.54%), '4-5 hrs/week' (13.27%), and '>5 hrs/week' (7.74%). Similarly, the same observation was found in other institutions also. However, the overall result indicates that 28.73 percent of them spent '0-2 hrs/week' followed by '2-3 hrs/week' (23.26%), '3-4 hrs/week' (24.32%), '4-5 hrs/week' (14.48%), and '>5 hrs/week' (9.22%).

Table 6: Distribution of Time Spent per week in using DOAJ

Institution	0-2 hrs	2-3 hrs	3-4 hrs	4-5 hrs	>5 hrs
AASC	31.21	16.99	31.20	9.32	11.28
BCASW	36.20	17.25	25.54	13.27	7.74
ICASW	37.78	33.39	12.50	11.34	4.99
IGCAS	34.51	21.50	14.73	15.99	13.27
KMCPGS	25.20	17.32	36.20	11.02	10.26
KCAS	20.09	27.89	26.63	15.23	10.16
PKCAS	17.71	34.65	26.06	13.28	8.30
RGCAS	26.26	23.53	27.17	12.93	10.11
SGCAS	15.24	19.21	27.44	30.18	7.93
TCAS	43.05	20.89	15.75	12.20	8.11

5.6. Satisfaction level of the respondents with DOAJ

Table 7 projects the result of satisfaction level of the faculties with the use of DOAJ. The result indicates that out of total number of respondents from AASC, 27.77 percent of them were 'Extremely Satisfied' with the use of DOAJ followed by 'Satisfied' (20.19%), 'Moderate' (32.25%), 'Dissatisfied' (12.02%), and 'Extremely Dissatisfied' (7.77%). With regard to BCASW, 32.29 percent of them were 'Extremely Satisfied' with the use of DOAJ followed by 'Satisfied' (20.61%), 'Moderate' (32.2%), 'Dissatisfied' (9.65%), and 'Extremely Dissatisfied' (5.25%). Similarly, the same observation was found in other institutions also. However, the overall result indicates that 22.57 percent of them were 'Extremely Satisfied' with the use of DOAJ followed by 'Satisfied' (27.39%), 'Moderate' (29.37%), 'Dissatisfied' (12.33%), and 'Extremely Dissatisfied' (8.35%).

Table 7 Distribution of Satisfaction Level of the faculties with the use of DOAJ

Institution	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Moderate	Dissatisfied	Extremely Dissatisfied
AASC	27.77	20.19	32.25	12.02	7.77
BCASW	32.29	20.61	32.20	9.65	5.25
ICASW	10.21	32.15	36.73	11.16	9.75
IGCAS	33.61	28.02	18.84	11.00	8.53
KMCPGS	25.71	20.02	34.61	12.11	7.55
KCAS	21.48	29.18	24.33	16.15	8.86
PKCAS	18.51	32.20	27.96	11.34	9.99
RGCAS	23.00	22.39	35.55	9.05	10.01
SGCAS	22.86	26.56	32.34	9.96	8.28
TCAS	10.22	42.55	18.85	20.86	7.52

5.7. Problems faced by the respondents with DOAJ

Besides the positive impact of using the journals covered in DOAJ database, the researchers intended to identify the constraints faced by the faculties of Arts & Science while using DOAJ database based on the perception of the respondents. As shown in Table 8, ‘*No Feedback Mechanism*’ and ‘*Slow Speed*’ were found to be the major constraints in the usage of DOAJ database reporting the opinion of 62.24 percent of the respondents each. The other problems identified include Lack of up-to-date information (46.85%), Lack of subject coverage (41.26%), Lack of Quality (34.27%), Inactive Links (32.87%), Lack of user friendliness (30.07%), Inadequate search facility (27.27%), Lack of Time (27.27%), Lack of Awareness (22.38%), and Lack of Interest (16.08%).

Table 8: Problems Faced by the respondents in using DOAJ

S. No.	Problems Faced	No. of Responses (N=143)	%
1	Lack of Awareness	32	22.38
2	Lack of Quality	49	34.27
3	Inadequate search facility	39	27.27
4	Lack of subject coverage	59	41.26
5	Inactive Links	47	32.87
6	Lack of user friendliness	43	30.07
7	Lack of up-to-date information	67	46.85
8	No Feedback Mechanism	89	62.24
9	Slow Speed	89	62.24
10	Lack of Time	39	27.27
11	Lack of Interest	23	16.08

6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study revealed that majority of the respondents were aware of DOAJ database and 50% to 85% of the faculties made use of the journals indexed in DOAJ database for various primary purposes like Preparing for seminars/ conferences, etc. (56.08%), Teaching (52.2%), conducting Research (49.49%), and Self-Learning (48.38%). Writing Journal Articles (44.07%), and Lecture Notes (38.52%) were found to be unexpectedly the secondary purposes. Frequency and time spent by the respondents towards the use of DOAJ database were found to be significant. It is quite encouraging that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the usage of DOAJ in terms of coverage and convenience. However, there are certain problems also identified, based on the opinion of the respondents, such as *No Feedback Mechanism* and *Slow Speed*. In view of the above findings, it could be concluded that the accessibility to DOAJ is a boon to the faculties working in Arts and Science colleges in Puducherry. It is suggested that user orientation or awareness programmes on DOAJ could be the possible mechanisms to eliminate some of the constraints by which the quality of teaching-learning and in the institutions under study can be enhanced.

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