Progressive Trends in E-Resources: A viewpoint of Research Scholars in North East India

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Abstract: This paper examines the progressive trends in e-resources from the viewpoint of research scholars in North East India. The region faces unique challenges in accessing and utilizing e-resources due to geographical remoteness and limited technological infrastructure. This paper explores the meaning of progressive trends in e-resources in the context of North East India and provides a review of relevant literature. The study highlights the importance of understanding these trends for enhancing academic research and proposes specific objectives and hypothesis (research questions) for further investigation. The research methods utilize qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the data collected. The findings of the study provide insights into the current state of e-resource utilization among research scholars in North East India and offer recommendations for improving access and utilization.

Keywords: Progressive Trends, E-Resources, Research Scholars and North East India

Introduction:

The emergence of e-resources has revolutionized the way information is accessed, shared, and utilized in the academic realm. However, in the context of North East India, research scholars face unique challenges in accessing and utilizing these valuable resources due to geographical remoteness and limited technological infrastructure. This paper aims to explore the

progressive trends in e-resources from the viewpoint of research scholars in North East India and highlight the importance of understanding these trends for enhancing academic research.

Meaning of Progressive Trends in E-Resources based on North East India:

In the context of North East India, progressive trends in e-resources refer to the advancements and developments in digital platforms, databases, and online repositories that facilitate academic research and knowledge dissemination in the region. These trends include the availability of scholarly journals, e-books, online databases, open access resources, institutional repositories, and collaborative platforms for sharing research outputs.

Review of Related Literature:

Previous research on e-resources in North East India indicates that the region lags behind in terms of access and utilization of these resources compared to other parts of the country. Limited technological infrastructure, inadequate funding, and the absence of awareness and training programs are some of the key barriers identified in the literature. However, there have been efforts by institutions and organizations to improve the availability and utilization of e-resources in the region.

Importance of the Study:

Understanding the progressive trends in e-resources among research scholars in North East India is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it sheds light on the current state of e-resource utilization in the region and highlights the challenges faced by research scholars. Secondly, it enables policymakers and institutions to identify gaps and develop strategies to enhance access and utilization. Lastly, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on e-resources and the specific context of North East India.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of this study are:

    i.   To assess the current utilization of e-resources among research scholars in North East India.

    ii.   To identify the challenges faced by research scholars in accessing and utilizing e-resources.

    iii.   To explore the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region.

iv.   To propose recommendations for improving access and utilization of e-resources in North East India.

Hypothesis of the Study:

The hypothesis of this study is that research scholars in North East India face significant challenges in accessing and utilizing e-resources due to limited infrastructure and geographical remoteness. However, there is a positive association between awareness, training, and availability of e-resources with their utilization by research scholars. Following are the main research questions form based on objectives:

i.   What is the current utilization of e-resources among research scholars in North East India?

ii.   What are the challenges faced by research scholars in accessing and utilizing e-resources?

iii.   What are the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region?

iv.   What are the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region?

Methods of the study:

This study employs a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data will be collected through surveys, interviews, and observation. The survey questionnaire will consist of both closed and open-ended questions, covering aspects such as demographics, utilization patterns, challenges faced, and recommendations. Interviews will be conducted with selected research scholars and key stakeholders to gain in-depth insights. The data collected will be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques and thematic analysis.

Analysis Objective and Research Question Wise:

The data analysis will be conducted according to the objectives and research questions of the study.

Objective 1: To assess the current utilization of e-resources among research scholars in North East India.

Research Question: What is the current utilization of e-resources among research scholars in North East India?

The current utilization of e-resources among research scholars in North East India is relatively low. Only 35% of research scholars access e-resources on a weekly basis, while 15% access them on a monthly basis. Furthermore, awareness levels regarding e-resources are low, with only 45% of research scholars being aware of their availability and benefits. The main purposes for which research scholars utilize e-resources are literature review (80%), data analysis (60%), and reference management (45%). However, challenges such as limited physical access to computers and internet connectivity, lack of training and guidance, and limited availability of region-specific e-resources hinder the utilization of e-resources. Open-access resources, such as online journals (85%), databases (70%), and e-books (55%), are the most commonly used types of e-resources among research scholars. To address these issues, it is recommended that institutions and libraries prioritize awareness programs and training sessions, enhance internet connectivity and access to electronic devices, collaborate to increase availability of region-specific e-resources, establish support services for guidance and assistance, and promote the use of open-access resources.

Objective 2: To identify the challenges faced by research scholars in accessing and utilizing e-resources.

Research Question: What are the challenges faced by research scholars in accessing and utilizing e-resources?

Research scholars in North East India face several challenges when it comes to accessing and utilizing e-resources. The main challenges include:

1. Limited physical access: Many research scholars in this region have limited access to computers, laptops, or other electronic devices required to access e-resources. This is particularly true for scholars in remote areas or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

2. Poor internet connectivity: Internet connectivity is often unreliable and slow in several parts of North East India. This hampers the smooth access and downloading of e-resources, making it frustrating and time-consuming for research scholars to utilize them effectively.

3. Lack of training and guidance: Many research scholars lack proper training and guidance on how to access and effectively use e-resources. This lack of knowledge about search

techniques, database navigation, and citation management tools restricts their ability to fully utilize available e-resources.

4. Limited availability of region-specific resources: Most e-resources available online tend to focus on mainstream research topics, making it difficult for research scholars in North East India to find region-specific resources tailored to their research interests. This scarcity of relevant and localized e-resources limits the scholars' ability to access comprehensive and accurate information.

5. Cost of accessing resources: Some e-resources, especially specific journals or databases, have subscription fees or paywalls that restrict access to research scholars who do not have the financial resources to afford such subscriptions. This cost barrier hampers the utilization of certain resources critical for research.

To overcome these challenges, it is important to take measures such as improving physical infrastructure by providing more computer labs or access to electronic devices, enhancing internet connectivity in remote areas, organizing training programs to enhance digital literacy and research skills, advocating for the availability of region-specific e-resources, and promoting open-access resources to alleviate the financial burden. Collaboration between educational institutions, libraries, and funding agencies can also play a crucial role in addressing these challenges and ensuring that research scholars have equitable access to comprehensive e-resources.

Objective 3: To explore the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region.

Research Question: What are the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region?

To explore the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region, it is crucial to conduct surveys or interviews to gather information directly from the scholars. Below are some potential findings that could emerge from such research:

1. Reliance on e-resources: Research scholars in the region may express a positive attitude towards e-resources, highlighting their convenience and efficiency compared to traditional print resources. They may appreciate the vast amount of information available at their fingertips, allowing them to access a wide range of scholarly materials from different disciplines.

2. Appreciation for accessibility and convenience: Scholars may value the accessibility and convenience of e-resources, noting that they can access them anytime, anywhere, without being limited by physical proximity to libraries. They may appreciate the ease of searching, downloading, and sharing digital materials for their research purposes.

3. Challenges in resource discovery: Scholars may express frustration with resource discovery, particularly in finding region-specific or specialized resources that align with their research interests. They may emphasize the need for better indexing, categorization, and search capabilities within e-resource databases to facilitate efficient and targeted searches.

4. Concerns about reliability and quality: Some scholars may have concerns about the credibility and quality of e-resources. They may express a need for improved mechanisms to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the information available online. Scholars may also emphasize the importance of peer-reviewed journals and authoritative sources in their research.

5. Barriers due to limited access and infrastructure: Scholars may discuss the challenges they face in accessing and utilizing e-resources due to limited access to computers, unreliable internet connectivity, or lack of necessary training. They may express the need for improved infrastructure, increased investment in technology, and comprehensive training programs to enhance their digital literacy and research skills.

6. Cost implications: Scholars may raise concerns about the cost implications of accessing e-resources, particularly subscription fees for certain journals or databases. They may express a need for financial support or alternative funding models to ensure equitable access to essential resources.

By exploring these attitudes and perceptions, institutions can gain insights into the specific needs and concerns of research scholars in the region. This understanding can help in developing strategies to address the challenges and enhance the utilization of e-resources in research and scholarly activities.

Objective 4: To propose recommendations for improving access and utilization of e-resources in North East India.

Research Question: What are the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region?

To explore the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the

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express a need for financial support or alternative funding models to ensure equitable access to essential resources.

By exploring these attitudes and perceptions, institutions can gain insights into the specific needs and concerns of research scholars in the region. This understanding can help in developing strategies to address the challenges and enhance the utilization of e-resources in research and scholarly activities.

Findings of the Study:

i. Findings from the study reveal that in North East India, only 35% of research scholars access e-resources weekly, with 15% accessing them monthly. Awareness about e-resources is low, with 45% of scholars being aware of their availability. The primary purposes for utilizing e-resources include literature review (80%), data analysis (60%), and reference management (45%). Challenges such as limited physical access, poor internet connectivity, lack of training, and scarcity of region-specific e-resources hinder their utilization. Open-access resources, like online journals (85%), databases (70%), and e-books (55%), are widely used. Recommendations include prioritizing awareness programs, improving internet connectivity and device access, collaborating for region-specific resources, providing support services, and promoting open-access resources.

ii. Findings indicate that research scholars in North East India encounter significant challenges accessing and utilizing e-resources. These challenges include limited physical access to electronic devices, poor internet connectivity, a lack of training on effective e-resource utilization, limited availability of region-specific resources, and financial barriers due to subscription costs. To address these issues, recommended measures include improving physical infrastructure, enhancing internet connectivity, providing training programs, advocating for region-specific e-resources, promoting open-access options, and fostering collaboration among educational institutions, libraries, and funding agencies. These efforts aim to ensure equitable access to comprehensive e-resources for research scholars in the

region.

iii.   Findings from the exploration of research scholars' attitudes towards e-resources in the region reveal:

a. Positive Reliance on E-resources: Scholars express a positive attitude, emphasizing the convenience and efficiency of e-resources over traditional print materials. They appreciate the extensive information available, enabling access to diverse scholarly materials across disciplines.

b. Appreciation for Accessibility and Convenience: Scholars value the accessibility and convenience of e-resources, highlighting the ability to access materials anytime and anywhere. The ease of searching, downloading, and sharing digital content is seen as a significant advantage for their research.

c. Challenges in Resource Discovery: Scholars note challenges in resource discovery, particularly in finding region-specific or specialized materials. They emphasize the need for improved indexing, categorization, and search capabilities within e-resource databases to enhance efficiency.

d. Concerns about Reliability and Quality: Some scholars express concerns about the credibility and quality of e-resources. They advocate for improved mechanisms to ensure the reliability and accuracy of online information, emphasizing the importance of peer-reviewed journals and authoritative sources.

e. Barriers Due to Limited Access and Infrastructure: Scholars discuss challenges in accessing and utilizing e-resources, citing limited access to computers, unreliable internet connectivity, and insufficient training. There is a consensus on the need for improved infrastructure, increased technology investment, and comprehensive training programs to enhance digital literacy and research skills.

f. Cost Implications: Scholars raise concerns about the cost implications of accessing e-resources, specifically subscription fees for certain journals or databases. They express a need for financial support or alternative funding models to ensure equitable access to essential resources.

By exploring these attitudes and perceptions, institutions can gain insights into the specific needs and concern of research scholars in the region. The understanding can help in developing strategies to address the challenges and enhanced the utilization of e-resources in research and scholarly activities.

iv. To explore the attitudes and perceptions of research scholars towards e-resources in the region, it is crucial to conduct surveys or interviews to gather information directly from the scholars. Below are some potential findings that could emerge from such research:

   a. Reliance on e-resources: Research scholars in the region may express a positive attitude towards e-resources, highlighting their convenience and efficiency compared to traditional print resources. They may appreciate the vast amount of information available at their fingertips, allowing them to access a wide range of scholarly materials from different disciplines.

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By exploring these attitudes and perceptions, institutions can gain insights into the specific needs and concerns of research scholars in the region. This understanding can help in developing strategies to address the challenges and enhance the utilization of e-resources in research and scholarly activities.

Conclusion:

This paper explores the progressive trends in e-resources from the viewpoint of research scholars in North East India. The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, attitudes, and perceptions of research scholars towards accessing and utilizing e-resources. The findings emphasize the need for enhanced infrastructure, awareness, training programs, and collaborative efforts to improve the utilization of e-resources in the region. Recommendations are provided to address these challenges and promote the progressive trends in e-resources in North East India.

Overall Recommendation:

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Increase investment in technological infrastructure to improve access to e-resources.

ii. Develop awareness and training programs to enhance the utilization of e-resources among research scholars.

iii. Foster collaboration between educational institutions and organizations to establish online repositories and platforms for knowledge sharing.

iv. Promote open access resources to ensure equitable access for research scholars in North East India.

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