

Perception of Open Access Publishing and scholarly communication among the faculties and research scholars of Tripura University: A Study

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to find perceptions of Open Access Publishing by faculties and research scholars of Tripura University through a survey using questionnaire method. The questionnaire was administered to 100 randomly selected faculty members and research scholars out of whom 78 have responded and the response rate is 78%. It is found that 69(88.46%) accepted that they are aware of Open Access; male (91.83%) faculties and research scholars are more aware of Open Access Publishing than that of female (82.75%) faculties and research scholars; 65 (83.33%) stated that they have used Open Access journal; (76%) respondents prefer and use both Open access journal; 29(38.16%) prefer OA journals because it is accessible from anywhere followed by 26 (34.21%) prefer it as it is freely available; 11 (14.47%) prefer it solely because they support OA publishing; maximum respondents also gave their view that they do not want submit their research to OA journals because they think OA journals are not always peer reviewed and not reliable; highest number of respondents agree (47%) to the fact that it ensure receiving of more citation; highest number of respondents (47%) agree to the statement; maximum respondents 43(55.13%) agree to the statement that OA ensures faster publication of their research. The results found from the study will help the university library in formulating policies regarding open access resources and institutional repositories.

Keywords: Open Access, Open Access Publishing, Scholarly Communication, Tripura University

1. Introduction

The research community in the world is actively producing new knowledge which is very crucial for upliftment of the society. This knowledge has to be accessible by all without hindrance so that mankind can be benefitted from it. But deal to access this knowledge in various forms is very expensive. So, economic obstacle has to be removed so that free flow of information can occur to eradicate information divide. Library budget is always

shrinking and the subscription costs of electronic resources are always increasing. These factors lead to the emergence of open access publishing. Paying for access to journals makes sense in the world of print publishing, where providing articles to each reader requires the production of physical copies of articles, but in the online world, with distribution as wide as the internet's reach, it makes much less sense (Plos, 2018).

Previous related studies have shown that the concept and benefits of open access are not understood well by scholarly community. Scholar



community is not having enough awareness or little awareness and skill shortfall regarding open access (Dechman and Syms, 2014). The major issues are lack of administrative support and researcher's ignorance of the benefits of open access (Grgic and Barbaric, 2011). There is a lack of acquaintance with institutional repositories and a very low rate for depositing research productivity in the institutional repository (Mischo and Schlembach, 2011).

It is very important for the academic community to understand the benefits and impact of open access, it is the responsibility of the library professionals to make the academic community aware of it. So, to understand the open access behaviour of faculties and research scholars of Tripura University this particular study is conducted. This research is concerned with the activities and attitudes of the scholarly community of Tripura University with respect to open access publishing.

1.1 Objectives

- ❖ To find out the level of awareness of open access among the scholarly community of Tripura University;
- ❖ To find out the level of usage of open access among the scholarly community of Tripura University;
- ❖ To identify the type of preferred scholarly communication among the sample population;
- ❖ To recognize the reasons for not selection of open access journals by the sample population; and
- ❖ To find out the perception of open access among the scholarly community of Tripura University.

2. Review of literature

Lars Moksness, Svein Ottar Olsen, (2017) tried to identify how attitudes, norms (injunctive and descriptive) and perceived behavioural control (PBC) (capacity and autonomy) persuade the purpose to publish open access (OA), and how individual innovativeness in information technology affects approach and PBC. This study concluded that attitude is the strongest predictor of the intention to publish OA, followed by injunctive and descriptive social norms, and PBC capacity and autonomy. All factors positively influence intention apart from PBC autonomy, which has a negative effect.

Valerie Spezi, Simon Wakeling, Stephen Pinfield, Claire Creaser, Jenny Fry, Peter Willett, (2017) studied open access mega-journals as the future of scholarly communication or academic dumping ground. It presented a review of the literature of Open Access mega-journals prepared about four important type: scale, disciplinary scope, peer review policy, and economic model. The open-access mega-journals (OAMJs) signify an ever more significant element of the intellectual contact countryside. The objective of the study was to observe the discussions relating to OAMJs, and their stress within scholarly publishing and thinks attitudes towards mega-journals within the academic community.

Gabriel Bosah, Chuma Clement Okeji, Ebikabowei Emmanuel Baro, (2017) attempted to understand a variety of issues concerning selection of open access journals by and to be acquainted with the obstacles librarians face with OA journal publishing. The results of the study disclosed that majority of the academic librarians were aware of the gold and green publishing routes, while the majority of academic

librarians were not aware of the diamond publishing route. The study exposed that a great amount of the academic librarians have published only one paper in OA journals. The study as well exposed that standing of journal and impact factor of journal were seen as very significant with the factors that update them of choosing OA. The common of the respondents agreed that author fees, and lack of even internet connectivity are the key walls to publishing in OA journals.

Ming Chen, Yunfei Du, (2016) tried to assess the position and eminence of library and information science (LIS) open-access (OA) journals in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). The study selected 86 source journals of LIS in the SSCI as a sample and measured their status of open access. Analytic hierarchy process (AHP) was used to analyse 36 OA journals of 86 source journals, especially their production capability, academic influence and network communication ability. The outcomes of the study specified that OA journals have become an gradually more imperative part of LIS journals. Production capability, academic influence and network communication ability are important factors affecting the quality of OA journals.

Nafiz Zaman Shuva and Radia Taisir, (2016) undertook a study to recognize Bangladeshi faculty members' awareness, perceptions, and use of open access journals. It investigated the factors that motivate and persuade the faculty members to select open access journals for getting published. The researchers also discussed some issues of predatory open access journals in the context of the open access movement. It was advocated that libraries should work as centres for open access publications and help faculty members and researchers choose the right journals for their research.

Mangkhollen Singson, M. Gnanaselvi Joy, S. Thiyagarajan and Valerie Dkhar, (2015) tried to find out the perception of open access publishing among the faculty members of Ponicherry University. They found that 98% of sample population were aware of open access publishing; faculty stated indexing database and search engines as a primary source of accessing OA journals; they also found that most of the sample was not in the favour of author pay model.

Julia Gross and John Charles Ryan, (2015) surveyed researchers in the Faculty of Education and Arts regarding their knowledge, understandings, and perceptions of OA publishing. The survey was also intended to draw the blockades to OA publishing supposed or experienced by researchers. This study argued that OA publishing will persist to renovate scholarship inside the arts and humanities, especially through the role of institutional repositories. The "library-as-publisher" role presents the potential to transform academic and university-specific publishing activities. They stressed on the point that training of university researchers and personnel is required to bring into balance their understandings of OA publishing.

3. Research Methodology

Research design is important as it provides the soft sailing of the different research procedures, thereby making research as competent as possible yielding highest information with minimum expenses of effort, time and money. The questionnaire was administered to 100 randomly selected faculty members and research scholars. They belonged to 26 different departments of Tripura University out of which 78 have responded and the response rate is 78%.

To accomplish the objectives, a survey was conducted among faculty members and research scholars of 26 different departments of Tripura University. From 2nd April February 2018 to 20th May 2018, respondents were contacted individually and given a questionnaire, together with a rationale for the study and a request for cooperation. 100 respondents randomly selected; 78 out of them responded.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected and analysed are represented in tabular and diagrammatic form to give a clear picture of the results found.

The data available as annexure shows that data were collected from total 78 faculties belonging to 26 departments out of which highest number of responses were received from Department of Bengali 9 (11.54%) followed by Botany 7(8.97%) and Forestry and Bio Diversity 7(8.97%) which is followed by Psychology 6 (7.69%). From remaining 23 departments less than 6 responses were received.

Data also shows that highest number of responses were received from Research Scholars (44%) followed by Assistant Professors (36%) and Guest Faculties (10%). Remaining 10% of responses were received from Professors, Associate Professors and Guest Lecturers.

Regarding awareness of open access publishing data revealed that highest number of respondents 69 (88.46%) accepted that they are aware of Open Access publishing followed by 9 (11.54%) are not aware of Open Access publishing.

Regarding usage of open access journal wise distribution, it can be seen that out of the total population highest number of respondents

65(83.33%) stated that they have used Open Access journal followed by 13 (16.67%) have not used Open Access journals ever.

The survey showed that 76% of respondents prefer and use both Open access journal and subscription-based journal followed by 24% of respondents who prefer open access journal only.

While assessing the user preference of open access journals, it is found that maximum respondents 29(38.16%) prefer OA journals because it is accessible from anywhere followed by 26 (34.21%) prefer it as it is freely available; 11 (14.47%) prefer it solely because they support OA publishing and remaining have accepted that they use OA because of combination of the above three reasons.

The sample population was also asked why they would not prefer getting published in OA journals, the reasons for not selection of OA journals and the data signify that maximum respondents 15 (25%) do not want to get published because they think OA journals are not always peer-reviewed followed by 7(11.67%) thinks there is lack of reliability followed by Lack of Awareness 6 (10%). An interesting fact is revealed that 18(23.07%) responded that there is no reason for not selecting an OA journal.

Perceptions: In this segment, few questions were asked regarding their perception about OA publications and results found are explained below. Respondents were asked to fill up Likert scale.

- ❖ Regarding reception of more citations by OA articles and it shows that highest number of respondents agree (47%) to the fact that it ensure receiving of more citation followed by (32%) is neutral about receiving more citation followed by (18%) strongly agree that article will receive

more citation and only (3%) disagree with the statement that article will receive more citation.

- ❖ Regarding whether the respondents perceive OA as a blessing for developing country researchers and it confirms that highest number of respondents (47%) agree to the statement followed by (22%) were neutral about the statement and (21%) strongly agree followed by (6%) disagree followed by (4%) strongly disagree.
- ❖ Perception regarding ensuring of faster publication of research work wise data and it validates that maximum respondents 43(55.13%) agree to the statement that OA ensures faster publication of their research followed by 17(21.79%) gave their opinion as neutral; 11 (14.10%) strongly agree to the statement; 5(6.41%) disagree and 2(2.56%) strongly disagree.
- ❖ Regarding preference of publications, it is found that highest number of respondents 43(55.84%) would you prefer to get published Open Access journals followed by 14(18.18%) prefer print only Journal; 12(15.58%) prefer subscription based journals; 5(6.49%) prefer both Open Access journal & Subscription based journal; both Open Access journal & Print only Journal 2 (2.60%) followed by all Open Access journal, subscription based journal & Print only Journal 1(1.30%).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The data for the study were collected from 78 faculties and research scholars of the total 26 departments of Tripura University of both Faculty of Science and Faculty of Arts and Commerce.

(Swan & Brown, 2004) have stated that awareness regarding OA is increasing among the scholarly community. In the current study, it is found that 88.46% respondents accepted that they are aware of Open Access publishing and 88.33% respondents have used open access journals. These data prove the increasing familiarity of open access publishing among the scholarly community of Tripura University. 76% prefers and uses both Open access journal and subscription-based journals. Conversely, this study reported that 18.18% respondents still want get published in only print only journals which shows they are not still clear about the benefits of getting published in an OA journal. Respondents also gave their view that they do not want submit their research to OA journals because they think OA journals are not always peer reviewed and not reliable. Likewise, (Coonin and Younce 2009) have also reported on author confusion over the terms “electronic” publishing and “OA” among social sciences and humanities faculty. This confusion is a message indicating author’s lack of clarity in OA publishing model beyond awareness.

OA attempts to reduce the access and knowledge divide (Ahemd, 2007; Eloff et al., 2013; Fernandez, 2006; Ghosh and Das, 2007; Herb, 2010). Lecturers and associate professors had a stronger agreement/ agreement with the statement ‘OA is a gift for developing countries’. Similarly, in this study also it is found that 47% agree to the statement that OA is a blessing for developing country researchers.

The study also shows an intersecting fact that the male faculties and scholars are more aware of OA publishing than female faculties and scholars with a degree of difference of 9.05%.

The current study was undertaken to fill some gaps in research on OA journals, in particular faculty members' awareness, perceptions, understanding, and use of OA journals among the scholarly community. It is anticipated that this study will assist to guide potential research on this particular field.

5.1 Suggestions

Based on the study, few suggestions are made

- ❖ University have to take a policy choice for setting up of Open access Institutional Repository.
- ❖ Links to open access Repositories, databases and online journals must be presented on the library's web page.
- ❖ Government should support universities to self-archive scholarly output in an OAI obedient format as a matter of course especially where this has been publicly funded.
- ❖ University should develop policies that certify publicly funded research is made freely accessible and available to anyone with internet access.

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Note:

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