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RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNIVERSITY FACULTY OPINION ON OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING: A CASE STUDY OF FACULTY OF LIFE SCIENCES, ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH.

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Abstract

Open Access, a way for liberated availability of scholarly content through the Internet and an emerging concept for far ranging and unrestricted access to scholarly literature. OA journals and OA repositories (Institutional/Disciplinary Repositories) are the two main approaches of Open Access publishing. However, this mode of scholarly communication is not widely exploited in developing countries. This paper discusses the factors that influence the adoption of Open Access for scholarly communication and awareness, opinion and attitude of Faculty members of the Faculty of Life Sciences, AMU Aligarh. The sample population of 30 faculty members out of total 69 from the Faculty of Life Sciences, AMU Aligarh was taken to conduct the study. It was evident from the findings that the majority of Faculty members were aware of Open Access. However, most of the researchers preferred OA journals to publish but they reflect their interest in deposition into Institutional repositories. The current poor research conditions, non awareness of copyright issues, inadequate online publishing skills, and the slow Internet connectivity are the major barriers that deterred researchers to publish the research findings through Open Access means.

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Introduction:-

“Open Access” (OA) and “Institutional Repositories” (IRs) have been buzz words in library literature for last decade. In 2001, the Budapest Open Access Initiative identified two ways for achieving OA goals. They are “Gold” OA (or author pays model) achieved by publishing in a peer-reviewed, scholarly OA journal in which articles are available in the public domain free of cost without any permission barrier and “Green” OA (or self-archiving) attained by publishing in any peer-reviewed journal (whether the availability is free or not) and then depositing a peer-reviewed version or preprint of the article in an OA repository. The Berlin Declaration of Open Access (2003), defines Open Access as “a mode of scholarly communication through which the “author(s) and right holder(s) of scholarly work grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit, and display the work publicly in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship”. Peter Suber in his article concisely defined OA as journal articles or books that are “digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions” (Suber, 2004). OA repositories can include articles that were published in gold OA journals or closed-access journals. Despite the promising potential for Open Access to improve scholarly communication, this mode of publishing is not yet wide spread in

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developing countries when compared to developed countries (Moller, 2006; Wang and Su, 2006; Directory of Open Access Repositories (DOAR), 2016).

The evolution of Open Access in India was started from Indian Academy of Science. The National Knowledge Commission of India (NKC) strongly recommends that peer-reviewed published research papers resulting from publicly funded research in India must be made available through Open Access channels (Das, 2008). Nowadays, the OA concept is evolving in India at higher rate and scholars are giving privilege to this model. The present study discussed the awareness, attitude and opinion of the Faculty members regarding Open Access mode of publishing.

Literature Review:-

An examination of the literature exposed that several surveys from across the globe on faculty attitudes and perceptions towards OA and IRs share similar findings, regardless of whether the survey was administered to faculty in a large research institution or a small liberal arts college; or what subjects the faculty were associated in, ranging from business to engineering, to science, to the humanities and social sciences. In this direction, Van Westrienen and Lynch's (2005) discusses the European survey notes low faculty participation in IRs due to confusion and uncertainty about intellectual property issues, as well as the perception of Open Access content being of low quality. In addition, Mischo and Schlembach (2011) studied engineering faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to better understand their OA practices and attitudes. The survey results show that engineering faculty published little in author-pays "Gold" journals and had few plans to do so in the future. Furthermore, Dutta and Paul (2014) shared the results of their survey among selected science and technology faculty members of the University of Calcutta in India. They reported that the faculty members' attitudes regarding IR were generally positive. However, their awareness was less than satisfactory. They further revealed that most of the aware respondents came to discover their IR through the Internet. The copyright issue was the most influential factor with regard to unwillingness to contribute. In consistent with, Prince and Saravanan (2015) analyses the awareness and perception of users in the higher educational institutions in kanyakumari district towards Open Access resources. The study reveals that the majority of the respondents were fully aware about Open Access resources and use for their academic activities. It is also found that the majority of the respondents was using Open Access resources for their course related work and satisfied its uses in their academic activity. Yang and Le (2015) conducted a study to understand TAMU faculty awareness of Open Access (OA) publishing; assess their attitudes towards and willingness to contribute to an Institutional Repository (IR). Survey results suggested that tenured faculty are more engaged and interested in OA publishing topics in general and tenure-track faculty are more willing to adopt new initiative such as Open Textbooks. Overall, the responding TAMU faculties are willing to consider publishing in OA publications, and almost half of them believe OA journal publications are acceptable for consideration of tenure and promotion in their departments. Despite their positive attitudes towards OA publishing, they are not so positive towards OA mandates. The survey also revealed there is a low awareness level of the IR, as well as of newer OA trends and resources.

Objectives:-

1. To find out the awareness of Faculty Members about Open Access Publishing.
2. To find out the opinion of Faculty Members whether Open Access publishing is helpful for research productivity.
3. To find out factors that facilitates adoption of Open Access by Faculty Members.
4. To find out the Purpose for usage of Open Access Publishing
5. To determine the perception of Faculty Members towards the Open Access Resources
6. To find out the Problems while using OA publishing.

Methodology:-

The present study adopted the survey method for data gathering. The total population of the study consists of 69 faculty members of Life Sciences, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh. A self-administered questionnaire was randomly distributed to 60 faculty members of the Faculty of Life Sciences, AMU, Aligarh, selected through stratified random sampling ranging from the ranks of Assistant Professors to professors at Faculty of Life Sciences, AMU Aligarh. The stratified random sampling ensured obtaining the desired representation from the various subgroups on the basis of rank, age and higher degree of qualification of the Faculty Members.

Of the 60 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 37 copies were returned and 7 questionnaires were not completely filled so they were rejected. Total 30 questionnaires were taken for analysis. Data analysis was done using frequency count and simple percentage method through MS excel.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:-

A total of 30 Faculty Members from Faculty of Life Sciences, AMU, Aligarh were participated in research.

Profile of Faculty Members:-

Rank:-

It is revealed from table 1 that close to a half (47%) of the Faculty Members were Professors, followed by Assistant professors (37%) and Associate Professors (17%). It is clear that majority of the respondents were of Professor rank.

Table 1:- Distribution of Faculty Members by Rank.

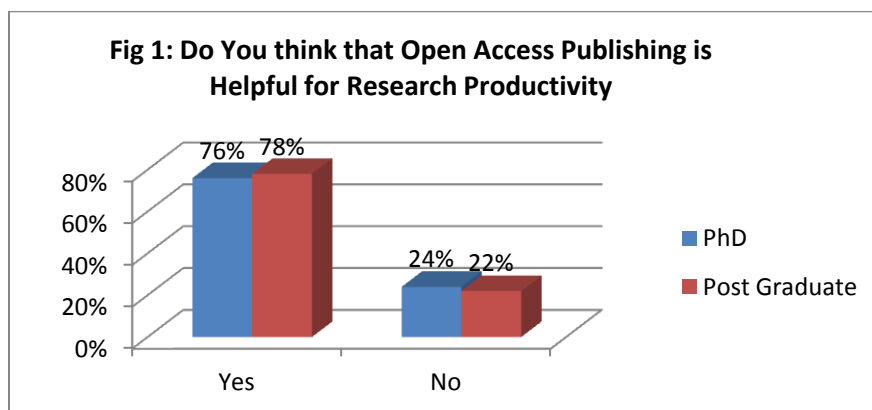
Distribution of Faculty Members by rank	Frequency	Percentage
Professor	14	47%
Associate Professor	5	17%
Assistant Professor	11	37%
Total	30	100%

Qualification:-

In terms of the highest academic qualifications attained by the Faculty Members, 23 (77%) were holders of PhD degrees while the remaining 7 (23%) had Masters Degrees (Table 2). Fig 1 revealed that the majority of the respondents (76% PhD and 78% Post Graduate) think that Open Access mode of Publishing is helpful for research productivity, while a few showed a negative perception for this view.

Table 2:- Distribution of Faculty Members by Qualification.

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
PhD	23	77%
Masters/Post Graduate	7	23%
Total	30	100%

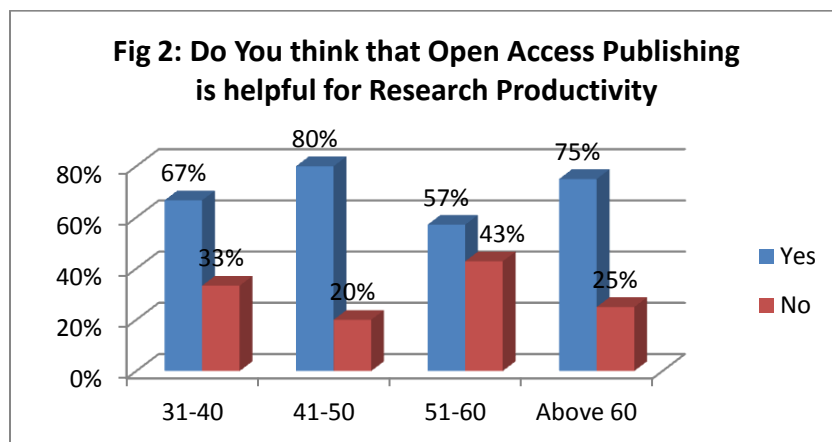


Age:-

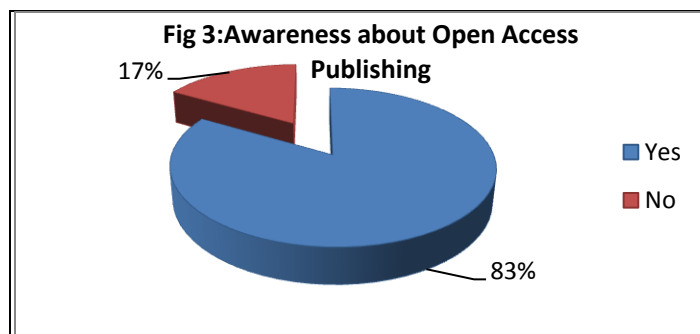
With respect to age, 9 (30%) were aged between 31-40 years; 10 (33%) between 41-50 years; 7 (23%) between 51-60 years; and 4 (13%) were above sixty years. This shows that younger people are more tending to use Open Access mode of publishing. Fig 2 revealed that that the majority of the respondents (80per cent) between the ages of 41 and 50 followed by faculty members (75 percent) above 60 age thinks that Open Access mode of publishing is helpful for increasing research productivity while the close to half of those above the age of 51 (43 per cent) showed a negative opinion about the view.

Table 3:- Distribution of Faculty Members by Age.

Age(Years)	Frequency	Percentage
31-40	9	30%
41-50	10	33%
51-60	7	23%
Above 60	4	13%
Total	30	100%

**Awareness about Open Access publishing:-**

As revealed from the fig 3, majority of the Faculty Members (83%) were aware of Open Access Publishing. This means that for a good number, the Open Access concept was quite familiar and hence they were in a position to have an opinion about it.

**Purpose of use of Open Access mode (multiple answers required):-**

The findings from this study (Table 4) indicate that majority (30%) of the Faculty Members use Open Access mode to increase their visibility, followed by (29%) who used to access the literature, while 21% disseminated their research findings and 20% for publishing their research output. The findings of the study revealed that the large number of researchers consider Open Access mode of publishing would increase the visibility of their research that further increases the citation rate.

Table 4:- Purpose of use of Open Access mode

S.No.	Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
1	To access literature	25	29%
2	For Publishing their Research output	17	20%
3	For increasing their Visibility	26	30%
4	For disseminating their research findings	18	21%
	Total	86	100%

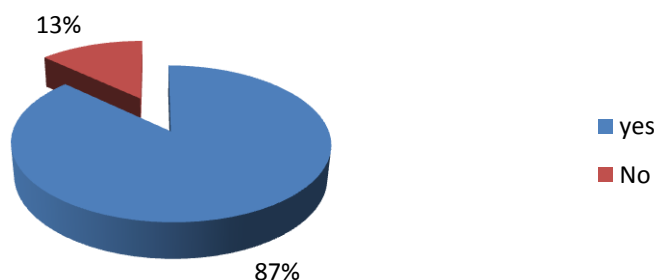
Which route of Open Access publishing they prefer?

Table 5 showed that out of the total respondents (17) 57% prefer Open Access Journals to publish their article in Open Access mode. Although a large number of faculty members prefer OA journals to publish their articles but a great majority 26 (87%) of the faculty members think that Institutional Repositories raises the prestige of the institution (fig 4).

Table 5:- Preference regarding route of OA publishing

S.No.	Route for publishing	Frequency	Percentage
1	Open Access Journals	17	57%
2	Institutional Repositories	7	23%
3	Disciplinary Repositories	6	20%
	Total	30	100%

Fig 4: Do you think Institutional Repositories raises the prestige of the institution



Faculty Members' Attitude and Opinion on Open Access Publishing:-

Table 5:- Attitude and Opinion of Faculty Members on Open Access Publishing.

S.No.	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
a)	Publications are original and represent high quality research	13%	17%	13%	27%	30%
b)	It is easy to access Open Access scholarly content from the Internet	13%	13%	7%	30%	37%
c)	I have the necessary knowledge to publish my work in Open Access outlets	17%	20%	17%	20%	27%
d)	My institution recognizes Open Access publications for my career development	7%	13%	20%	27%	33%
e)	I feel confident searching information on the Internet	3%	7%	7%	33%	50%
f)	I feel confident publishing research output on the Internet	7%	13%	17%	30%	33%
g)	Open Access outlets increase research impact by researchers' works being highly cited	3%	3%	3%	30%	60%
h)	Open Access enables researchers from developing countries to access literature more easily	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%
i)	Publishing in Open Access outlets exposes scholarly work to a large potential readership	0%	0%	7%	27%	67%

Publications are original and represent high quality research:-

Thirty percent Faculty Members were strongly agree and twenty seven percent were agree with the statement, while seventeen percent were disagree with this view point.

It is easy to access Open Access scholarly content from the Internet:-

Out of the total Faculty Members, thirty seven percent and thirty percent were strongly agree and agree respectively with this statement whereas only thirteen percent were disagreeing with it.

I have the necessary knowledge to publish my work in Open Access outlets:-

There was a partial response regarding the above view. Twenty seven percent fully supported the viewpoint whereas twenty percent were disagreeing with it.

My institution recognizes Open Access publications for my career development:-

Majority of the Faculty Members (33%) were strongly agreed, 20% agree while 7% of the Faculty Members were strongly disagreeing with the above fact.

I feel confident searching information on the Internet:-

Majority (50%) of the Faculty Members were strongly agreed with the viewpoint while only 3% of the Faculty Members were disagreeing with it.

I feel confident publishing research output on the Internet:-

33% and 30% of the Faculty Members feel confident publishing research output on the internet whereas 7% were strongly disagree with it.

Open Access outlets increase research impact by researchers' works being highly cited:-

Majority of the Faculty Members (60%) were strongly agreed with the fact on the other hand only 3% were strongly disagreeing.

Open Access enables researchers from developing countries to access literature more easily:-

Majority of Faculty Members (67%) were agreeing with this view point while no one was disagreeing with this view.

Publishing in Open Access outlets exposes scholarly work to a large potential readership:-

Majority of Faculty Members (67%) were agreeing with this view point while 7% had no opinion on this view.

Barriers faced while using Open Access Publishing (multiple answers required):-

As shown in the table 6 below top six barriers related to the use of Open Access Publishing by Faculty Members. 25% Faculty Members considered copyright is the major issue while publishing through OA mode followed by fear of authenticity (20%) and lack of online publishing skills(20%).A few of them considered slow internet connectivity (17%) and erratic power supply (15%) as a barrier. A negligible number 5 (4%) thought Lack of awareness as the issue regarding the use of Open Access publishing.

Table 6:- Problems faced while using Open Access Publishing

S.No.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of awareness	5	4%
2	Copyright	30	25%
3	Fear of Authenticity	24	20%
4	Slow Internet Connectivity	20	17%
5	Erratic Power Supply	18	15%
6	Lack of online Publishing skills	24	20%
	Total	121	100%

Findings and Summary:-

1. Majority of the Faculty members of the faculty of Life Sciences, AMU, Aligarh are aware of Open Access publishing.
2. Majority of the Respondents that have the positive perception regarding the view that Open Access Mode of Publishing is helpful to increase the research productivity are the holders of PhD degree.
3. A good number of respondents thought that to publish via Open Access mode will increase citation rate that further increases their productivity.
4. Majority of the faculty members of the faculty of Life Sciences, AMU, Aligarh feel confident while publishing research output on the internet via Open Access mode of publishing.
5. Majority of the faculty members of the faculty of Life Sciences, AMU, Aligarh shows greater interest in Open Access journals and wanted to publish their work in OA journals.

6. Majority of the faculty members of the faculty of Life Sciences, AMU, Aligarh thought that Institutional Repositories would increase the prestige of the institution.
7. Majority of Faculty Members were agreed for the view that Open Access enables researchers from developing countries to access literature more easily.
8. Although the study revealed that majority of the respondents showed their interest in OA mode of publishing but some barriers were faced by them regarding copyright, lack of skills publishing online and they also have fear regarding the authenticity of OA publishing.

Conclusion:-

The majority of counteracting faculty members of the Faculty of Life Sciences, AMU Aligarh is aware of OA journals and indicated their willingness to publish via OA mode. Although the faculty members considered that Institutional Repositories would increase the prestige of the institution but they feel comfortable to publish in OA journal publication. In line with previous studies, copyright concerns, as well as the fear of authenticity were the significant barriers noted. The present study concluded that institutional policy on scholarly communication should be amended to integrate the use of Open Access publishing. It appears that if more information were provided regarding the OA mode of publishing via conferences, seminars, trainings and workshops, a majority of scholars in India would be interested in contributing their work. It also suggests that time to time workshops should be conducted for the scholars for improving and simplifying the deposit process, might be vital for increasing the IR participation rate. Moreover, universities should accelerate the establishment of institutional repositories and the enhancement of Internet speed at universities through subscription to more bandwidth so as to meet the demand from the learned community.

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