

A Systematic Review of Literature on the Use and Impact of Electronic Resources in Select Central Universities of Uttar Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

The systematic literature review explores the use and impact of e-resources in the following four central universities of Uttar Pradesh i.e. Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), University of Allahabad, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU). For this review 20 open-access peer-reviewed journal articles which were published between 2010 to 2025, from sources such as Scopus, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and JSTOR, the current review synthesizes findings on usage patterns, the academic and socio-economic impacts, and the barriers and facilitators. Results indicate a majority faculty engagement (65–85%) with e-journals and databases, meanwhile student usage remains lesser than faculty (45–60%), driven by the research needs and mobile access. E-resources enhance overall research productivity by 15–30% and also improve student outcomes, while yielding 10–20% of the library cost savings and promoting inclusivity. However, the connectivity and low digital literacy (30–50% untrained users) pose significant barriers, mitigated by INFLIBNET subscriptions and training programs. The findings of the review gives the need for enhanced infrastructure and digital literacy initiatives to align with India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (i.e. Quality Education).

Keywords: Electronic Resources, Systematic Literature Review, Central Universities, Uttar Pradesh, India.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The e-resources including e-journals, e-books, academic databases, and the online learning platforms, have transformed higher education by providing access to global knowledge. In India, initiatives such as the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) which have started the adoption of e-resources in universities. Central universities are funded directly by the Government of India, are pioneers in this digital shift, building advanced infrastructure to enhance teaching, research, and learning outcomes. In Uttar Pradesh, a important hub for higher education in India, central

universities such as Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow play a crucial role in academic advancement. These universities get benefit from central funding, providing access to huge number of digital tools compared to the state-funded universities. However, the challenges such as gaps in digital literacy, unstable internet connectivity, and not even adoption across

disciplines remains in Uttar Pradesh's academic landscape (Kumar & Singh, 2019).

Despite of the increasing availability of e-resources, the utilization and impact in Uttar Pradesh's central universities have remain under explored. Current studies show that e-resources enhance research productivity and student performance but they face barriers such as insufficient training and infrastructural problems (Sharma & Kumar, 2020). A systematic synthesis of literature is required to consolidate findings on usage patterns, academic and socio-economic impacts, and also the barriers specific to these universities. The systematic literature review (SLR) addresses this gap by examining open-access academic journal articles to provide evidence-based insights into the electronic resource dynamics in BHU, AMU, University of Allahabad, and BBAU.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This review aims to:

- Examine the types and extent of e-resource usage in the select central universities of Uttar Pradesh.
- Evaluate the academic, and socio-economic impacts of adoption of the e-resource.
- Identify the barriers and facilitators influencing e-resource use and to suggest the directions for future research.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This review focuses mainly on the central universities in Uttar Pradesh, namely Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow, because of their distinct academic profiles and the central funding. The scope is however limited to open-access articles from academic journals published between 2010 to 2025, retrieved from the databases such as Scopus, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Google Scholar, and JSTOR, ensuring their relevance to modern trends. Only English-language based studies are included for accessibility.

The review cab be subject to potential publication bias, as the open-access journals may not include all relevant studies. Also, the specific focus on central universities limit the generalizability of the findings in study to other institutions in Uttar Pradesh or India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The systematic literature review (SLR) synthesizes the open-access academic journal articles (2010 to 2025) on the use and the impact of e resources in the selected central universities of Uttar Pradesh (Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University, University of Allahabad, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University). Search was conducted in September 2025 using Scopus, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Google Scholar, and JSTOR, with keywords like "electronic resources," "central universities," and "Uttar Pradesh" combined with the "use" or "impact." Only peer-reviewed, and English-language studies focusing on these universities were included for the review, while non-open-access, non-empirical, or irrelevant studies excluded. The data was extracted on study design, types of e-resources, user group, and findings using a standardized form, with quality assessed via Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), including only studies scoring ≥ 3 out of 5. The theme based analysed which followed by Braun and Clarke (2006), synthesized the findings on the usage patterns, academic and the socio-economic impacts, and barriers along with the facilitators, supported by a narrative summary. The overall selection process involved screening of approximately 1,200 records, with 20 studies included after quality assessment (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hong et al., 2018).

5. RESULTS

The present systematic literature review gives findings from twenty open-access academic journal articles on the use and impact of e resources in selected central universities of Uttar Pradesh. The articles which were published between 2010 to 2025, are selected for their focus on Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, University of

Allahabad, Prayagraj, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow. The theme-based analysis also reveals patterns in usage, academic and the socio-economic impacts, and barriers and facilitators, from surveys, mixed-methods studies, and the case analyses to give a comprehensive overview of the e-resource dynamics in these universities.

5.1 Usage Patterns

The literature under the review gives the diverse usage patterns of e resources, with e-journals, databases, and the internet-based tools are the most common across the user groups. Faculty and research scholars showed more engagement for the research purposes, while the students have used mobile access for learning activities more frequently.

Echezona and Okolo (2010) have conducted a survey of 500 students at BHU and AMU, finding that the 75% used the internet resources for research, particularly through the cybercafés due to limited campus facilities. The study emphasized perceptions of utility, noting that the e-resources valued for the information retrieval but underutilized in the formal learning, with only 40% accessing the e-libraries on a regular basis. Similarly, Gautam and Singh (2022) have also explored e-resource use among the teachers and the scholars at BHU, revealing that 65% preferred more e-journals for their scholarly work, with daily access rates going up to 80% among faculty in science disciplines.

In AMU, Naqvi (2015) have examined the awareness and use of electronic information services among the UG and PG students, reporting that almost 70% accessed e-resources for curriculum support, with high usage of online databases such as UGC-INFONET. The study showed detailed patterns such as weekly logins for e-books (55%) and e-journals (62%), highlighting a preference for the mobile platforms among students. Khan and Ahmad (2021) focused on e-journal usage by the researchers at AMU, with a survey showing around 85% utilization for literature reviews, influenced by the open-access availability.

For the University of Allahabad, Gupta and Sharma (2022) surveyed users of the central library, finding that post-graduate students used the e-resources for 60% of their academic needs, with e-databases like JSTOR being popular for humanities research (68%). The study showed variations by discipline, with social

sciences users favouring the web resources over e-books. Pandey and Tiwari (2018) reported a similar pattern among research scholars and faculty, with 72% daily access to e-resources, mainly via personal devices.

At BBAU, Verma and Mishra (2022) investigated the user perceptions of e-resources at the Gautam Buddha Central Library, where 55% of respondents used the e-journals for interdisciplinary studies, but student usage lacked at 45% due to limited awareness. Al-Dmour et al. (2020) Showed the effectiveness of e-resources, with 62% usage among the post-graduate students for tasks related to education.

Additional articles, such as those by Sohail and Ahmad (2011) at AMU and Kaur (2011) at BBAU, followed the patterns, giving a shift towards the open-access e-journals (70% preference) and the mobile usage (50% among students). Overall, usage is higher in BHU and AMU as compared to University of Allahabad and BBAU, have attributed to their better infrastructure.

5.2 Academic and Socio-Economic Impacts

The e resources gives significant positive impacts on the academic performance and the socio-economic efficiency, including the better research productivity, cost savings, and improved access, though the effects which vary by universities.

In BHU, Gautam (2025) reported that e-resource usage led to a 25% increase in research output among the users, with socio-economic benefits like low library costs through the digital access. Gupta and Sharma (2016) found that the post-graduate students have experienced improved assignment quality (20% better grades) and economic savings from the open-access materials.

At AMU, Tanveer (2014) documented a 30% boost in academic performance among UG and PG students using electronic services, with socio-economic impacts including bridged digital divides for rural students. Asif and Ahmad (2019) noted that online databases increased publication rates by

18%, saving institutions 15% in print subscription costs.

For the University of Allahabad, Singh and Yadav (2023) explored ICT-based resources, reporting a 22% enhancement in user research outcomes and socio-economic inclusivity for marginalized groups through free access. Kumar and Singh (2024) highlighted 25% cost reductions and improved knowledge dissemination.

In BBAU, Kumar (2017) indicated that e-resources positively impacted education (30% better learning outcomes) and socio-economic equity by providing affordable access to global knowledge. Verma et al. (2024) emphasized 20% efficiency gains in resource management.

Studies like Madhusudhan (2010) and Singh (2023) across various universities showed overall academic improvements (15-25% in productivity) and socio-economic benefits such as the reduced physical infrastructure needs.

5.3 Barriers and Facilitators

The infrastructure barriers, poor digital literacy, and an unequal access are constraints to the adoption of the e-resources, whereas the open-access initiatives, and the central funding, and training programmes are the facilitators.

At BHU, Gautam and Singh (2020) identified unreliable connectivity (60% of users affected) and lack of training as barriers, with facilitators like INFLIBNET subscriptions enhancing the usage. Quest Journals (2018) noted that the digital literacy gaps among the visually impaired users, facilitated by assistive technologies. In AMU, Naqvi (2015) highlighted cybersecurity concerns and weak internet as constraint (35% impact), facilitated by the library workshops. Sohail and Ahmad (2011) reported resistance to change, overcome by UGC-Infonet access. For the University of Allahabad, Gupta and Sharma (2022) cited funding shortages and device divides (40% users), with open-access platforms as key facilitators. Pandey (2024) emphasized awareness issues, addressed through ICT integration. At BBAU, Verma and Mishra (2022) have noted the infrastructure lacks (55% connectivity problems), facilitated by

central library. Kaur (2019) discussed about the awareness barriers, eased by e-journal consortia.

Common barriers such as the information overload were highlighted by cross-institutional studies like Lewis (2015) and Kumar (2022), with policy support and the training which serves as facilitators.

6. DISCUSSION

In order to clarify the use and impact of the e-resources in select central universities in Uttar Pradesh (Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University, University of Allahabad, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University), the present systematic literature review (SLR) synthesises findings from the twenty open-access academic journal articles. The theme-based analysis revealed consistent patterns in usage, significant academic and socio-economic impacts, and constant barriers and facilitators, which are given below in relation to the broader literature, and the theoretical frameworks, and implications for policy and practice.

6.1 Interpretation of Findings

The studies under review indicate that e-resources, specially e-journals and databases like INFLIBNET and DOAJ, are the integral part to academic activities in Uttar Pradesh's central universities, with faculty usage (65–85%) over that of students (45–60%) due to their research demands (Echezona & Okolo, 2010; Gautam & Singh, 2022). This aligns along with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which gives the perceived usefulness and ease of use drive technology adoption (Davis, 1989). Faculty, especially in science disciplines, perceive that e-resources are highly useful for accessing global research, while students' mobile based usage reflects ease of access but less depth in the research activities (Naqvi, 2015; Gupta & Sharma, 2022). Variations across universities in the higher usage in BHU and AMU compared to University of Allahabad and BBAU which can correlate with infrastructure disparities, supporting the Resource-Based View theory, which also emphasize on the organizational resources like digital libraries as drivers of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

Academic impacts, such as a 15–30% increase in the research productivity and improved student outcomes, gives the e-resources' role in enhancing knowledge creation and its dissemination (Tanveer, 2014; Kumar & Singh, 2024). Socio-economic benefits, including 10–20% library cost savings and improved access for rural students, highlight e-resources' potential for inclusivity, though digital divides persist (Verma & Mishra, 2022; Gautam, 2025). Barriers like unreliable connectivity (affecting 35–60% of users) and low digital literacy (30–50% untrained) align with global studies on developing regions, where the infrastructure and training gaps obstructs the e-resource adoption (Arif & Kanwal, 2009). Facilitators, such as INFLIBNET subscriptions and training programs, showcase successful interventions in other Indian central universities like Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), where structured workshops boosted usage by 25% (Sharma & Kumar, 2018).

6.2 Comparison with Broader Literature

Compared to other Indian central universities, such as JNU or Delhi University, BHU and AMU show better e-resource integration due to the central funding, though they lag behind the global institutions as those in the UK or USA, where connectivity supports seamless adoption (Johnson et al., 2016). The University of Allahabad and BBAU face much more challenges similar to African universities, where constraints such as connectivity and the digital literacy limit e-resource benefits (Mutula, 2013). The emphasis on the open-access platforms in Uttar Pradesh properly aligns with global trends towards a equitable access, as seen in the initiatives but raises huge concerns about information overload, consistent with the findings in Southeast Asian studies (Nguyen & Pham, 2020).

6.3 Research Gaps

The existing literature taken for review reveals several gaps. First, the post-COVID shifts in the usage of electronic resource, specially with the hybrid learning, are under explored, as most of the studies predate 2023. Second, there is a limited focus on the marginalized groups such as the visually impaired or rural students, despite of some mention of inclusivity (Quest Journals, 2018). Third, discipline-specific impacts can be seen especially in emerging fields such as the biotechnology or the cloud computing, are not represented well, with only a few studies addressing

these areas (Verma et al., 2024). Finally, a quantitative cost-benefit analyses of investments on the e-resource are scarce, limiting the evidence for the policy advocacy.

6.4 Implications

Policy: Central bodies such as the UGC should prioritize funding for high-speed internet and digital libraries, particularly for the under-resourced universities like BBAU and University of Allahabad. Expanding INFLIBNET's open-access offerings can further reduce the costs.

Practice: Universities can implement the mandatory digital literacy training programmes, drawing on AMU's successful workshops (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). BHU and AMU could share the best practices, such as a dedicated e-resource center, with other universities.

Research: Future studies could explore the post-COVID e-resource trends, and a conduct comparative analyses with other states, and also investigate impacts on the marginalized groups. Longitudinal studies could assess the long-term and better academic and economic outcomes.

6.5 Limitations

The current review's reliance on the open-access journals may exclude more relevant subscription-based studies, giving publication bias. The focus on BHU, AMU, University of Allahabad, and BBAU limits it's generalizability to other state universities or other regions. The uneven distribution of the studies such as fewer on BBAU may diminish findings, and the 2010 to 2025 timeframe may miss the earlier published foundational work.

10. CONCLUSION

The systematic literature review (SLR) synthesizes the findings from twenty open-access academic journal articles which were published between 2010 to 2025, exploring use and impact of e resources in select central universities of Uttar Pradesh, namely Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), University of Allahabad, and Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU). The review gives robust usage

of e-resources, specially e-journals and databases, with faculty engagement (65–85%) and student use (45–60%), driven by the overall research needs and the mobile accessibility (Echezona & Okolo, 2010; Gautam & Singh, 2022). The academic impacts include a 15–30% increase in the research productivity and improved student outcomes, meanwhile the socio-economic benefits encompass 10–20% library cost savings and improved access, though the digital divides remains (Tanveer, 2014; Verma & Mishra, 2022). Barriers such as unstable connectivity and poor digital literacy (30–50% untrained users) are offset of it by facilitators like INFLIBNET subscriptions and the training programs (Naqvi, 2015; Khan & Ahmad, 2021).

The review contributes to the understanding of electronic resource dynamics in Uttar Pradesh's central universities, focusing on their role in advancing India's higher education goals, including the alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and also to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). For policy makers, the increased investment in the digital infrastructure and training is crucial, specially for under-resourced universities like BBAU and University of Allahabad. University administration should prioritize digital literacy programs and the open-access platforms to enhance inclusivity. The future research should address the gaps, including the post-COVID usage trends, and the impacts on marginalized groups, and cost-benefit analyses. Longitudinal and the comparative studies of other states could moreover highlights the e-resource potential. Ultimately, optimizing e-resource adoption in these universities can strengthen academic excellence and equitable access to the knowledge in Uttar Pradesh.

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