

Awareness and Usage of N-LIST Consortium Among College Students of Barak Valley, Southern Assam

Dr. Shibojit Choudhary

Librarian

S. S. College, Hailakandi - 788151, Assam, India

E-mail: shibojit.lis@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed to assess the awareness and usage of the N-LIST consortium among college students in the three districts of Barak Valley, Southern Assam. The researcher employed an online survey method, using a Google questionnaire that was shared among students of selected colleges through email, instant messaging applications, and social media platforms. A total of 265 students responded to the questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that while the majority of respondents were aware of the N-LIST consortium, its actual usage and utilization of the available e-resources was quite limited among the college students. The study further highlighted the various factors that contributed to the underutilization of the N-LIST e-resources, and suggested effective measures to promote their optimum utilization and ensure greater access to these valuable academic resources by the college students in Barak Valley, Southern Assam.

Keywords: ICT, Electronic Resources, N-LIST, E-journals, E-books

1. Introduction

In the current digital age, where information and knowledge are paramount, the availability of comprehensive and reliable academic resources in electronic format has become increasingly crucial for students, researchers, and the broader academic community. One such prominent initiative in the academic landscape of Indian colleges is the N-LIST consortium, which aims to provide seamless access to a vast and diverse collection of electronic resources to the academic community across the country. This initiative seeks to empower and support the scholarly pursuits of students, faculty, and researchers by granting them access to a wealth of digital content, including e-journals, e-books, and specialized databases.

The present study has been conducted to investigate the awareness and usage of the N-LIST consortium among college students in the Barak Valley region of Southern Assam. Specifically, it examined the degree to which college students were cognizant of the diverse range of N-LIST resources, including e-journals, e-books, and specialized databases. Additionally, the research explored the patterns of usage of these electronic resources among the students, as well as the perceived benefits and challenges associated with accessing and utilizing the N-LIST consortium. By gaining a deeper understanding of the students' engagement with this valuable academic resource, the study sought to identify and recommend strategies to enhance awareness and optimum utilization of the e-resources available under N-LIST consortium among the college students of the Barak Valley region.

2. N-LIST Consortium: An Overview

The N-LIST consortium is a collaborative endeavor spearheaded by the e-ShodhSindhu Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre, and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium. Its overarching aim is to bridge the gap in the availability of high-quality electronic resources for the academic community, particularly in the context of the rapidly evolving digital landscape. N-LIST empowers students, researchers, and faculty from participating colleges and institutions by providing them with seamless access to a vast array of e-resources, which they can directly access and download from publishers' websites after being authenticated through the server deployed by the INFLIBNET Centre. The N-LIST Consortium maintains subscriptions to a diverse range of electronic resources, including over 6,000 e-journals and 1,99,500 e-books, catering to the diverse academic pursuits of its beneficiary institutions.

3. Review of Literature

A multitude of studies have been conducted in India and internationally since the emergence and proliferation of e-resources, as well as the development of the innovative concept of consortia-based joint subscription to e-journals and other digital academic content. A study by **Sinha, Singha, and Sinha (2011)** on utilization of electronic resources offered by the Assam University Library under the UGC-Infonet Digital Library Consortium indicated that most participants were cognizant of the availability of these e-resources and frequently accessed them for academic purposes, such as studying, publishing research, and completing projects. **Das, Sahu, and Mohapatra's** study (2012) of research scholars at universities in Odisha found that only 47% were aware of the UGC-Infonet consortium. The researchers recommended providing user orientation programs to increase awareness among scholars about the various e-resources available for research purposes. They also suggested that libraries should facilitate greater internet access through high-bandwidth LAN and Wi-Fi to enable scholars to fully utilize these digital resources. **Singh (2017)** explored the usage of electronic resources provided through the N-LIST Programme among undergraduate students from four postgraduate institutions in Jalandhar District, Punjab. The findings reveal that an overwhelming majority, 94.64% of the surveyed undergraduates, were cognizant of the N-LIST Programme and a significant proportion, 75.92% of the undergraduate participants, were actively accessing and utilizing the e-resources made available by the N-LIST Programme on a biweekly basis. **Hanchinal (2019)** investigated the use of electronic resources, particularly the N-LIST program, among college students in the Mumbai Suburban area and found that half of the respondents utilized the N-LIST e-resources, primarily for preparing class notes and assignments. **Bansode and Jadhar (2020)** conducted a survey to assess the awareness and utilization of the N-LIST Consortium among faculty members from select colleges affiliated with Savitribai Phule Pune University in Pune. Their findings reveal that the faculty members were cognizant of the N-LIST resources and primarily leveraged them to enhance their subject-matter expertise and for instructional purposes. A study by **Bhattacharyya and Chatterjee (2023)** explored the awareness and utilization of the N-LIST program among users at Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya in Haripal, Hooghly. The findings indicate that most participants were well-informed about the N-LIST program and actively leveraged the available e-resources to support their research and project-related work. Moreover, the respondents expressed satisfaction with the facilities provided for accessing these valuable digital resources through the N-LIST initiative.

4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- To evaluate the awareness and familiarity of college students in Barak Valley, Southern Assam with the N-LIST consortium and its available electronic resources

- To investigate the frequency with which these students utilize the e-resources provided through the N-LIST program
- To analyze the diverse purposes for which students access and leverage the N-LIST e-resources
- To assess the satisfaction level of students with the infrastructure facilities at their colleges that enable access to these digital resources
- To identify and highlight the key challenges and problems encountered by students in accessing and using the e-resources offered by the N-LIST consortium

5. Research Methodology

The researcher utilized a survey methodology to carry out the study. An online questionnaire, designed with the research objectives in mind, was created using Google Forms. This questionnaire was then distributed to undergraduate students through various channels, including email, instant messaging apps, and social media platforms. Additionally, relevant secondary data was obtained by visiting the N-LIST consortium's official website. The survey data was subsequently analyzed and interpreted using straightforward percentage-based techniques, with the findings presented in a tabular format to enhance clarity and accessibility.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

A total of 265 undergraduate students from different colleges of the three districts of Barak Valley, Southern Assam have participated in the online survey and submitted their responses. As shown in Table 1, the respondents were distributed as follows: 116 (43.77%) from Cachar District, 90 (33.96%) from Karimganj District, and 59 (22.26%) from Hailakandi District. Additionally, the sample consisted of 119 (44.91%) male respondents and 146 (55.09%) female respondents.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents

District	Male	Female	Total
Cachar	61	55	116 (43.77%)
Karimganj	26	64	90 (33.96%)
Hailakandi	32	27	59 (22.26%)
Total	119 (44.91%)	146 (55.09%)	265 (100%)

6.2 Awareness of N-LIST

The study sought to assess the awareness of respondents regarding the availability of electronic resources under the N-LIST consortium. Table 2 reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. 197 (74.34%) are aware of N-LIST whereas 68 (25.66%) respondents are not aware of it.

Table 2: Awareness of N-LIST

Aware	Not aware	Total
197 (74.34%)	68 (25.66%)	265 (100%)

6.3 Frequency of Using N-LIST E-Resources

Table 3 highlights the frequency of N-LIST e-resource usage among the respondents. The majority, constituting 100 (37.74%) respondents, reported accessing these resources on an as-needed basis. Additionally, 36 (13.58%) respondents indicated using the e-resources available through N-LIST on a weekly basis. It is important to note that the 68 (25.66%) individuals who did not respond to this question are those who were unaware of the N-LIST consortium.

Table 3: Frequency of Using N-LIST E-Resources

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
------------	-----------	------------

Almost daily	25	9.43
Every alternate day	12	4.53
Once a week	36	13.58
Once a month	24	9.06
As and when required	100	37.74
No response	68	25.66
Total	265	100

6.4 Purpose of Using N-LIST E-Resources

Table 4 showcases the diverse purposes for which respondents utilized the e-resources provided by the N-LIST consortium. The majority, 202 (76.23%) respondents, accessed these resources to support their project and dissertation work. Similarly, 178 (67.17%) participants leveraged the materials for completing their assignments. Furthermore, 90 (33.96%) respondents employed the e-resources to enhance their domain knowledge, while 89 (33.58%) utilized them for seminar-related activities.

Table 4: Purpose of Using N-LIST E-Resources

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
For Preparing notes	68	25.66
For Writing Assignments	178	67.17
For projects / dissertations	202	76.23
For seminars	89	33.58
For updating knowledge	90	33.96
Other purposes	70	26.42
No response	68	25.66

6.5 Problems in Accessing E-Resources

Table 5 highlights the challenges experienced by the respondents in accessing the e-resources. It reveals that non availability of full text (55.23%) and difficulties in downloading articles (54.34%) are the main problems indicated by the respondents. It also reveals that a significant percentage (i.e. 51.16%) of the respondents don't know how to use these resources and 41.51% mentioned the non-availability of adequate infrastructure facilities in their respective institutes.

Table 5: Problems in Accessing E-Resources

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate infrastructure	110	41.51
Internet connectivity problems	52	19.77
Unawareness to use	136	51.16
Non availability of full text	146	55.23
Difficulties in downloading articles	144	54.34
Other problems	26	9.81

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Access to e-resources through consortium platforms represents a significant advantage for academic institutions, particularly those in North Eastern India that frequently face budgetary constraints in obtaining and maintaining their own digital subscriptions. The N-LIST initiative by the Government of India is a commendable effort to bridge the digital divide, providing the opportunity for all members of the academic community across the country to access a wealth of scholarly content. The findings of this study indicate that a substantial number of college students

in the Barak Valley region are aware of the N-LIST consortium and actively utilize its electronic resources. However, to further enhance the utilization of N-LIST resources, it is recommended that the relevant authorities focus on strengthening the infrastructure facilities and providing comprehensive training to students on effectively accessing and utilizing these valuable resources. Additionally, regular promotional activities should be undertaken to increase awareness about the N-LIST programme and its benefits among the college student community, thereby maximizing the reach and impact of this important initiative.

REFERENCES

1. Bansode, S. &Jadhar, M. (2020). Awareness and use of INFLIBNET 's NLIST consortium by the faculty members of selected colleges affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University. *Journal of Indian Library Association*, 56 (4), 120-131. Retrieved from <https://www.ilaindia.net/jila/index.php/jila/article/download/692/231>
2. Bhattacharyya, A. & Chatterjee, S. (2023). Use and awareness of N-LIST e-resources by the faculty and students of Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya, Haripal, Hooghly. *College Libraries*, 38(1), 103-116. Retrieved from <https://collegelibraries.in/index.php/CL/article/view/107>
3. Das, P., Sahu, G. & Mohapatra, R. K. (2012). Use of UGC-Infonet consortium by research scholars in universities of Odisha: A study. *IASLIC Bulletin*, 57(3), 171-182.
4. Hanchinal, V. B. (2019). Awareness and usage of e-resources of n-list consortium: a study with reference to academic colleges of Mumbai. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2340>
5. Singh, J. (2017). Use of electronic resources in N-LIST programme by the undergraduate students of four postgraduate colleges of Jalandhar District, Punjab: A study. *Indian Journal of Information Sources and Services*, 7(2), 1-8. Retrieved from <https://www.trp.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IJISS-Vol.7-No.2-July-December-2017-pp.1-8.pdf>
6. Sinha, M. K., Singha, G & Sinha, B. (2011). Usage of electronic resources available under UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium by Assam University library users. Paper published in conference proceeding of 8th International CALIBER 2011. Retrieved from <http://ir.inflibnet.ac.in/ir40/bitstream/1944/1642/1/50.pdf>