

# **AWARENESS AND USE OF e-PG PATHSHALA AMONG STUDENTS OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE OF CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH INDIA: A STUDY**

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# ABSTRACT

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In India, the number of distance education programme is increasing to match the rising demand for higher education. Student support services in general, and library and information services in particular, have sparked a lot of interest as distance education programme have grown and expanded. In India, LIS education is at a crossroads, and it has evolved into a fast-growing discipline with a multidisciplinary approach. LIS education has expanded to encompass disciplines such as computer applications, analytics, information systems, management studies, and operations research, in addition to library-specific subjects. As a result of the shifting landscape, modern librarianship has evolved into a career with a wide range of opportunities and difficulties for LIS students and professionals. Through its organized efforts, library and information science education in India has played a vital part in the growth of the information society. In 2011, India celebrated a century of library and information science education. S.R. Ranganathan (1892–1972) is considered the father of India's library movement, as well as the country's first official LIS education.

Technological advances and their consequences have impacted people's lives in a variety of ways since technology affects every part of life. Computers, the internet, and other technical breakthroughs have altered the way we process, save, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate data or information, making it easier and faster to handle and advance it to the next level. It is classified as a component of information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is a broad term for information technology (IT), which includes all communication internet technologies, wireless communications, smartphones, computer systems, operating systems, development tools, video conferencing, social networking, and other media applications and services that allow users to access, recover, store, transmit, and manipulate data.

The Digital Learning Network (2008), “With the mission and vision of making India a developed nation, the former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh initiated India’s Education Plan, as announced in December 2007 at the eleventh meeting of the National Development Council (NDC). The aim of this programme is to achieve rapid growth in Indian society.”

e-PG Pathshala is a content-dedicated online platform with open access. e-PG Pathshala is an MHRD initiative carried out by the UGC as part of its National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT). A large volume of content, as well as its quality, is generated for 70+ subjects and made available in open access mode as part of this effort. This research focuses on the e-PG Pathshala learning resources and their accessibility among students, including graduates, postgraduates, research scholars, and academicians. An analysis of the benefits of e-PG Pathshala is presented, along with some suggested improvements.

According to the website (<http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/>), there were 13486315 ‘Total Visitors’ who accessed the e-PG Pathshala between March 19, 2014 and March 12, 2022. This site is a remote library with more than 20,000 texts, more than 19000 videos, more than 3200 experts, and more than 30,000 quizzes with a total count of about 70 subject areas and 723 papers from interdisciplinary sources. Principal investigators, paper coordinators, content writers, content reviewers, language editors, and a multimedia team were assigned to each subject. Anyone, from anywhere, can view all of this stuff without paying a fee. This project covers the void left by instructors in different institutions, assisting students in receiving an education and furthering their understanding of the subject. e-PG Pathshala is a portal for all postgraduate courses that helps with self-study, assessment, and keeping up with other courses. It has a platform for students and a platform for content creators. Learners can download a module for use in their studies and learning. It offers students and researchers free books and curriculum-based e-content. Prof. J. P. Singh Joorel, Director of INFLIBNET, is the new project coordinator for e-PG Pathshala.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Central Universities provide a variety of academic disciplines to ensure that students receive a high-quality education. India's government has undertaken numerous programmes and initiatives. e-PG Pathshala is one of the initiatives that could be quite valuable for LIS students in terms of offering help and support in order to improve their learning experience. The self-learning programme has aided users in their studies by providing study materials that are not generally found in a classroom setting. As a result, doing a critical analysis on the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala by students of central universities in north India is vital in order to determine how it affects the students in their study, that's why I chose this topic for research work.

The problem undertaken for the present study is entitled **“Awareness and Use of e-PG Pathshala among Students of Library and Information Science of Central Universities in North India: A Study.”**

### **3. RESEARCH GAP**

- Only a few studies on e-PG Pathshala have been done.
- Only a few studies were restricted to a single department or university.
- There was no research undertaken to assess the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala among students in central universities in North India.
- Previous research was unable to ascertain the sharing purpose of e-PG Pathshala.

### **4. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

A literature review is a part of the research study. The purpose of this chapter is to assess the value of previous research on the proposed study topic and, as a result, to choose a title under which new research can be conducted. A literature review is a comprehensive overview of past research on a particular topic. A review of literature also notifies readers that the researcher has acknowledged all prior features of the chosen subject as well as any relevant publications. This literature review is intended to give an

outline of the materials you found while studying the chosen topic, as well as to demonstrate how the suggested research fits within this broad area of study.

The review of Literature describes the related reflections on awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala among library and information science students in India and foreign countries. A review of literature is required for the examination of the literature on e-PG Pathshala in library science. It has been taken from print as well as from various online databases, such as Emerald Insight, Elsevier, Science Direct, JSTOR, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Web of Science, Scopus, etc. This study reviews the literature on the concept of e-PG Pathshala as made by various researchers and institutions. The fundamental reason for being is to pass on to the reader what information and thoughts have been built upon a topic and their qualities and shortcomings. The organisation of the audit may change from control to teaching and from task to task. A survey might be an independent unit—an end in itself or a prelude to and support for taking part in essential research. This study was conducted by reviewing some contributions by different investigators on the concept of e-PG Pathshala. The researcher has reviewed or read more than 100 articles, but in this chapter the researcher reviewed only those studies that are closely related to the present study. The researcher evaluated only those articles that were published between 2021 and 1995. Various studies have been conducted on the e-PG Pathshala. Not only this, but some research papers have also been consulted.

The review of literature for the present study is divided into the following significant themes, which are as follows:

- General Studies on e-PG Pathshala;
- Studies on Online Courseware;
- Studies on Library & Information Science Education;
- Studies on Web-based User Education;
- Studies on Online Learning and Distance Learning;
- Development in Online Learning from past to present;
- Perception and Attitude towards Online Courseware in LIS.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala among students of library and information science of central universities in North India.
- To examine the source of awareness and time spent on accessing online content.
- To identify the problems faced by users while accessing and using online content.
- To investigate the satisfaction level of users regarding e-PG Pathshala.
- To know the expectations of the users towards e-PG Pathshala.
- To examine the observation of online courseware and its support in classroom teaching.

## 6. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, the study is intended to answer these questions in order to meet the aforementioned objectives:

**H1:** The e-PG Pathshala is known to the majority of students.

**H2:** The majority of students become aware through their teacher.

**H3:** The majority of students spend minimum 1 hour per day accessing online content from e-PG Pathshala.

**H4:** When accessing online resources, the students face a problem with a lack of internet facilities.

**H5:** Most of the students are satisfied with the content of e-PG Pathshala.

**H6:** Most students are expected to assume that the material may be updated frequently.

## 7. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on the various aspects related to the “Awareness and Use of e-PG Pathshala among Students of Library and Information Science of Central Universities in North India: A Study.” It was taken up by the investigator with the goal of determining the key factors that motivate library and information science students. The study is limited to the North Central Universities in India due to time and geographical constraints. It is also limited to library and information science students only. It was decided to select the population under study for the Central Universities in North India. These are as follows:

**Table 1.2 Central Universities in North India**

| S. No. | Central Universities in North India    | Acronym | Place            | Established Year |
|--------|--|---------|------------------|------------------|
| 1.     | Aligarh Muslim University              | AMU     | Aligarh          | 1875             |
| 2.     | Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University  | BBAU    | Lucknow          | 1996             |
| 3.     | Banaras Hindu University               | BHU     | Varanasi         | 1916             |
| 4.     | Central University of Haryana          | CUH     | Haryana          | 2009             |
| 5.     | Central University of Himachal Pradesh | CUHP    | Himachal Pradesh | 2009             |

|    |  |       |             |      |
|----|--|-------|-------------|------|
| 6. | Central University of Punjab               | CUP   | Punjab      | 2009 |
| 7. | Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University | HNBGU | Uttarakhand | 1973 |
| 8. | Jamia Millia Islamia University            | JMIU  | New Delhi   | 1920 |
| 9. | University of Delhi                        | DU    | New Delhi   | 1922 |

## 8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study focuses on the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala among students of library and information science of central universities in north India: A study. The study adopted the survey research method as its approach in order to collect the desired data. The data for the study was collected through an online questionnaire that was administered to students of LIS through email and WhatsApp. The detailed questionnaire was prepared on the basis of the objective of the study, which included open-ended and closed-ended questions. According to the university data, there are 518 students enrolled in central universities in North India. The study's sample size is chosen from each university, representing 70% of the entire population. As a result, there are 362 students in the sample.

The collected data were analyzed using excel and SPSS software (v.20) for descriptive analyses. An analysis has been made after collecting the relevant data and some suggestions have been made for the improvement of the user and the better functioning of the website, so that it can play an important role in achieving its goals.

## 9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The ultimate importance of the study is, therefore:

- This study is very beneficial to investigate the usage of e-PG Pathshala content by the students as the government of India has spent a lot of money on the creation of the content for e-PG Pathshala. It helps policy makers to initiate various kinds of projects related to online learning.
- The present study is valuable for learners of library and information science because it provides a platform on which learners can easily access their content at any time.
- With the help of this study, students are able to learn about the e-PG Pathshala, a learning platform as an Open Educational Resource (OER) among students of Central Universities in North India.
- Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute to the knowledge and services offered by e-PG Pathshala in the field of library and information science regarding online learning platforms in India.

## 10. STYLE OF REFERENCING

The reference style is a set of rules for appropriately acknowledging other people's ideas, concepts, and efforts. Referencing is a crucial component of academic writing, especially when it comes to avoiding plagiarism and maintaining academic value in projects and analyses. The researcher cited the bibliographic references in the thesis using the American Psychological Association (APA) style of citation and referencing. The 7th edition of the APA referencing style was used to refer to the documents in this research project. Raimo Streefkerk published the 7th edition on October 11, 2019 and amended it on April 21, 2022. The APA standard was followed for citing within the text as well as presenting references at the end of each chapter.

## 11. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is comprised of six chapters, as outlined below: The content of each chapter is briefly explained below:-

### ***Chapter 1: Introduction***

This chapter provides background on the study. Before stating the problem of the study, it introduces the concept of e-PG Pathshala and online courseware. The chapter also presents the definition of key concepts; the aim and objectives of the study; the scope and limitations of the study; hypotheses of the study; the significance of the study; a brief outline of the research design; and the thesis structure.

### ***Chapter 2: Review of Literature***

The chapter provides a review of the literature and discusses all recent studies on e-PG Pathshala and online courseware in various universities/colleges or institutions on a national and international scale. The purpose of this review is to situate the study within similar studies as well as to examine the available information in the subject discipline. The study covers the following reviews: General Studies of e-PG Pathshala, Studies on awareness of online learning, Studies on distance learning, Studies on library and information science education, Studies on online learning, Studies on open courseware, and Studies on web-based user education.

### ***Chapter 3: Online Courseware: An Overview***

This chapter defines the overview of online courseware. This chapter also discussed the concept, history, features, components, advantages, challenges, guidelines for library services, and national and international learning platforms of online courseware.

### ***Chapter 4: Research Methodology***

This chapter describes the procedures that were employed to conduct the research. It outlines the complete research process, including sample processes, data collection methods, and data analysis statistical procedures.

### ***Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation***

This chapter presents the study findings from descriptive analysis and inferential statistics. For a proper understanding and interpretation of the results, various data presentation methods such as figures, tables, and narrations were used.

### *Chapter 6: Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions*

The findings of the study are interpreted and discussed in this chapter. It includes an overview of the research findings, a conclusion, and suggestions for further research.

## **12. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The following are the major findings and opinions drawn from the analysis of data based only on information gathered from a questionnaire from students of selected universities:

- In the present study, the findings indicate that gender-wise responses from central universities in North India of library and information science students. It was found that 53% of students were male and 47% of students were female. It shows that the majority of the respondents were males, in comparison to females.
- The findings of the study demonstrate that the maximum number of students was (70.68%) post-graduate and (29.52%) under-graduate level. One of the reasons for this is that Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Central University of Haryana (CUH), and Central University of Punjab (CUP) offer integrated courses.
- It was found from the analysis that in selected universities, the majority of the students, (97.79%), were aware of e-PG Pathshala and (2.20%) were not aware of e-PG Pathshala.
- The study found that (38.02%) of students became aware of it from teachers, followed by friends (20.31%), the internet (19.92%), social networks (13.67%), and the least from conferences/seminars/webinars (7.42%), and five students learned about it from other sources, such as research scholars and their own experiences.

- The study found that students access the e-PG Pathshala website. It was seen that the majority of the respondents (92.26%) had accessed e-PG Pathshala website. (7.73%) of the respondents did not access e-PG Pathshala website.
- The study findings revealed that the highest number of respondents (38.32%) occasionally accessed e-PG Pathshala website, followed by (35.62%) of respondents who access website weekly, (18.86%) of respondents accessed it daily, and the lowest, (7.18%) of respondents accessed e-PG Pathshala monthly.
- The findings of the present study show the majority of respondents (55.24%) accessed e-PG Pathshala content for one hour per day, with (35.35%) accessed 2-4 hours, (1.93%) accessed 5-8 hours, only 2 respondents accessed more than 8 hours per day, and (6.90%) of respondents accessed nothing to access e-PG Pathshala.
- It was found that the majority of the respondents (36.12%) accessed the e-PG Pathshala website for preparing semester exams. It states that the maximum number of respondents used e-PG Pathshala for preparing for semester exams.
- The findings of the study indicate that the maximum number of students (40%) accessed e-PG Pathshala from home. It states that with the use of the internet and electronic devices, e-PG Pathshala's study materials can be accessed and gained from anywhere, at any time.
- From the analyzed data, it is clear that the majority of students (57.28%) used mobile phones to access e-PG Pathshala, followed by (30.53) laptops. The third is personal computers, with (9.60%), and followed in the fourth by the I-Pad with (12.57%).
- It was found from the study that the highest number of students, (73.48%), did not face problems using e-PG Pathshala. Apart from this, (26.51%) of students faced problems while accessing e-PG Pathshala.
- The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the students, (72.3%), accessed the content via a search engine. The finding states that the use of e-PG Pathshala and other resources in the present modern society has led to the emergence of online resources. This is due to the implications of technology in

every aspect of life as well as in the educational system. Therefore, the use of online content has become popular among learners.

- It was noted that the majority of the students (26.58%) stated that e-PG Pathshala is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with (23.46%) freely accessing course content, (18.25%) conveniently accessing the content, (15.98%) of students said that e-PG Pathshala has appropriate content, and (15.70%) of students said that e-PG Pathshala has multiple user access.
- It was found that the maximum number of the student (47.23%) were aware of WhatsApp. It states that WhatsApp is the most informative application for students.
- The findings of the study show that the majority of the students (53.59% ) said that e-PG Pathshala has high quality content, followed by (25.96%) average quality, (19.88%) very high quality, and only 1 student said e-PG Pathshala has low quality content, and 1 student said very low quality content.
- The results of the study revealed that most of the students (30.77%) accessed e-books/e-texts. It was discovered that the majority of students preferred e-texts over any other type.
- The study found that most of the students (82.32%) accessed content in PDF format, followed by (11.87%) who accessed content in video formats, (4.97%) accessed content in MS Word format, and 3 students accessed content in other formats.
- The current study also examined the level of satisfaction of selected universities in India, and it was discovered that (60.22%) of the total sample of the study were satisfied with the e-PG Pathshala website, followed by (22.65%) highly satisfied, (16.57%) neutral, and only 1 respondent dissatisfied and highly dissatisfied.
- It was found that the maximum number of students, (88.95%), were satisfied with the content of e-PG Pathshala and (10.49%) of students were not satisfied with the content of e-PG Pathshala.
- It was observed that a maximum number of students (27.48%) were satisfied with the lack of access to e-resources from e-PG Pathshala; (25.19%) of students were

satisfied that there was no updated information; (21.37%) of students were satisfied that there was improper online content; (21.37%) of students were satisfied with some technical problems over there; and (4.58%) were dissatisfied for some other reasons.

- The study findings revealed that most of the students (58.56%) said that the teacher orally introduced the content. The findings declare that computers play a significant role in education due to the growth and consequences of ICT in modern society. In today's society, learning takes place through computer presentations.
- It was observed that the maximum number of students (28.41%) said that e-PG Pathshala has freely available information. It states that most of the students approach e-PG Pathshala as a freely accessible platform.
- The study found that the maximum number of students, (38.95%), who occasionally preferred to take print out of online content from e-PG Pathshala, (38.12%) had preferred to take print out of online content, and (22.92%) had not preferred to take print out of online content from e-PG Pathshala.
- The findings of the study show that the majority of students, (46.57%), expected that e-PG Pathshala was a relevant platform. The findings state that due to the impact of technology on many aspects of life, including education, information that is more helpful, easier, and faster than written information can be created, disseminated, and shared with the use of technological applications. As a result, students are increasingly turning to online resources.
- From the analyzed data, it is clear that the majority of the students, (85.63%), support online courseware as part of their classroom teaching. As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of online learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms.
- The study found that out of the total sample of (73.48%), had sufficient e-PG Pathshala content for their LIS course. It states that e-PG Pathshala is one of the most popular online communication platforms that has changed the destination

and direction of the entire education system for LIS students in post-COVID-19 conditions.

- The findings of the study revealed that out of the total response maximum number of students, (48.34%) believed that online courseware did not provide similar advantages as face-to-face lectures. (27.07%) of students believed that online courseware provides occasional advantages similar to face-to-face lectures, and (24.58%) of students believed that online courseware provides all advantages.
- The study found that (40.60%) of students had more effective remote learning. It declared that because of the Covid-19 outbreak, education had gone online to a large extent. It is essential for teachers and students to understand how to make remote learning more effective. Universities had been implementing some components of remote learning for some time, but the usefulness of this as a long-term solution had been harmed due to global affairs and the development of urgent remote learning facilities.
- The data from the study found that the majority of students (43.64%) encountered technology barriers in the form of online courseware.
- The findings of the study revealed that the maximum number of students (45.02%) feel that online courseware has good importance. It states that the purpose of online courseware observations is to aid in professional development. They have utilized it to encourage contemplation and spark ideas in an online learning environment.

### 13. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Online learning is becoming increasingly successful in the learning experience, allowing people all over the world to gain access to education for free or at a reduced cost. In order to promote knowledge, online courseware is becoming increasingly popular. Through the National Mission on Education Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT), the Indian government has launched e-PG Pathshala, a new project to promote online learning by offering high-quality educational content to all Indian students. The e-PG Pathshala is an online course designed for post-graduate

students from various institutions, universities, and organisations. These online courses were created by notable faculty members from various organizations and are beneficial to students in their academic pursuits.

According to the surveys, students studying library and information science at central universities in north India are aware of e-PG Pathshala, whereas 2.20 percent of respondents are unaware of it at all. The study clearly demonstrates that students from selected universities are familiar with the contents and learning materials in e-PG Pathshala.

It is critical to continue providing orientation and make them aware of e-PG Pathshala at this time. It is also vital for the MHRD to organize training programmes for the entire academic department. All students should be taught this information so that they can use e-PG Pathshala efficiently. The material of the e-PG Pathshala should be frequently updated with content and should have more content topic by topic, which is in the syllabus of the UGC-NET exam. The use of e-PG Pathshala is mandatory for all universities by the Ministry of Education. Students should be encouraged to use online resources as study materials in order to become more dependent on the study materials provided by e-PG Pathshala resources and content to enhance their learning. The results of the study revealed that teachers and collaborators have an important role in educating students about e-PG Pathshala. Students profit from e-PG Pathshala in a variety of ways, including class assignments, semester exams, competitive exams, and so forth.

#### **14. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE STUDY**

Based on the study findings, following recommendations are given below:

- According to the findings of this study, students at selected universities are aware of e-PG Pathshala. Those students who are completely unaware of e-PG Pathshala, demonstrating that students at chosen universities do not recognise the value of e-PG Pathshala as a learning resource in many areas. As a result, it is critical for professors to support the usage of e-PG Pathshala among students by presentation or realistic instruction.

- Students may be encouraged to use online resources as study materials in order to become more dependent on the study materials provided by e-PG Pathshala resources and content to enhance their learning.
- The material may be frequently updated and would have more content topic by topic, which is in the syllabus of the UGC-NET exam.
- There would be a search facility with keywords on the website so that content can be retrieved easily.
- The Ministry of Education should make the use of e-PG Pathshala mandatory for all universities.
- The study also suggested that it may provide separate content for UG and PG students.
- It may also provide more than one YouTube lecture by different teachers or specialists for a topic or chapter. It will be very comprehensible for the students.
- The e-PG Pathshala is only for English-medium students. It may also be available in different languages for the students, so that the optimum utilization of the content of e-PG Pathshala.
- It can also be recommended that each university be assigned a specific UGC-approved curriculum, which may be followed in the establishment of e-PG Pathshala online content. It has the potential to assist India's student community in obtaining an equal level of education that is free of discrimination.
- Video lectures are very rare on e-PG Pathshala. Every topic would have a video lecture by an expert, and its link should be provided in the PDF itself too.
- Training may be given to the faculty on how to go with e-PG Pathshala. After being trained, faculty members should instruct students on how to use it.

- There would also be an option for a feedback tool on the website, so that students can give their feedback regarding their content.

## **15. AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

- User perception and expectations of e-PG Pathshala among students of library and information science at Central Universities in India: A study.
- Awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala among students from all universities in India: A study.
- A comparative study on e-PG Pathshala content and the syllabus of library and information.
- An analysis of online content modules of online courseware: A case study of e-PG Pathshala portal.
- This kind of study may be done in other subject areas also because it is seen number of programs offered by the institutions are known to library and information science students but other students have less ideas and knowledge regarding this, also we can study what types of awareness programs were implemented by the concerned authority to raise the awareness of this platform among students of other subject fields.

