

Study of Open Access Publishing in Social Sciences and its Implications for Libraries

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ABSTRACT

The Open Access Movement (OAM), which started as a gradual realisation by authors mainly in biomedical sciences to make available results of public-funded research projects to the public without much barrier pertaining to cost, permission, copyright obligations, etc., gradually gained momentum across the world and India was no exception to it. Though the movement was confined mainly to science, technology and medical fields in India, since last few years, a number of open access repositories and open access journals in Social Science subjects have started appearing. The present study which is confined to the open access Social Science journals published from India as mentioned in the Directory of Open Access Journals, identified 60 open access Social Sciences journals in India. The study also analysed the journals on the basis of certain parameters as to trend of open access journals in Social Sciences, and was found that most of open access journals in Social Sciences appeared between 2009 and 2014 and about half of the journals charge authors for publishing their papers in the journals and only a few are published under Creative Commons Attribution. Lastly, the paper discusses about implications of open access publishing on Social Science research libraries made few suggestions towards encouraging open access publishing in Social Science subjects in India.

Keywords: Social sciences, open access publishing, open access movement

1. INTRODUCTION

The Open Access Movement (OAM), which started in the developed countries as a movement in recognition to the need that the output of public-funded research should be made available to public at large without any barrier pertaining to cost, access, etc., dates back to 1991¹. The movement gained further momentum with three landmark 'initiatives', viz., the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001), the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing (April 2003), and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (October 2003). An analysis of the definitions put forth in three initiatives reveal the following criteria which are to be satisfied for a piece of literature to be qualified as an open access (OA) literature²

- (a) The OA literature is freely available: Notwithstanding the differences about the other aspects of essential characteristics of open access literature, free availability is the 'the element that catalysed the open-access movement'³. As such, free availability is the first and foremost of the characteristics of open access literature;
- (b) The OA literature is online: The cost factor makes it almost mandatory for OA literature to be online as the cost of digital publication of literature and their distribution through intranet,

internet, etc., is minimal compared to print versions;

- (c) The OA literature publication requires processing fee: Though in an ideal situation, authors are not required to pay for publishing their works in open access domain, many open access journals charge authors either at the time of submission or at the time of acceptance in the form of 'processing fees';
- (d) The OA literature can be used with minimal restrictions: In addition to be made available as free literature, open access literature can also be used with minimal restrictions as long as there is correct attribution and the integrity of the work is maintained.

1.1 Open Access Movements in India

The establishment of first interoperable and OA institutional repository in the Indian Institute of Science, in September 2002⁴ is a landmark event and it was followed by several other institutional repositories (IRs) like the *Vidyanidhi* (University of Mysore), and Librarian's Digital Library (DRTC, Bangalore). Afterwards, a large number of IRs were set up in India. As per a recent study⁵, there are 68 IRs in India which is quite significant and India stands second only to Brazil among the BRICS

countries in terms of number of IRs. Similarly, overall, there are 4,91,622 records are uploaded in the IRs⁶. So far as OA journals are concerned, the OA journals publishing also started in early part of the last decade. The advocacy programmes conducted by NCSI, IISc, Indian Medlars, MedKnow, etc., towards OA publishing may be one basic reason towards successful venture of OA in India⁷. As per a registry updated till April 11, 2013, there are 563 OA journals in India⁸ which is quite impressive among the developing countries of the world. So far, as mandate towards OA publishing is concerned, several institutions in India such as INSA (a signatory to Berlin declaration), NIIT, Rourkela, ICRISAT, Hyderabad had earlier made it mandatory to submit different versions of research papers in the respective IR. The report of the National Knowledge Commission has recommended that 'Peer-reviewed research papers resulting from publicly-funded research should be made available through OA channels, subject to copyright regulations⁹'. The movement culminated with the issuance of the OA policy by Department of Science and Technology and Department of Biotechnology in December 2014 which not only mandated submission of final versions of the research papers coming out of research grants received from DBT and DST in the respective institutions (in centrally managed repositories by DBT and DST in case the host institution does have an IR) where the researchers are working, but also strongly recommended that every institutions that receive funds from DBT and DST have an IR¹⁰.

1.2 Open Access Movement and Social Sciences

Social science research in India dates back to establishment of Indian Universities in the later part of the nineteenth century. Various universities in India started offering courses in several social science disciplines such as Economics, Political Science, Sociology, History, etc., which led to proliferation of research in the subject. The establishment of several research centres such as Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, etc., also added to the acceleration of social science research in India. Further, the establishment of the Indian Council for Social Science Research in 1969 gave a big impetus to the research activities in social sciences. Presently, there are more than 200 government research institutes and autonomous organisations which undertake social science research. Some of the major social science research centres in India are: (i) Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai; (ii) Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan; (iii) Delhi School of Economics (Delhi University), Delhi; (iv) Different social science departments of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi; (v) Gokhale Institute of Politics

Table 1. Categories of social science institutes in India

Universities with social science departments	Government research institutions	Autonomous research institutions	Total
190	67	152	409

Source: *Social Science Research in India: A Mapping Report*, DFID, September 2011

and Economics, Pune; (vi) Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai besides other 27 research institutions funded by the ICSSR. Table 1 reproduced from a report gives a clear picture of distribution of social science institutions in India. Hence, it is evident that research in the subject is scattered between university departments, deemed universities and specialised research institutions. Even though India has the highest volume of research output in entire South Asia, there is wide disparity in research activity and output across the country both in terms of quantity and quality. Some of the premium universities located mostly in major cities foster academic research cultures which include interdisciplinary work, knowledge production with emphasis on peer review, and engagement with internal and external learned societies. On the other hand, the quality of research in a large majority of institutions neither conforms to international academic standards nor have they been able to make a significant contribution to social science research, either theoretical or applied and policy-oriented, in the country^{11,12}.

The present study is an overview of open access movement pertaining to Social Sciences in India. As there are only a handful of research institutions in Social Sciences which have institutional repositories are there and also it is not clear about whether the OA repository is subject specific or not, the study includes basically the OA journals in social sciences and allied subjects published from India.

Though India's show in the international arena is noteworthy so far as OA publishing is concerned, but mostly that has been confined to the science and medical science fields. The number of IRs devoted to Social Science subjects is negligible as most the repositories were established either in scientific research institutions or in Indian Institutes of Technology which understandably is predominantly oriented towards engineering and technology. However, providing barrier-free access to some social science literature like working papers, discussion papers, reports, etc., which are important from research perspective of social science subjects started much earlier. For example, some of the prominent research institutions like the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, National Institute of Public Finance

and Policy, etc., have been providing free access to their working papers since early parts of the last decade. Similarly, the number of OA journals was very few in social science subjects compared to Science and Technology. A study conducted in 2011 identified only 25 open access journals in social sciences in India (including) subjects such as Law, Library and Information Science, Management and interdisciplinary⁷. Recently, however, the trend seems to be changing and there has been a significant growth in OA journals in social science subjects in India. So far as open IRs are concerned, apart from the Universities, only a few social science research institutions such as the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research and Institute of Social and Economic Change, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Tata Institute of Social Sciences etc., have their own IRs. Besides, some Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) such as IIM-Ahmedabad, IIM-Kozhikode, etc. have also developed their IRs.

1.3 Open Access Strategies

Open access can be accomplished through two complementary strategies, viz., self-archiving and OA journals. In the earlier strategy, authors typically upload an e-print (either pre-print or post print depending upon the policy of the publisher where their work is published) in an IRs which is typically referred to as the 'Green Road' to open access, and in the second strategy, authors can publish their articles in open access journals normally called as 'Gold Road' to open access.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study are to:

- (a) Find out the growth of OA journals in social sciences published from India.
- (b) Find out their policy pertaining to acceptance of papers for publication, the factors that might have caused the increase of OA journals in India and the major publishers of open access journals in social sciences in India.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study is carried out on social science journals published from India that are available open access. The list is taken from the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Apart from taking journals devoted to traditional social science subjects like Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, etc., journals on Management, Library and Information Science, Linguistics which have significant bearing on social sciences are also considered. That apart, some interdisciplinary subjects are considered for the purpose of the study.

The paper did not attempt to study the impact factor of the journals after it is found that most the OA journals have started appearing during last very few years and it is premature to assess the quality of the journals based upon the impact factor.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The study finds that the starting from 1999, a number of OA journals started appearing in the field of social sciences. Table 2 and Fig. 1 shows the growth of OA journals in social science in India. The Table and Fig. did not consider two established open access journals such as *Annals of Library and Information Studies* and *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology* because though the full-text of the same journals is available since their respective first issues, it was not clear exactly the year when these two journals started publishing open access.

From Table 2, it is evidently clear that most of the OA journals in social sciences started appearing during last five years. In fact, out of 60 journal titles that were considered for the study, 45 journals 75 % started appearing during 2009-2014. The year 2011 alone witnessed appearance of 12 OA journals in social science subjects, followed by 10 in 2012. Perhaps it may be the result of the policy of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to link research output in the form of journal articles with recruitment and promotion which got reflected in proliferation of articles in social science subjects. So far, as publication policy is concerned though most of the journals claim to have followed the peer-reviewing process before acceptance of articles for publication, 30 journals which is half of the total number of journals considered, charge publication/

Table 2. Number of journals

Year	Number of journals
1999	01
2000	01
2001	-
2002	-
2003	02
2004	03
2005	03
2006	03
2007	01
2008	-
2009	06
2010	09
2011	12
2012	10
2013	06
2014	01

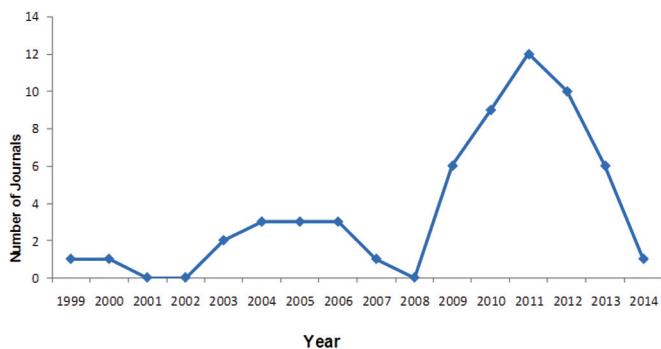


Figure 1. Number of journals

processing fee either at the time of submission, or acceptance of papers, or both. The study also reveals that barring a few established journals, other journals don't have any print version of the journal.

While it has been gradually becoming a policy in the western countries to publish OA journals under the Creative Commons Attribution (specifically CC-BY), which allows the content to be copied, distributed, edited, re-mixed and built upon, even commercially, within the boundaries of copyright law, as long as there is attribution to the original creation, only 15 out of the 60 journals are published under the Creative Commons Attribution.

5. ROLE OF LIBRARIES

The libraries in social science research institutes in India are gradually opening up to adoption of new technologies and in fact, most of the social science research libraries resort to different technological tools and internet for providing better services to their respective clientele. Traditionally, the outcome of research in social sciences comes in different formats such as journal articles, books, working papers, monographs, etc., and the libraries attached to social science research institutes have to procure the same to serve their users in a better way. However, the OA has opened up a huge potential for libraries to procure a potentially large number of journals with a much lesser investment and add them in their main collection. Even, with the use of federated search mechanism, it is also possible for libraries to provide access to the OA materials through the OPAC. Simultaneously, however, libraries need to be very careful in selecting the quality OA journals in social sciences. As is evident from the study, most of the OA journals in India started appearing during last five years after a policy promulgation by UGC, hence it is but natural that many journals might have mushroomed to accommodate articles from budding researchers and teachers without bothering much about the quality. Here, the libraries can play a pivotal role in identifying the quality journals. In fact, it is also possible to prepare a list of so called 'predatory journals' as has been

done by Jeffrey Bell¹³. Libraries can also play a crucial role in identifying the core OA journals in social science subjects in India and assist the researchers to submit their research papers in the same journals. Finally, the libraries can also create IRs to store and disseminate OA literature from the same.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Open access publishing, which is becoming a trend in social sciences in India in recent years, is definitely a welcome development as the OA journals are likely to increase the visibility of research papers by Indian scholars. It is true that earlier, some OA portals such as RepEc, SSRN, e-Social Sciences, etc., used to provide access to mainly e-resources to different social science subjects and most of the social science research institutes has been providing free access to their grey literature such as working papers, discussion papers, annual reports, etc., access to peer reviewed journals articles has been a difficulty for researchers in social sciences. Also, the Indian publications often used to get unnoticed at the international level which is evident from the fact the percentage of Indian contributions in Economics & Business was between 2004 and 2008 was only 0.72 % with a relative impact of 59 % whereas the same for social sciences was 0.67 % with relative impact of 39 % when compared to the overall contribution and impact factor of the country¹⁴. It is true that the fund allocation for various research and development activities in social sciences in India is meagre compared to science and technology. There are still many projects especially on subject fields like Economics, Demography, Sociology, Anthropology which attract large amount of public funding and the results of which often get reported in international peer reviewed journals and researchers in India face difficulty in getting access to the said literature. Hence, in the line of OA policy approved for all DST and DBT and ICAR-funded projects, there should be a similar policy for social science literature in India. The major recommendations should be as follows:

- (a) Research papers emanated out of public funded research in social science subjects in India should be made available to public at large without any barrier such as cost, permission, copyright, etc.
- (b) All the research institutes in social sciences funded by ICSSR should be encouraged and funded to create their own institutional repositories that will house pre-print and post-print of research publications in the form of journal articles, popular articles, success stories, case studies, annual reports, project reports, schedules, grey

- literature such as working papers and discussion papers, in-house seminar papers, and other such material which are useful from research point of view.
- (c) It should be mandatory for the research paper to deposit a post-print copy of their research publications that is result of a public funded project, in the respective institutional repository where the researcher is working.
 - (d) The authors of scholarly literature produced from the research funded wholly or partly by the ICSSR, ICHR, UGC and similar other bodies are advised to mention about the OA policy pertaining to public-funded social science research while signing the copyright agreements with the publishers.
 - (e) A central IR should be established at the ICSSR where a copy of all the project reports and post-prints of research papers should be deposited and made available to researchers.
 - (f) As part of monitoring OA journals, a central advisory and quality control cell should be established to assess the quality of open access social science journals in India and encourage the scholars to submit the research papers in selected Indian OA journals which will go a long way in increasing the visibility of Indian publications worldwide.

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About the Author

Dr Prabhash Narayana Rath is working as Deputy Librarian at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune. He obtained his PhD in Library and Information Science as a UGC Research Fellow from University of Calcutta. He has edited two books and contributed about 20 papers in the form of journal articles, conference papers, and working papers. He is also a member of the Indian Historical Records Committee of Government of India.

Appendix-1**List of open access journals in social sciences published from India**

Title of the journal	Publisher/ host	Year from which available online	Whether print version available	Whether charges for publication	Whether CC attribution is there
<i>Afro-Asian Journal of Social Sciences</i>		2010	No	No	
<i>Annals of Library and Information Studies</i>	NISCAIR	1954	Yes	No	
<i>Anthropologist</i>	Kamla-Raj Enterprises	1999	Yes	Yes	
<i>Asian Journal of Management Research</i>	Integrated Publishing Association	2010	No	Yes	
<i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Social Sciences</i>	International Society for Asia Pacific Studies	2009	No	No	
<i>Coldnoon: Travel Poetics</i>		2011	Yes	No	
<i>Conservation and Society</i>	MedKnow Publications	2003	No	No	
<i>Contemporary Issues and Ideas in Social Sciences</i>	Society for Research in Social Sciences	2005	No	No	
<i>Current World Environment</i>	ENVIRO Publishers	2006	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology</i>	DESIDOC	1981	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Geo-Analyst</i>	Geographical Society of North Bengal	2011	No	Yes	
<i>Golden Research Thoughts</i>		2011	No	Yes	
<i>Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies</i>	Educational Research Multimedia & Publication	2010	Yes	Yes	
<i>Indian Journal of Community Health</i>	Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine	2009	No	Yes	
<i>Indian Journal of Community Medicine</i>	MedKnow Publications	2000	No	No	Yes
<i>Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge</i>	NISCAIR	2006	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Innovative Journal of Business and Management</i>		2012	No	Yes	
<i>International Educational e-Journal</i>		2012	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Advanced Research</i>		2013	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics</i>		2012	No	No	
<i>International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences</i>	K. Jaishankar	2006	No	No	Yes
<i>International Journal of Digital Library Services</i>		2011	Yes	No	Yes
<i>International Journal of Economics and Research</i>	Sanben Agency	2010	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Educational Research and Technology</i>	Society of Education, India	2010	Yes	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Educational Sciences</i>	Kamla-Raj Enterprises	2004	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal of English and Education</i>	Brahmaputra Publishing House	2012	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Innovative Research and Development</i>	GLOBEEDU Group	2012	No	Yes	Yes
<i>International Journal of Knowledge and Research in Management and e-Commerce</i>	R.G. Education Society	2011	Yes	No	

<i>International Journal of Management and Business Studies</i>	Cosmic Journals	2011	Yes	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Management and Strategy</i>		2010	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology</i>		2013	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews</i>		2012	No	Yes	Yes
<i>International Journal of Trends in Economics, Management and Technology</i>		2012	No	Yes	
<i>International Journal on Research and Development: A Management Review</i>	Institute for Research and Development	2012	Yes	No	Yes
<i>International Research Journal of Applied Finance</i>	Kaizen Publishers	2010	No	Yes	Yes
<i>International Research: Journal of Library and Information Sciences</i>		2011	No	No	Yes
<i>International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities</i>		2011	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Journal of History and Social Sciences</i>		2010	No	No	
<i>Journal of Human Ecology</i>	Kamla-Raj Enterprises	2004	No	Yes	
<i>Journal of Management and Public Policy</i>	Management Development Research Foundation	2009	Yes	Yes	
<i>Journal of Management and Science</i>	Non-Olympic Times	2009	No	No	
<i>Journal of North East India Studies</i>	Associates for North East India Studies	2011	No	No	
<i>Journal of Social Sciences</i>	Kamla-Raj Enterprises	2004	No	Yes	
<i>Law, Environment and Development Journal</i>	School of Oriental and African Studies	2005	No	No	Yes
<i>Lokavishkar International e-Journal</i>		2012	No	Yes	
<i>Modern Journal of Applied Linguistics</i>		2009	No	Yes	
<i>Research Revolution</i>	Divine Pubns.	2012	No	Yes	
<i>Researchers World: Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce</i>	Educational Research and Multimedia Pubn.	2011	Yes	No	
<i>Review of Research</i>		2011	No	No	
<i>Rupkatha Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities</i>		2009	No	No	
<i>Scholars World</i>		2013	Yes	Yes	
<i>Shodh Sanchayan</i>		2014	Yes	No	
<i>SIJ Transactions on Industrial, Financial and Business</i>	Standard International Journals	2013	No	Yes	
<i>Socio-legal Review</i>	National Law School of India, Bangalore	2005	Yes	No	
<i>Studies on Home and Community Science</i>	Kamla-Raj Enterprises	2003	No	Yes	
<i>Studies on Tribes and Tribals</i>	Kamla-Raj Enterprises	2007	No	Yes	
<i>Tactful Management</i>	Laxmi Book Publications	2013	No	No	
<i>Third Front: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences</i>		2013	No	No	Yes
<i>Trade, Law and Development</i>	National Law University, Jodhpur	2009	No	No	
<i>Trends in Information Management</i>	University of Kashmir	2011	No	No	