

## **Use of CeRA Consortium for E-Resources in Agriculture by Research Scholars of the Vasantrya Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani : A Case Study**

**Santosh V. Dhage**

Librarian College of Agriculture, Latur, VNMKV, Parbhani, Maharashtra, India

---

### **Abstract**

Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture is a e-Consortium of Agricultural Libraries under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research for National Agricultural Research System libraries. The paper discusses brief background of the Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CeRA) and the components of the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP). The Present study find out the usage of CeRA by the research scholars of the Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani. A questionnaire was monitored among 100 research scholars of various departments like Agronomy, SSAC, Plant Pathology, Botany and Entomology at the faculty of Agriculture. Reveals that there is a demand for more journals titles although a substantial numbers users (71.96%) are satisfied with the existing model of CeRA. Conclude that the more training on availability and usability would be of great support to the users

**KEYWORDS:** Consortium in agriculture, CeRA, Consortia, user study, MKV

---

### **Introduction :**

Oral communication has been an integral part of people to people interactions in all civilizations. With the advancement of science and technology, the process of communication has expanded over the years to cover print and other modes like computer, mobile phone and associated gadgets. India is predominantly an agrarian country, and the growth of agriculture is reflected in the good yields of different crops that depend on various factors – natural and man made. Agricultural research, the backbone of agricultural growth in the country, demands timely dissemination of knowledge being generated and updated across the globe from time to time. R & D institutions have been procuring print versions of journals and literature in aid of science and technology. With the rapid growth of internet facilities and advancement of web technology, almost all reputed international journals are available on line and can easily be accessed by researchers over the network. Since ICAR is having network connectivity across institutes and state agricultural universities, selected journals could be made available over the network for the use of scientific community. Accordingly, the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) has funded for establishing the Consortium for e-Resources in Agriculture (CERA) at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in November 2007 to facilitate accessibility of scientific journals to all researchers / teachers in the National Agricultural Research system by providing access to information specially access to journals online which is crucial for having excellence in research.

The requirement of e-Journals by the academics and Research community has increased year by year. The ICAR has launched 'CeRA' Consortium for e-resources in agricultural to facilitate access to e-resources to students and researchers in institute of Higher education specially universities. The consortium enables the academic libraries to access a large number of scholarly journals from reputed publishers, as it was difficult for the universities to raise the necessary funds to subscribe journals

The CeRA consortium for e-resources in Agricultural provides current as well as archival access to more than 2000+ journals (Electronic + print) from several publishers. 200+ print journal from e-journals from the informatics, spinger70, Taylor and Francis group- 1079, Indian Journals 131, Annual review-22, Elsevier 358, CSIRO- 8. The Vasant Rao Naik Marathwada Agricultural University, Parbhani accept the consortia from August-2008 The CeRA e-resources covers almost all subject disciplines arts, humanities, social sciences, medical sciences, mathematics and statistics, Agricultural sciences, chemical sciences, Life sciences, food sciences, etc. Currently It is a customized solution for accessing and sharing journal literature subscribed by all the 126 participating libraries in the consortia, individually and collectively, through CeRA Consortium. CeRA gives full text access to 1343 journals to all the libraries from 3 consortia subscribed publishers –Annual Reviews, CSIRO(Australia) and Springer, in addition gives access to metadata of journals from 635 publishers for those journals libraries subscribe and also Open Access Journals. Jccc@cera covers in all 2199 journals.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of e-journals in academic libraries a large number of surveys have been carried out during the last few years, all of these surveys included faculty numbers among their participants, in many cases, these survey examined the use of e-mail, word processors and so forth and only a few of them were targeted towards faculty as well as graduate students and their awareness to the availability and use of the libraries electronic resources.

A China study examined the use of electronic resources at seven universities in Wuhan the study found that users the purpose of the utilization of electronic resources for customers is scientific research, teaching and the need for self development.

Lenares (1999) identified the reasons why his respondents preferred print sources as easier to read, better graphic quality, easier to browse, and easier to access. Bostick Sharon L (2001) argued that the buying power of the libraries for better prices has increased under the consortia mode.

Palmer and Saddler (2003) reported that their respondents expressed desire for print information sources because they are considered proven archival sources. Other reasons the print information sources are preferred to online sources are: ability to browse and scan through pages, portability, physical comfort, and conveniences

Watts and Ibegbulam (2006) examined some of the barriers to the usage of electronic information resources available at the medical library of College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their findings reveal that lack of an adequate ICT (information and

communication technology) infrastructure and affordable online access, absence of in-depth ICT skills and information searching skills among library staff, and cost of using the cybercafé are barriers to the use of electronic resources

In a survey conducted in 2010 usage of e-resources and the internet by Indian academics to examine the perception and use of e-resources and the internet by the engineering , medical, management academics in Bangalore city. The survey shows that the students and faculty who participated in this survey are aware of e-sources and also the internet even though a majority of the academic community use electronic information sources for their academic related work.

Use of consortium for e-resources in Agriculture (CeRA):A case Study of Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri. (M.S)CeRA of ICAR has become a heavily-used service by the students. Curriculum-based information literacy courses like 'library and information services', 'research methodology', etc.,have contributed much towards imparting required skills for the access and use of digital information resources. Strengthening of CeRA services by adding more resources and facilities will provide strong information support for the education, research, and extension programmes

### **CeRA's Content Resources**

CeRA Currently provided access to a collection of 2000+ Journals (Electronic+Print) from several publishers from the following sources.

- 200+ Print Journals from Designated Document Delivery Libraries .
- 1800+e-Journals from the following participating publishers
- Informatics
- Springer-70
- Taylor&Francis Group -1079
- Indian Journals -131
- Annual Reviews 22

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present survey was conducted through a questionnaire circulated among 100 research scholars (Ph.D) studying in the faculty of Agricultural, VNMKV, Parbhani, the justification behind choosing only research scholars for the present study was that, generally, after enrollment, in the first amount of time collecting relevant literature pertinent to his/her research question, due to wide availability of digital resources on web , now researches mostly spend their time to surf web and related websites.

In August 2011 session 109 research scholars were enrolled in various dept in faculty of agriculture out of 100 were randomly selected. The departments under faculty of agriculture include Agronomy, AHDS, Agricultural engineering , Horticulture, Plant pathology, Agricultural economics, extension education.

Questionnaires were equally distributed around different department, personal interaction with the research scholars revealed many facts and enabled making some

important suggestions for the overall improvement of the CeRA the collected data is presented in the form of tables and figures.

### Objectives of the study:

- **To Know the users approach to keep themselves updated with electronic contents**
- **To identify the satisfaction with content coverage, and access to the e-journals available under CeRA Consortium.**
- **To find difficulties faced by the research scholars in accessing CeRA.**
- **To identify actual information needs of research scholars: and**
- **To provide suggestions and ways and means for effective use of the CeRA Consortium.**

### Analysis

This paper is the result of a descriptive survey carried out among 100 students of Vasantnao Naik Marathawada Agricultural university, Parbhani. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The uses of CeRA by the students by the end of the survey, 82 (82%) valid questionnaires were collected for necessary analysis and interpretation.

Table .No.1 Users approach to online contents .  
Faculty of Agriculture

Particulars	Agro	SS AC	Plant Path.	Botany	Ento	Respondents	%
Content requirement search through search engine	6	5	6	5	5	27	32.92
Browse table of content of online journal regularly	5	5	4	6	5	25	30.48
Search print copies regularly	4	5	5	4	5	23	28.08
Use indexing and abstracting services	0	0	1	1	1	3	3.65
Receive table of content through e-mail services	0	1	1	0	0	2	2.43
Go to discussion list forums	0	1	1	0	0	2	2.43
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%

### Users approach to online contents for getting updated

The research scholars were allowed to mark possibilities for the question on how research scholars kept themselves upto date with new advances in their fields, as indicated in table 1. 32.92 percent of them responded that kept themselves updated by searching relevant keywords through search engines at regular intervals. 30.48 percent followed through "Table of contents" of online journals regularly and 28.08 percent by reading print copies of journals regularly. A very nominal percent i.e. 3.65 % used indexing and abstracting services and 2.43 percent preferred discussion forums and email alert way to updates themselves.

Table .No.2 Users preferred route to access research Literature  
Faculty of Agriculture

Sources of access	Agro	SSAC	Plant Path.	Botany	Ento	Respondents	%
Library webpage	5	4	3	3	5	20	24.39
Search Engine	4	6	8	5	7	30	36.58
Publisher Websites	4	3	5	5	3	20	24.39
Open access publication	2	4	2	3	1	12	14.63
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%

Research scholars were asked about the channel through they reach their research literature , 24.39 percent responded preferred to visit libraries webpage to access the e-journals . 39.58 percent responded searched through search engines like google, yahoo etc. The access rate to e-journals from publishers website was 24.39 percent , 14.63 percent accessed open access scholarly publications to obtain research article the preferential methods of access in various subjects is also mentioned in Table 2.

Table .No.3 Locations of accessing CeRA Faculty of Agriculture

Access point	Agro	SSAC	Plant Path.	Botany	Ento	Respondants	%
University library	8	6	9	8	9	40	48.79
Dept	3	7	3	3	2	18	21.95
Other University premises	4	4	6	5	5	24	29.26
Outside of the campus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%

Table No.3.shows the place from where research scholars accessed scholarly resources. It was found that the university library is the most preferred place 48.79 percent to access research literature followed by the departments 21.95 percent, by other university locations 29.26 percent such as computer center, colleges, Hostels. No one accessed CeRA from outside the campus because CeRA Consortia is available in campus only.

Table .No.4 Users preferred file format of e-journals availability

Faculty of Agriculture

File format	Agro	SS AC	Plant Path.	Botany	Ento	Respondents	%
HTML	3	3	4	4	6	20	24.39
PDF	12	10	11	10	8	51	62.19
Other(Word)	0	4	3	2	2	11	13.41
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%

Table No.4 shows that 62.19 percent of the respondents preferred to read/ store articles in PDF format, followed by 24.39 percent in HTML format.It was found that 13.41 percent respondent preferred to read articles in other formats such as MS word.

Table No 5 Purpose of access and use of CeRA resources

Faculty of Agriculture

Purpose	Agronomy	SS AC	Plant Path.	Botany	Entomology	Respondents	%
Full Text Article	8	10	11	10	7	46	56.09
Abstract	3	4	3	3	4	17	20.73
Request of Article	2	2	2	2	3	11	13.41
Article Received	2	1	2	1	2	08	9.75
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100

Table 5 shows that 56.09 percent students accessed and used CeRA full text resources and 20.73per cent used abstracts only. 13.41 per cent respondents requested articles and 9.75 percent respondents received articles through the Document Delivery System of the CeRA.

Table .No.6 Preferential form to acquire e-journals.

## Faculty of Agriculture

Particulars	Agro	SSAC	Plant Path.	Botany	Ento	Respondents	%
Read Article online	3	3	4	3	2	15	18.29
Save Article	4	3	4	5	3	19	23.17
Take print article	8	11	10	8	11	48	58.23
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%

As per table No.6, 58.23 percent of the respondents prefer to read articles by taking print out, followed by 23.17 percent save the soft copy of the articles for future reference. The preference of read articles online was limited i.e. 18.29.

Table .No.7 Problems in accessing and using CeRA

## Faculty of Agriculture

Sources of access	Agro	SS AC	Plant Path.	Botany	Entomology	Respondents	%
Lack of training programme	4	4	5	4	3	20	24.39
Restricted Access	6	7	7	5	7	32	39.09
Interested Journal are not available through CeRA	3	3	3	3	4	16	19.51
Unwanted resources available	2	3	3	4	2	14	17.07
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%

As shows in table No.7. 24.39 percent of research scholars complained that lack of training programme are responsible for their not accessing CeRA and 39.09 percent of research scholars mentioned that most of the important journals of their interest are not accessible in full text format, 19.51 percent of users mentioned that most of the journals

of their interest are not available through campus network. It was found that 17.07 percent of users complain that content searching is more difficult from homepage of the journals as compared to search engine of subject portals.

**Table .No.8 Users Level of satisfaction of Reference Availability in CeRA**

Faculty of Agricultural

Sources of access	Agro	SS AC	Plant Path	Bot - any	Ento	Respondents	%	Overall
Strongly Agree	5	6	7	6	7	31	37.80	71.96
Agree	6	5	6	5	6	28	34.16	
Disagree	1	2	2	2	1	8	9.75	13.30
Strongly disagree	1	1	0	1	0	3	3.65	
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3	3	2	2	12	16.63	16.63
Total	15	17	18	16	16	82	100%	100%

CeRA Agricultural consortium is widely known for getting access to online contents in table No.8. 71.96 percent were satisfied with the existing model, Whereas 13.4 percent were dissatisfied and 16.63 percent did not respond to the question. Assessment of the level of the satisfaction/ dissatisfaction according to the Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree) showed that 37.80 percent strongly agreed followed by 34.16 percent agreed with the satisfaction level and about 16.63 percent neither agreed nor disagreed with the satisfaction level.

#### **Discussion :**

The basic purpose to establish any consortium is to minimize the gap digital divide. To reach the consortia material users really on search engines. The consortium along with the publisher should impart awareness and training to enable make better use of CeRA consortium is only possible within campus, university should improve the access possibility by increasing nodes enabling high speed connectivity.

The study indicates that majority of the respondents (71.96 percent) were satisfied with existing model of CeRA consortium, but it needs further enhancement interms of coverage in the areas of interest of the users there are many journals yet to be included in CeRA databases which have considerable impart fact of in their respective field. The study also indicates, 36.58 percent of research scholars pointed out that most of important journals of their interests were not accessible in fulltext format. The survey also need to be included in the consortium.



## Conclusion :

CeRA Consortia as a tool with positive impact, and the study has enabled the respondents to express their satisfaction and their aspirations for improvements. CeRA has become a heavily-used service by the Research Scholars . Strengthening of CeRA services by adding more resources and facilities will provide strong information support for the education, research, and extension programmes. It is important for the University library to improve the awareness of CeRA Consortia in the University library by the academic community so as to increase the usage of this service.

## Reference

1. Bhatt J and Joshi N, Impact of UGC Infonet Digital Library Consortium to academic community : a case study of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, proceedings of 7<sup>th</sup> International CALIBER-2009, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, February 28-27, 2009.
2. Bostick . “Sharon L. Academic library consortia in the United States: An Introduction”. Library Quarterly 11.1 (2001): 6-13
3. <http://www.cera.jccc.in/about/AboutCeRA.pdf>
4. Kalbande, D.T. and Syed, Fayyaz.M. “Use of consortium for E-resources in agriculture (CeRA): A case Study”. International Journal of Library and Information Studies ISSN: 2231-4911 Vol.2(1), Jan-Mar, 2012
5. Kumbar B.D, Vantal R M, Hadagali G.S and Patil L, Use of UGC – Infonet consortium by the faculty members and research scholars department of chemistry, Karnataka university, Dharwad, Proceedings of the international Convention (CALIBER 2006, 2-4 (2006)257-264.
6. Liyi Zhang, Pinghao Ye, Qihua Liu, (2011) "A survey of the use of electronic resources at seven universities in Wuhan, China", Program: electronic library and information systems, Vol. 45 Iss: 1, pp.67 - 77
7. Maharana,B and Sethi, B. B. “Use of internet and e-resources by the students of business management: A survey of P. G. students of business administration, Sambalpur University, India, International Journal of Library and Information Science Vol. 2(3), pp. 45-53, April 2010.
8. Mukherjee, B. & Kumar, P. “Use of UGC-Infonet e-journals byu research scholars of the Banaras Hindu University, Varansi : A case study.” ALIS, 37.12 (2010): 339-347.
9. Raza M and Upadhyay A. K, Usage of e-journals by researchers in Aligarh Muslim University: a study, The International Information & Library Review, 38(2006)170-179.
10. Rogers s, Elctronic journal usage at Ohio state University college & Research Libraries, 62(201)25-34.
11. Salaam, M. O., &Aderibigbe, Nurudeen A. (2010). Awareness and utilization of The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library by academic staff: A case study of University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. Chinese Librarianship: an International Electronic Journal, 30.