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**Awareness, Availability and Utilization of Open Access Journals  
Versus Closed Access Journals**

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**Abstract**

*Often, we observe that generally people are ignorant about new researches and the facilities available to them. Even the well-advertised government projects and public welfare schemes do not reach to the end users. Similar is a boon available to library goers i.e. Open Access Journals. But reader class carry on purchasing or subscribing to newspapers, magazines, journals etc. which are in fact available to them free of cost. What can be the reason? This curiosity lead me to carry out survey as to usage of Open Access Journals specifically about its awareness, availability and utilization thereof. Open Access Journals in comparison to Closed Access Journals should be more popular and my study pointed out that due to ignorance among library goers, still the users prefer to quote from Closed Access Journal as they believe that such contents are more realistic, whereas this is a myth. However, amazing fact was noticed that increasing number of females were highly interested in quoting, and accessing Closed Access Journals compared to males and their awareness was really commendable.*

**Keywords:**

Open Access; Open Access Journals; Closed Access Journals; Purchased Journals; Subscribed Journals; Paid Journals; Free Journals;

**Introduction**

The library is the first and foremost point where readers come and look out for their desired information/books and in turn library caters to their desired information needs. Library offers various modes such as reading print media on the spot just sitting inside Library, issue of books on loan etc., but recently a new trend is conspicuous after advent of internet. Now all information and reading material is available on line. E – Journals can be bifurcated into two portions; Open Access Journals and Closed Access Journals. Apropos our topic, we are concerned only with Open Access Journals (OAJ) & Closed Access Journals (CAJ), therefore, deliberation is confined strictly to OAJ & CAJ. Some think-tanks contemplate about contrast in quality and variety offered by OAJ & CAJ. As per Springer publisher “Open Access Journals are subject to the same peer review, production and publishing standards that apply for journals published under the subscription-based model, so there is no question about the quality and reliability of the work”<sup>1</sup>.

**Open Access**

Open Access came into existence in library at that time when the racks were kept open for the users to choose information/literature/books of their choice. **Computer & internet changed** the whole scenario. With efflux of time, print library transformed into electronic publishing technology form or **substituted by e-resources**. Open Access brought a significant change in view of intermittent rising prices of journals. So, open access to journals play a vital role for all types of Library as it reduces library budget as well as space problems. Open Access is defined in **Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002**<sup>2</sup> as “Free availability of literature on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as

data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself.”

### **Open Access Journals**

**Open Access Journals** are scholarly journals that are available to readers “digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.” However, contrary to it, some of the journals are sold at subsidised rates but mostly on payment basis. Open access journals are available, be it partially, absolutely or **delayedOpen Access**.

According to Mr. Charles W. Bailey, Jr. “Open access journals have the following characteristics: (1) they are scholarly, (2) they utilize quality control mechanisms like those of conventional journals (e.g., editorial oversight and copy editing), (3) they are digital; (4) they are freely available, (5) they may allow authors to retain their copyrights, and (6) they may use Creative Commons or similar licenses”<sup>3</sup>. **BhupenderSharma**<sup>4</sup> asserts in the study “Open Access E-Journals are the excellent source of latest articles, research articles and update information relating to desired subject”.

### **Closed Access Journals**

Closed Access Journals are those journals for which one has to make payment for reading or study, or one has to subscribe to utilise content of these journals subject to copyright or in other words it is just opposite to open access journals. Copyright remains retained with the publishers.

**Donald W. King & Frances M. Alverado Albertorio**<sup>5</sup> stated “Journal prices are partly determined by costs, which vary widely among journals and publishers. A previous article by the first author<sup>1</sup> focused on various aspects of journal publishing costs, including the factors that contribute to the wide disparity of average cost per subscription and average cost per article. These costs are most often reflected in the price of subscriptions or other charges, but not necessarily so; publishers with larger portfolios sometimes subsidize journals with low (or negative) margins out of the profit or surplus made by other journals. A journal must reach at least break even point in order to recover its costs, unless it is subsidized from some other source. Wide variations in prices and other journal charges are necessitated in part by cost factors such as: circulation; size; non-article content; special graphics; rejection rates and other content quality considerations; additional revenue sources to publishers”.

**Elsevier Subscription Agreement (2014)**<sup>6</sup> described in its agreement that Closed access/subscription journals/products grants to the Subscriber the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and use the products and services identified in “**Subscribed Products**” and provide the Subscribed Products to its Authorized Users subject to the terms and conditions.

Over the past 40 – 50 years, the trend was of subscription or price based journals. Thereafter, with advent of computer, internet and electronic publishing, new modes of charging for journals emerged. At that moment to amass huge profits, the Publishers united and evolved a strategy of differential pricing structures and bundling of journals policy. As the publishers were in control of journals contents, they started selling “**set of e-journals**” instead of selected one journal or article. Users’ institutions were forced to buy a full ‘set of journals’ helplessly.

### **Literature Review**

**Subbiah&Subbiah (2014)**<sup>7</sup> Open Access Journal has more impact than the Subscribed/Closed Access Journals. Moving to OA has proven to be advantageous to developing country journals; it has helped a large number of Latin American and many Indian journals improve their Impact Factor.

**Bjork & Solomon (2012)**<sup>8</sup> results show that OA journals are performing the same level as subscription journals. There are large numbers of both subscription and OA journals that maintain high quality and widely cited. The results indicate that the level of citations from older subscription based OA



journals, which have made the electronic version openly available, is clearly lower than the corresponding subscription journals. OA articles published in largest publishing countries; attract equal numbers of citations compared to subscribed journals. Citations from OA articles are increasing through readership from open availability of Journals.

One way of measuring quality is to calculate citation data by impact factors (how many times other scientists have quoted the research). **Bo-Christer Bjork from Hawken School of Economics, Helsinki, and David Solomon from Michigan State University** compared the impact factors of 610 Open access journals with over 7000 subscribed journals. “The citation rate for subscription journals was overall 30% higher than the open access ones but this difference was largely due to a high share of older OA journals, particularly from regions like Latin America in the citation indexes<sup>9</sup>”

### **Objective**

1. To find out the Awareness about Open Access and Closed Access Journals (i.e. Subscribed /Purchased /Paid).
2. To find out the Availability of Open Access and Closed Access Journals
3. To find out the Utilization of Open Access and Closed Access Journals

### **Hypothesis**

1. Users of Open Access Journal are more aware than the Closed Access Journal (i.e. Subscribed /Purchased /Paid).
2. Users avail Open Access Journals more than the Closed Access Journals.
3. Users are more interested in utilizing Open Access Journals despite availability of Subscribed Journals.
4. Female members utilize Journals more than the Male members.

### **Methodology**

In order to comprehend methodology in a scholarly way, we consulted quotations of various renowned researchers. Some of them are quoted below.

“The term ‘research’ refers to the systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analysing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions towards the concerned problem or in certain generalization for some theoretical formulation” described by C. R. Kothari (**Kothari, 2004**)<sup>10</sup>

A sample used in the survey method is representative of a larger population and uses results to generalize about the population as a whole (**Guthrie, 2010**)<sup>11</sup>.

The method used in the present study is based on analysis, questionnaire tool, interview, and telephonic interview, discussion, besides personal face to face interview and diary methods. The targeted people of this study is confined to the territory of almost all over Punjab. To conduct this study, it was planned to draw a random sample from the population. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet.

### **Sampling**

Several techniques are in existence to determine a sample. However, in order to conduct the study, keeping in view the objective and hypothesis, it is planned to draw a random sample from the population of different colleges by contacting them proportionately from **each college’s gender wise, discipline-wise etc.** A total number of **1092 users** were selected for conducting study and they were supplied a questionnaire each. Out of these 1092 questionnaire **only 728 respondents** returned the questionnaire duly filled in. The data of total response is tabulated below.

**Table No. 1**

Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Received	%age
1092	728	66.67

The response of respondents at 66.67% is quite satisfactory.

**Data Analysis**

In accordance with the replies furnished in questionnaire duly filled in received from users from colleges of Punjab, a detailed study on the title “Awareness, Availability and utilization of Open Access e – Journals Versus Closed Access e – Journals (i.e. Purchased/Subscribed or paid journals)” was conducted. The analysis and description of the study is placed here below.

**Table No. 2**

Particular	No. of Users	%age
Male	296	40.66
Female	432	59.34

The above table shows that male users i.e. 296 (40.66%) whereas the female users were 432 (59.34%).

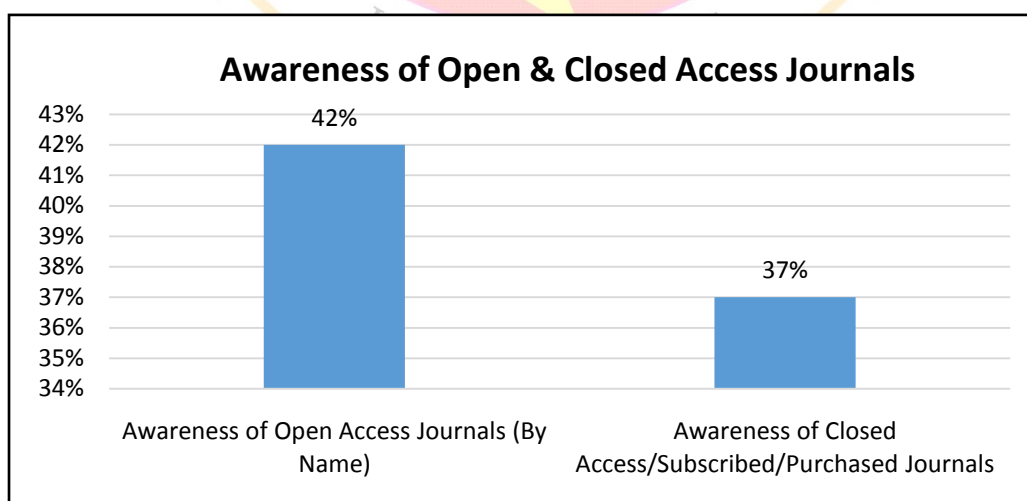
**Objective 1** To find out the Awareness of Open Access Journals and Closed Access Journals (i.e. Subscribed /Purchased /Paid).

**Table No. 3**

Awareness of Open Access Journals		Awareness of Closed Access/Subscribed / Purchased Journals
Yes	309 (42%)	267 (37%)
No	419 (58%)	461 (63%)

The users were asked about the name of open access journals. It was found that awareness rate was 42% among the users whereas the awareness of Closed access/subscribed/purchased journals i.e. 37%. All the users knew them by name. This fact is also substantiated by the figure shown below.

**Figure No. 1**



The above diagram fulfils the *Objective 1* ‘To find out the Awareness of Open Access Journals and Closed Access Journals (i.e. Subscribed /Purchased /Paid).’

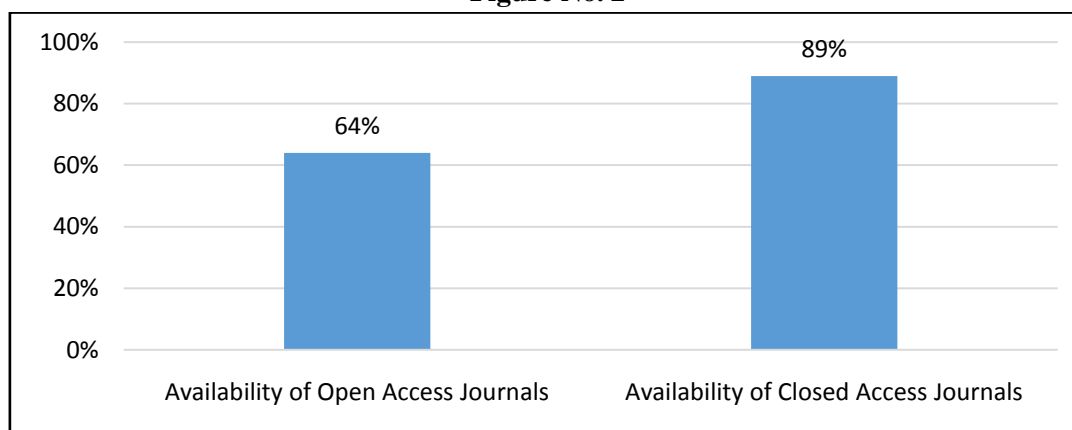
**Objective 2** To find out the availability of Open Access and Closed Access Journals.

**Table No. 4**

Availability of Open Access Journals	Availability of Closed Access Journals
463(42%)	645 (89%)

The Above table shows that 463 users replied positive about availability of online open access journals whereas the 645 users told availability of closed access journals.

**Figure No. 2**



The above figure tells us that the availability of the closed access journals (89%) is higher than open access journals (64%). So here the objective 2 “*To find out the availability of Open Access and Closed Access Journals (i.e. Subscribed /Purchased /Paid)*” **is fulfilled.**

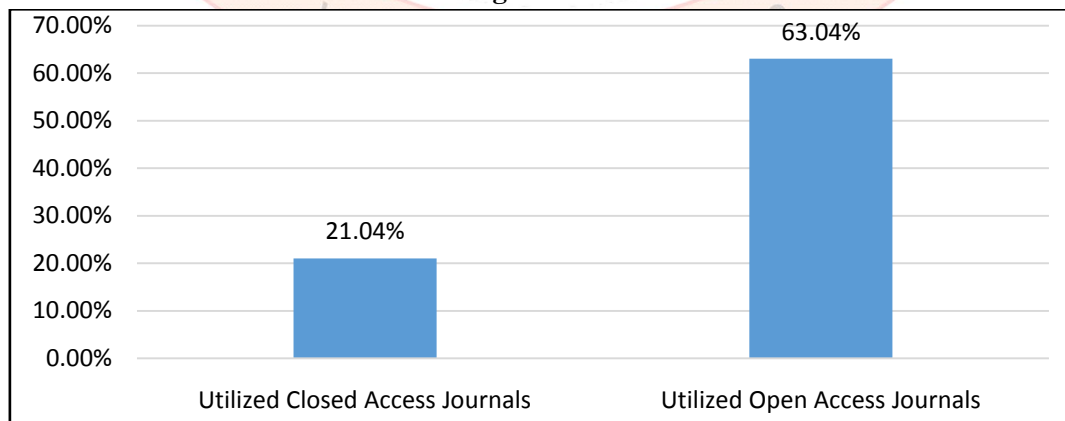
**Objective 3**To find out the utilization of Open Access and Closed Access Journals (i.e. Subscribed/Purchased/Paid).

**Table No. 5**

Utilization of Open access journals	Utilization of Closed access journals
459(63.04%)	174(21.04%)

The above table indicates that the Utilization of open access journals is (63.04%) whereas the utilization of closed access journals is (21.04%). To meet this objective researcher asked three types of questions from users so that qualitative & quantitative research can be carried out.

**Figure No. 3**

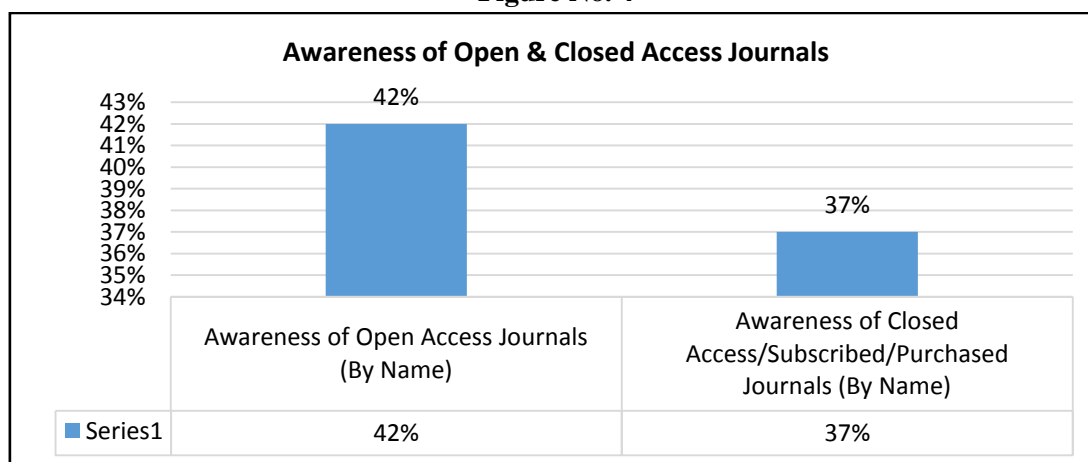


The above figure shows that the utilization of open access journals among users is 459 out of 728 users. Utilization of closed access journals is 174 out of 728 users. Third objective of the study was “To find out the utilization of Open Access and Closed Access Journals which **is fulfilled.**

**Hypothesis 1.** Users of Open Access Journal are more aware than the Closed Access Journal.

For testing the awareness among users, the questions were put to them and on the basis of their 728 replies, the average of awareness has been counted. Highest awareness about the open access journals was 42% among the users. Awareness of closed access journals among users was 37%. Difference of awareness was 5% between the open access journal and closed access journals. Ultimately it proves that there was **lack of awareness** among users be it Open Access or Close Access Journals.

**Figure No. 4**

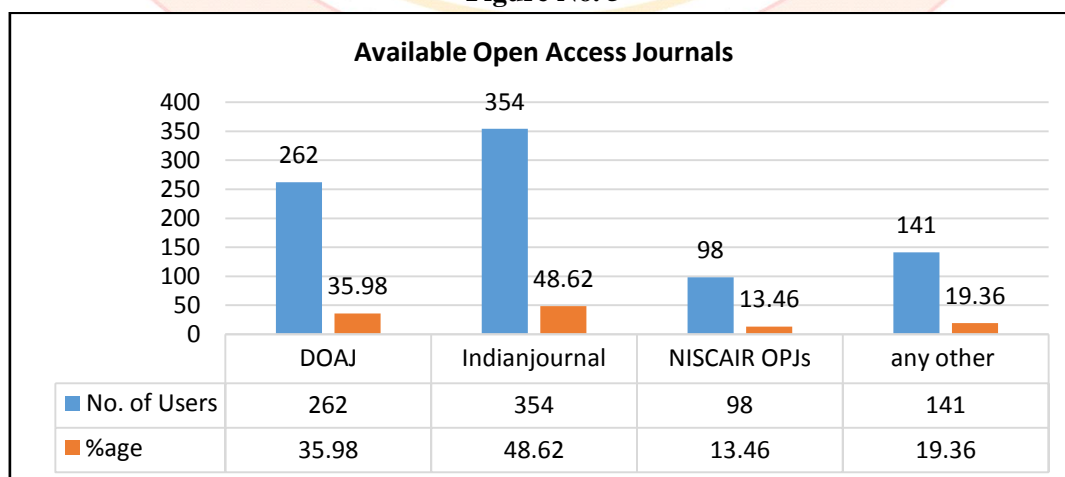


The above figure clearly depicts that the level of awareness is not up to the mark (even not 50%). Therefore the hypothesis “Users of Open Access Journal are more aware than the Closed Access Journal” **is accepted.**

**Hypothesis 2.** Users avail Open Access Journals more than the Closed Access Journals.

The Figure no. 5 reveals that 354 out of 728 users replied availability of the indianjournals.com, being the highest one among users is i.e. 48.62%, whereas the lowest one is the NISCAIR Open Periodical Repositories at 98 or say only 13.46%. The second preferred option of availability among users was DOAJ i.e. 35.98%. Available means they had listened the name of this source & knew something about these sources.

**Figure No. 5**

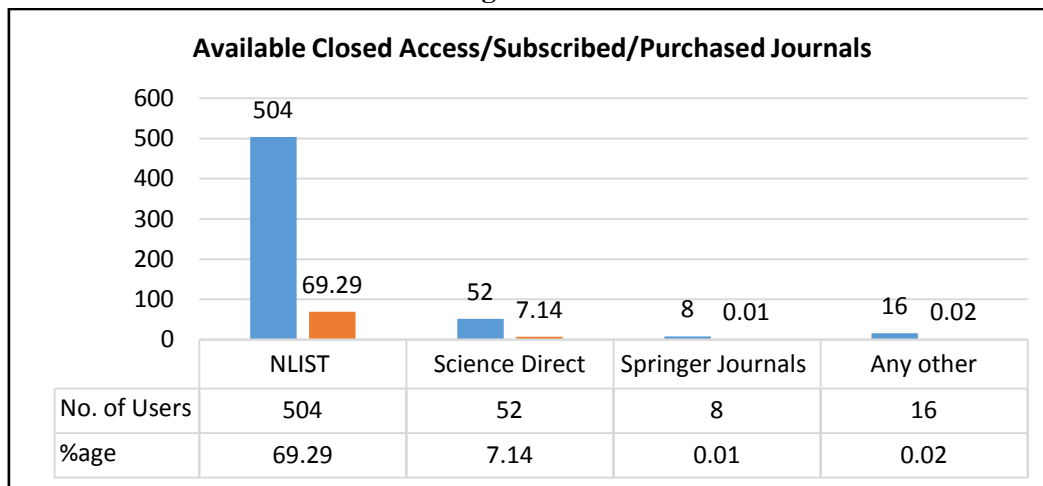




Multiple answer accepted

The Figure no. 6 depicts that NLIST programme’s availability among users was 69.29% i.e. majority of the users were of NLIST programme. Second source of availability of closed access journals was Science Direct i.e. 7.14%. Closed access journals Springer was the lowest one in availability among users.

**Figure No. 6**



Availability of NLIST programme changed the hypothesis of the study as discussed below:

**Table No. 6**

Particular	%age
Availability of Open Access Journals among users	64%
Availability of Closed Access Journals among users	89%

When this question was placed before users about availability of different type of closed access journals i.e. NLIST, Science Direct, etc. the respondents were quite familiar with NLIST which is the closed access/ subscribed journals. Actually, the reason can be attributed to library staff who disseminated information about subscription of NLIST among library users.

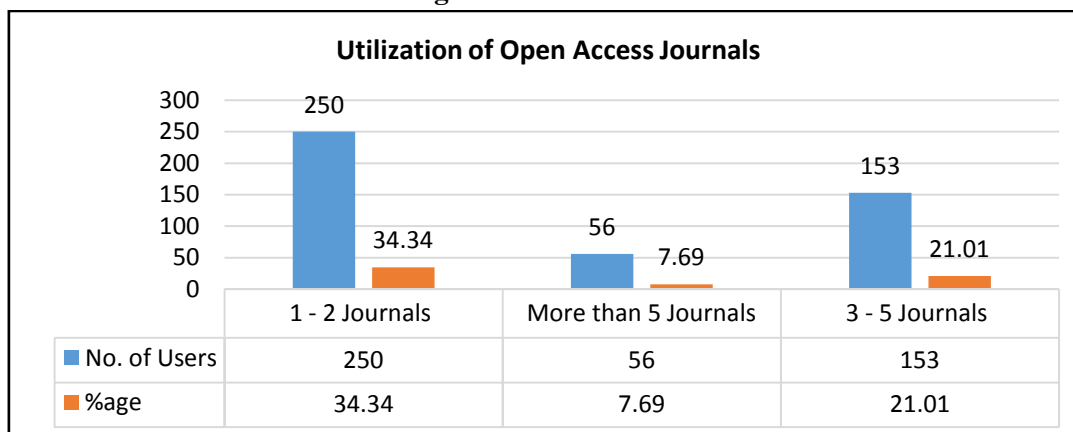
The availability of open access journals among users was 64% less than closed access journals i.e. 89%. Closed access journals 25% more than open access journals. So here the above table shows the hypothesis “Users avail Open Access Journals more than the Closed Access Journals” **is rejected.**

**Hypothesis 3.** Users are more interested in utilizing Open Access Journals despite availability of Subscribed Journals.

The below figures in table shows that 250 out of 728 users utilized the 1 – 2 open access journals i.e. 34.34% in majority, followed by the 3 – 5 open access journals utilized 153 users i.e. 21.01%. Less utilized by the users more than 5 open access journals i.e. 7.69%. Overall utilized open access journal is i.e. 63.04%.

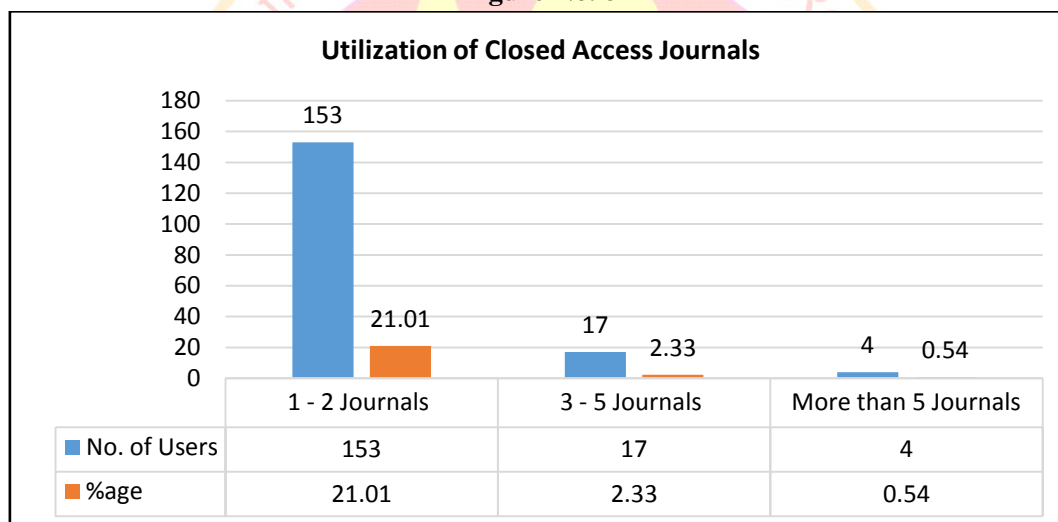


**Figure No. 7**



The below table in figure no. 8 shows that 153 out of 728 users utilized the 1 – 2 Closed access journals i.e. 21.01% in majority, followed by the 3 – 5 closed access journals utilized 17 users i.e. 2.33%. Less utilized by the users more than 5 closed access journals i.e. 0.54%. Overall utilized open access journal is i.e. 23.88%.

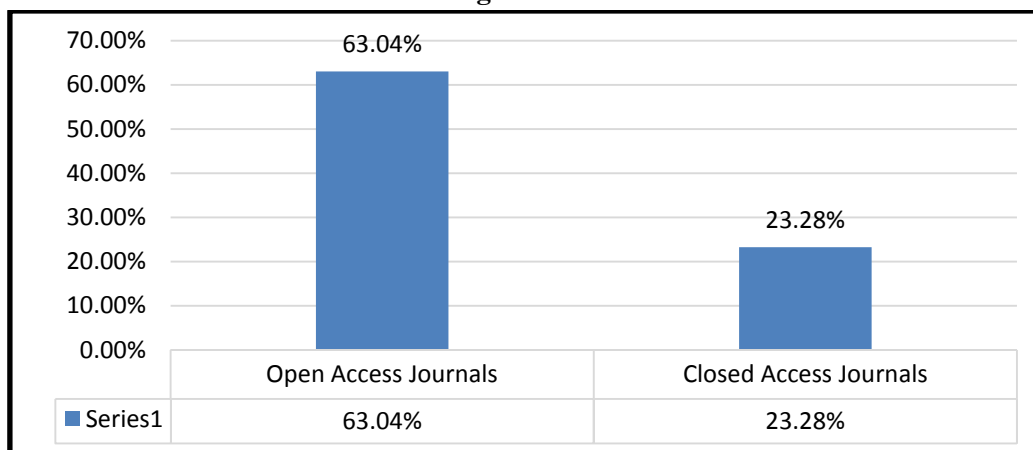
**Figure No. 8**



The above figure no. 7 & 8 shows that the respondents who utilized 1 – 2 journals are 250 out of the total 728 means 34.34% which shows that the utilization of open access journals is to the tune of 63.04% compared to never utilized the closed access journals at 554 or say 76.12% which is on the higher side showing that the utilization of closed access journals is only to the tune of 23.88%. The difference between utilization of Open access journals and closed access journals is 39.16% (63.04 minus 23.88). This comparison indicates that the utilization of open access journals is more than the utilization of closed access journals.

There is significant difference between use of OAJ and CAJ as the Chi-square value is found to be 267.6. The Chi square value is significant at 0.01 level. Forthcoming it is clearly visible from the tables & figures therefore the hypothesis “*Open Access Journals utilized more than Closed Access Journals among users*” **is accepted.**

**Figure No. 9**

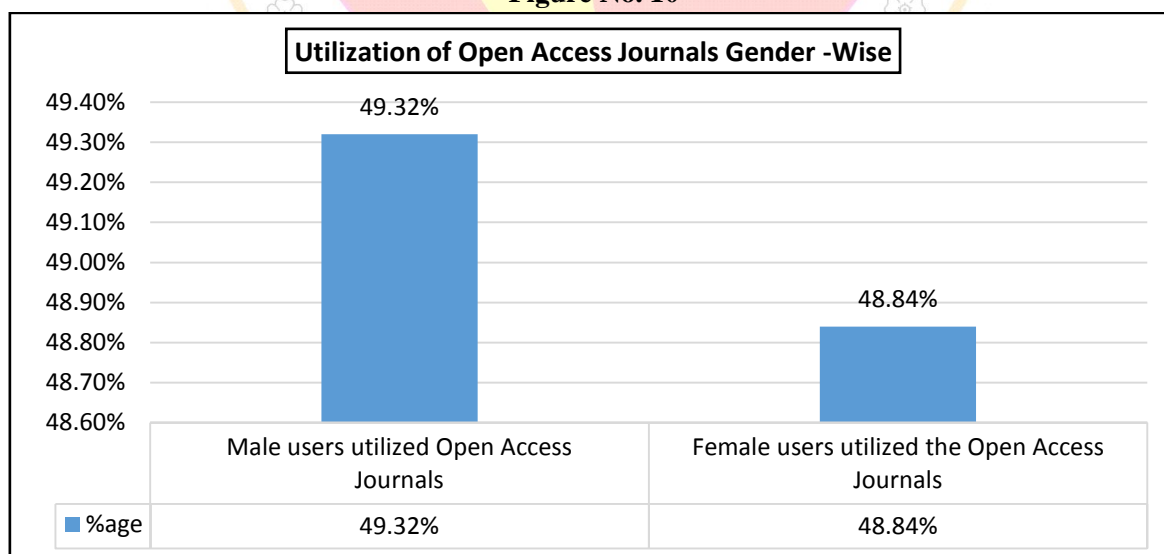


When the question was put to users that in which online journals they were interested to utilize their replies in above figure tells us that 63.04% users were interested to utilize open access journals (majority of open access journals) whereas the users nominal i.e. only 23.28% were interested to utilize closed access journals. In face to face interview, I realized that all the users were interested in open access journal because they think that all the desired articles are offered without any login and can be searched directly with full text whereas the subscribed e.g. NLIST has much publisher’s site with directions to come and go on so and so page and again do this work repeatedly after consuming substantial time. So they abandon this tedious job and search the desired information on open access journals.

**Hypothesis 4.** Female members utilize the Journals more than the Male members.

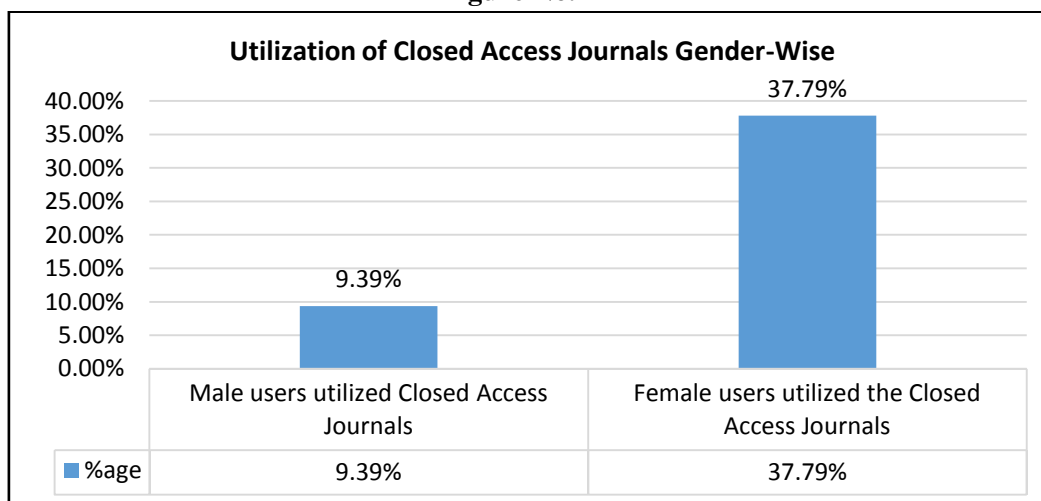
Utilization of open access journals by the male users is 49.32% whereas the female members utilized 48.84%. Male members are utilized open access journals more than female members. A nominal difference of just 0.48% between the male and female member in utilization of OAJs. The above figure depicts clearly.

**Figure No. 10**



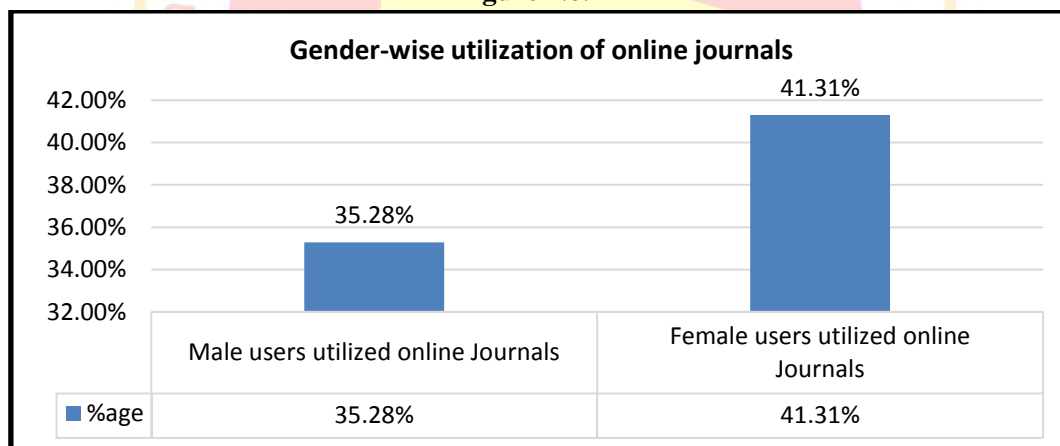
Male members utilized the closed access journals 9.39% whereas female members utilized 37.79%. Female members utilised close access journals 28.40% more than the male members.

**Figure No. 11**



Male members’ utilization of open access journals is 0.40% more than the female member whereas the female members’ utilization of closed access journals is 28.40% more than the male members. Male member utilized the online journals i.e. 35.28% whereas the female members utilized the online journals i.e. 41.31%. Female members overall utilization of online journals is more than male members. Overall difference in utilization of online journals i.e. 5.97%. So we can say that the hypothesis 5 “Female members utilize the Journals more than the Male members” **is accepted.**

**Figure No. 12**



**Findings**

1. Lack of awareness of open access journals among users i.e. 42% (not upto the mark i.e. 50%).
2. Lack of awareness of closed access journals among users i.e.37% (not upto the mark i.e. 50%).
3. Despite lack of awareness, Open Access Journal’s awareness is more than the closed access journals among users.
4. Availability of indianjournals.com is in majority whereas the DOAJ is the second in open access journals.
5. Availability of NLIST programme is higher than other subscribed journals as well as open access journals.
6. Availability of closed access journals is more than open access journals.
7. Utilization of OAJs is 63.04%.

8. Utilization of CAJs is 23.88%.
9. Utilization of OAJs more than closed access journals (CAJs).
10. Users are interested to utilize OAJs despite availability of subscribed journal (NLIST) and they are not interested to buy any journals because of free journals availability.
11. Female members are utilizing the online journals more than male members.

### Conclusion

After thorough deliberation over data collection, methodology, objective and hypothesis, it is concluded that there is considerable lack of awareness among library users about the Open Access Journals and Closed Access Journals. Undoubtedly, aware readers prefer Open Access Journals due to free availability and without hassle of copyright. Further, as regards availability, here 'available' means they had listened the name of this source & knew something about these sources. Availability of indianjournals.com is in majority whereas the DOAJ is the second in open access journals. Most preferred link is NLIST than other subscribed journals. Further, with regard to reading, extracting, quoting and citing purposes, Utilization of Open Access Journal is more than the Closed Access Journal and NLIST. An amazing result too emerged that Female members utilize online journals more than male members.

### Suggestions & Recommendations

Taking into consideration the findings and conclusion of this research article, it suggested that awareness among library users be enhanced using different measures such as sensitising library staff to guide and advise the library users about Open Access Journals intimating them about free availability, writing research articles and pursuing research study, project, etc. desired study material to enable them in contesting skill or job competitions, which do not create copyright hassle also. But awareness is also needed to promote Closed Access Journals counting on their advantages. Government should also develop required infrastructure to promote Open Access Journals by increasing internet speed. Utilization among users has not picked up the speed as required in a developing country, so more and more new comers should be persuaded to gain knowledge about it. Promotion of Open Access Journals and other Open Access Resources will definitely help our country to emancipate at a larger scale.

### Future Scope

There is a lot of future scope as regards research in the topic of Open Access. One can research on other aspects of Open Access such as software available free of cost to the library users. Research can extend to promotion of measures applicable to widen utilization scope of the Open Access Resources readership. On the basis of present article, the government can take steps to build infrastructure to facilitate general public with free of cost information and knowledge through Open Access Journals and Open Access Resources.

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