

Abstract

This study explores how postgraduate students in the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at Jadavpur University engage with open access (OA) resources in their academic and research work. In the evolving landscape of digital scholarship, OA plays a crucial role in bridging information gaps, especially in developing countries like India. Despite increasing institutional support for OA and widespread access to platforms such as open access journals, repositories, and preprint servers, student usage patterns remain inconsistent and under-researched—particularly among engineering postgraduates.

Using a mixed-methods approach that included surveys and interviews, the study gathered data from 438 students across 16 departments. The results reveal that while awareness of OA is moderately high, actual usage is concentrated primarily on open access journals and conference proceedings, with limited engagement in repositories, preprints, or educational resources. Technical barriers, lack of training, and concerns about the quality of OA content were cited as key obstacles. However, students who received formal training showed significantly higher usage across a broader range of resources and demonstrated increased research productivity, including higher publication rates and more diverse literature coverage.

The study underscores the impact that structured support, digital infrastructure, and policy mandates can have on enhancing OA adoption. Students expressed strong belief in the societal value of OA, especially for promoting equity and innovation, yet remained cautious about the credibility of certain OA sources. These findings emphasize the need for curated guidance, institutional repositories, and discovery tools that improve access and trust in OA resources.

In conclusion, the study recommends the integration of OA literacy into curricula, improved discovery systems, mobile-friendly repositories, and institutional policies that mandate and support open access publishing. It highlights how effective use of OA resources can significantly benefit student research, while also contributing to a more inclusive scholarly communication environment. By addressing current barriers and leveraging best practices, institutions like Jadavpur University can better equip their students for research excellence in an open knowledge society.

Keywords: Open Access (OA) ,Postgraduate Students, Engineering Education , Institutional Repositories, Open Educational Resources (OER), Scholarly Communication, Information Literacy, Research Productivity, Academic Publishing, Digital Libraries, Preprint Servers, Article Processing Charges (APC), Knowledge Accessibility, Jadavpur University.