Library OPAC Usage among BA Students of Kittel Arts College, Dharwad

Gopalrani
Research Scholar
Department of Library and Information Science
Karnatak University, Dharwad-580003
Email: **gopalrani0274@gmail.com**

R. Ramesh Naik
Senior Professor
Department of Library and Information Science
Karnatak University, Dharwad-580003
Email: **rrnaik@gmail.com**

Abstract

The study investigates the awareness, usage trends, and challenges of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) among BA students at Kittel Arts College, Dharwad. A questionnaire was distributed to 107 respondents, and the data were analysed to understand usage frequency, search methods, devices used, and satisfaction levels. The results showed that a majority (84.11%) of students are aware of OPAC, but many do not use it regularly. Challenges include a lack of guidance, difficulty finding relevant materials, and system errors. The study concludes that OPAC's full potential is not being realised due to insufficient user training and limited digital literacy.

Keywords
OPAC; Kittel Arts College; Catalogue; Keyword Search; Author Search

Electronic access
The journal is available at www.jalis.in
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15852960

Journal of Advances in Library and Information Science
ISSN: 2277-2219 Vol. 14. No.3. 2025. pp.225-229

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's academic landscape, libraries remain vital hubs for knowledge, research, and education. The introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has led to a significant transformation in the role and operations of academic libraries. Among these technological innovations, the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) has emerged as a crucial resource for both library personnel and patrons. An OPAC serves as an online repository of materials available in a library or a consortium of libraries. Users can locate books, journals, magazines, and other materials by searching through criteria such as title, author, subject, and keywords. It functions as a portal to the library's collection, designed to facilitate the search and retrieval of resources. OPAC systems are fundamental to digital libraries, enhancing access, usability, and user satisfaction. Even though many academic institutions, including Kittel Arts College in Dharwad, have implemented OPAC systems, there are still questions regarding the level of awareness, usage, and accessibility among students, especially undergraduate students who are anticipated to depend significantly on library resources for their academic growth.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the awareness of OPAC among BA students.
2. To analyse the frequency and reasons for OPAC usage.
3. To recognise the challenges encountered by students when using OPAC.
4. To propose enhancements for improved OPAC utilisation.
5. To understand the reasons for using OPAC

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study, titled "Library OPAC Usage among BA Students of Kittel Arts College, Dharwad", was conducted with the objective of understanding the awareness, usage patterns, and challenges related to the use of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) by undergraduate students. The population for the study consisted of Bachelor of Arts (BA) students enrolled at Kittel Arts College, Dharwad. To ensure wide representation across different academic years and subject combinations, a random sampling method was used

to select participants. Total Questionnaires Distributed: 120, Questionnaires Received Back: 107, Response Rate: 89.17% The questionnaires were physically distributed and collected from students during regular class hours with the cooperation of Library faculty members to ensure maximum participation. The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared in simple English to ensure ease of understanding for all respondents. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions. The Percentage Method was used to calculate the proportion of students falling under each category. Charts and Graphs, Visual representations of data (Pie Charts, Bar Graphs, and Column Charts), were prepared using Microsoft Excel to better interpret trends and patterns. The study is limited to only BA second and final year students of Kittel Arts College, Dharwad. Only physical distribution was used; no online responses were collected.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION

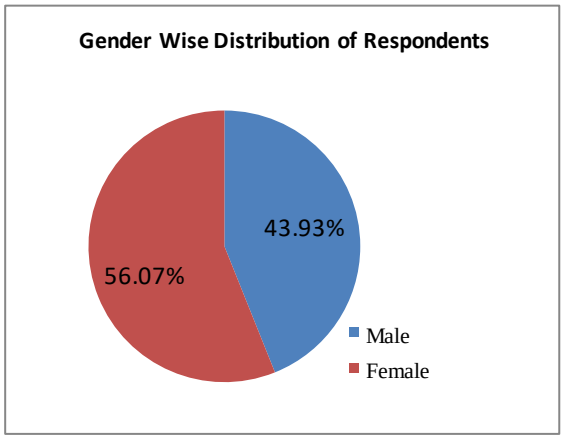


***Figure 1**: Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents*

Figure 1 shows that the gender-wise distribution of respondents shows that out of a total of 107 respondents**,** 60 (56.07%) are female and 47 (43.93%) are male**.**

4.2 AWARENESS OF OPAC

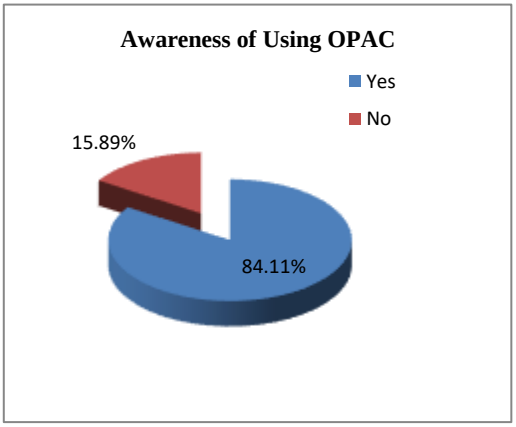


***Figure 2:** Awareness of Using OPAC*

Figure 2 reveals that out of 107 respondents**,** 90 students (84.11%) are aware of the Library OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), while 17 students (15.89%) are not aware of it. This indicates a high level of awareness among students regarding the OPAC system in the library, suggesting that the majority of students are familiar with using digital tools for accessing library resources. However, the fact that nearly 16% are still unaware highlights the need for continued orientation or awareness programs to ensure that all students can effectively use the OPAC for their academic and research needs.

4.3 FREQUENCY OF USING OPAC

Table 1: Frequency of using OPAC

Frequency	**No of respondents**	**(%)**
Daily	15	14.02
Weekly	35	32.71
Monthly	33	30.84
Rarely	07	6.54
Never	17	15.89
Total	**107**	**100.00**

Table 1 presents the frequency with which respondents use the Library OPAC system. Out of 107 respondents**,** 15 students (14.02%) use OPAC daily, 35 students (32.71%) use it weekly, 33 students (30.84%) use it monthly, 7 students (6.54%) use it rarely, and 17 students (15.89%) have never used OPAC. The data indicates that a majority of students use OPAC on a regular basis, with around **77.57%**

using it daily, weekly, or monthly. The highest usage frequency is weekly (32.71%)**,** showing that students typically consult the OPAC once or more each week, likely for locating academic materials.

4.4 PURPOSE OF USING OPAC

Table 2: Purpose of using OPAC

Purpose of using	No of respondents	(%)
Searching for Books	98	91.59
Checking Book Availability	80	74.77
Locating Books in the Library	70	65.42
Checking Borrowed Books	85	79.44
Renewing Books	20	18.69

The data in Table 2 indicates that students utilize the OPAC system for a variety of academic purposes, with some functions being significantly more popular than others. The most common use is for searching books (91.59%)**,** which reflects that OPAC is effectively serving its core purpose as a tool for discovering library resources. A large number of students also use it to check the status of borrowed books (79.44%) and to verify the availability of titles (74.77%)**,** which highlights OPAC's role in helping students plan their visits to the library efficiently and manage their borrowing activities. Interestingly, 65.42% of students use OPAC to locate books on shelves, showing that the system also aids in the physical navigation of library materials. This supports the idea that OPAC is integrated into both digital and physical access to resources. However, only 18.69% use OPAC for renewing books

4.5 USE FOR DEVICES ACCESS OPAC

Table3: Use for devices Access OPAC

Use for devices	No of respondents	(%)
Library Computer	85	79.44
Personal Laptop	20	18.69
Mobile Phone	70	65.42
Personal Desktop	00	00.00

The data from Table 3 indicates that students use a variety of devices to access the Library OPAC, with library computers (79.44%) and mobile phones (65.42%) being the most preferred options. The high use of library computers suggests that students still rely heavily on institutional infrastructure**,** possibly due to better internet connectivity, availability of systems, or limited access to personal devices. This could also indicate that OPAC is mainly used within the library premises**,** rather than remotely. The significant use of mobile phones (65.42%) shows a shift toward on-the-go and remote access**,** indicating that many students prefer the convenience and portability offered by smartphones. This reflects a digital trend where mobile-friendly platforms are becoming essential. In contrast, only 18.69% use personal laptops**,** and none reported using desktop computers**.** This may reflect economic or accessibility constraints or could suggest that students find OPAC more useful when physically present in the library rather than using it at home.

4.6 EXPERIENCE OF USING OPAC

Table 4: Experience of Using OPAC

Experience	No of respondents	(%)
Very Easy	20	18.69
Easy	45	42.06
Neutral	17	15.89
Difficult	22	20.56
Very Difficult	03	2.80
Total	**107**	**100.00**

Table 4 shows the respondents' experience levels with using the Library OPAC system. Out of 107 students followed by 45 respondents (42.06%) found it Easy**,** 20 respondents (18.69%) found it Very Easy**,** 17 respondents (15.89%) felt Neutral**,** 22 respondents (20.56%**)** found it Difficult**,** and 3 respondents (2.80%) rated it Very Difficult. This data suggests that a majority of students (60.75%) find the OPAC system easy or very easy to use**,** indicating a generally positive user experience**.**

4.7 SATISFACTION LEVEL OF SEARCH RESULTS IN OPAC

Table 5: Satisfaction level of search results in OPAC

Satisfaction level	No of Respondents	(%)
Very Satisfied	35	32.71
Satisfied	40	37.38
Neutral	16	14.95
Dissatisfied	07	6.54
Very Dissatisfied	09	8.41

Total	**107**	**100.00**

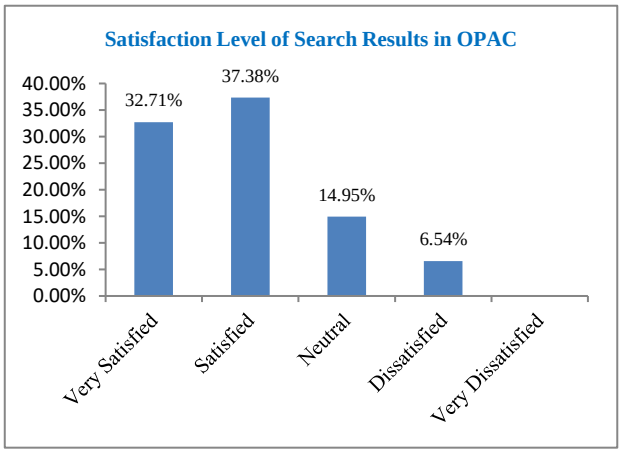


Fig.3: *Satisfaction level of search results in OPAC*

Table 5 and Figure 3 show that a majority of students, 70.09% are either satisfied or very satisfied with the OPAC search results, indicating that the system is generally effective and accurate in retrieving relevant information. However, a combined 14.95% expressed dissatisfaction**,**

4.8 METHOD OF SEARCH USING OPAC

Table 6: Method of Search using OPAC

Searching Method	No of respondents	(%)
Title Search	54	50.47
Author Search	45	42.05
Subject Search	70	65.42
Keyword Search	83	77.57
Advanced Search	21	19.63

Table 6 shows the different search methods used by students when accessing the Library OPAC system. The most commonly used method is Keyword Search**,** with 83 respondents (77.57%)**,** followed by Subject Search 70 (65.42%)**.** This suggests that students prefer broad, flexible search approaches that allow them to explore multiple options or related resources. Title Search (50.47%) and Author Search (42.05%) are also frequently used, indicating that many students come to the OPAC with specific resources or authors in mind**.**

4.9 CHALLENGES FACED WHILE USING OPAC

Table 7: Challenges faced while using OPAC

Challenges	No of respondents	(%)
Poor Internet Connectivity	04	3.73
Difficulty in Searching	17	15.89
System Errors	26	24.29
Lack of Guidance/Training	87	81.30
Difficulties finding relevant books	86	80.37

Table 7 reveals that a large majority of students, over 80% face two major challenges while using the OPAC: Lack of Guidance/Training (81.30%) and Difficulty Finding Relevant Books (80.37%)**.**

4.10 NEED ANYTRAINING/ORIENTATION/ GUIDANCE FOR USING OPAC

Table 8: Need any training/orientation/guidance for using OPAC

Training Programme	Yes	No	Total
No of respondents	95	12	107
Percentage	88.79	11.21	100.00

The data in Table 8 clearly shows that 95 out of 107 respondents (88.79%) expressed the need for training, orientation, or guidance in using the Library OPAC, while only 12 students (11.21%) felt no such need

5. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. A large majority of students (84.11%) are aware of the Library OPAC system, showing good initial exposure.
2. The majority of students use OPAC for searching books (91.59%), checking availability (74.77%), and monitoring borrowed books (79.44%).
3. Only 18.69% use it for book renewal, pointing to underuse of advanced features.
4. Most students access OPAC via library computers (79.44%) and mobile phones (65.42%), showing reliance on institutional support and increasing mobile usage.

5. 60.75% of respondents found OPAC easy or very easy to use.
6. However, 23.36% found it difficult or very difficult, suggesting usability and access issues for some.
7. 70.09% are satisfied or very satisfied with OPAC search results.
8. Most students use basic keyword (77.57%) and subject (65.42%) searches.
9. Only 19.63% use advanced search options, showing a lack of awareness or training in effective search techniques.
10. 88.79% of students expressed the need for orientation or training to use OPAC effectively.

6. CONCLUSION

The investigation into the use of the Library OPAC system by BA students at Kittel Arts College, Dharwad, shows that, although awareness levels are quite high, the actual patterns of usage differ, revealing significant gaps in effective utilisation and understanding. The majority of students utilise OPAC for basic functions like searching for and checking the availability of books, yet a considerable number are either not using advanced features or are entirely unaware of them. The data further reveals that a large portion of students face challenges in using the system, primarily due to a lack of guidance and training. Despite having access to devices such as library computers and mobile phones, students encounter difficulties in effectively searching for relevant materials, which affects the overall utility of the OPAC. There is a notable demand for orientation and training programs, indicating students' willingness to learn and engage more effectively with the OPAC system. This emphasises the need for structured user education, improvements to the interface, and ongoing technical support. In conclusion, while OPAC is a vital and widely acknowledged tool among students, its full potential is not being realized. Libraries need to concentrate on enhancing user-friendly designs, providing targeted training sessions, and promoting awareness to bridge the gap between access and effective usage.

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