

## Utility of E-resources in Social Sciences Research: Focusing NASSDOC & ICSSR Consortia

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Libraries of Social Sciences Research Institutes in India are facing the problem of shrinking/static budgets and simultaneous exponential rise in journal prices. The need of the hour is to find a pragmatic solution to this problem. Something substantial has to be done in order to facilitate access to scholarly resources to social scientists. NASSDOC & ICSSR Consortia is major initiatives that have come to the rescue of social sciences research in India, so that they can cater the needs of academia depending upon them. These revolutionary steps are providing scholarly resources including peer reviewed journals/databases. These efforts will definitely boost the social sciences research in our country.*

**Keywords:** E-resources, NASSDOC & ICSSR Consortia, Social Sciences Research.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Social Science Research embodies the study of various societal systems, their constituents, patterns, behaviour, power structures and welfare aspects such as status of health, education, employment and others. One need not exemplify the inherent importance of this field and more so the role of the field for knowledge and inputs in various policies and decisions for the benefits of the society. Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) was established in the year of 1969 by the Government of India to promote research in social sciences in the country. In 1969 ICSSR

established National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), as a Division of the ICSSR with the objective to provide library and information support services to researchers in social sciences; those working in academic institutions, autonomous research organisations, policy making, planning and research units of government departments, business and industry etc. NASSDOC also provides guidance to libraries of ICSSR Regional Centres and ICSSR supported Research Institutes. Libraries in ICSSR supported Research Institutes are facing the problem of shrinking/static budgets and simultaneous exponential rise in prices of the books and journals. The need of the hour is to find a pragmatic solution to this problem. Something substantial has to be done in order to facilitate access to scholarly resources to social scientists. NASSDOC providing scholarly resources including peer reviewed journals, databases, etc. These efforts will definitely boost the social sciences research in India.

## **2. SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH INSTITUTES IN INDIA**

The Indian Council of Social Science Research provides maintenance and development grants to 30 research Institutes. Sponsoring of research institutes outside the scope of the University Grants Commission has been one of the major programmes of the Council in enlarging the base of social science knowledge, improving the quality of research, and promoting an interdisciplinary perspective. These institutes constitute an important mechanism for implementing the Council's policy of dispersal of research talents and building up of research capabilities in the different regions of the country, particularly in the areas where social science research is not yet well developed. The Research institutes have established close links with the scholars in the region as well as elsewhere through various activities such as seminars, workshops and training and consultancy programmes. Some of the institutes are closely associated with national and state level planning and development agencies, and have thereby strengthened the links between research and policy making.

Each institute determines its own direction of research, which includes a wide spectrum of subjects related to agricultural and rural development, industrial structure and growth, income distribution and poverty, employment and wages, inter-regional differences in levels of development, education, health, nutrition, problems of weaker sections of society including women, energy, technology, ecology and environment, and social, cultural and institutional aspects of development. Thus, research studies have generated substantial empirical knowledge of the structure of Indian economy, polity and society and their dynamics both at the national and regional levels. List of Research Institutes Funded/Recognised By ICSSR, New Delhi:

1. Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore (Karnataka).
2. Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)
3. Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (CSSS), Kolkata (West Bengal)
4. A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies (ANSISS), Patna (Bihar).
5. Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE), Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).
6. Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), Delhi.
7. Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi.
8. Centre for Social Studies (CSS), Surat(Gujarat).
9. Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), Chennai (Tamil Nadu)
10. Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune (Maharashtra)
11. Giri Institute of Development Studies (GIDS), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
12. Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi.
13. Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research (SPIESR), Ahmedabad (Gujarat).
14. Council for Social Development (CSD), Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).
15. Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Jaipur (Rajasthan).
16. Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh (Punjab).
17. Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), New Delhi.

18. Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).
19. NKC Centre for Development Studies (NKCCDS), Bhubaneswar (Orissa).
20. Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR), Ahmedabad (Gujarat)
21. Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), New Delhi.
22. O.K.D. Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati (Assam).
23. Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR), Dharwad (Karnataka).
24. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar National Institute of Social Sciences (BANISS), Mhow (Madhya Pradesh).
25. Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research (MPISSR), Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh).
26. Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS), New Delhi
27. Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI), Patna
28. Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation (GIFT), Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)
29. Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Kolkata (West Bengal)
30. Institute for Human Development (IHD), New Delhi

### **3. E-RESOURCES**

An electronic resource is any information source that the library provides access to in an electronic format. The library has purchased subscriptions to many electronic information resources in order to provide you with access to them free of charge. These are more useful due to inherent capabilities for manipulation and searching, providing information access is cheaper to acquiring information resources, savings in storage and maintenance etc. and sometimes the electronic form is the only alternative.

#### **4. ADVANTAGES OF E-RESOURCES**

- 4.1. Accessible:** can be accessed from any computer on campus and usually any computer off campus, any time of the day or night, so there is no need to make a trip to the library.
- 4.2. Easily searchable:** each database can be searched quick and easy often through the complete full text of articles and via online index.
- 4.3. Speed:** Articles/issues appear online before printed version is available.
- 4.4. Interactive:** Rapid turnaround time means articles can be read, commented by the readers, amended quickly and greater feedback thru the web.
- 4.5. Links:** Hypertext format should be exploited and links to related articles, information on other web sites, stable URLs for individual articles and email alerts when latest issue loaded.
- 4.6. Added Value:** Advantages taken on the web is to add value by using animation, virtual reality and interactive mathematical charts.
- 4.7. Inexpensive:** savings can be made over printing costs, distribution costs and extra costs by new features.
- 4.8. Flexibility:** E-resources evolved quickly. They are not tied to a format, printer, and distribution network.

#### **5. E-resources of NASSDOC & ICSSR Consortia:**

- 5.1. Econlit with full text (EBSCO):** Contains all of the indexing available in EconLit, plus full text for nearly 600 journals, including the American Economic Association journals with no embargo (American Economic Review, Journal of Economic Literature, and Journal of Economic Perspectives). This database also contains many

non-English full-text journals in economics & finance. Volume and issue browsing is available for all full-text journals. It provides links to full-text articles in all fields of economics, including capital markets, country studies, econometrics, economic forecasting, environmental economics, government regulations, labour economics, monetary theory, urban economics and much more. Users can also access Computer Source Consumer Edition, Military & Government Collection, Primary Search, ERIC & MAS ultra. (Accessible at 24 ICSSR Research Institutes, 2 Regional Centres, NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

**5.2. Indiatat (Datanet India):** Indiatat is India's comprehensive information portal that provides recent, authentic & exhaustive socio-economic data/information. It is a cluster of 51 sites including India-specific, Sector specific and State specific sites with authentic and comprehensive compilation of secondary level socio-economic statistical data about India and its states on more than 35 variables. (Accessible at 22 ICSSR Research Institutes, 2 Regional Centres, NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi).

**5.3. JSTOR:** JSTOR is an online archival database produced by ITHAKA, a non-profit organisation. It provides access to full text journal articles from more than 2000 academic journals and scholarly content. The contents are provided by more than 900 publishers in more than 50 disciplines. Because of JSTOR's archival mission, there is a gap from 1-5 years between the most recently published journal issue and the back issues available in JSTOR. The most recent 3-5 years are generally unavailable. The subjects covered are: Economics, Political Science, Social Work, Sociology and Criminal Justice, Geography, Education, Psychology, Asian Studies, Public Policy, Library Science, Population Studies, Management, Business, Marketing and Finance, Public Affairs, History, etc.. Overall subjects have been categorised in different Collection (I – IX). Links have been provided from JSTOR to titles that are common to JSTOR and

other collections e.g. Project MUSE, Periodicals Index Online, etc. (Accessible at 22 ICSSR Research Institutes, 2 Regional Centres, NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

**5.4. Prowess IQ (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, CMIE):**

Prowess is database of large and medium Indian firms. It includes the data on the financial performance of the firms from 1989 onwards. It contains detailed information of over 20,000 firms. These comprise - All companies traded on India's major stock exchanges and several others including the central public sector enterprises. The database covers most of the - Organised Industrial activities; Banking and Organised financial and other services sectors in India. Prowess provides detailed information on each company. This includes a normalised database of the financials covering 1,500 data items and ratios per company. Besides, it provides quantitative information on - Production, Sales, and Consumption of raw material and Energy. Totally, the number of indicators per company is close to two thousand. Such information is usually available for over ten years. (Accessible at 29 ICSSR Research Institutes, 2 Regional Centres, NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

**5.5. Sage Research Method Online Database:**

Sage Research Methods Online Database provides access to more than 600 Books, 100,000 pages of book, journal and reference content covering almost 2,000 qualitative and mixed methods topics and terms from SAGE. Its "Methods Map" allows to create a visual search "map" from the taxonomy that links methods or authors. "Methods Collection" allows listing of the articles and chapters that have been found most useful and a user can explore other user's lists using the Methods Collections – and share his/her collection with colleagues and students. SRM includes video interviews with some of the leading authors in the field. It provides Counter Compliant Usage Statistics, MARC Records, Open URL Compliance and DOIs for book chapters

registered with Cross Ref. (Accessible at NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

**5.6. J Gate:** J-Gate is an electronic gateway to global e-journal literature. Launched in 2001 by Informatics India Limited, J-Gate provides seamless access to millions of journal articles available online offered by 4700+ Publishers. It presently has a massive database of journal literature, indexed from 13860+ e-journals with links to full text at publisher sites. In J-Gate cover-to-cover indexing is done. Coverage of over 50 lac articles with back files for majority of them from 2001 onwards and in some case of some publishers starting from their first issue also. NASSDOC has subscribed to (1) Social Science & Management Collection and (2) Library & Information Science Collection. (Accessible at NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

**5.7. Soc-Index with Full Text (Ebsco-Host):** SocINDEX offers comprehensive coverage of sociology, encompassing all sub-disciplines and closely related areas of study. It contains informative abstracts for core coverage journals dating as far back as 1895 and provides data mined from priority coverage journals and selective coverage journals. Complete with extensive indexing for books, monographs, conference papers and other non-periodical content sources and also includes searchable cited references. It includes: nearly 900 full-text journals and magazines; more than 850 full-text books and monographs; dozens of working papers, dissertations and conference proceedings; Abstracts for more than 1,500 core coverage journals dating as far back as 1895; Data mined from 330 priority coverage journals; nearly 2.5 million records and subject headings from a 27,000+ term sociological thesaurus. (Accessible at NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi).

**5.8. Political Science Complete (Ebsco-Host):** Political Science Complete provides extensive coverage of political topics with a worldwide focus, reflecting the globalization of contemporary political discourse. Designed specifically for students, researchers and



government institutions, it covers top-ranked scholarly journals, many of which are unique to the product. It includes, more than 660 full-text journals, nearly 340 full-text reference books and monographs, nearly 45,000 full-text conference papers and provides with a subject-specific thesaurus of nearly 24,000 terms. (Accessible at NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

**5.9. Psyc-Articles (Proquest):** Psyc Articles offers full-text articles for journals published by the American Psychological Association. The database includes all material from the print journals. Many titles go back to volume 1, issue 1. It covers Applied psychology, Communication systems, Developmental psychology, Educational psychology, Experimental human and animal psychology, Personality, Psychological and physical disorders, Physiological psychology and neuroscience, Professional personnel and issues, Psychometrics and statistics, Social psychology, Social processes and issues, Sports psychology and leisure and Treatment and prevention. It covers the period dating back to 1894 to current date. (Accessible at NASSDOC and ICSSR, New Delhi)

## **6. Conclusion**

The efforts of NASSDOC & ICSSR Consortia are appreciable and will definitely strengthen Social Sciences Research in India. Free/highly subsidised access to scholarly online resources will help Social Sciences Research Institutes in translating their mission into reality. The research output will increase multifold. Also all Social Sciences Research Institutes will have simultaneous access to some quality resources enabling social scientists to join the main stream. This is an opportunity for those who were earlier deprived of scholarly resources to utilise these resources in a meaningful way and contribute as much as possible to the nation's development. In the long run consortia approach will be much more popular in user community and that day is not so far behind when consortia approach will expand the country's information base.

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