

## **AWARENESS AND USE OF E-PG PATHSHALA IN THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE IN ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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The innovation and advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have also transformed the education system worldwide. The study aims to find out the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala among science and social science faculty students. e-PG Pathshala is a curriculum-based portal for postgraduate students, freely available on the internet round the clock. Survey method was used to carry out this study. Structured questionnaires were distributed to the enrolled postgraduate students in the faculty of science and social science in Aligarh Muslim University. Findings show that the majority of students are familiar with e-PG Pathshala. Most students utilize this portal since it is convenient and always available to write notes, dissertations, or theses. Most users spent less than an hour on it. The most preferred access point is their room or hostel. The study also discovered that most students considered e-PG Pathshala user-friendly and beneficial. The research also addresses how students look for information, their degree of competence, and their satisfaction with the e-PG Pathshala resources.

**Keywords:** e-PG Pathshala, Online learning, Information and Communication Technology, Aligarh Muslim University

### **INTRODUCTION**

Modern technology convergence has led to inventions and social transformations that have profoundly influenced how people think, work, and live (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015; Grabe & Grabe, 2007). In the age of information explosion, ICT have influenced the global teaching and learning system by introducing more convenient and interactive mediums (Dassanayaka et al., 2022; Latchem, 2017). The term “online learning” refers to a method of education delivered over the internet in various formats such as video, audio, pdf, and other electronic forms (Aslam & Kumar Sonkar, 2019). eGyankosh, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), eGurukul and e-PG Pathshala, National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning

(NPTEL), Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL) are some of the well-known e-learning initiatives launched in India (Maharaj, 2018). Additionally, some prominent programmes that provide a variety of self-regulated and self-paced online courses are Udacity, edX, Coursera, and SWAYAM (Roy et al., 2022).

### e-PG PATHSHALA

e-PG Pathshala is a curriculum-based portal containing seventy subjects comprising all fields of arts and humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences. It was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now known as the Ministry of Education) through the National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT). In e-PG Pathshala, users can access

high-quality, interactive content in both text and video format. e-PG Pathshala contains more than twenty thousand e-text and nineteen thousand video contents of more than thirty-two hundred experts from seventy subjects. In terms of subjects, Home Science has 640 modules e-text/Video) contents, while Bioinformatics has only one.

The contents available on the portal is divided into three distinct modules: i. E-Text - topic-based resources available in PDF format; ii. Learn More - references of the offered topic for further reading; iii. Self-Learning - video lectures by subject specialists working at various universities and R & D institutes in India. Additionally, e-PG Pathshala offers its users subject- and topic-specific quiz windows (*E-PGPathshala*, 2022).

Subject wise distribution of contents can be seen in the following image-

#### Uploaded Course / Subjects (22000+ Modules[e-text/Video])

Adult Education (190)	Analytical Chemistry/Instrumentation (222)	Anthropology (559)
Architecture (164)	Biochemistry (261)	Bioinformatics (1)
Biophysics (150)	Biotechnology (261)	Botany (176)
Buddhist Studies (67)	Business Economics (457)	Chemistry (565)
Chinese (26)	Commerce (409)	Comparative Study of Religions (77)
Computer Science (633)	Criminology (482)	Earth Sciences (49)
Economics (567)	Education (136)	Electronic Science (117)
English (567)	Environmental Sciences (520)	Food and Nutrition (602)
Food Technology (329)	Forensic Science (560)	Geography (337)
Geology (136)	Hindi (592)	Home Science (640)
Hotel & Tourism Management (639)	Human Resource Management (599)	Human Rights and Duties (354)
Indian Culture (524)	Information Technology (318)	Japanese (453)
Jyotish-ganit (560)	Law (162)	Library and Information Science (595)
Linguistics (493)	ML Planning (45)	Management (599)
Material Science (465)	Mathematics (367)	Media and communication studies (383)
Performing Arts(Dance/Drama/Theatre) (560)	Pharmaceutical Science (215)	Philosophy (333)
Physical Education, Sports and Health Education (37)	Physics (343)	Political Science (222)
Population Studies (183)	Psychology (599)	Public Administration (102)
Risk / Disaster Management (21)	Russian Studies (436)	Sanskrit (Acharya In Vyakhrana) (534)
Sanskrit (MLA) (610)	Social Medicine and Community Health (111)	Social Work Education (187)
Sociology (526)	Spanish (560)	Statistics (595)
Telugu (312)	Visual Arts (487)	Women Studies/Gender Studies (431)
Zoology (184)		

Source: <https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/>

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Courses have relied on textbooks for decades. Teachers have used lectures, seminars, and tutorials to retain and repeat topics. Nowadays, the curriculum that fosters performance and competency is more preferred in educational environments. Curriculums are beginning to emphasize capabilities and focus more on how the material will be utilized than on what the information is (Oliver, 2002). Although it is widely accepted that ICT has significant potential for advancing education, research has consistently struggled to provide conclusive evidence about the effect of ICT on student performance (Kaffash et al., 2010). According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26) “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit” (*Article 26-UHR*, 2022). Various publicly accessible portals can be viewed as serving these purposes. Aside from curriculum-based portals, an internet-based portal can support self-learning activities such as language and soft skills learning (Ames, 2021).

The acronym “OER” stands for “open educational resources,” which refers to resources for education that are available without charge in the public domain. UNESCO stated that “OER are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use,

adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions”(UNESCO, 2017) Tablets, smartphones, and microcomputers are becoming more popular worldwide, and people are coming up with new ways to use them. As a result, distance and online learning are becoming more popular among students because they can choose their programmes (Szopiński & Bachnik, 2022). As of July 27 2022, there are 1055 universities comprising state, central, and deemed and private universities in India (*UGC University List*, 2022). Hence, with a huge number of universities, one can think of the importance of the curriculum-based portal among the students. On the hand, with large population countries like India may face number of circumstances for ICT to be used in all areas of education (Oliver, 2002; Starr, 2001) and that may lead to various issues such as technical infrastructure, societal peculiarities, and culture may become impediments to the transfer of studies conducted in developed countries to poor countries (Boateng et al., 2016).

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know from where PG students of science and social science faculties access e-PG Pathshala
2. To know the purpose of using e-PG Pathshala
3. To identify the awareness of e-PG Pathshala
4. To measure the level of satisfaction for e-PG Pathshala
5. To find out the frequency of usage of e-PG Pathshala
6. To know the search technique used for e-PG Pathshala

## METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used for the collection of primary data. Structured questionnaires were distributed to postgraduate students in the university's central library, departments, and hostels using the simple random sampling approach. It was determined that 205 (i.e., 91.11 percent) of the received questionnaires were valid for further analysis and tabulation.

### ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

On 1877, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in the Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. The college was transformed into Aligarh Muslim University in 1920 (*AMU History*, n.d.) Currently, the university consists of thirteen faculties, 117 departments, three academies, and twenty-one centres and institutes (*Facts of AMU*, n.d.).

Science faculty is one of the twelve faculties, which consists of eight teaching departments such as the Department of Chemistry, Computer Science, Geography, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics and Operations Research, and Interdisciplinary Department of Remote Sensing and GIS Applications (*Faculty of Science*, n.d.) While Social Science comprises various departments like Economics, Education, History, Islamic Studies, Library and Information Science, Mass Communication, Psychology Physical Education, Political Science, Sociology, Social Work, Advanced Centre for Women's Studies (*Faculty of Social Sciences*, n.d.)

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is restricted to a curriculum based on an e-learning platform 'e-PG Pathshala.' Due to time constraints, the current study investigated the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala only among the PG students of the science and social science faculties in AMU. For this study, research scholars and faculty members' opinions were not undertaken. Also, the study considered PG students from only two university faculties.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 1: Sample Population**

Total Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Received	Valid Questionnaire	
350 (100%)	225 (64.28%)	205 (91.11%)	
		<i>Science</i>	<i>Social Science</i>
		100 (48.78%)	105 (51.21%)

A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to science and social science faculty students. Respondents returned approximately 64 percent, or 225, of the distributed questionnaires. For further analysis and interpretation, 91 percent (205) of the questionnaires have been found to be valid. Specifically, around 49 percent of valid surveys were obtained from students in the science faculty, whereas 51 percent were received from students in the social science department.

### Awareness of e-PG Pathshala

Table 2 shows how well-known e-PG Pathshala is among postgraduate students in the

social science and science faculties. According to the table, social science faculty students (94, or 89.50 percent) are much more familiar with e-PG Pathshala than science faculty students (89 i.e., 89 percent). While 11 percent of respondents

from the science faculty are unaware of e-PG Pathshala, 10.50 percent (11) of students in the social science faculty are also unaware of e-PG Pathshala.

**Table 2: Awareness of e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Response	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Yes	89 (89%)	94 (89.50%)
2	No	11 (11%)	11 (10.50%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

**Table 3: Use purpose of e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Purpose	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	To write thesis/dissertation/notes	55 (55%)	62 (59%)
2	To see the research trends	15 (15%)	16 (15%)
3	To decide the research topic	23 (23%)	8 (8%)
4	Any other purpose	7 (7%)	19 (18%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

Table 3 looked at how science and social science faculty students used e-PG Pathshala for various objectives. 59 percent of students in the social science faculty use e-PG Pathshala to write their dissertations, notes, and theses, compared to 55 percent of students in the science faculty. About 15 percent of students in both faculties use e-PG Pathshala to view research

trends. However, only 8 percent of students in the social science faculty and 23 percent of students in the science faculty use e-PG Pathshala to choose their research topics. Students in the social science faculty are given 18 percent weighting for other purposes, and students in the science department are given 7 percent weighting.

**Table 4: Preference for Using e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Reason	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	It is easy to browse	16 (16%)	29 (27.61%)
2	It is available all the time	53 (53%)	25 (23.80%)
3	It is convenient	24 (24%)	46 (43.80%)
4	Others	7 (7%)	5 (4.76%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

Table 4 shows the reason for using e-PG Pathshala with few listed reasons. About 44 percent of social science students think that e-PG Pathshala is convenient to use, followed by it is easy to browse (28 percent). However, 53

percent of science faculty students prefer to use it because it is available all the time, followed by it is convenient to use. There are other reasons that both faculty students also prefer like it has e-text and video of the same topic.

**Table 5: Time Spent on e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Time	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	0 to 1 hour	58 (58%)	54 (51.42%)
2	2 to 3 hours	25 (25%)	34 (32.38%)
3	More than 3 hours	9 (9%)	12 (11.42%)
4	Any other	8 (8%)	5 (4.76%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

The table 5 displays how much time PG students from the faculties of social science and science spend using e-PG Pathshala. Approximately 58 percent of science students and 51 percent of social science students spend 0 to 1 hour. Similarly, 25 percent of scientific students

and 32 percent of social science students spend time doing the same. Students in social science (11.42 percent) spent the most time, which was more than 3 hours, whereas only 9 percent of science students devoted more than 3 hours.

**Table 6: Searching Place**

Sl. No.	Place	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Departmental Lab	22 (22%)	11 (10.47%)
2	Library	26 (26%)	30 (28.57%)
3	Hostel/Home	43 (43%)	59 (56.19%)
4	Any other place	9 (9%)	5 (4.76%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

Table 6 shows the place where the e-PG Pathshala is being searched. The majority of students from the faculties of science (43 percent) and social science (56.19 percent) use e-PG Pathshala from their home or hostel. While

26.57 percent of science students and 28.57 percent of social science students access it in the library. In the same way, departmental lab is used for access by science students with 22 percent and only 10.47 percent by social science students.

**Table 7: User-ease of e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	User-ease	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Yes	86 (86%)	99 (94.28%)
2	No	14 (14%)	6 (5.71%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

The table 7 illustrates the user-friendly nature of e-PG Pathshala among science and social science students. It is shown that the majority of the user from both the faculties, i.e., science (86

percent) and social science (about 94 percent) agreed with the user-ease nature of the overall e-PG Pathshala.

**Table 8: Use frequency of e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Frequency	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Daily	3 (3%)	19 (18.09%)
2	Once in a week	8 (8%)	18 (17.14 %)
3	Once in a month	13 (13%)	10 (9.52%)
4	According to need	76 (76%)	58 (55.23%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

The table depicts the frequency of using e-PG Pathshala by science and social science faculty students. Approximately 18 percent of students from social science faculty use e-PG Pathshala daily. Whereas in science faculty only 3 percent of students are using it daily. However, 18 (17.14 percent) students from social science faculty and only 8 percent of science faculty use

it once in a week. Similarly, 13 percent of students from science faculty and approximately 10 percent of social science faculty use it once in a month. Majority, i.e., 76 percent of students from science faculty use it according to need. On the other hand, 58 (55.23 percent) students from social science faculty use it according to need.

**Table 9: The usefulness of e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Response	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Yes	81 (81%)	83 (79.04%)
2	No	19 (19%)	22 (20.95%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

Table 9 shows that usefulness of e-PG Pathshala among the students of science and social science faculties. Table illustrate that the

majority of science (81 percent) and social science (about 79 percent) students responded e-PG Pathshala is as useful for them.

**Table 10: Search Strategy**

Sl. No.	Search Through	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Title	24 (24%)	43 (40.95%)
2	Subject	23 (23%)	39 (37.14%)
3	Keyword	38 (38%)	23 (21.90%)
4	Author	15 (15%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

The above table highlights the searching technique used by science and social science faculty students using e-PG Pathshala. In social science faculty, 43 (40.95 percent) and in science 24 percent of students are searching through Title. However, 39 (37.14 percent) from social science faculty and 23 percent from science faculty are

searching through the subject. Keyword strings are used by 38 percent of students from science faculty and approximately 22 percent of students from social science faculty. However, author string has been used by 15 percent of students in science faculty and nobody from science faculty.

**Table 11: Knowledge having for using e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	User knowledge	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Experienced user	52 (52%)	46 (43.80%)
2	With the help of others	23 (23%)	19 (18.09%)
3	Novice user	14 (14%)	20 (19.04%)
4	Not Expert	11 (11%)	20 (19.04%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

Table 11 depicts the competency of science and social science faculty in using e-PG Pathshala. Experienced users are represented by 52 percent of science and 43.80 percent of social science faculty. Whereas 23 percent of users in the science and 18 percent in the social science faculty require assistance to access e-PG

Pathshala. In the faculty of social science, 19 percent of students are classified as novice one, while 14 percent are classified for the same. In the group of non-experts, 19 percent are from social science and 11 percent are from science faculty.

**Table 12: Information Regarding e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	From	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Teachers	14 (14%)	37 (35.23%)
2	Classmates	67 (67%)	38 (36.19%)
3	Tutorial	17 (17%)	17 (16.19%)
4	Any other	2 (2%)	13 (12.38%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>



Table 12 highlights the source of training in order to access e-PG Pathshala. In the social science faculty about 35 percent of students and 14 percent in the science faculty came to know about e-PG Pathshala from their respective teachers. While 67 percent from science and

about 36 percent from social science faculty students got information regarding e-PG Pathshala from their classmates. Similarly, about equal percent of respondents (science and social science students) came to know about e-PG Pathshala from tutorials available on the internet.

**Table 13: Satisfaction Level with Resources Available on e-PG Pathshala**

Sl. No.	Satisfaction level	Faculties	
		Science	Social Science
1	Partially satisfied	37 (37%)	51 (48.57%)
2	Fully satisfied	30 (30%)	40 (38.09%)
3	Partially dissatisfied	18 (18%)	13 (12.38%)
4	Fully dissatisfied	15 (15%)	1 (0.95%)
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>

The above table shows the satisfaction level of users with the availability of resources on e-PG Pathshala. 48.5 percent of social science faculty users and 37 percent of science faculty are partially satisfied. Whereas, 38 percent of social science faculty users and 30 percent of science faculty are fully satisfied. However, 12 percent users from social science and 18 percent from science faculty are partially dissatisfied. Whereas 15 percent of science and about 1 percent of social science faculty students are fully dissatisfied.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study sought to examine the awareness and use of e-PG Pathshala by the postgraduate students of the science and social sciences faculties in AMU, Aligarh, and the results show that most of the objectives are met satisfactorily. The study reveals the findings majorly as-

Results show that the majority of the students from both faculties (science and social science) are aware of e-PG Pathshala (Table 2). The platform serves students of both faculties to prepare notes and write dissertations and thesis. And a considerable number of students from science faculty use it for other research purposes. Some other purposes are also being served as either faculty's students indicate its use for the preparation of curriculum, assignment, and classmates, searching materials for syllabus etc (Table 3). As a result, the majority of science students prefer e-PG Pathshala because it is available around the clock and is convenient, whereas the majority of social science students prefer it because it is convenient and has an easy browsing facility (Table 4).

According to the study, users are hesitant to spend time on e-PG Pathshala since very few students from both faculties spend more than 3

hours on e-PG Pathshala. And a significant percentage of students from both faculties are devoting less than an hour to it, followed by 2 to 3 hours for the majority of social science faculty students. Few students in both faculties dedicate less than half an hour and are even never used (Table 5). The majority of respondents from both faculties choose to access e-PG Pathshala from a room or hostel, followed by the library and departmental lab. Other access points are prioritized by students of science faculty over students of social science (Table 6). In addition, the study found that most science and social science students feel that e-PG Pathshala's user-friendly interface meets their needs (Table 7). Most students from both the faculties believe that e-PG Pathshala is beneficial to them (Table 9). However, e-PG Pathshala is used by most students according to their needs (Table 8). The study also found that social science students rely more on the title approach to finding their desired information, followed by subject search, while science students on keyword searching are more popular among science faculty students, followed by title searching (Table 10).

Findings revealed that the number of experienced users is significant in both faculties. However, science faculty students seek assistance from others to access the e-PG Pathshala, although the number of novice and non-expert respondents in social science faculty is also considerable (Table 11). According to the current study, the majority of students from both faculties learned about e-PG Pathshala from their classmates. Teachers also had an important role in introducing students to the social science

faculty. However, the use of tutorials is more noticeable in science faculty. Aside from the social science faculty, some students learned through other means, such as through their seniors or on their own using the internet (Table 12). However, the majority of students in both faculties are just partially satisfied with the content on e-PG Pathshala. However, the proportion of students who were completely satisfied with the contents was higher in the social science faculty. At the same time, specific concentrations of science faculty students are fully dissatisfied (Table 13).

Among various other platforms that have long served the purposes of academic curricula of academic institutions, e-PG Pathshala has brought about a revolution in this field. The current study reveals the widespread adoption of e-PG Pathshala because of its high quality and vast content. Its ease of use and dependability increased its popularity among students. However, its use becomes more obvious during pandemics because it is critical for students to complete their courses properly and effectively. Content from several courses is organized in a consistent manner, allowing students to readily find useful information. Information explosion occurs every fraction of the time and in various areas of study simultaneously. Despite covering practically all major areas of study with appropriateness, there is always a need for further development and improvement. Emerging topics such as remote sensing are being integrated, as are many other subjects. Advancement in the interface is always welcome as time passes. The features of various well-known databases should be followed and

adopted by the e-PG Pathshala module. Because users have varying abilities and knowledge, the search method should be more specialized and convenient.

### **FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

The curriculum-based platforms for postgraduate students include e-PG Pathshala. However, a variety of dedicated portals for various targeted users, such as SWAYAM, e-Pathshala, DIKSHA, and others, are freely available. And besides e-PG Pathshala, the current study can be expanded by comparing, evaluating, and doing case studies on the other portals listed above.

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### Annexure: Questionnaire

1. Are you aware of e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) Yes [       ]
  - b) No [       ]
2. For what purpose do you use e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) To write thesis/dissertation/notes [       ]
  - b) To see the research trends [       ]
  - c) To decide the research topic [       ]
  - d) Any other purpose [       ]
3. I prefer e-PG Pathshala because
  - a) It is easy to browse [       ]
  - b) It is available all the time [       ]
  - c) It is convenient [       ]
  - d) Other.....
4. Please indicate the average time spent on the e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) 0 to 1 hour [       ]
  - b) 2 to 3 hours [       ]
  - c) More than 3 hours [       ]
  - d) Any other [       ]
5. Where do you search e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) Departmental Lab [       ]
  - b) Library [       ]
  - c) Hostel/Home [       ]
  - d) Any other place [       ]
6. Whether E-PG Pathshala is user friendly or not?
  - a) Yes [       ]
  - b) No [       ]
7. How frequently do you use e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) Daily [       ]
  - b) Once in a week [       ]
  - c) Once in a month [       ]
  - d) According to need [       ]
8. Do you think that e-PG Pathshala is most useful for PG students?
  - a) Yes [       ]
  - b) No [       ]
9. Which search technique do you use for searching purposes?
  - a) Through Title [       ]
  - b) Through Subject [       ]
  - c) Through Keyword [       ]
  - d) Through Author [       ]
  - e) Another, please specify.....
10. How expert are you in accessing the e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) I am an experienced user [       ]
  - b) Use with the help of others [       ]
  - c) I am a novice user [       ]
  - d) Not expert [       ]
11. From where did you get training to access e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) From teachers [       ]
  - b) From classmates [       ]
  - c) From any tutorial [       ]
  - d) Any other [       ]
12. How much do you satisfy with the resources which are available on e-PG Pathshala?
  - a) Partially satisfied
  - b) Fully satisfied
  - c) Partially dissatisfied
  - d) Fully dissatisfied