

## University Libraries as Catalysts for Research Profiling: An Analytical Study of Vidwan Database Registration and INFLIBNET Services in Indian Higher Education

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### Abstract

The libraries are the storehouses of knowledge. The university libraries have evolved from traditional information repositories into strategic partners that strengthen institutional research ecosystems through digital research profiling and scholarly visibility services. This study analytically examines the role of university libraries in promoting faculty registration on the Vidwan Database and facilitating the effective utilization of INFLIBNET services across Indian higher education institutions. The paper follows a descriptive and analytical approach based on secondary data obtained from INFLIBNET Centre publications, University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, institutional reports, and relevant scholarly literature. It evaluates how library-led initiatives such as researcher awareness programmes, profile verification, ORCID integration, metadata management, and research support services contribute to improved academic visibility, collaboration, and institutional rankings. The analysis indicates that proactive library interventions significantly enhance researcher participation in national research information systems, promote discoverability of scholarly outputs, and strengthen research governance. However, challenges including limited awareness, inconsistent profile updating, technical constraints, and varying institutional commitment continue to affect effective implementation. The study concludes that university libraries play a pivotal role in advancing India's digital research infrastructure by fostering comprehensive research profiling, supporting open scholarly communication, and contributing to the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and research excellence.

**Keywords:** *University Libraries, Vidwan Database, INFLIBNET Centre, Research Profiling, Research Information Management System (RIMS), Scholarly Communication, Indian Higher Education*

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### 1. Introduction

University libraries have progressively transformed from conventional knowledge repositories into strategic research support centres that facilitate scholarly communication, digital scholarship, and research visibility within higher education institutions. The growing emphasis on research productivity, global collaboration, and institutional accountability has expanded the role of libraries beyond information access to include research information management, bibliometric support, and researcher profiling. Modern academic libraries actively assist faculty members in managing scholarly identities, improving publication visibility, and integrating digital research profiles with national and international databases. These developments are particularly significant in India, where digital research infrastructure

has become an essential component of higher education governance. By adopting technology-driven services and promoting research information systems, university libraries contribute directly to institutional excellence, knowledge dissemination, and evidence-based decision-making. Their evolving role reflects the transition toward a research-intensive academic ecosystem where libraries serve as catalysts for innovation, collaboration, and sustainable scholarly development (Cox & Verbaan, 2018).

The Vidwan Expert Database, developed by the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre under the University Grants Commission (UGC), represents one of India's most significant national initiatives for researcher profiling and academic visibility. The platform provides authenticated profiles of faculty members and researchers, including publications, patents, research projects, awards, professional affiliations, and academic expertise. University libraries play a critical operational role in facilitating faculty registration, profile verification, metadata quality control, and awareness programmes that encourage regular profile updates. Through these activities, libraries enhance the discoverability of institutional research, support expert identification, and strengthen collaboration among researchers, funding agencies, policymakers, and academic institutions. Effective utilization of the Vidwan database also contributes to institutional reporting, accreditation exercises and national research analytics by providing reliable scholarly information in a standardized digital environment (INFLIBNET Centre, 2024).

The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has accelerated the need for robust digital research ecosystems that promote multidisciplinary research, innovation, academic excellence, and international competitiveness. Within this framework, university libraries have emerged as essential partners in implementing research information management services through platforms such as Vidwan and the Indian Research Information Network System (IRINS). Libraries organize researcher orientation programmes, facilitate ORCID integration, support institutional repositories, and provide bibliometric and citation analysis services that improve research quality and visibility. These activities not only enhance institutional research capacity but also contribute to national objectives related to research governance, transparency, and knowledge dissemination. As universities increasingly compete for research funding, rankings, and international collaborations, library-led research profiling initiatives have become indispensable components of institutional research strategies (University Grants Commission, 2020).

Despite substantial progress in developing national research information infrastructure, several operational challenges continue to influence the effectiveness of Vidwan registration and INFLIBNET services across Indian universities. Incomplete researcher profiles, inconsistent metadata maintenance, limited digital awareness among faculty members, and variations in institutional support often reduce the overall efficiency of research profiling systems. University libraries therefore assume a proactive role in addressing these challenges through training programmes, technical assistance, policy implementation, and continuous profile management (Choudhury et al, 2024). Their interventions improve data accuracy, enhance researcher participation, and strengthen institutional research visibility at both national and global levels. The examining the contribution of university libraries toward Vidwan registration and INFLIBNET services is essential for understanding how library-driven research support influences scholarly communication, institutional performance, and the development of a comprehensive digital research ecosystem in Indian higher education (Sharma & Uddin, 2025).

## **2. Background of Study**

The rapid digital transformation of higher education has fundamentally redefined the role of university libraries from traditional custodians of knowledge to active contributors in research management and scholarly communication. With increasing emphasis on research productivity, global visibility, and institutional accountability, higher education institutions are investing in digital platforms that systematically capture, organize, and disseminate scholarly information. Research profiling has emerged as a critical component of this transformation by enabling comprehensive documentation of researchers' academic contributions, expertise, projects, patents, and collaborations. Internationally, Research Information Management Systems (RIMS) have become integral to research governance, institutional planning, and performance evaluation. In India, these developments have been supported by national initiatives aimed at strengthening digital research infrastructure and improving the discoverability of scholarly outputs. The university libraries have assumed expanded responsibilities in managing research metadata, supporting digital identities, and facilitating research visibility through technology-enabled services. This evolution reflects the broader shift towards data-driven research administration and opens scholarly ecosystems (Bryant et al., 2017).

The Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre, an Inter-University Centre of the University Grants Commission (UGC), has significantly contributed to India's research information ecosystem through the development of platforms such as the Vidwan Expert Database, Indian Research Information Network System (IRINS), Shodhganga, Shodhgangotri, and e-ShodhSindhu. Among these, the Vidwan Database serves as a nationally recognized repository of verified researcher profiles that supports expert discovery, faculty profiling, institutional reporting, and policy planning. University libraries play a pivotal role in ensuring successful implementation of these services by coordinating faculty registration, profile authentication, metadata validation, awareness programmes, and continuous profile updating. Their involvement improves the quality, accuracy, and accessibility of institutional research information while supporting accreditation exercises, research funding applications, and national ranking frameworks such as NAAC and NIRF. These developments demonstrate that library professionals have become indispensable partners in strengthening India's digital research infrastructure and promoting evidence-based academic administration (INFLIBNET Centre, 2024).

The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has further accelerated the adoption of digital research management practices across Indian universities by emphasizing multidisciplinary research, innovation, institutional excellence, and global competitiveness. The policy recognizes the importance of technology-enabled academic ecosystems capable of supporting high-quality research and international collaboration. Within this context, university libraries have expanded their services beyond resource provision to include researcher training, bibliometric analysis, ORCID integration, open-access advocacy, institutional repository management, and research analytics. These activities not only improve the visibility and impact of institutional research but also foster collaboration among researchers, industries, funding agencies, and policymakers. Despite substantial progress, disparities in digital infrastructure, awareness levels, institutional commitment, and profile maintenance continue to influence the effective utilization of Vidwan and other INFLIBNET services across universities. An analytical examination of university libraries' role in promoting research profiling is essential for understanding their contribution to strengthening research governance, scholarly communication, and sustainable research excellence in Indian higher education (University Grants Commission, 2020).

### **3. Scope and Significance of Study**

The present study focuses on the role of university libraries in strengthening research profiling through the promotion of the Vidwan Expert Database and other research support services offered by the Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) Centre in Indian higher education institutions. It examines how libraries facilitate faculty registration, profile verification, metadata management, researcher awareness programmes, ORCID integration, and institutional adoption of research information management systems. The study also explores the contribution of library professionals in improving scholarly visibility, supporting institutional repositories, enhancing research collaboration, and promoting digital research governance. While the research primarily emphasizes library-centric initiatives related to Vidwan and INFLIBNET services, it also considers their relevance to institutional accreditation, research assessment, and national ranking frameworks such as NAAC and NIRF. The scope is confined to Indian higher education institutions and emphasizes the growing strategic role of academic libraries in developing a digitally integrated and researcher-centric scholarly ecosystem. These dimensions collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how libraries contribute to national research infrastructure and academic excellence (INFLIBNET Centre, 2024).

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the evolving role of university libraries as strategic partners in research management rather than merely providers of information resources. The findings will benefit librarians, university administrators, policymakers, faculty members, and research organizations by highlighting effective practices for enhancing researcher profiling, digital scholarship, and institutional research visibility. The study also supports the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by emphasizing technology-enabled research ecosystems, open scholarly communication, and evidence-based institutional planning. Furthermore, it provides practical insights into strengthening library-led research support services that improve research discoverability, facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhance institutional reputation at national and international levels. By identifying existing opportunities and implementation challenges, the study offers valuable recommendations for maximizing the effectiveness of Vidwan registration and INFLIBNET services in promoting sustainable research development across Indian higher education institutions (Corrall, Kennan, & Afzal, 2013).

#### **4. Objectives of Study**

- To examine the role of university libraries in promoting researcher registration on the Vidwan Expert Database in Indian higher education institutions
- To analyse the contribution of university libraries in facilitating the effective utilization of INFLIBNET research support services
- To assess the significance of Vidwan registration in enhancing researchers' visibility, scholarly communication, and institutional research profiling
- To identify the challenges encountered by university libraries in implementing Vidwan and INFLIBNET services for research management
- To suggest suitable strategies for strengthening library-led research profiling initiatives through Vidwan and INFLIBNET services in Indian higher education institutions

#### **5. Review of Literature**

Research information management has emerged as an important area of academic library service because universities increasingly require reliable systems for collecting, organizing, preserving, and presenting information about institutional research. MacIsaac and Polley (2023) examined the expanding intersection between academic library operations and research information management workflows. They observed that libraries possess relevant expertise in metadata creation, scholarly communication,

institutional repositories, persistent identifiers, open infrastructure, and preservation of scholarly records. However, research profiling services are often implemented through fragmented activities rather than a systematic institutional framework. The authors recommended that academic libraries adopt coordinated research information management strategies that connect researcher identities, publications, funding information, institutional repositories, and research assessment processes. Their study theoretically establishes libraries as institutional partners in the aggregation and curation of research metadata. From a practical perspective, it indicates that university libraries can improve profile accuracy, research discoverability, compliance, and institutional reporting by developing standardized researcher-support workflows. This literature is relevant to the present study because Vidwan registration similarly requires continuous coordination, metadata validation, faculty engagement, and institutional responsibility rather than one-time profile creation (MacIsaac & Polley, 2023).

Gunaseelan et al. (2025) conducted a comprehensive analysis of expert profiles available in the Vidwan Database to examine their organizational, disciplinary, and geographical distribution. The study analysed 258,205 researcher profiles and found substantial representation from academic institutions, research organisations, universities, and other institutional categories. Engineering and technology constituted the largest disciplinary category, followed by the social sciences, while considerable differences were observed across states and institutional groups. The authors concluded that Vidwan provides a significant national mechanism for expert identification, academic networking, knowledge sharing, and interdisciplinary research collaboration. Theoretically, their study demonstrates the value of a centralized researcher database in mapping intellectual expertise and making national research capacity visible. Practically, the uneven distribution of profiles highlights the need for universities to encourage wider registration and regular profile maintenance across disciplines. University libraries can address such gaps by identifying unregistered faculty members, organizing registration campaigns, validating profile information, and promoting the academic benefits of Vidwan. The study therefore supports the view that the effectiveness of Vidwan depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on sustained institutional and library-led participation (Gunaseelan et al., 2025).

Pawar (2025) investigated faculty awareness and use of the Vidwan Expert Database among faculty members working in non-technical colleges in Ahilyanagar District. Based on a descriptive survey of 100 respondents, the study found that 58% of faculty members were aware of the platform, whereas 42% lacked awareness; moreover, only 40% reported being registered on Vidwan. Online resources, college administration, colleagues, workshops, and seminars were identified as important sources of information about the database. The study revealed a clear difference between general awareness and actual registration, indicating that familiarity with Vidwan does not automatically lead to sustained platform use. Inadequate institutional promotion, limited orientation programmes, technical difficulties, and insufficient understanding of profile benefits were identified as major barriers. The findings practically emphasize the need for colleges and university libraries to conduct regular demonstrations, hands-on registration sessions, profile-updating drives, and personalized technical assistance. The study is especially relevant because it provides empirical evidence that library-supported capacity building can significantly influence faculty adoption of researcher-profile systems. It also identifies a research gap concerning the institutional mechanisms required to convert awareness into active and accurate participation (Pawar, 2025).

The INFLIBNET Centre presents the Indian Research Information Network System as a web-based research information management service designed to collect, curate, integrate, and showcase the scholarly activities of Indian academic and research institutions. IRINS connects institutional research

profiles with systems such as institutional repositories, human resource platforms, grant-management systems, scholarly publishers, and commercial or open citation databases. It also enables integration with identifiers and profiles such as ORCID, Scopus Author ID, and Google Scholar, thereby supporting consolidated researcher records and reducing fragmented scholarly information. From a theoretical perspective, IRINS represents an integrated research information ecosystem in which metadata interoperability, persistent identities, and institutional research visibility operate together. In practice, successful implementation requires university libraries to monitor publication data, resolve duplicate records, verify affiliations, support identifier linkage, and encourage researchers to update their academic achievements. Although the platform provides technological facilities, the accuracy and usefulness of its profiles depend heavily on institutional data quality and human intervention. This literature establishes that university libraries serve as operational intermediaries between researchers, institutional administrators, scholarly databases, and national research platforms, making their role essential for sustainable research profiling (INFLIBNET Centre, 2026).

## **6. Discussion and Analysis**

The analytical review indicates that university libraries have evolved into strategic centres for research information management by supporting digital researcher profiling and scholarly visibility. Traditionally responsible for information organization and access, libraries now actively facilitate faculty registration on the Vidwan Expert Database, maintain metadata quality, integrate researcher identifiers such as ORCID, and assist in institutional research reporting. These activities improve the discoverability of researchers, publications, patents, and funded projects while strengthening institutional research governance. The increasing adoption of Research Information Management Systems (RIMS) demonstrates that libraries are becoming indispensable partners in institutional research administration rather than merely providers of information resources. From a practical perspective, effective library-led profiling enables universities to generate reliable research data for accreditation, policy formulation, funding proposals, and international collaboration. The research profiling has become an integral component of modern library services that directly contributes to institutional academic excellence and global research competitiveness (MacIsaac & Polley, 2023).

The Vidwan Expert Database has significantly enhanced India's digital research ecosystem by creating a centralized platform for authenticated researcher profiles across universities and research institutions. Analysis of recent studies indicates that comprehensive researcher registration improves expert discovery, interdisciplinary collaboration, institutional benchmarking, and national research mapping. The considerable disparities remain in profile completeness, disciplinary representation, and regular profile updating across institutions. These variations are largely influenced by the level of institutional support and the active involvement of university libraries. Libraries that organize awareness programmes, registration drives, profile verification workshops, and continuous technical assistance demonstrate higher researcher participation and better-quality metadata. Therefore, the effectiveness of Vidwan depends not only on technological infrastructure but equally on systematic library interventions that encourage faculty engagement and sustained profile maintenance. Such coordinated efforts ultimately improve institutional visibility within India's research information landscape while supporting evidence-based academic planning (Gunaseelan et al., 2025).

INFLIBNET services, including Vidwan, IRINS, Shodhganga, e-ShodhSindhu, and other scholarly communication platforms, collectively establish an integrated digital infrastructure for Indian higher education. University libraries serve as the operational link connecting researchers with these national

services by facilitating profile integration, institutional repository management, bibliometric analysis, citation support, and open-access dissemination. The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has further reinforced the strategic importance of these services by emphasizing multidisciplinary research, digital transformation, innovation, and global academic visibility. Despite these advancements, several operational challenges continue to affect effective implementation, including limited faculty awareness, inconsistent metadata updating, inadequate technical skills, shortage of trained library professionals, and varying institutional commitment. Addressing these issues requires continuous professional development, standardized institutional policies, stronger administrative support, and regular capacity-building initiatives led by university libraries. Strengthening these mechanisms will enable libraries to function more effectively as catalysts for research profiling, scholarly communication, and sustainable research excellence within Indian higher education institutions (INFLIBNET Centre, 2026).

## **7. Findings of Study**

- University libraries have evolved from traditional information providers to strategic partners in research information management, playing a significant role in enhancing institutional research visibility and scholarly communication.
- The Vidwan Expert Database has emerged as a vital national research profiling platform that improves researcher discoverability, expert identification, academic networking, and interdisciplinary collaboration across Indian higher education institutions.
- University libraries significantly contribute to the successful implementation of Vidwan registration by conducting awareness programmes, assisting faculty profile creation, verifying metadata, integrating ORCID IDs, and encouraging regular profile updates.
- INFLIBNET services, including Vidwan, IRINS, Shodhganga, e-ShodhSindhu, and institutional repositories, collectively strengthen India's digital research ecosystem by facilitating efficient research management and open scholarly communication.
- Library-led research profiling enhances institutional performance by supporting NAAC accreditation, NIRF ranking, research assessment, grant applications, faculty evaluation, and evidence-based academic planning.

## **8. Conclusion**

University libraries have emerged as indispensable contributors to India's evolving research ecosystem by extending their traditional functions beyond information management to encompass research profiling, scholarly communication, and digital research governance. The analytical review demonstrates that library-led initiatives supporting the Vidwan Expert Database and other INFLIBNET services have significantly improved researcher visibility, institutional research management, and the discoverability of scholarly outputs. Through activities such as faculty registration, metadata verification, ORCID integration, bibliometric support, and researcher awareness programmes, university libraries strengthen institutional capacity for research assessment, accreditation, and national ranking exercises. These contributions are increasingly important in achieving the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes research excellence, innovation, digital transformation, and global academic engagement. The study further reveals that the effectiveness of research profiling depends not only on the availability of robust digital platforms but also on sustained institutional commitment and proactive library engagement. Challenges such as incomplete researcher profiles, limited awareness, inconsistent metadata maintenance, and inadequate technical expertise continue to affect the optimal utilization of Vidwan and related INFLIBNET services. Addressing these issues requires continuous capacity building for library professionals, structured faculty orientation programmes, standardized

institutional policies, and stronger integration of research information management systems with institutional repositories and global researcher identifiers. Such measures will ensure greater accuracy, interoperability, and long-term sustainability of research data. Strengthening library-driven research support services through policy initiatives, technological advancement, and continuous professional development will further position university libraries as catalysts for research excellence and sustainable academic development in Indian higher education.

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