Journal of Science &Technology Metrics

DLINE JOURNALS

ISSN: 2582 – 6956

JSTM 2026: 7 (1)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.6025/jstm/2026/7/1/15-26

Assessing the Scholarly Impact of Agricultural Scientists on ResearchGate: An Altmetric Study of Agricultural Scientists in Karnataka, India

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to explore and assess the research visibility of agricultural scientists in India, with a specific focus on their engagement with academic social networking platforms, particularly ResearchGate (RG). In an era where digital presence significantly influences scholarly communication and collaboration, this study aims to investigate how agricultural scientists disseminate their research and engage with the wider academic community through their RG profiles.

The scope of the study is limited to three prominent agricultural universities in Karnataka, India: The University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru; the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad; and the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Raichur. The analysis was confined to faculty members who had active profiles on ResearchGate. Data accuracy was based on information available at the time of collection, and no subsequent updates or modifications to RG profiles were taken into account. To initiate data collection, the names and designations of faculty members were obtained from the official websites of the respective universities. A systematic search was then conducted on ResearchGate to identify faculty members with registered profiles. These individuals were categorised by academic rank (Assistant Professor,

Associate Professor, and Professor) and departmental affiliation. Their profiles were examined to extract key scientometric indicators, including the number of publications, full text uploads, citation counts, H-index, followers, followings, Research Interest (RI) Score, and participation in academic discussions.

All collected data were organised using Microsoft Excel and subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. The purpose was to evaluate the extent of faculty members' research visibility, productivity, and academic engagement on RG. Additionally, institutions, departments, and individual researchers were ranked using quantifiable metrics such as the RI Score, H-index, and overall research output. Of the 416 faculty members across the three universities, 215 (51.68%) had created RG profiles, indicating a moderate but growing trend in the adoption of academic social networking tools for research visibility. Collectively, these faculty members uploaded 4,991 research documents to the platform, averaging approximately 11.99 documents per individual. S. Ramesh from UAS Bengaluru emerged as the most prolific author, with 154 publications accounting for 9.94% of his university's total uploads, demonstrating outstanding individual productivity.

An analysis of publication types revealed that journal articles overwhelmingly dominated the content, representing 83.85% (4,185) of total uploads. This indicates a strong preference for peer-reviewed literature, which plays a central role in enhancing academic visibility and citation impact. Other formats, such as datasets (5.36%), conference papers (4.6%), and book chapters (2.6%), were also present, albeit in smaller proportions, suggesting some diversification in scholarly communication.

Among the institutions studied, UAS Dharwad ranked highest in total publications (2,638) and recommendations (2,128), reflecting substantial research output and community engagement. The H-index analysis further reinforced this standing, with UAS Dharwad scoring the highest (471), even when adjusted for self-citations (459). It also led to social engagement metrics with 3,821 followers and 3,071 following, indicating strong academic networking and visibility among peers.

Keywords: ResearchGate, Research Impact, RG Score, Agricultural Scientists

Received: 1 September 2025, Revised 30 November 2025, Accepted 6 December 2025

1. Introduction

Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNSs) have emerged as transformative platforms in the scholarly communication landscape, enabling researchers to disseminate their work, engage in academic discussions, and collaborate across disciplines. These platforms bridge the gap between formal and informal channels of scholarly exchange, fostering a dynamic environment for intellectual interaction (Kronick, 2001; Guedon, 2001). In recent years, ASNSs such as ResearchGate, Mendeley, Academia.edu, Google Scholar, Zotero, and WordPress have gained prominence, offering tools to enhance research visibility, connect with peers, and stay updated with developments in their respective fields (Sugimoto et al., 2017). Unlike general social networking sites, ASNSs are tailored specifically for academics, allowing users to upload research papers, abstracts, and publication links. They also provide functionalities to track the impact and popularity of uploaded content, facilitate question and answer based scholarly engagement, and present career opportunities relevant to users' academic interests (Meishar-Tal & Pieterse, 2017).

The growing popularity of these platforms is attributed to their open access, broad user base, and the seamless integration of formal publication with informal academic discourse (Van Noorden, 2014). This dual functionality has led to optimism about their potential to reshape scholarly communication systems (Blümel, 2021). In addition to fostering engagement, ASNSs contribute to alternative methods of evaluating research impact. Traditional evaluation metrics such as citation counts and journal impact factors (Goodyear et al., 2009) are now complemented by altmetrics technology driven indicators that reflect real time engagement with research outputs, including views, downloads, shares, and discussions (Piwowar & Priem, 2013; Wildgaard, 2014). These altmetric indicators offer a more immediate and comprehensive view of scholarly influence, particularly in digital environments.

Among the various ASNSs, ResearchGate (RG) stands out as one of the most widely used platforms. Founded in 2008 by Dr. Ijad Madisch, Dr. Soren Hofmayer, and Horst Fickenscher, RG has grown into a global network of over 20 million researchers spanning 190 countries (ResearchGate, 2023). The platform provides several key indicators, such as publication counts, full-text availability, citations, Research Interest (RI) scores, and user engagement metrics, that help measure the social and academic impact of research contributions. This study explores the use of altmetric indicators and ResearchGate engagement among agricultural scientists in Karnataka, assessing how these platforms are leveraged to enhance research visibility, academic networking, and scholarly influence in the digital age.

2. Review of literature

A literature review is critical in academic research by offering a comprehensive summary of existing scholarly work. It highlights the depth of available knowledge and reflects the researchers' expertise in their field. For this review, data were sourced from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), Google Scholar (GS), EBSCO, and others.

Singson and Amees (2017) explored the motivations, activities, and perceived benefits of ResearchGate membership among researchers at Pondicherry University. Their findings revealed that ResearchGate was widely embraced by researchers, primarily to connect with peers sharing similar academic interests. A key activity reported by users was browsing and reviewing others' scholarly work to stay informed about current developments in their fields.

In a separate study, Shrivastava and Mahajan (2017) investigated 173 faculty ResearchGate profiles from various departments. They collected and analysed data through direct profile visits, focusing on the interrelations among RG-provided metrics. Their analysis revealed patterns and correlations that helped clarify the nature of ResearchGate's engagement indicators.

Ali and Richardson (2017) also analysed altmetric data from ResearchGate using SPSS software (version 21). Their study identified a positive relationship between publications, reads, and citation counts. Interestingly, they noted that a significant portion of the publications did not appear in high-impact journals, yet still attracted engagement. Sheeja and Mathew (2019) conducted an altmetric study of 64 Indian naval architecture researchers. They reported that 65% of the researchers maintained RG profiles, with the majority having 1–50 citations, an H-index of 1-5, 1000–5000 reads, and RG scores ranging from 10 to 15. Their findings demonstrated a clear link between altmetric indicators and conventional scientific metrics.

Vinay et al. (2020) examined ResearchGate usage among science faculty in Karnataka State Universities. They found that 61.17% of faculty had created RG profiles, with the University of Mysore standing out in impact, recording 23,821 citations and an RG score of 1016.78. Césars et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative study using data from ResearchGate, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Of 12,731 citations analysed, 59.9% were related to agriculture, 19.3% to health, 19% to environmental topics, and 1.8% to other fields. Their analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between citation counts across these three platforms. In 2021, Kumar and Singh evaluated RG profiles from 32 departments at King George's Medical University (KGMU), Lucknow. The study revealed that 1196 publications were uploaded to ResearchGate, of which 34.9% were available in full text. Ali (2021) conducted a focused analysis on the top 10 Library and Information Science (LIS) faculty profiles on ResearchGate, assessing their publication counts, citations, Research Interest (RI) scores, and reads. The study found that 46% of full-text documents were uploaded and that publications and citation counts were positively correlated.

Sulakshana et al. (2022) studied RG usage at Kuvempu University, Karnataka. Their research revealed that 70 faculty members had created RG profiles, 18% of whom were from scientific disciplines. Collectively, they had uploaded 3029 documents, which had received 584,966 reads, 39,228 citations, and 480 h-index scores. In a more recent study, Sulakshana and Sampath Kumar (2023) investigated RG profiles of faculty members at the University of Mysore. They found that 78 faculty members had RG profiles and collectively uploaded 5,205 papers, which attracted 1,527,647 reads and 71,814 citations, with a combined h-index of 912. Science faculty recorded a high Research Interest (RI) score of 7712. Finally, Panda and Kaur (2023) analysed the top 15 most cited Indian researchers on ResearchGate. Sujit K. Bhattacharya was identified as the most cited, with 17,210 citations and 505 research contributions. His h-index and RI score stood at 70 and 8991, respectively. The study also reported that 71.95% of the content was research articles, with 49.10% available in full text. A Pearson correlation analysis confirmed strong positive relationships among five key research variables.

After reviewing the researchers' published literature, it was found that no in depth studies had been conducted on the chosen topic. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the research performance of Agricultural Scientists in Karnataka on ResearchGate.

3. Research questions

As the primary objective of this study is to explore the research visibility of agricultural scientists in India, it examines how their scholarly contributions are represented and disseminated on their ResearchGate profiles. Accordingly, the study seeks to address the following research questions, which are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of their research presence, productivity, and impact in the national and global academic landscape

a) What percentage of agricultural scientists have created profiles on ResearchGate?

b) How many total documents and full-text articles have been uploaded by agricultural scientists on ResearchGate?

c) Who are the most productive authors among agricultural scientists, based on the number of publications

uploaded to ResearchGate?

d) What are the key research impact indicators of agricultural scientists on ResearchGate (such as citations, reads, H-index, and recommendations)?

e) Is there a significant difference between the H-index and the H-index when self-citations are included?

Scope and Methodology

The study focused on three agricultural universities in Karnataka, India, viz., University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru, University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) Dharwad, and University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Raichur and was limited to faculty members who had created profiles on ResearchGate (RG). The accuracy of the findings depended on the information available on RG at the time of data collection, with no consideration for subsequent updates. Faculty names and designations were first gathered from official university websites, and RG was then searched to identify profile holders. These faculty members were categorised by academic rank and department, and their RG profiles were examined to extract data on key research metrics, including publication count, full-text uploads, citations, H-index, followers, followings, Research Interest (RI) Score, and engagement in academic discussions. The data were systematically compiled in Excel and subjected to descriptive analysis to assess faculty research visibility and activity on RG. The results were used to meet the study's objectives and to rank universities, departments, and individual faculty members based on metrics such as RI Score, H-index, and research output.

1. Data analysis and interpretation

Sl No.	Name of the University	Year of establish-ment	Total no. of faculty members	No. of faculty members with ResearchGate profiles	Percentage
1	University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore	1963	193	82	42.48
2	University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad	1986	177	110	62.14
3	University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Raichur	2008	46	23	50.00
Total			**416**	**215**	**51.68**

Table 1. Creation of ResearchGate profiles by faculty members at universities

Table 1 highlights the creation of ResearchGate (RG) profiles among faculty members across three agricultural universities in Karnataka. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, exhibits the highest level of engagement, with 110 out of 177 faculty members (62.14%) maintaining RG profiles. This is followed by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, where 23 out of 46 faculty members (50.00%) have profiles, indicating moderate participation. In contrast, the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, shows the lowest level of engagement, with only 42.48% (82 out of 193) of faculty members registered on the platform. Of 416 faculty members across all three universities, 215 (51.68%) have created RG profiles. The result suggests a reasonably positive trend toward scholarly visibility and networking on academic social networking platforms such as ResearchGate, though there remains significant scope for improvement, particularly at UAS Bangalore.

Sl.no	Name of the University	Total no. of faculty members	Total number of documents uploaded	Average number of documents uploaded
1	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore	193	1860	9.6
2	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	177	2637	14.89
3	University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur	46	493	10.71
	TOTAL	**416**	**4991**	**11.99**

Table 2. Number of documents uploaded by faculty members to ResearchGate

Table 2 presents the total number of documents uploaded to ResearchGate by faculty members from three agricultural universities in Karnataka. A total of 4991 documents were uploaded by 416 faculty members, averaging 11.99 documents per person. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, leads with 2637 uploads by 177 faculty, achieving the highest average of 14.89 documents per faculty member, indicating strong research engagement. With 493 uploads from 46 faculty, Raichur follows with a solid average of 10.71. In contrast, UAS Bangalore, despite having the most prominent faculty (193), has the lowest average upload rate of 9.6, with 1860 documents, suggesting underutilization of ResearchGate. Overall, the data reveal disparities in research sharing practices, with Dharwad showing the highest participation and Bangalore presenting scope for improved engagement.

Table 3 lists the top 10 faculty members from three agricultural universities in Karnataka, ranked by the number of publications on ResearchGate, highlighting individual research productivity and engagement. S. Ramesh from UAS Bangalore ranks first with 154 publications, contributing 9.94% of his university's total

uploads, reflecting exceptional individual output. Faculty from UAS Dharwad dominate the list, occupying 6 of the top 10 positions, with A.P. Biradar and D.P. Biradar each contributing 140 publications. Despite Dharwad's dominance in numbers, Bangalore faculty such as M. S. Sheshshayee (116 publications) and C. T. Ramachandra (98 publications) show higher individual percentage contributions than their university's total. Overall, Dharwad reflects broader faculty participation, while Bangalore showcases standout individuals with high publication counts, suggesting differing patterns of academic engagement on ResearchGate.

Name	University	Total publications of the University	Publications by faculty	Percentage	Rank
S. Ramesh	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore	1550	154	9.94	1
A P Biradar	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	2102	140	6.66	2
D.P. Biradar	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	2102	140	6.66	3
R Vasudeva	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	2102	136	6.47	4
Shashikant. S. Udikeri	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	2102	130	6.18	5
M. S. Sheshshayee	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore	1550	116	7.48	6
P.U. Krishnaraj	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	2102	111	5.28	7
C. T. Ramachandra	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore	1550	98	6.32	8
Shamarao Jahagirdar	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	2102	97	4.61	9
N.B. Prakash	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore	1550	92	5.94	10

Table 3. Most productive authors based on the total number of publications uploaded to RG Profile

Table 4 presents the distribution of 4991 research items uploaded by faculty members on ResearchGate, highlighting a strong preference for traditional publication formats. Journal articles dominate the uploads, comprising 83.85% (4185 items), indicating a focus on peer-reviewed outputs central to academic visibility and citation impact. Other formats, such as datasets (5.36%), conference papers (4.6%), and chapters (2.6%), appear in smaller numbers, reflecting limited but present diversification in scholarly communication.

Types of documents	Total numbers	Percentage
Articles	4185	83.85
Datasets	268	5.36
Conference papers	232	4.6
Chapter	130	2.6
Preprint	43	0.86
Poster	38	0.76
Books	30	0.60
Thesis	28	0.56
Technical reports	12	0.24
Others	25	0.50
Total	**4991**	**100**

Table 4. Total number of documents uploaded to RG profile

Sl.no	Name of the University	Total RG profile creators	Total no full text documents uploaded
1	University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore	82	1334
2	University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad	110	1561
3	University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur	23	282
TOTAL		**3177**	**215**

Table 5. Total number of full-text documents uploaded by the faculty members

Table 5 highlights the extent of faculty members' open-access engagement at three agricultural universities in Karnataka through full-text uploads on ResearchGate. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, leads with 1,561 uploads by 110 faculty members, reflecting strong participation in scholarly sharing. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, follows with 1334 uploads from 82 faculty members, indicating a high per capita contribution. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, with 23 faculty members, uploaded 282 documents, showing moderate involvement. Altogether, 3177 full-text documents were uploaded by 215 faculty members, indicating a positive trend toward open access and research visibility. However, institutional variations indicate the need for targeted awareness and capacity-building efforts to further promote ResearchGate participation and knowledge dissemination.

University	**Research indictors**				
	Sum of Publications	Sum of Citations	Sum of Reads	Sum of Recommen-dations	Sum of RI Score
University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru	1860	17180	933515	1996	15529.54
University of Agricultural Science, Dharwad	2638	20977	879330	2128	17688.8
University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur	493	1484	154124	1142	2327.5
Total	4991	39641	1966969	5266	

Table 6. Distribution of universities based on ResearchGate's research indicators

Table 6 compares ResearchGate engagement across three agricultural universities in Karnataka, based on the number of publications uploaded, total reads, and recommendations. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, leads in publication count (2638) and recommendations (2128), reflecting strong research output and community endorsement. However, the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, records the highest number of reads (933,515), with 1860 publications and 1996 recommendations, indicating higher reader engagement and a broader reach per publication. Although smaller in scale, the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, shows a notable impact with 493 publications, 154,124 reads, and 1142 recommendations, suggesting a high recommendation-to-publication ratio and strong appreciation of its content. Collectively, the three universities uploaded 4991 publications, garnering nearly 2 million reads and over 5200 recommendations, highlighting an overall active and impactful presence on ResearchGate.

The table also presents a comparative analysis of the impact of research among three agricultural universities in Karnataka using ResearchGate metrics. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, leads with the

highest number of faculty profiles (110), publications (2638), citations (20,977), and Research Interest (RI) score (17,688.8), indicating firm research productivity and influence. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, follows with 82 faculty members, 1,860 publications, 17,180 citations, and an RI score of 15,529.54, showcasing a high per-capita research impact. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, despite its smaller size (23 faculty members), contributes 493 publications, 1484 citations, and an RI score of 2327.5, reflecting emerging research engagement. Dharwad demonstrates leadership in research quantity and quality, Bengaluru reflects high individual impact, and Raichur shows promising growth.

Name of the University	Sum of H index	Sum of H index excluding self-citations	No. of followers	No. of followings
University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru	369	358	2713	2326
University of Agricultural Science, Dharwad	471	459	3821	3071
University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur	80	76	842	743
Total	**920**	**893**	**7376**	**6140**

Table 7. Sum of H index and followers and followings

The study compares the H-index and the H-index excluding self-citations for faculty members of three agricultural universities in Karnataka, revealing the credibility of their scholarly impact. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, leads with an H-index of 471, slightly reducing to 459 without self-citations, followed by Bengaluru (369 to 358) and Raichur (80 to 76). The minimal differences across all three universities indicate that most citations are from external sources, reflecting authentic academic influence. Overall, the combined H-index decreases marginally by only 2.93% (from 920 to 893) when self-citations are excluded, suggesting that self-citation has a negligible effect and that the faculty's research is widely acknowledged within the broader academic community.

Table 7 highlights the ResearchGate networking engagement of faculty members from three agricultural universities in Karnataka, as measured by their follower counts and following counts. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, leads with 3821 followers and 3071 followings, indicating strong research visibility and active academic networking. The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, follows with 2713 followers and 2326 following, reflecting a significant level of engagement. Although the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, has comparatively fewer faculty members, it has shown a meaningful presence with 842 followers and 743 following. The three universities account for 7376 followers and 6140 following, demonstrating healthy academic engagement on ResearchGate that supports greater research visibility, collaboration, and dissemination.

Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights into how agricultural scientists across Karnataka's leading agricultural universities utilise ResearchGate to disseminate their research and engage with the academic community. The analysis revealed that the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, consistently leads in terms of research productivity and academic impact, followed by UAS Bengaluru and UAS Raichur. Metrics such as the number of publications, citations, and full-text uploads, H-index, and Research Interest (RI) scores underline this pattern.

While Dharwad excels in volume, Bengaluru demonstrates higher reader engagement and per capita impact. Although relatively new and smaller, Raichur shows encouraging participation levels and growth potential. The distribution of ResearchGate profile creation also highlights a gender imbalance, with male faculty dominating across all designations and underscoring the need for more inclusive academic visibility initiatives. Overall, the study underscores the growing importance of altmetrics and ASNSs in modern scholarly communication. It recommends that universities actively promote participation in ResearchGate through training, awareness programs, and institutional policies that support open access publishing. By leveraging platforms like ResearchGate, agricultural universities can enhance the visibility, reach, and impact of their scientific contributions both nationally and globally.

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